



Strategic Plan 2006-2009

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1 Introduction

This Strategic Plan covers the period 2006-2009. It sets the broad strategic priorities and directions for Sport Climbing Australia (SCA) for that period. It was approved by the SCA Board in February 2006.

This Plan brings together into one document the consultations engaged in through various mechanisms of SCA. It is draft to the extent that further consultations are planned regarding specific strategies and their implementation during 2006.

This Plan performs a number of functions:

- Signals the directions of Sport Climbing Australia to all those interested in the sport of climbing;
- Identifies those areas which need particular attention during 2006-2009;
- Guides management and operational planning and decision-making;
- Sets key objectives against which we will report to our members and stakeholders.

The development of this plan has been informed by the Federal Government *Game Plan 2006* document, the Australian Sports Commission *2002-2005 Strategic Plan*, and the UIAA Climbing *Preliminary Strategic Plan for Sports Development* (Jan 2005).

2 About Sport Climbing Australia

Sport Climbing Australia Inc. formally came into being in January 2005 following the amalgamation of the Australian Sport Climbing Federation and the Australian Climbing Gyms Association. This was possible as both bodies were incorporated in New South Wales under the NSW Incorporated Associations Act. A third body the Indoor Rock Gyms of Australia, incorporated in Victoria, agreed to support the new peak body.

Sport Climbing Australia is the sole peak body Australia responsible for competition climbing and the development of climbing in artificial climbing environments whether these be indoors or outdoors.

Today climbing in its broadest sense includes mountaineering, rock climbing, bouldering (on natural rock), and various disciplines for climbing on artificial surfaces. The advent of climbing on artificial surfaces facilitated development of the sport of climbing in urban areas and the development of various types of climbing facilities. There are various types of facilities including

- Commercial climbing facilities which operate as for-profit businesses. Some occupy an entire building space whilst some others lease a particular area within a larger sport and recreation facility. There are approximately 30 commercial climbing facilities across Australia;

- Climbing walls operated by non-profit community based organisations. These generally operate within a broader purpose community based facility and have shorter opening hours than commercial facilities;
- Education provider facilities. A significant number of schools and tertiary education providers have some form of climbing facility. These often locate climbing within the broader educational objectives of the particular institution;
- Mobile facilities. These are generally operated as part of a business and provide an introductory climbing experience at a particular event. Competition climbing sometimes utilises temporary walls erected outdoors for that purpose.

Competition climbing, whilst sometimes held outdoors on natural rock, is largely conducted on such artificial walls constructed either indoors or outdoors.

There are currently three internationally recognised disciplines for competition climbing, namely

- Lead (known in Australia as Difficulty)
- Bouldering
- Speed.

Competition climbing exists at a number of levels these being:

- International including world and continental championships for Opens and Youth.
- National
- State & Territory
- Local to regional
- Within particular facilities or schools.

Reflecting worldwide trends competition climbing developed in various Australian states during the 1990's with annual national championships in both bouldering and technical disciplines since 2001. Four states (NSW/ACT, Qld and Tasmania) conduct annual series of 5-7 events whilst in others various specific events are held on a regular basis.

Climbing has been growing as a recreational and leisure option in recent years. By the late 1990's all capital cities in Australia, many regional centres and a growing number of school and community recreation facilities had installed climbing facilities. Whilst the size of the industry is not known precisely the popularity of 'extreme' leisure options ensures growth in the foreseeable future.

Australians have competed at World Cup events since the early 1990's with youth competitors entering our first World Championships in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2004. In 2005 Australians Samantha Berry and James Kassay represented the Oceania Continental region at the World Games in Germany, the first time climbing was included in this elite program. The UIAA (Union Internationale Des Associations D'Alpinisme- International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation) through UIAA Climbing, has been actively pursuing inclusion in the Olympic program, with the current goal of 2012-2016 for realisation. In 2006 UIAA climbing will host an event in timing with the Winter Olympic Games at which Australia has been invited to field two representatives.

In 2005 24 young climbers represented Australia at the UIAA Youth World Championships in Beijing. This competition saw Australia win its first world championship (Libby Hall in Youth B Female Speed). In 2006 six open athletes are expected to compete in one or more UIAA World Cup events with a strong youth team travelling to the World Youth Championships in Austria. Our Open contingent is currently preparing for the 2007 World Championships.

Australia has become a respected member of the international peak body (UIAA) and sent a delegate to the 2005 UIAA General Assembly in Singapore. In late 2006 SCA was invited by the UIAA Executive to nominate for the UIAA Climbing Sport Development Committee which advises on development of the sport internationally. Strong links have been forged with the Asian region, with athletes from each region now invited to attend each others regional events. As a result of this in 2005, 8 youth athletes competed at the Asian Youth Climbing Championships in Hong Kong.

3 Vision

To govern, support and develop the sport of competition climbing in Australia, and to continue as the recognised National peak body for climbing on artificial surfaces.

Our mission is to enrich the lives of Australians through further development of the sport of climbing.

The SCA constitution describes the objects of SCA as:

- (a) the proper organisation and administration of the sport of competition climbing within Australia;
- (b) to support and encourage the further development of climbing in artificial climbing environments;
- (c) to act as the peak body in Australia for the sport of competition climbing in all it's forms, both indoor and outdoor, on artificial surfaces and rock;
- (d) to organise and administer competition climbing events in Australia, including national championships and international events, as may be beneficial to the furtherance of the sport in Australia;
- (e) the encouragement of safe and equitable practices in artificial and competition climbing environments including:
 - a. the avoidance of discrimination;
 - b. the specification or endorsement of standards and operating procedures;
 - c. observing national and international provisions on the use of prohibited substances in sporting competitions.

- (f) the promotion and development of competition climbing and climbing in artificial climbing environments as positive leisure options for members of the Australian public; and
- (g) to liaise and affiliate with other compatible organisations.

4 Critical Opportunities and Challenges

Climbing provides sporting and leisure options which have enormous potential to contribute to the health and wellbeing of Australians. Some particular qualities of climbing as a sport are:

- Whilst being at its essence an individual exercise climbing has historically been undertaken as a mutually supportive exercise between people who share a common goal. Dependence on others for providing safety backup (belaying), and a culture of supporting other competitors is deeply engrained in competition climbing.
- Climbing is particularly popular with those who enjoy the combination of individual challenge and informal social connection. Climbing has particular potential to foster healthy and active lifestyles amongst young people and those who are not attracted to more traditional sports. Indeed there is anecdotal evidence that people who may not excel at ball sports and other hand-eye coordination sports can achieve elite status in climbing due to the different qualities it demands;
- The 'edgy' and 'extreme' image of climbing is accompanied by the high level of safety and low incident level in competition climbing and training.
- Climbing has a long tradition of simultaneous concern for ethics, safety and excellence. The organisation of climbing into a sport allows for these qualities, and debates about their achievement in contemporary contexts, to be explicitly addressed and codified to the extent this is necessary for responsible sports administration.

Given the above the following critical opportunities exist:

- Climbing, particularly climbing on artificial surfaces, can contribute positively to the health and wellbeing of a diversity of Australians at a time when health promoting activity is a central concern of governments;
- Climbing can cater for a wide range of abilities, both males and females, across a wide age span. It can be developed in such a way to be both family friendly and cater for particular social groups and interests;
- There are a large number of climbing walls in Australia operated by schools and community organisations which could play a more articulated role in the development of the sport. This can be complimentary to the contribution and roles of larger commercial

facilities which tend to offer more comprehensive facilities and programs;

- Specifically designed climbing facilities are being incorporated into public spaces in various parts of the world, a development which may be fostered in Australia. Some urban authorities are interested in climbing as part of broader leisure and adventure precincts/ programs /parks within their jurisdictions.
- There is strong interest and capacity within competition climbers to support increased levels of competition, including international participation, and to play a supportive role in sport and athlete development.

5 Governance

As a recently formed national organisation the governance structures and processes of Sport Climbing Australia are still developing. Sport Climbing Australia is incorporated in New South Wales under the NSW Incorporated Associations Act (1984). Figure 5.1 (below) depicts the broad organisational structure of SCA. Key elements already established are:

- An 8 member Board which invites membership from across Australia. In 2006 the SCA Board has members from 4 states and 1 territory;
- SCA is formally recognised by the international peak body for climbing (the UIAA) as the peak body for the sport of climbing in Australia (with attendant voting rights);
- Three Committees provide advice to the Board in the 3 key strategic areas of Competition Climbing, Climbing Facilities and Sport Development. Each is chaired by a member of the Board. All SCA members are invited to express interest in being a member of these committees;
- Portfolios are created in areas of strategic importance to SCA;
- State and Territory structures, accountable to the SCA Board are being developed. The first state sub-committee (Queensland) was endorsed in 2005 and provides a model for other states and territories;
- Policies for effective governance have been developed and are being revised as SCA structures develop. SCA has an endorsed Conflict of Interest Policy, an endorsed SCA Code of Ethics, a draft Member Protection Policy, and an Environmental Plan.
- A variety of communication mechanisms for communicating with members and the climbing public have been developed. These include the SCA website, the SCA newsletter, and regular contributions to the Australian *Rock* magazine; and
- Various limited access and open access on-line discussion forums exist for the Board, for each key Committee and for SCA members and stakeholders.

The Board uses a combination of face to face, email list communications, and internet based meetings to discuss issues, develop policies and make decisions. A number of specific strategies are employed to ensure responsive and accountable decision-making. These include:

- The timing of face to face Board meetings to coincide with National and Oceania climbing events so as to maximise the number of Board members able to attend;
- The increased use of the private SCA web-based Board Discussion Forum for the recording and tracking of Board member concerns and the ongoing development of policies;
- The requirement for all Board members to actively and regularly utilise email communication and the Discussion Forums. The IT Portfolio has as one of its responsibilities the support of Board members in being able to deal with technical and usage difficulties that may arise.
- The inception of formal web-based Board meetings which utilise the SCA Board Discussion Forums. In 2006 these will allow the business of the Board to become more streamlined.
- Regular reporting to the Board in writing by Board officials and portfolio holders.
- Publication of key reports on the SCA website for open access.

SCA has proved effective in gaining a cross section of national representation and attracting SCA members with the appropriate skills to the Board. Decision-making follows well-established conventions for non-profit governance. SCA members are informed of the Boards interests and decisions through the SCA newsletter and the SCA website.

These and other mechanisms provide a foundation for the continued development of effective and accountable governance within SCA as it grows. In the period 2006-2009 the following objectives will be pursued:

Strategy 1

Continued development of Board roles and communication processes so as to deal effectively with an expected increase in the amount and complexity of business. This will include development of an on-line SCA Board Manual which brings together Board orientation information, policies and procedures.

Strategy 2

Development of appropriate liability insurance for Board members.

Strategy 3

Continued development of Australia's participation in the international administration of climbing, particularly through the UIAA and the UIAA Climbing Oceania Council.

Strategy 4

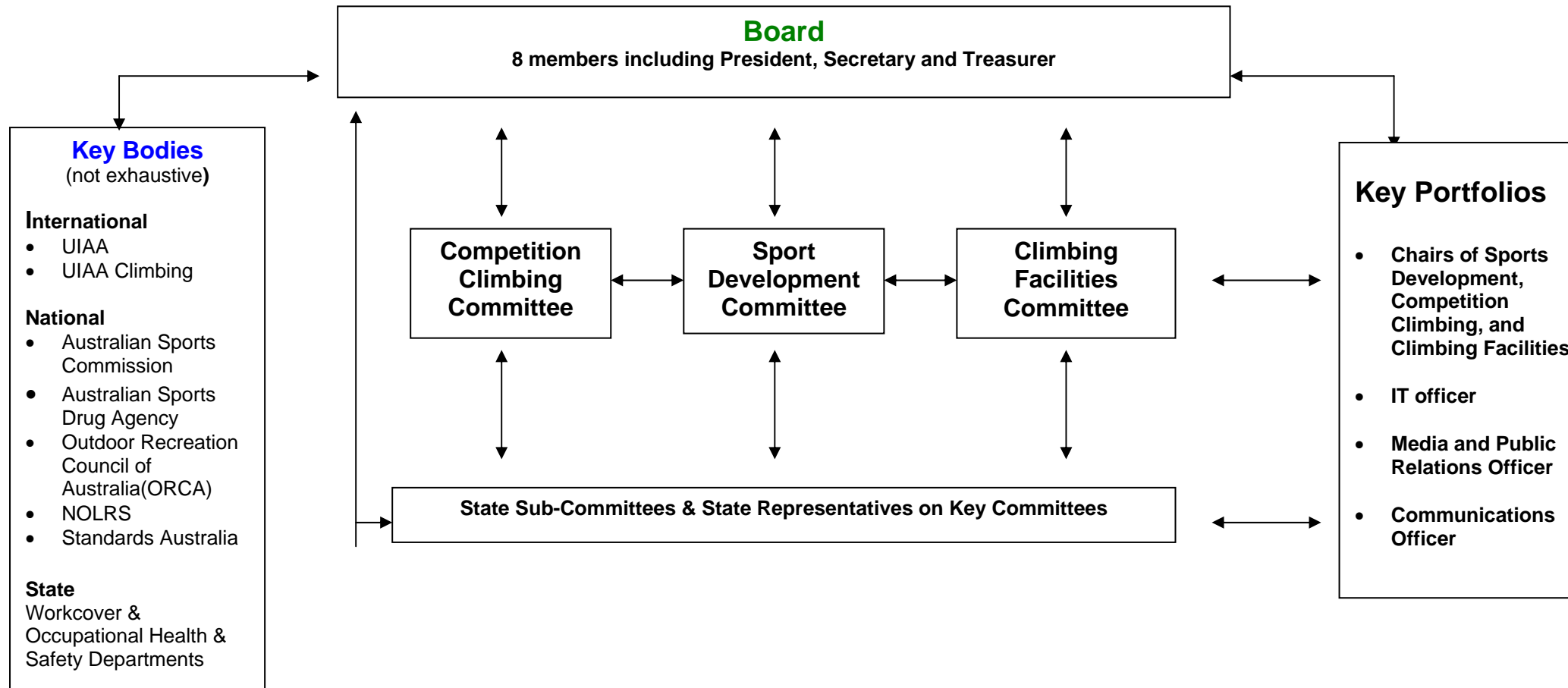
Active involvement of a diversity of membership in key committees and consultation processes.

Strategy 5

Development of effective mechanisms in each state and territory to assist in the delivery of SCA strategies including the development of competition climbing in that state/ territory.

Figure 5.1

Sport Climbing Australia



6 Membership Development

The SCA constitution details 3 types of members, namely Individual, Competition and Facility members. During 2005 the adequacy of these membership categories was discussed and view developed that these should reviewed during 2006. The SCA Membership Policy has been drafted and this will be ready for implementation early in 2006.

Key objectives for 2006-2009 are:

Strategy 6

To implement the SCA Member Protection Policy.

Strategy 7

To review, and amend as appropriate, the categories and costs of membership.

Strategy 8

To significantly increase overall membership numbers each year. An initial target is to triple membership numbers by the conclusion of 2009. In particular to increase the number of school and non-profit facilities which are Climbing Facility members.

Strategy 9

To provide clear information to SCA members regarding the benefits of membership and opportunities available through SCA membership.

7 Sport Development

A necessary corollary to the further development of competition climbing in Australia is the development of various pathways, opportunities, and support structures which will encourage and facilitate the growth of the sport. These are clustered under the following strategic areas:

- 7.1 Growing the grassroots:
 - Growing recreational climbing
 - Local and regional athlete support and development
- 7.2 Officials development
- 7.3 Athlete development
- 7.4 Coaching
- 7.5 Mentoring and peer support

7.1 Growing the grassroots

The rationale for development of a sport rests on the overall benefit sport brings to the Australian community. To this extent development of the sport at the grassroots is not undertaken solely or even largely for the development of elite participation. The sport of climbing has substantial benefits it can bring to a wide variety of people in the Australian community, particularly to young people and young adults. Key objectives for 2006-2009 are:

Strategy 10

To identify and document the benefits of participation in the sport of climbing at local and regional levels.

Strategy 11

To develop and begin to implement a SCA strategy for local and regional development of the sport of climbing. This strategy will identify critical success factors for local and regional development of the sport and will draw on, but not be limited to, a range of other strategies identified in this plan.

7.2 Officials development

In order to deliver an effective competition structure and athlete support network there is a need to ensure that competition officials are sufficiently numerous and competent. Officials refers to the following categories:

- Judges including a Head Judge for each sanctioned event;
- Routesetters, who create and match climbs for a particular level of event and/or category;
- Belayers, for top-rope and lead climbing;
- Scorers, who coordinate the entering and tabulation of scores;
- Event administrators, who coordinate competitor registration, SCA membership; and SCA financial administration;
- First Aid officials, who provide first aid when appropriate.

Strategy 12

To develop and/or endorse standards, and conduct and/or endorse training for judges, routesetters and belayers who are used in SCA sanctioned competition climbing events.

Athlete development

A sport is often judged by the success of its Open Elite athletes at the International level. SCA has the broad objective of Australian climbers being internationally competitive at the highest levels of the sport across all formats.

Strategy 13

Development of a clear strategy for the encouragement, development and administrative support of open elite athletes with the view to maximising their performance at sanctioned International events. Key results should be:

- Increased numbers competing at sanctioned International Open events;
- Improved International rankings for Australian climbers;
- Conduct of camps and clinics oriented to elite level competition;
- Annual review of selection policies.

Strategy 14

Development of a clear strategy for the encouragement, development and administrative support of youth athletes with the view to maximising their performance at sanctioned International events. Key results should be:

- Increased numbers competing at sanctioned International Youth events;
- Improved International rankings for young Australian climbers;
- Conduct of camps and clinics oriented to elite level competition;
- Annual review of selection policies.

Coaching

The development of coaching expertise is an important ingredient in the overall development of the sport, both at local and elite levels. Many climbing facilities have some form of junior climbing group and/or individual instruction available. At the elite level some athletes have coaches who currently do not have access to sport specific accreditation.

Strategy 15

To establish nationally accredited coaching qualifications for the sport of climbing.

Strategy 16

To develop a national coaching program which results in accredited coaches being located in all States and Territories and at all member facilities which offer climbing instruction.

Mentoring and peer support

Climbing has always been characterised by support and encouragement being provided by more experienced climbers to those extending their expertise. This is important to recognise and foster in the structures developed for the sport.

Strategy 17

To develop clear pathways whereby experienced climbers can provide mentoring and support to other climbers. This should begin by developing a strategy for the involvement of current or former Open level competitors with new Open competitors and with climbers in the Youth categories.

8 Competition Climbing

SCA has the role of developing, managing and further developing competition climbing in Australia. Overall SCA seeks to see substantial growth in the numbers of climbers participating in all categories, and at all levels, of competition. SCA has actively engaged with the International administration of competition climbing and further development of this presence is an important element of taking the sport forward in Australia. Of particular significance is Australia's leadership role in forming the Oceania Competition Climbing Council as a formal UIAA Climbing Continental Council. Specific strategies for 2006-2009 are:

Strategy 18

To provide policies and systems for the sanctioning of competitions across all internationally recognized formats.

Strategy 19

To hold SCA sanctioned annual state/ territory championships for each state and territory in Australia in all 3 internationally recognized climbing formats (lead, bouldering and speed).

Strategy 20

To develop a National strategy (with state and territory specific implementation) to encourage and spread competition climbing as a sporting option within schools.

Strategy 21

To raise the level and diversity of sponsorship for competition climbing events through development of an SCA sponsorship policy and an SCA sponsorship team which investigates opportunities and makes recommendations to the Board.

Strategy 22

To see enhanced levels of participation and success by Australian individuals and teams in sanctioned International competitions.

Strategy 23

To promote and apply international and national anti doping codes.

Strategy 24

To hold sanctioned International competitions run according to International rules and regulations. Specifically to host at least one Oceania Championship and one World Cup event during the period of the plan.

Strategy 25

To actively contribute to the International administration of climbing, particularly through SCA involvement in UIAA committees and processes.

Strategy 26

To actively support the international effort for competition climbing to achieve inclusion as an Olympic sport.

9 Climbing Facilities

Climbing facilities form a vital part of making the sport of climbing accessible to the Australian community. It can be expected that there will be continued development in the types of facilities developed and the technologies they utilise. Climbing facilities are also an integral resource in the provision of competition climbing and have an important contribution to make in the development of innovative and sustainable competition.

Strategy 27

To advocate for safe and non-discriminatory standards and practices in all forms of climbing facilities which utilise artificial surfaces. This includes ongoing participation in relevant Government and Industry processes.

Strategy 28

To have an accreditation policy which raises the safety and service standards of climbing facilities and which is subject to regular review.

Strategy 29

To continue to facilitate lower insurance premiums for SCA accredited members.

Strategy 30

To facilitate climbing facilities sharing information, concerns and challenges, and develop appropriate responses to these.

10 Communication and Promotion

The development and maintenance of effective internal and external communications is of critical importance to a national peak body. The role of internet based communication is increasingly central.

Strategy 31

Redevelopment of the SCA website with ongoing review and improvement mechanisms incorporated.

Strategy 32

Development and implementation of a communication strategy which enhances internal and external communication with SCA members and the broader community.

11 Links with Relevant Agencies

As a peak national body SCA represents the sport of climbing to government, industry, and the community. A wide range of organizations, agencies and businesses are important to develop and maintain connection to and communication with. SCA already has substantial links with a range of key industry and government agencies as well as business. For example two Board members of SCA have been members of the Standards Australia group reviewing standards for climbing facilities in Australia. These include:

- Standards Australia;
- Australian Sports Commission;
- Australian Sports Drug Agency;
- Outdoor Recreation Council of Australia (ORCA);
- National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme (NOLRS);
- State Occupational Health & Safety Departments (such as Workcover);
- Leading suppliers of safety, climbing and adventure products.

Strategy 33

To further develop the links of SCA with key identified agencies and businesses to the betterment of the sport of climbing. A register of agencies and key areas of

relationship will be developed so as to allow these to be sustained and further developed as membership of the Board changes over time.

12 Conclusion

This strategic plan will be used to guide SCA operations from 2006-2009. Specific Action Plans exist or will be developed for each strategy. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually as part of the reporting process to the SCA Annual General Meeting.