New Zealand has been praised internationally for its success in limiting the spread of the COVID-19 Coronavirus, and this has enabled Modern Pentathlon New Zealand (MPNZ) to continue much of its planned development work in 2020.

MPNZ has demonstrated a commitment to inclusion in its activities, with an 84-year-old taking part in a recent Laser Run event – and scoring five green lights in 14sec. The Federation has also been praised for its contribution to the UIPM Para Sports movement, providing opportunities especially for athletes with a visual impairment.

Having set a goal of enabling access for all to the sport of Modern Pentathlon, MPNZ has created a partnership with the New Zealand branch of Achilles International to ensure para athletes have guides and support.

Para athlete and advisor Shannon Cleave, who is visually impaired and competes internationally in triathlon, said: “The defining moment in any sport’s growth is when it draws and supports athletes from all sectors of the community.”
Modern Pentathlon is global and the next logical step is to include para-athletes, to unite and inspire the world.

New Zealand currently has one senior female athlete who competes in all five disciplines, as well as several who compete in events ranging from Laser Run to Tetrathlon.

MPNZ President Kaewruethai Collings said: “It takes a lot of trust from para-athletes to enable us to guide and set them up as role models for people living with disabilities, to show that they can be included against able-bodied athletes. The support in New Zealand has been fantastic and we are going from strength to strength.

While there have been challenges for each event and competition, the country continues to move forward in this space. We would be happy to offer advice to other National Federations looking to develop their para-sport offering.”

Kitty Chiller, President of the Oceania Modern Pentathlon Confederation, added: “Modern Pentathlon New Zealand does an amazing job in integrating para athletes into all their activities. I have seen these athletes compete and it is wonderful. Andrew and Kaewruethai are very committed to this and this really sets them apart as an inclusive, innovative and forward thinking federation.”