

About Sport Climbing and Climbing New Zealand

Please refer to the About Us page on our website for general background about Sport Climbing and Climbing New Zealand.

<https://www.climbing.nz/about-us/about-our-sport-sport-climbing/>

The Strategy Refresh

Our existing strategic plan covered the period 2016-2019. The strategic plan provided a solid framework for the plan and set some challenging targets in the form of KPIs. The framework is likely to provide a good structure for the revised plan. What was missing however in the previous plan was a translation of strategic objectives down to actual executable actions that could be delivered to each year.

A SWOT analysis to follow provides some reality checks on what we need be aware of and what needs to be overcome to be successful.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

- **We have an established network of clubs that provide grassroots support especially for our youth climbers.**
- **We have a community of passionate and dedicated coaches and parents who are willing to support the sport.**
- **We are now connected with the appropriate sports organisations in New Zealand who are tasked with the growth in participation (Sports New Zealand) and tasked to the support of elite athletes (HPSNZ and IOC)**
- **We are a sport with a growing profile and it is an Olympic sport.**
- **We have had some success in para-climbing internationally.**
- **We have good numbers participating Youth C, B and A climbers.**
- **Climbing at Intermediate and High School is growing with and because of the success of AIMS games and Secondary School events.**

Weaknesses

- **We don't currently have current development plans (Strategic Plan) for the sport that can articulate to all stakeholders our aims and aspirations.**
- **NZ has limited climbing facilities with some regions missing out at present. Our club structure does not yet cover all regions.**
- **We lose over 80% of our competition climbers after they leave school.**
- **We currently don't have a professional or semi-professional athlete mindset, nor the structures and programmes to support.**
- **Climbing is spread throughout the country, this makes it challenging to bring elite athletes together for development and coaching and to develop a strong team culture.**

- **We don't have effective development support for our coaches, route-setters and officials.**

Opportunities

- **New facilities are being developed or considered around New Zealand, this will see grow in climber numbers and is likely to see new climbing clubs emerge.**
- **New Zealand has a broad base of recreational climbers across a broad age range throughout NZ who have an interest in competitive climbing.**
- **Sport New Zealand's Strategic direction aligns well with climbing as a sport and recreation (that can be a lifelong activity)**
- **Climbing has a growing international profile, increases in facilities and participation as a recreation is significant.**
- **Olympic inclusion has immediate promotional impact.**

Threats

- **Youth have many choices as to how they use their leisure time, sporting or otherwise.**
- **Climbers opt for the recreation over the sport.**
- **We have too much of the CNZ operations and climbing expertise sitting with a small number of people, we risk burning people out.**
- **We lack good internal processes and data within CNZ to support a growing sport.**

High performance sport

New Zealand has a long history of success in a range of sporting disciplines. At the very top end of some sports we have fully paid professionals, however many sports support their top elite athletes through the competitive and targeted Government funding administered through HPSNZ and individual sport NSOs. Many sports without elite and supported athletes rely on a range of support from sponsors, philanthropy, family as well as significant individual sacrifice from the athletes themselves.

No matter how they are funded or supported, all sports striving to make elite status have very structured high-performance programmes to which their leading and aspiring athletes sign up to.

For Sport Climbing to be considered for future high-performance support we need to have clear intentions and plans to establish and operate high-performance programmes.

Coaching, route-setting and athlete support

Route setting

We are very aware that our pool of expertise supporting the competition side of the sport is limited.

We have been taking steps to expand our route-setting pool, but we lack depth in experience particularly in the lead route-setter role.

Coaching

We have been relying on the expertise and efforts of a small group of coaches to support CNZ Teams in recent years. Rob Moore and Pete Lofthouse have shouldered most of the work. With Rob Moore stepping down from his role of Opens coach it is timely to reconsider and potentially reset how we provide the best possible support for our climbers, particularly those with the aspiration to develop as elite athletes.

Event Officials

While we have been well supported with many volunteer judges and helpers, CNZ only has a limited number of people able to act in key event management roles. We do not have any formal training for our judges.

Climbing New Zealand Management

Climbing New Zealand is overseen by a Management Committee as described early. Further the sport is supported by additional roles of national selectors (3), selection convenor, National Open Coach, National Youth Coach, and New Zealand Team Manager. Most of these roles are filled from within the Management Committee.

We are supported by several other roles from the wider community providing Sponsorship Management, Website Administration, PIKI event software support.

We have a member of the management committee providing funding applications support.

Two past members of the CNZ Management Committee provide New Zealand representation on the Oceania Council for Sport Climbing (OCSC)

Currently we have no fully or partially funded roles.

Actual event organisation, event officials and event route-setters are sourced from the broader climbing community. Local club members and gym owners and the wider climbing community also play important roles in supporting successful event delivery.

Gyms are compensated for their costs, officials and route-setters are provided with small “contributory” payments for their efforts.

Financial and Organisational Sustainability

In recent years CNZ has been able to make small regular profits from its activities which does mean that we have a solid bank balance. Our annual fixed costs are modest and can be covered by the base contributions from our clubs. We have no significant assets to maintain.

Our clubs do vary significantly in size and memberships therefore smaller clubs with low competitor numbers are paying significantly more through their club subscriptions per athlete than the larger clubs. A review of the membership model has been requested and is underway.

Event costs have been rising and would become unsustainable if it wasn't for funding support that we have been able to secure from charitable gaming trusts on a regular basis.

With this support and incoming from entry fees, athlete licenses and solid event sponsorship we are able to break even at worst across the National events each year.

We have not increased entry costs for at least 5 years, so do have some leeway to increase entry fees.

Even though we have maintained our financial viability and a healthy bank balance, costs are a major obstacle to the Sport's development.

We have not reinvested back into the sport in any significant way.

We rely heavily on our volunteers to deliver the events and provide support to our athletes and national teams. We are at risk of burning out these key contributors in our coaches, administrators and organisers.

If our aspirations for the sport are to be fulfilled, we must find pathways to create sustainable support for those who lead the sport's future.

Efficiency and effective operations and governance

Part of the solution to supporting our key contributor is to be efficient in CNZ operations. One barrier to being efficient is having the time and toolsets to achieve and maintain an efficient organisation. We still have an "organisational deficient" to overcome.

Our focus as a management committee has been on operations – getting from event to event, working through the range of issues that require the committee's attention and often just in time. Partly some of the challenge has been driven by the growth of the sport and greater demand on the organisation to meet new commitments and develop and maintain new relationships.

In the last few years, the Olympics opportunity has required new focus, new accountabilities and new relationships to be developed and maintained. The SkySport opportunity also took a significant effort to understand, establish and another dimension to integrate into our event organisation.

Relationships and Partnerships

While Climbing New Zealand has a clear purpose in relation to Sport Climbing (“the sport”), it exists as part of a very rich and enthusiastic climbing community. Those that support and advocate for outdoor climbing are not our competition but should be seen as our partners.

The success of “the sport” has huge benefits to the whole climbing community, but it will take broad community support for “the sport” to flourish.

The commercial climbing community is important to the sport, as the existence and the growth of competitive climbing should be beneficial to those commercial facilities. The growth in the number and regional spread of climbing facilities is a really positive development for climbing generally and for Climbing New Zealand. We need to work together for the benefit of the whole.