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STRONG START TO A SPORTING PARTNERSHIP

A burgeoning partnership with the New Zealand Olympic Committee (NZOC) has cemented AUT's place as New Zealand's top sports science university. Not only has AUT Millennium officially been named the National Olympic Training Centre, but AUT students now enjoy unrivalled access to work experience and internships within one of the country's preeminent sporting organisations.

Signed in late-2019, the deal has seen AUT collaborate with NZOC across sport, media, communications and creative arts, creating exciting opportunities and growth for students, athletes and the organisations themselves. Already the University has hosted a string of events including the premiere of NZOC's 'One Fern. 100 Years' documentary, the Tokyo 2020 flagbearer announcement and team farewell, and the Tokyo 2020 Performance Support Forum. During the Tokyo Olympic Games, AUT campuses were transformed into 'Supporter Hubs', generating great excitement for the global competition, while this year it's full steam ahead with the Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

For NZOC CEO Nicki Nicol, teaming up with AUT is a powerful and felicitous way to engage more Kiwis with the Olympic and Commonwealth movements.

"AUT connects with a large, youthful audience, each working hard to

excel in their own particular field – just like New Zealand's Olympic and Commonwealth athletes," Nicki explains.

"Connecting with these amazing future leaders from AUT helps us tell our story and interact with those who have a lot in common with many of our athletes but perhaps don't follow them as closely as other groups of New Zealanders. Like the New Zealand Team, AUT is about excellence, integrity and inspiration so there's a lot of natural cross-over in the things we do as an organisation and the skills AUT students are honing."

The partnership aims to inspire young people to strive in their chosen field.

"Basically we're connecting two high-performing teams – the New Zealand Team off the back of our most successful ever Summer and Winter Olympic Games campaigns, and AUT, which has placed consecutively in the top 100 ranking universities

in the world for sport. It offers the chance to share transferable skills – the resilience, determination, and perseverance demonstrated by the New Zealand Team can cross over to all walks of life – and it enables AUT students to see the role of sport in connecting, inspiring and uniting New Zealanders.

"This is a unique mandate with a global audience. The Olympic Rings are something everyone recognises, and we're grateful to be a small part of AUT's connection with the rest of the world."

Twenty-two-year-old Ella Agnew is one AUT graduate who's already reaping the benefits. After completing her Bachelor of Sport and Recreation majoring in Management, she was selected for a year-long internship at NZOC. Part of their Performance Support Team for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, she's been invited to travel to England to help run the New Zealand operations at the Birmingham Athlete Village.



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Bachelor of Sport and Recreation graduate and NZOC intern Ella Agnew.

"This is an amazing opportunity and one I feel very grateful for. I've never travelled internationally except to Australia, so it's very exciting and incredibly beneficial for my personal and professional growth," says Ella.

"I've always been interested in the management/large scale events space, but it can often feel overwhelming trying to figure out how to achieve one's career goals. This internship is providing me with invaluable experience far beyond that of an entry level or volunteer role. I'm getting to understand what's involved with running a large-scale international event while contributing meaningfully. I'm also getting to meet and form relationships with people all over the sector."

There's no doubt the internship will lay strong foundations for Ella's future.

"My 'why' has always been the sense of community that sport creates. Large scale sports events bring people together on a shared journey, they inspire young people to get active, and create a sense of national pride. This has inspired me to want to work in the event management aspect of the sector, and with some

and like many of the partnerships the University has forged, the benefits are considerable.

"The mantra 'partner or perish' has never been truer than it is today," Nigel says. "Resources are constrained, costs are rising and uncertainty is growing. By aligning with people and organisations who

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big sports events coming up in New Zealand over the next few years, I hope I'll be ideally placed to play a part in them."

Nigel Murphy, AUT's Executive Director, External Engagement, says that the AUT-NZOC partnership dishes up a wealth of opportunities,

share your vision and values, you're able to leverage more ideas and resources, to help you go further and achieve more than you can on your own.

"Genuine partnerships benefit all partners – they're all about win-win."