



**AUSTRALIAN ALPINE CLUB
FALLS CREEK**

AAC FALLS CREEK INC

ABN 77 885 651 266

**Annual
Committee Reports**

**For the year ended
31 December 2020**

Chairperson's report

It feels strange writing my first report as chairperson about a whole year that, not from a lack of effort and will, in the end never happened.

The year started with bush fires raging throughout Victoria and no sooner had a group of athletes from South Australia settled into the lodge for some altitude training when everyone was required to evacuate the village due to the nearby threat of fire. To everyone's relief Falls Creek was unscathed physically but the increased financial cost of insurance is now impacting the club.

Then Covid-19 took hold.

As the landscape of Covid-19 restrictions on travel and accommodation requirements was constantly evolving, the committee decided early into the season to firstly refund monies paid for bookings without question and secondly to set up a sub-committee to wade through the various items of legislation from the Victorian Government and the DHHS that would affect how or when the lodge would be open for members.

After countless hours of work, John Burnett and Jenny Hughes had completed and submitted the clubs extensive 25 page Covid-19 Safe Operating plan as required by Falls Creek Resort Management.

Members will be pleased to read in the Treasurer's (Will Zacharin) report the club continues to still be in a very strong position financially even after a difficult 2020 season. But the constant challenge of covering ever increasing fixed costs that are unavoidable now requires a different approach.

John Burnett's lodge supervisor report will give you an insight into the efforts the committee went to in trying to open the lodge during Covid-19 as well as the clubs pleasure in appointing Julia Mitas as our new lodge manager.

Bookings in 2020 were very stop, start and then unfortunately cancelled with Alan refunding nearly all monies paid. Also, I'm pleased to say that bookings for the coming 2021 season are very strong.

The communications role is now handled by Tony Jordon, and you will read of his efforts in updating the social media platforms the club uses to contact members during winter (White season) as well as marketing the lodge to increase revenue during the summer months (Green season) while the club is less frequented by members.

Despite the poor year Lynn Cameron's membership report will show the number of members wishing to leave is at a fairly low level. New memberships last year were very few but there is good interest going into 2021

There is a lot that happens behind the scenes to the benefit of members and the club that goes mostly unnoticed and definitely unrecognised. The IT report by Jenny Hughes shows the club is constantly improving the on line booking system, internet facility and other IT aspects. In a rare secretary report Jenny highlights the changes made to the club's Rules of Association in improving the use of Video conferencing in future AGMs to the benefit of members from interstate and locally who are unable to attend in person.

I would like to say thank you to Andrew, Myra and Reeve Rist, who for the last 10 years have been the club's lodge managers. You have always been warm and welcoming with a willingness to help and go above and beyond, so from the members, this and previous committees, thank you.

Thank you to Jenny Noye and Daniel Maj from our accounting firm ProAcct and to my fellow committee members who volunteer a lot of their time to the benefit of AAC Falls Creek

Justin Checcucci

Treasurer's Report 2020

The 2020 calendar year was one of the most difficult and challenging in the history of the Club. After summer bushfires, Falls Creek was then under severe restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, until the resort was eventually closed in late June. All winter bookings were refunded, so the Club received very little revenue during the reporting period (\$8,369).

It was important for the lodge to be up and running for the impending winter season until the resort was closed, so our fixed costs for management, utilities, resort fees, insurance and general maintenance had to continue.

For the reporting period, the Club posted an operating loss of \$95,575 compared to a loss of \$2,480 in 2019. Fortunately, continuing prudent financial management by the Committee resulted in our cash-at-bank at the end of the financial year being \$135,836 down from \$166,824 in the previous year. This was due to a reduction in variable costs, a strong cash balance going forward and some support from the Victorian Government in relation to business support grants (\$20,000).

The biggest cost drivers for the annual budget are the Falls Creek Resort Management fees (\$36,675), insurance (\$23,395) and utilities (\$23,159). With the significant increase in these costs, there is a need for the Committee to review annual revenue, or the Club may end up making an annual loss in future years, with little capacity to fund repairs, general maintenance and capital expenditure.

Unearned income from member subscriptions (late payments) rose from \$15,685 in 2019 to \$24,175 in 2020. It is important that members pay their annual subscriptions during the year and preferably no later than 31 January each year. This debt impacts on our budget and there is a cost in having to pursue late payments. The Committee will be tightening up on management of late payments in 2021.

COVID-19 cleaning costs have already been incurred for the summer period and it is likely these costs will continue in 2021.

Looking forward

The Committee is concerned with the unavoidable increase in fixed costs, particularly insurance and is considering the best way of addressing this, with a view to bringing a proposal to the Annual General Meeting in May 2021.

As I write this report, the Club has experienced heavy early bookings for the winter season, so this may go some way to restoring our financial position.

Will Zacharin

Lodge Supervisor's Report 2020

COVID

- As we entered 2020, COVID dominated our thoughts, lives and impacted the globe over.
- As a Committee, detailed planning commenced in Mid March to endeavour to open the lodge with a Safe Operating Plan for a Winter Season. The Alpine community pulled together to open for the season.
- A COVID SOP was developed and issued to FCRM on the 3rd July 2021 and preparation of the Lodge was implemented on the weekend of the 4th and 5th July 2020.
- Countless hours have been spent on preparing the SOP, to no avail. With the season closing.
- We continued to monitor and prepare for a Green Season operation in some form.
- As the Lodge Supervisor, I would like to thank Jenny Hughes for the countless hours of preparing, reviewing, debating and producing the SOP. Thank you. Thanks to the Sub Committee for their support also during this time.

Lodge Manager

- Further to the events of the 2021 and after 10 years of amazing service, as our Lodge Managers, it is with a very heavy heart, we are saying goodbye to Andrew and Myra.
- We thank them for their years' of service to AAC FC and we have all appreciated the diligence, dedication, early morning breakfasts to keep us fuelled for the season and commitment to AAC FC. They leave the Lodge with the bar set high for others to follow. We all thank you both for your service. Thank you both and wish them well with their future endeavours on the mountain.
- During the later end of 2020, we commence the task of advertising, vetting, interviewing and appointing new Lodge Managers. Thank you to the Lodge Managers Sub Committee for their hours and guidance on the appointment.
- The process has been completed with the appointment of Julia Mitas as our new Lodge Manager.
- We would like to welcome Julia to the AAC FC family and we look forward to the 2021 year ahead.
- Julia is well known on the mountain for her community connections, work ethic and lodge management skills. We look forward to the year ahead and the transition into the roll has proceeded as planned.
- Please ensure you make Julia welcome to the AAC FC. The Committee looks forward to supporting Julia in her new role and we hope you will also support Julia as our New Lodge Manager.

Working Bee 2020

- Due to the prevailing COVID events the Annual Working Bee was cancelled. Andrew Rist carried out priority maintenance. Other tasks have been deferred to 2021.

Capital Expenditure and Maintenance

- Due the financial stress imposed due to COVID, future capital expenditure has been suspended.
- Essential maintenance continues and forward planning continues until more favourable conditions prevail.
- The Committee continues to monitor the FCRM risk assessment of the resort.

John Burnett

Lodge Supervisor

Booking Report 2020

Summer

Bookings were made in January.
Bookings were cancelled, due to Bushfires
Bookings were refunded.

Three Peaks had the only other summer bookings to be able to be honoured before Covid forced us to shut down. Lodge was about two thirds full.

Winter

Bookings were made
Bookings were cancelled, due to Covid.
Bookings were refunded.

Really that is the only thing I can say. They are the facts.

What did happen before we were shutdown was establish a detailed Covid Safe Operating Plan (CSOP). John Burnett, Jenny Hughes with some overseeing from Justin Checcucci brought together a plan that was endorsed by Resort management for its detail. They deserve high praise for the effort they put in.

Due to circumstances, some of the things put into place will remain for 2021(all being well) so if you are able to attend this year, you will be required to follow certain procedures. Nothing we can do about it. Just has to be done for the safety of all in attendance, so if the manager directs you to do things a certain way upon arrival, please follow it or you will be asked to leave.

At the AGM in 2019, it was raised that members and guests wanted better short term access where possible in Winter. We explained in last year's AGM reports how we were enhancing the Waitlist policy in the online system. Due to Covid, we were obviously unable to implement those changes in 2020. 2021 they will be in play.

Our managers Andrew & Myra (Reeve too) have decided to move on. From my point of view with the bookings they have been easy to work with and nothing ever seemed to be too much trouble. It just worked. I can only offer a tremendous thankyou. The effort they have put in has been wonderful. Myra's parents also need applauding for their help at work parties and various other times. I wish them well with their future endeavours.

With Andrew and Myra departing, we welcome our new manager Julia Mitas who comes with big raps so I look forward to working with them.

I must also thank the Committee for all their individual work on their respective roles as well as the extra work due to Covid. They have worked very hard in 2020 and the start of 2021 to try and give you, as members, the best working Lodge they can.

I must also personally thank Jenny Hughes for her diligence in setting up the online system. I just use it, but Jenny irons out the little gremlins that continually pop up from time to time. Just makes my job so much easier.

Jenny Noye at Proacct continues to provide the administrative information I need to complete bookings.
Thanks Jenny.

Booking report is light on Booking details this year for obvious reasons. I only hope I can rectify that this time next year.

Hope you can get up there and enjoy our wonderful facility this winter.

Great Skiing.

Alan Long

Membership and Events

Membership

Welcome new members Ros Chatfield & Hugh James.

Also congratulations to Ian Farrow & Noel Poon, both being credited with Life Memberships.

Apart from that, there was not a lot of movement on the Membership front during 2020.

Membership Summary

Member Category	2019	2020	Changes
Full	220	217	-3
Provisional (part-paid)	0	0	0
Overseas	3	3	0
Under 25	25	25	0
Under 18	15	14	-1
Multiple	5	3	-2
Life	7	9	+2
Wait to Sell	2	4	+2
Total	277	275	-2

New Members

- Ros Chatfield
- Hugh James

Family Transfers

- Oliver Heath to Henry Minson
- Richard Robinson to Michelle Robinson

New Life Members

- Noel Poon
- Ian Farrow

Vale

- Nil

Other Retired Members

- Casey Macrae
- Angela Eland
- Alexander Carew
- Georgia Owen (U18)

Events

The Summer of 2020 was cut short due to the devastating bushfires, and the entire 2020 Winter Season was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Needless to say no ski races were held during 2020.

Next year the Interclub Races will be hosted by Niseko, & held at Perisher on Saturday 4th September 2021.

AAC National @ October 2020

President – Ian Farrow

Treasurer – Wendy Bartel

Secretary – Lynn Cameron
Vice President – Peter Esdale.

A huge Thank You to Noel Poon who, after many years as National President, has stepped down.

As at October 2020, Neither Anton or Perisher has drawn down their new loans of \$75K each.

Anton current loan is \$70K

Niseko current loan is \$180K.

2020 was to celebrate 70 Years since the Ski Tourers Association was formed, (AKA) Australian Alpine Club. Neck buffs have been purchased to commemorate this. There are plenty available for those wishing to purchase any @ \$10.00 each.

Thanks

Lynn Cameron

Communications Report 2020

In a year that started with the evacuation of Falls Creek due to the threat of bushfires, followed by COVID-19 putting an end to the Ski Season, the year 2020 was a challenge for everyone. We trust the AAC Falls Creek website and social media channels made it possible for Members to stay up to date on all the latest news and announcements.

News on the website

If you don't regularly check the AAC Falls Creek website, you could be missing out on Club news and announcements. All Club and Resort news is published on the website and is updated at least monthly, but in the Winter season it is often updated more regularly. Most news articles that are published on the Website are also "pushed" to members via our monthly email Newsletters and also via the Club's Facebook posts.

Looking forward to 2021 we will be working to update many of the images on the website and in time, we will also be giving the Website a renovation with a fresh, new, modern look.

Newsletters

The monthly Newsletter published via e-mail remains our most effective way of reaching Members. There were eleven Newsletters released in 2020 with an average open rate of 62.6%. The peak open rate of 72% occurred with the June Newsletter that featured a COVID-19 update.

Social Media

Facebook and Instagram are popular social media channels preferred by some members and we continue to use these channels as a platform for promoting the lodge to a broader summer audience.

If you're not doing so already, please follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/fallshuette and on Instagram at [#aacfalls](https://instagram.com/aacfalls).

Summer Marketing

Despite the cancellation of all Summer events in 2020, the Club remains focused on growing its Summer patronage from Members, Guests and Summer Associates going forward. We intend to continue our listing in the Tourism North East Ride High Country Guide as well as continuing our membership of the Falls Creek Chamber Of Commerce which provides us strong summer booking enquiries for major events through Falls Creek Central Reservations.

The club was also accepted as an accommodation partner with Blue Dirt's Ignition MTB event for November 2020, however given COVID-19 restrictions at that time, the event had to be cancelled. We will continue discussions with Blue Dirt to re-establish our partnership for the 2021 event.

A huge thanks to Jenny Hughes for caretaking the Communications role for the first half of 2020 and to all members who have contributed to our Facebook and Instagram accounts, particularly John Burnett, Lyn and Mel Cameron and Myra (and Reeve!) Rist.

Tony Jordan

Communications

Secretary & Information Technology Report 2020

Information Technology

Lodge Internet

With the lodge closed, there was little attention given to the lodge internet until late in the year. For some years the Telstra ADSL2 service in the village has been inadequate to meet peak demand. The location of the lodge at the end of a long cable run has not helped. Unfortunately there were no plans to bring NBN to the village. In 2019 some commercial lodges engaged an alternative network supplier to install high speed broadband. While technically very good, pricing was not appropriate for the club. There was talk of some more affordable plans in future.

Late in 2020 that network supplier introduced club plans, with a significant discount on set up fees. The committee decided to take up that offer with installation to occur early in 2021. This should also include a TV feed – no more need to clear snow from the satellite dish.

The games room TV has built-in Netflix and a few other apps. It also has built-in Chromecast so you can use this to cast many apps from your phone or other device to the big screen.

Booking System

Alan Long has covered this in the Booking Officer's report. There were a few tweaks to take advantage of new features in the system but no major changes.

Members of the other AAC lodges (except Niseko) have been able to log in to make bookings at Falls Creek. For 2021 Falls Creek members should be able to book in to all the other Australian lodges. Niseko hope to be added in 2021. If you are booking for more than 1 member, that member will need to have connected to the other lodge's booking system first. It's an annoying shortcoming of the system which we hope will be addressed in the future.

Data from the booking system was also extracted and summarised in support of our applications for bushfire and covid relief grants.

New Communications Officer

Unfortunately we received little response to the call for a member to join the committee and take on the communications role. I am very pleased that existing committee member Tony Jordan has now been able to take on the role. You will have been enjoying his posts and newsletters for some months now. I will be supporting him with some the underlying systems.

New logos

You may have noticed new club logos and letterheads. Some time ago AAC National had a package of new logos designed, modernising the snowflake on dark blue. These have been tweaked for Falls Creek and are being gradually introduced to our documents and on-line systems.

National IT

As usual I prepared the national booking information. This is now provided primarily as online information, although it can be downloaded in printable form.

After a suggestion from the provider of the booking system, National has decided to support more coordination between the clubs regarding the booking system and other IT. Ray Thornhill from Dinner Plain and I will attempt to provide this.

Secretary

We don't normally report on secretarial matters in these reports as they tend to be quite mundane. However, 2020 turned out to be a very busy year for secretarial projects, largely supporting other committee members.

Covid related

A major activity was assisting the Lodge Supervisor with the Covid Safe Operating Plan and other covid related matters. This was a particularly time-consuming and frustrating project. Government bodies were very slow to provide guidance and rules for us to follow. Perhaps unsurprisingly, shared accommodation was fairly low on their priority list. This meant that our plans were constantly evolving in the months leading up to our targeted opening in July. We strove to keep members up to date on the changing situation but unfortunately sometimes it was too murky to have much useful information to convey.

After the disappointment of the cancelled ski season, we were keen to open the lodge for summer. Once again government advice for shared accommodation was slow to be published. When clear government advice was provided in December, the plan was significantly revised and was in place in time to reopen the lodge in early January.

General Meetings & Rules of Association

Covid restrictions meant that our normal AGM could not be held in May. The regulatory body granted a 3 month extension, but it became clear that we would still not be able to meet in person. At first glance, holding the AGM via video conference looked fairly straightforward. It turned out to be rather more complex as we made sure that the AGM provisions in the constitution (formally known as the Rules of Association) were respected. In the end it ran very smoothly, including a ballot to elect the committee.

An advantage of the videoconference AGM was that members could attend who had never previously been able to, including interstate members. The committee intends using videoconference for AGMs in future. Preferably this will be in combination with a physical meeting, but not until the pandemic eases.

While the constitution explicitly allowed for members to participate via technology rather than in person, some of the provisions didn't cater well for remote participation. The committee decided to revise the Rules to make it clearer how general meetings could be run using videoconference or other technology. Revisions will be drafted and put to a videoconference Special General Meeting.

Lodge Manager Recruitment

A sub-committee was given the task of recruiting a new lodge manager. As well as the normal recruitment activities, there was a review of the duties and expectations of a new appointee.

Looking forward into 2021

Thank you to the members who attended the Special General Meeting and approved the changes to the Rules of Association. They have been lodged with Consumer Affairs Victoria and will be in place for this AGM. I am also very happy to welcome Julia as our new Lodge Manager.

Thanks to all the committee members, Andrew & Myra Rist, Jennifer Noye at ProAcct and Nik Dow at CBDWEB for their help and support throughout the year.

Jenny Hughes

Secretary & IT