
President's Report 2023



APRIL 2023

Climbing New Zealand
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Climbing New Zealand AGM 2023

President Report

This report is covering the period through to March 2023, including the end of the 2021/22 season, which ran through until May 2022 due to Covid delays.

The last 12 months has seen a more normal climbing events season, however not without its challenges.

We closed out the 21/22 season with the La Sportiva Lead and Para-climbing Championships in early May at Extreme Edge Panmure, with Tom Waldin and Cirrus Tan crowned Lead Champions for the season. Being two months delayed this put pressures on the selection processes for the international season.

Post this event we selected athletes to compete at the Australian Youth Championships in June (with a short turnaround) and also organized a selection event to support the selection of athletes to compete at the IFSC Youth World Championships in Dallas, Texas, USA.

We selected 16 athletes to compete in Australia and had several strong performances with 1st place performances from Rebecca Hounsell (bouldering), Julian David (speed), Jamie Birchler (speed and lead). Thanks to Chris Warburton for supporting the team.

In a first for Climbing New Zealand, we sent a Team of athletes to the FISU World University Climbing Championships held in Innsbruck, Austria, June 2022. Three athletes competed in Bouldering and Lead with two athletes going very close to make semi finals, Phoebe Kenderdine a single “plus” short in Lead and Tom Waldin a single zone short in bouldering, after securing 4 tops. It was a great experience for the athletes and we hope to have a bigger team representing us at this event in 2024.

The early season of IFSC events also resulted in a special milestone for New Zealand climbing with Rachel Maia being awarded our very first IFSC World Cup medal, a silver

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in the AL2 Para-climbing category at the Para-climbing World Cup in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. Rachel then had to battle through illness over the following season events in Europe but ended the season with two more finals and two 4th places. For her amazing achievements we nominated Rachel for a Halberg Award at the end of 2022.

A team of 12 athletes set off to Dallas, Texas in August to compete at the IFSC Youth World Championships. Only one athlete had had previous experience at this level, so it was a big learning curve for all.

Valuable experience was gained by all from the event and from the climbing and training in the high quality gyms in Texas. In the competition, Oskar Wolff's performance in the bouldering was the highlight with him achieving 2 tops and 29th place overall. The team had several top 40 finishes in Lead and Bouldering which was credible. Our speed climbers also delivered good results with new NZ records set. Thanks to all who supported to make this trip happen and a big thanks to Chris Warburton and George Sanders for their leadership and support for the athletes.

We were pleased to see the return of the New Zealand Secondary School Climbing Championship event in 2022. BOPSCA hosted and supported the event for CNZ and there was strong support from the schools. We also welcomed new sponsorship and broadcaster to this event, negotiated by Rob Waddell and Associates. Maori TV came in to support the broadcasting with a range of sponsorship partners, Ka Pai to Whakaata Maori.

The 2022/23 kicked off with the La Sportiva Open Bouldering Championships held at BoulderCo's fantastic new facility in West Auckland. Oskar Wolff produced a masterclass of climbing in the final to be crowned male Open Champion. Amanda Speed was our Female Champion in a closely contested final.

In between times, 22 athletes headed off to Noumea, New Caledonia to the Noumea Open which was organized after the original plan for an Oceania Championship event had to be cancelled after New Caledonia withdrew from its IFSC association and OCSC

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membership. The loss of the Oceania event was really disappointing. Those who did make it to Noumea were treated to great hospitality and a fun competition. It was great to reconnect with the New Caledonian community for the first time since 2017.

In December the La Sportiva Youth and Masters Bouldering Championships were held at Uprising in Christchurch. A record number of athletes (over 140) plus a new format for qualifiers made for entertaining and sometimes chaotic qualification rounds, and some strong finals fields and close results.

The new year started with the La Sportiva National Speed Championships held at Blake Park, Mount Maunganui in early February 2023. We dodge the rain and the sun came out along with some new national records!

Our Champions were:

Open Female: Sarah Tetzlaff – new national record 10.11

Open Male: Julian David – new national record 6.58

Another 6 national records were set across the categories.

A big thanks to BOPSCA for making their facility available and for hosting and supporting the event.

We finished the season with a return to the South Island this time to the YMCA Adventure Centre in Christchurch for the La Sportiva Lead and Para-climbing Championships. It was a challenge to organize such a big event in a relatively small facility, but huge credit to the setters in making it all work. Teenagers Enzo Murray and Rebecca Hounsell were crowned Open Champions for the season, both very impressive in their final climbs, and Rachel Maia won the AL2 Para-climbing category.

During the year I had several opportunities to interact with the climbing community seeking understanding about their organisations and also to promote what Climbing New Zealand is all about. Highlights included attending the Auckland Sport Climbing

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Club workshop, and interacting with the New Zealand Alpine Club and Aotearoa Climbing Access Trust. While it is early days with these relationships there is a very positive intent to explore the opportunities to work together more effectively going forward.

To support Climbing New Zealand's future growth and development we continued to work up a new constitution. The new constitution has been drafted to meet the needs of newly legislated Charities Act.

A new mission and enabling activities was agreed with clubs and signed off by the CNZ committee.

Despite significant cost head winds, overall we had a positive financial year in 2022. This was possible through solid sponsorship revenues, good participation numbers, as well as some success with funding for venue hires.

We commenced a review of our cost models for memberships, athlete licences and event registrations. This work needs to be prioritised as we head into 2023. We recognize the need to simplify the costing model to provide simpler administration processes and transparency for clubs and climbers.

The CNZ committee has recognized the need for some paid support to sustain and improve the organisation's operations and event management. We will need to secure funding to enable a paid role to be sustained in the longer term.

Thanks to our key sponsor La Sportiva, who have provided amazing support this season, including support for all our podium prizes. A big thanks to the team at Mountain Adventures for being great to work with and attending and supporting all our events. Thanks to the ongoing sponsorship from RAB, The North Face and Black Diamond.

The Speed Climbing Squad has had significant success this year, and has attracted additional support for High Performance Sport New Zealand, both in direct funding and indirectly with some of HPSNZ's best supporting the programme with their skills and guidance. Rob Moore has been awarded for his work and dedication to the programme with an HPSNZ Prime Minister's scholarship. Congratulations Rob!

Overall the programme is travelling very well against its plan and a significant international event programme is planned for 2023, starting at the IFSC World Cup in Korea in April and including the IFSC World Championships in Bern, plus additional World Cups in Europe. We wish the team well for their big season ahead.

In support of the HPSNZ programme, Climbing New Zealand secured additional funds to support athlete integrity and athlete welfare. This allow us to help athletes travelling internationally by ensuring they were appropriately supported.

With the HPSNZ programme and climbing now an Olympic Sport, we have been more engaged with Drug Free Sport NZ, and they have attended and drug tested athletes at two of our events in the 2022 / 2023 season. We need to continue to raise the awareness of drug-free sport and our obligations to our athletes.

To support the development of the sport in New Zealand, we invested into route setting, initially running two training workshops. The first workshop supported the setting for the La Sportiva Open Bouldering Championships where international setter Pierre Despagne led the setting and provided the setters with new ways to plan and work together to provide good outcomes. This training was followed with a setting workshop targeting gym setters for a day post the competition. Both workshops were highly successful and received great feedback. Thanks to Wiz Fineron for stepping up and leading this initiative to start building our route setting capabilities. We know we still have work to do but this was a great step forward.

Event planning and organizing has been a major challenge over the past 12 months. Across all the events, a big thanks for Shane Death, Sabrina Street, Kim David, Matt Darnborough, Nelson Lam and Dion Clapperton for acting as CNZ event officials. A very

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special thank you to Dion Clapperton who has gone way beyond all expectations to help to make our event planning and delivery effective.

Thanks too to Peter Lofthouse and Rob Moore for leading the selection processes.

At the grassroots I want to acknowledge those who have continued to provide events last year. Again, the Auckland Sport Climbing Club and their associations ran a successful series of events for the Auckland schools community.

To the CNZ Committee, thank you for everything you do to support Climbing New Zealand and ultimately support our athletes. On the committee thank you for supporting each other and supporting me in my role.

I would like to thank Scott Rees and Chris Warburton, who I know are stepping down from their CNZ roles at this year's AGM.

In the climbing community we have been very fortunate to have had the support of Lisia Grocott and Geoff Jacobsen, who wrote the PIKI system for Climbing New Zealand a number of years ago. As is often the case time catches up with any technology and the existing system was destined for end of life this year. We did a search for a system to replace PIKI and when we came up short, Lisia and Geoff stepped in to re-write it for us to allow the system to be sustained going forward. A huge thank you for their ongoing support.

I also want to acknowledge others outside of the committee who contribute significantly, including Conor Boyd (website and roaming photographer), Chris Gatland (sponsorship), David Sanders, Sarah Hay and Stephane David (Oceania Council). Also I would like to acknowledge Nelson Lam for his guidance, support and training of our judges and climbing officials. Addendum to the report: Additional thanks to John Kerr for completing our annual accounts this year.

To our clubs and communities, thank you for supporting our sport and for all of you who have volunteered your time at events - thank you, we cannot do this without you all.

To our athletes, I trust you have all learnt and grown from your own climbing journeys in 2022 and we look forward to providing opportunities for all in 2023 and beyond. What are your climbing goals?

2023 is a big year with Olympic Qualification opportunities, will we get an athlete or two to Paris 2024? And who is thinking about getting to the Olympics in 2028 for LA28? We end this season with the sport of climbing in good shape in New Zealand and, as ever, there are exciting times ahead.