



30.6.2023

## The Ball has arrived in New Zealand

**The Ball – a symbol of gender equality and climate change awareness across the world – has arrived in New Zealand ahead of and at the 2023 FIFA Women’s World Cup (Wāhine O Te Ao). The Ball will be visiting schools, clubs and attending events in Aotearoa New Zealand.**



*The Ball being signed by the U19 Kulas, the Fiji National Women’s U19 Team*

Using the motto *One Ball, One World*, the project is run by the German based non-profit organisation *Spirit of Football (SOF)* promoting gender equality through football and investigating how people around the world have been dealing with the consequences of climate change. So far more than 10,000 people have signed *The Ball* and pledged to use the power of football to take action to make their communities stronger, to promote gender equality and to take better care of the environment. Liverpool F.C. Manager **Jürgen Klopp** is amongst the *Spirit of Football* Ambassadors supporting the project and its aims for society.

*The Ball* kicked off in England’s Battersea Park in July 2022, where the first official game of football was played in 1864. New Zealand is country number 20 on this journey and *The Ball* will be in Aotearoa until July 29th 2023.

This includes the most special of occasions: the opening game of the FIFA Women’s World Cup (*Wāhine O Te Ao*) between New Zealand and Norway at Eden Park (Auckland) on July 20. *The Ball* will visit schools, clubs and NGOs in New Zealand and the SOF team will run workshops with women, children, footballers and ethnic and indigenous communities.

The *Spirit of Football* team are the guardians of *The Ball* and New Zealander Andrew Aris, the founder, is accompanying *The Ball* in Aotearoa. Andrew and his team have run 50+ events and workshops since the kick-off in England last year, and have connected with more than 80 partner organisations en route through Europe, North America, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania.

The first person to sign *The Ball* was New Zealand international **Katie Rood**, who plays for Hearts FC in Scotland. She said: "*Everyone loves the World Cup, but if we are to be able to continue playing it in the future, we need collective and urgent climate action. The journey of The Ball from London to New Zealand is an opportunity for football to get its environmental act in order. I am going to take action. Are you?*"

*Spirit of Football’s* Ambassador and Liverpool F.C. manager **Jürgen Klopp** sent this message to the world: "*It is a ball for us all. Be part of our team. Everyone can play. Respect your teammates, your opponents and the environment. One Ball, One World.*"



Filimoni Vosarogo, **Fiji's Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources** said: "We all belong to one ecological system and so we all need to make our little contribution to preserving the one earth we have."

*The Ball's* final destination is Australia (Melbourne, Sydney and Perth) from 30<sup>th</sup> of July to 20<sup>th</sup> of August 2023, reaching the FIFA Women's World Cup final at Sydney Olympic Stadium.

***The Ball's* Schedule in Aotearoa, New Zealand (tbc):**

July 6th Thursday: Fencibles FC, William Green Domain, Howick, East Auckland. Workshop for 25 girls (9 to 12 years old) from 9am to 3:00pm.

July 8th Saturday: Migrant Expo Festival (Claudelands, Hamilton). Pledges and ball signings – 10:30am to 2:30pm (tbc).

July 12th Wednesday: North Shore United FC Holiday Camp (Auckland). Workshop (9am to 3pm).

July 14th Friday: All Blacks Final Training before South Africa Test Match. Meet and greet – statements and pledges from selected All Blacks (time & venue tbc).

July 15th Saturday: Matariki Multicultural Tree Planting Event with Earth Diverse next to the Hamilton Zoo (Hamilton). Fair Play Football session + ball signings and pledges (9:30am - 1:30pm). + All Blacks v South Africa Test Match (Auckland). 7:30pm kick-off

July 17th Monday: Takapuna Grammar School Sports Leaders Workshop (30 kids, Takapuna, Auckland): 1:30pm to 3:30pm @ Takapuna Grammar School, Auckland

July 19th and 20th: Linfield College (Auckland). 2-day sustainability + gender equality workshop with 25 pupils: 9am to 3pm

July 20th Thursday: FIFA World Cup Opening Match New Zealand v Norway - Eden Park (Auckland)

July 21st Friday: Stanhope Rd Primary School (Ellerslie, Auckland). Visit all classes for pledges and signatures + end with full assembly presentation: 9am to 3pm.

July 22nd Saturday: FIFA World Cup match USA v Vietnam (Eden Park, Auckland)

July 24th Monday: Travel Auckland to Wellington (by train - tbc)

July 25th Tuesday: Meeting with Tory Whanau, Mayor of Wellington, at 1pm at Wellington City Council for signature and pledge + FIFA World Cup Match New Zealand v Philippines (Wellington)

July 26th Wednesday: Wellington Girls College (Wellington). Several smaller workshop sessions in classrooms and in the school gym. German Ambassador to New Zealand to attend, sign *The Ball* and make a pledge: 9am to 3:30pm.

July 27th Thursday: Travel Wellington to Auckland

July 28th Friday: Presentation to Auckland Grammar School full assembly: 9am

## Prominent signatories



*Alex Morgan, football legend, signs The Ball in Nashville, USA, and pledges to fight for Gender Equality*



*Joe Rokocoko, rugby legend, signs The Ball in Fiji and pledges to strengthen his community*

## Background, Contact and Further Information

This is *The Ball's* 6th journey to the FIFA World Cup and the first journey to the **FIFA Women's World Cup**. Its previous five journeys all went to the FIFA Men's World Cup. To find out more about those journeys, and the current one, go here: <https://www.theball.tv>

*The Ball* was presented at the **UN Climate Action Hub** in cooperation with the United Nations UNFCCC at **COP 27 in Egypt** in November 2022: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRHtxL5wzjI>

*Spirit of Football* is a **FIFA Foundation** Community Programme-supported organisation. The FIFA Foundation supported *Spirit of Football* to develop and test educational resources focusing on sustainability and football from March to June 2022. The Swedish Postcode Foundation is supporting the project from start to finish.

SOF has been using these resources running workshops and an advocacy campaign on its gender equality, sustainability and climate action tour that began in London in July 2023. *The Ball* is being carried (and kicked) by a team of educators from *Spirit of Football*. *Spirit of Football* is a partner of **Festival 23** - the youth festival being organised by Football United (and Common Goal) in Sydney, Australia in August 2023. Download our education handbook here: <https://the-ball.tv/2022/idea/>

**The US Women's National Football Team (USWNT)** signed *The Ball* and pledged for Gender Equality in February 2023: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMyqk\\_IHlOA&t=11s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMyqk_IHlOA&t=11s)

*The Ball* in New Zealand is being supported by **EarthDiverse** - a nonprofit charitable trust that provides accessible community-based diversity education.

For more information about *The Ball* and the non profit organisation *Spirit of Football* you can visit all of our channels here: <https://linktr.ee/spiritoffootball>

Feel free to **contact** Iris Albullet: [iris@spiritoffootball.de](mailto:iris@spiritoffootball.de) 0273984769 and Andrew Aris: [andrew@spiritoffootball.de](mailto:andrew@spiritoffootball.de) 0274363724