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| President’s Report 2021 |
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| March 2021  Climbing New Zealand  Authored by: Richard Waldin |

# Climbing New Zealand AGM 2021

## President Report

This report is covering the 2020/21 climbing season up until the completion of the Lead and Para-climbing event in early March 2021.

Twelve months ago I was elected to the role of President in the middle of our level 4 lockdown. David Sanders presided over the meeting from the other side of the world, locked down with his parents in England.

I would like to open by thanking David for his support and council this year and for his years of service and ongoing support. I would also like to acknowledge David’s wife Zil who has played a really significant role in supporting Climbing New Zealand alongside David but also in her own right as Youth Team manager for 2 years.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our lives has been profound, and the challenges continue into 2021.

The first and most significant impact on our climbing community came at the end of March with the postponement of the Oceania Open Combined Championships and Olympic qualifier. This event was eventually rescheduled to the 19th and 20th of December 2020. Despite a significant effort to lobby the IFSC to be more flexible in the timing of this event, we could not get a further delay. This was a massive disappointment for so many. As a result, only 2 of the 19 New Zealand athletes selected for this event were able to attend and compete. Cirrus Tan and Chase Gatland both performed to their best finishing the event on 7th and 6th places respectively. A special mention of Cirrus who travelled from New Zealand to compete then had to endure two weeks in isolation on her return to New Zealand through Xmas and New Year, an amazing effort and sacrifice.

For our domestic events the impacts were most strong felt as to tried to return to normal and run our competitions after the initial lockdown delays. The 11th of August was a pivotal day; we had 110+ registrations for our Lead event and the walls at the Extreme Edge Panmure gym were striped and holds cleaned ready for route-setting to commence the following morning. Auckland went into level 3 lockdown. We cancelled the Lead event, held out to the last minute but also had to cancel the September schools event, followed by the Open Bouldering event. I would like to provide special mention of the support from Jacob and Nico at Extreme Edge Panmure in their efforts to get these events to happen in short timeframes. Also, I appreciate the work of Dion Clapperton, Shane Death, Peter Lofthouse and Ian Hallam and Lara Whiting of Auckland Sports Climbing Club in all the preparation and planning that went into these events.

Climbing at the AIMS games was also a covid-19 casualty in 2020.

We also had to cancel a training camp for our Open Climbers after securing funding and Rob Moore had put a huge effort into the preparation.

For sports in general the covid-19 impacts have been massive. While our own sport has been significantly impacted and our athletes have had their own individual disappointments, Climbing New Zealand with the support of its clubs and community has come through ok.

From late October we were able to return to some normality we organized and run a successful Youth and Masters Bouldering Championship event at Hangdog in Wellington. Thanks to the Hangdog team and the Dynomites club for their support for this event and being up to give it a go in uncertain times. While numbers were down a bit, it was great to come together and be competing again. The setting by the route-setters lead by Pete Lofthouse was excellent and some brilliant climbing was on display. Thanks to our CNZ officials David, Shane and Dion.

In recent weeks we completed our 2020/21 season with our Open Bouldering event in February and Speed and Lead and Para-climbing events in March.

The last two events had record participation with over 70 competitors in the speed event and 128 competitors in the Lead and Para-climbing event.

In the Open Bouldering at Northern Rocks, Tom Waldin retained the Open Male title, with Amanda Speed crowned Female Open champion. Again great route-setting and well organized thanks to Northern Rocks, ASC and the CNZ officials Sabrina, Shane and Dion and the route setting team led by Tyler. The finals fields were both strong but the overall numbers were low and this is an issue for us to try and address in 2021.

The speed event took place on a perfect day at BOPSCA’s fantastic facility at Blake Park in Mount Maunganui. A number of National records were set including Sarah Tetzlaff beating her own record with a new time of 11.146 seconds in Open Female category, and was also crowned female Open Champion. Tom Waldin was the male Open Champion. Several other new records were set including Male and Female Masters and Female Youth D. Thanks for Rob, Shane and the BOPSCA team for making this event such a success.

The Lead and Para-climbing event at the The Wall and Basement Cinema in Rotorua created a fantastic atmosphere and some impressive performances from young and old. Amanda Speed came out on top as Female Open Champion. The Youth climbers dominating in the Open Male field with Henry Booker crowned Male Open Champion in his home gym. The lead up to this event was impacted by Covid-19 restrictions which required some late changes and re-planning. Huge thanks to The Wall and the Rotorua Climbing Club and to our CNZ officials Sabrina, Shane and Dion.

In reflecting on the season it was really exciting to see the new generations of talent flowing through the grades starting with our Youth D’s and seeing very close competition particularly in the Youth B and Youth A grades.

Other key achievements this year included the reshaping of our selection policy and ultimately making the decision to shift our championship season to happen through the spring and summer from September through March each year. A huge thanks to Mike Birchler who led this work on the selection policy changes. We trust that ultimately it will provide a fair and transparency process for all New Zealand Team selections.

There is a massive amount of work that goes onto running Climbing New Zealand. Climbing as a global sport and now an Olympic sport demands a lot from its leaders and I appreciate the support from David Sanders, Sarah Hay and Rob Moore in supporting a number of important national and international relationships.

In bringing our competitions together this year, special thanks to Dion Clapperton and Shane Death who have led the event organization. Dion also led the process for seeking funding from the gaming charities in support of our competitions.

Thanks for Peter Lofthouse who has provided route-setting leadership and was head route setter for our two largest events. It was great to involve some new and returning route-setters this season and I look forward us building a stronger cohort for the future.

Thanks to our two national coaches Peter Lofthouse and Rob Moore for leading the selection processes with the support of **Fabrizio Facchini.** Thanks to Ian Hallam who has done an excellent job as CNZ appointed selection convener.

To the future, there is so much happening in the Sport. The Olympics in Tokyo will showcase the best of the best. In New Zealand the interest in the sport is huge, new Gyms have opened or are planned, and we are seeing some of the regional gaps in our National facilities being filled. We obviously hope to see this complemented by the establishment of new clubs and growth in the interest in the Sport of Climbing.

With para-climbing there is a significant push by the IFSC to progress it’s development and they are working to get para-climbing included in the para-Olympics from 2028.

Climbing New Zealand has work to do to be prepared for this growth, at present our revised Strategic Plan is still in early draft form. As was commented to me, it is really hard to tell people why we are taking certain actions or making certain decisions if we have not communicated our goals and ambitions for our Sport.

If I am re-elected to the president’s role I have two immediate priorities, the first to complete our Strategic Plan, the second to review and refresh our organization’s constitution to be more friendly toward the growth of the sport. Both these important actions will require broad input from our membership and community.

I would like to thank Sarah Hay, Oliver Soar and Amanda Speed who are stepping down from their CNZ roles at this year’s AGM. Sarah remains committed to supporting us through an Oceania role. Oliver has led the process of getting CNZ registered for GST and it has been great to have his safe hands on our Finances.

As Oliver will report Climbing New Zealand did suffer a financial loss in 2020, some of our events have become very expensive to run and we do rely on community charity funding to help balance the books.

Thanks to all of those who served on the management committee for their work this year.

I want to also acknowledge Conor Boyd (website), Chris Gatland (Sponsorship) Rachel Maia (Social Media) Lisia Grocott (PIKI Support), David Sanders (Oceania Council Rep) and Sabrina Street (Competition official and mentor) who all support CNZ outside of the management committee, and to Judah Plester, Conor Boyd and Eddie Fowke who have attended our events showcased our athletes through the lens of their cameras.

Our event sponsors Rab and The North Face continue to provide us with great support in the form of funding contributions and sponsored prizes. Sky Sport Next has added a new dimension to the Sport, and we continue to work with them to improve on the broadcast delivery of our sport.

The year ahead looks really uncertain particularly in relation to international competitions, but there are perhaps some positive signs for later in the year. Thanks to our clubs and supporters for their support and patience this year.

I personally appreciate the input and feedback from so many in the community this year. To those who I have not got to know I look forward to making the connection in the year ahead.