



**AUSTRALIAN ALPINE CLUB
FALLS CREEK**

AAC FALLS CREEK INC

ABN 77 885 651 266

**Annual
Committee Reports**

**For the year ended
31 December 2021**

Chairperson's report

I am looking forward to welcoming members to the first AAC Falls Creek combined in person and live streamed AGM.

With another year of living with Covid-19 in the community came another year of issues for the club to deal with and adjust to. Government rules and regulations in some cases changed on a weekly basis with very limited if any, written information or guidelines to assist in the operation of our type of club, many hours were spent speaking to the Covid hotline to seek clarification. With each State having different rules, what used to be a simple process turned into a never-ending list of checks and balances for each booking. Do you live in the right post code to travel? Do you reside in the same house? Proof of vaccination before entering the resort and for staying the lodge, daily QR check in, are you required to quarantine after being Victoria? the list went on but, in the end, the Victorian Government's regulations forced Vale Resorts position and ski lifts were turned off and the resort closed.

Apart from Covid-19 one of the biggest concerns that carried over from 2020 was the Geotechnical work planned for 2021 and the anticipated financial contribution required by the Club from Falls Creek Resort Management. Finally, a meeting was held in March 2022 to confirm that FCRM will install two new retaining walls in front the lodge and at no cost to the club.

The Treasurer's report by Will Zacharin will show the club's operating fixed costs increasing, especially insurance, but with a tight budget, prudent control and some Government assistance, the club has weathered what hopefully will be the last of Covid-19 related Resort closures and placed the lodge in a strong financial position for the future, allowing investment back into the club's facilities to the benefit of all.

Tom Harrington, our Lodge Supervisor, reports on the minor maintenance issues we had during a cut off white season, as well as the appointment of Jessica and Craig McAllister as the club's new lodge managers for 2022 and forward.

The recent summers have not helped our summer bookings with Peaks Challenge weekends being the exception. 2022 summer bookings are looking very promising and we continue to pursue more ways of increasing summer usage. Alan Long's Booking report still shows winter bookings are strong.

Even though we had a disrupted season, Communications Manager Tony Jordan was able to keep members informed of Covid-19 changes at the lodge through emailed club newsletters plus multiple Facebook and Instagram posts.

Membership numbers have stayed very consistent over the last few years, with strong interest and take up of new memberships which has added revenue and balanced our wait to sell list as you will read in the membership report by Lynn Cameron.

Behind the scenes our technologies and procedures are always being reviewed and implemented to enhance members' experience with the club, both online and when staying at the lodge. The IT and Secretary report by Jenny Hughes will highlight some of improvements made in 2021.

I would like to thank Julia Mitas. Even though she has decided to depart our AAC family, she certainly made a positive impact with the members in her short time as lodge manager.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all the members who supported the club's processes during another difficult Covid-19 year, Jennifer Noye and Daniel Maj from ProAcct and a personal thank you to my fellow committee members who over the last year have volunteered a great deal of their time to the benefit of all at AAC Falls Creek.

Lastly, I wish everyone a great snow filled winter season. Get to the lodge, have some fun and carve up those runs.

Justin Checcucci
Chair of AAC Falls Creek

Treasurer's Report

The 2021 calendar year was another tough year for the Club, due to continuing COVID-19 restrictions and rolling closure of the resort in July and August.

As usual, our fixed costs for management, utilities, resort fees, insurance and general maintenance had to continue. Insurance costs rose significantly again from \$23,395 in 2020 to \$40,963 in 2021. This was forecast and resulted in the approved \$30 insurance levy agreed at last year's AGM, to offset a proportion of these costs. This levy needs to continue for the foreseeable future, unless insurance premiums can be reduced by government intervention.

For the reporting period, the Club posted an operating loss of \$33,813 compared to a loss of \$95,575 in 2020. Prudent financial management by the Committee and some new memberships, due to retiring members, resulted in our cash-at-bank at the end of the financial year being \$174,622 up from \$135,836 in the previous year. The Committee was reserving a reasonable budget for upgrading of the retaining wall on the Falls Creek Road in front of the lodge, but fortunately Falls Creek Resort Management has advised the Club that no cost will be forthcoming for the major upgrade to the retaining wall. Victorian Government business support grants again assisted to reduce the revenue loss over the winter season (\$45,400).

The biggest cost drivers for the annual budget are the Falls Creek Resort Management fees and rent (\$42,254), insurance (\$40,963), admin (\$25,551) and utilities (\$20,636). These fixed costs continue to rise each year and the Club needs to manage its finances closely to ensure there are capital funds to replace some old assets, such as fridges, dishwasher and the aging heating system, as well as other future structural improvements for the lodge.

The Club joined SLOPES, this year, which is a consortium of ski lodges that looks after the interests of 88 ski lodges in Perisher, Smiggins, Guthega and more recently Falls Creek and Hotham. SLOPES membership has allowed the Club to be considered under new insurance arrangements and for the first time in many years the Club will have 100% cover for bushfires in 2022. It is hoped that this membership will assist with lobbying governments and service providers for better deals in the Alpine Resorts.

As I write this report, it is pleasing to observe that the Club has experienced improved bookings over the summer months in 2021 and 2022 and heavy bookings for the coming winter season. As long as the mountain remains open this winter, projected revenue will bolster the club's financial position for the future.

Will Zacharin
Treasurer

Lodge Supervisor's Report

- This was my first year as Lodge Supervisor

COVID

- As we entered 2021, COVID again dominated our thoughts and lives and impacted the globe over.
- As a committee, detailed planning continued to prepare to open the lodge with a COVIDSafe Plan for a Winter Season. The Alpine community pulled together to open for the season.
- The lodge was kept safe and clean, we had no reports of any covid.
- As the Lodge Supervisor, I would like to thank Jenny Hughes and previous lodge supervisor John Burnett for the countless hours of preparing, reviewing, debating and producing the CovidSafe plan. Thank you.

Lodge Manager

- Julia was appointed manager of the club but this only lasted a year. She had an opportunity to purchase a small coffee shop on the mountain and went with that.
- A period of advertising and selection resulted in the naming of new lodge managers.
- We would like to welcome Jessica and Craig McAllister with their 3 children to the AAC FC family and we look forward to the 2021 year ahead. We are confident that they will quickly fit in with the club and its members and into the mountain community. We look forward to the year ahead and the transition into the role is proceeding as planned.
- Please ensure you make Jessica and Craig welcome to the AAC FC. The Committee looks forward to supporting them in their new role and we hope you will also support them as our new Lodge Managers.

Working Bee 2021

- The 2021 working bee focused on getting back into the club and get things moving again after a year of few visitors.
- The 2022 working bee will also have modest goals: normal run of the mill things to be done and a good chance to consider the larger Expenditure items that are in front of the club, such as sorting out the locker spaces, new fridges, repairs to front of the club.
- We have a strong list of people that keep coming back up to the club working bees, BUT are always looking for extra people who want to help in this important way.

Capital Expenditure and Maintenance

- Capital expenditure has been minimised for the past 2 years. Essential maintenance has continued.
- The most significant items were
 - Repairs to the main fridge
 - First stage of repairs to spa room floor and external wall and prevention of further water damage from external source
 - Installation of stainless steel beam to replace the wooden utensil rail in the kitchen (required by Health Inspector)
 - Installation of defibrillator
 - Replacement of some fire hoses
 - Improvement to spa discharge
- We had good news from the resort management regarding the retainer wall at front of club - it is to be replaced at no cost to the club.
- As the Treasurer covers in his report, the club has weathered the financial aspects of covid quite well and we are very hopeful that 2022 will see normal revenue.
- Capital works can now recommence with a list of possible projects that were suspended

Tom Harrington
Lodge Supervisor

Booking Report

Summer

January and February only had two very small bookings. March had a full Lodge over the 3 Peaks cycle event and the following week a large family Booking. In April we had a full Lodge for Easter, with some smaller family bookings later in the month.

Once we were able to re-open after the Winter season, we had a couple of smaller bookings in early December. Late December (after Christmas) we had an almost full Lodge which followed through into January 2022.

Winter

We had a reasonable opening weekend thanks to a Perisher member. School holidays were well used before light Bookings for the remainder of July. First week of August was race week before Covid forced us to close again for the remainder of the winter season. Bookings for the remainder of the season were cancelled and refunded.

Better than 2020, but far from ideal.

In General

At the 2021 AGM the Committee was asked if it could be made more feasible for singles to have their own room. After much discussion it was decided to try a new policy for 2022. This year if a single member wants a room to themselves, they book themselves in as per normal but for the second bed when putting a name against the bed you type in Empty and the system will fill in remaining details. There is a limit of 3 rooms per week for this purpose. So when Empty is typed in, it will show Empty#1 (#2 or #3). If one is not showing it means someone has already used it. In busy times, only rooms 6,7,8 and 11 may be booked in this way.

Our new manager for 2021 has unfortunately decided to move on after an opportunity came up that was too good to refuse. Julia has been wonderful for the short time we have had her. I wish her well in the future.

The Committee have appointed new managers, Jessica and Craig McAllister and their 3 young children will be in residence by the start of the Winter season. I am sure they will be a wonderful addition to our club.

Our Booking system is constantly been updated and minor changes this year have been made for it to be easier to use on phones and tablets. Other technical details are also aimed at making it easier for the user to operate.

On the booking system, I must thank Jenny Hughes for her diligence in keeping me up to date in changes as we move forward.

2021 was a difficult year in many ways, your Committee worked extremely hard to make the Lodge functional, safe (from a Covid point of view) and fiscally strong. I would like to thank them all for their diligence and hard work. Jenny Noye at Proacct I would also like to thank for her assistance to me in providing relevant information for me to complete the bookings.

We got partially through 2021 Winter bookings before being shut down. Let's hope this year everything goes well for a full season

Happy Skiing

Alan Long
Booking Officer

Membership and Events

Membership

Welcome new members Andrew Hines, Peter Lodewijks, Katherine Hanrahan, Oliver Oostermeyer, Philip Rapley, Ned Dixon – U/25, Harry Dixon – U/18.

Retiring Members

Jennifer Bailey, Samuel Heath, Mark Lorenzetti, Lucy Owen, James Wruck.

Vale

Peter Sturt (Multiple Member with Perisher)
Clive Brinsmead

Family Transfers

Susan Whitehead to Holly Mears (Daughter)

New Life Members

Nil

Membership Category Changes

Under 18 to Under 25 - Tess Burnett, Andrea de Jong, Niamh Thorn.

Under 25 to Full Membership - Harrison Cowie, Stefan Greco, Angus Harding, Louisa Kitchin, Charlotte Long, Jacinta Poon.

Member Category	2020	2021
Full	217	222
Overseas	3	3
Under 25	25	23
Under 18	14	11
Multiple	3	4
Life	9	9
Wait to Sell	4	5
Total	275	277

Events

Due to the continual on & off with lockdowns, Metropolitan v Regional v Victoria v All the other states, it was very difficult to arrange anything, or even travel to the ski fields which we all so desperately wished for.

The Queen's Birthday celebrations were cancelled.

Christmas in July was cancelled.

School Holidays went ahead.

Race Week started well until Thursday when Victoria was plunged into yet another snap lockdown. Our Race Captain John Cameron had organised a racecourse on Nastar for the Saturday morning. This was an amazing effort considering the Lift Company didn't even have a Race & Events department this year.

The theme for Race Night was Olympics / Japan to coincide with the Winter Olympics. Maybe we can break out the Chop Sticks & Yukata's next year.

AAC National

- No change to the Committee.
- Anton Huette is working toward a major renovation.
- Perisher Huette is continuing to upgrade their Lodge with window replacements.
- The Interclub Races, hosted by Niseko, but held at Perisher Resort, were cancelled again, this time due to the border closures.
- Next year (2022) the Interclub Races will be hosted by Dinner Plain, but held at Mt Hotham.

Many thanks to Jennifer Noye at Proacct, whose knowledge & dedication to the Club are acknowledged.

Lynn Cameron
Membership & Events

Communications Report

With such a challenging landscape in 2021, communications to our Member base through our website, our newsletters and our social media channels was a vital way of keeping everyone informed. We trust everyone managed to stay up to date on all the latest Club news, COVID restrictions and the key events throughout the Summer and Winter periods.

News on the website

We published 21 articles on the website in 2021, combining News and COVID updates along with Policy updates.

The Club's website was the key information source for all the latest COVID restrictions and will continue to be so in 2022. If you're not checking the website at least monthly, I would advise you to do so, particularly if you've made a booking or if your stay at the Lodge is imminent. A big thanks to Jenny Hughes who maintained the COVID status page all the way through 2021.

With little to no access to the Lodge in 2021 we were unable to update much of our imagery on the website, but with 2022 looking more positive, you should expect to see many of the older images updated with new ones. We are also aiming to begin updating the website template in 2022, to provide a fresher and more contemporary look and feel.

Newsletters

The monthly Newsletter published via e-mail remains our most effective way of reaching Members. Despite no Newsletters in September or October due to Lockdowns, there were still twelve different Newsletters released in 2021. Our average open rate was 58%, slightly down on the open rate in 2020 of 62.6% no doubt a result of widespread Lockdowns through the year.

Social Media

Our Facebook and Instagram community is always growing with 99 Facebook and 138 Instagram followers currently. If you're not doing so already, please follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/fallshuette](https://www.facebook.com/fallshuette) and on Instagram at #aacfalls. And please, continue to add your likes and comments and share our posts with friends.

Summer Marketing

With most 2021 Summer events going ahead and some pent-up demand from Locked down Victorians, the Club benefited from increased patronage last summer. The Club remains focused on growing its Summer patronage and intends continuing our listing in the Tourism North East Ride High Country Guide, and continuing our membership of the Falls Creek Chamber Of Commerce which provides us strong summer booking enquiries through Falls Creek Central Reservations, particularly for Peaks weekend. For 2022 we will update our current photography for our online listing to ensure we're showcasing the best of our Lodge and ensure our rooms are looking their very best.

The club was accepted as an accommodation partner for Blue Dirt's Ignition MTB event for 2021. Despite some initial enquiries, we were not successful in gaining any bookings for the event. The event had very restricted numbers due to Covid, meaning that there was much reduced demand for accommodation. We will continue discussions with Blue Dirt and investigate whether to continue our partnership for 2022.

For 2022 we will be surveying our Member base to identify any Falls Creek Summer events that Members would like the Club to get behind and run as a Club event. For example a Dragon Boat team, a Road Cycling or MTB weekend, or maybe even an altitude training event!

Thank you to everyone who visited our website, read our newsletters and interacted with us on Facebook and Instagram in 2021, I look forward to interacting with you all again in 2022.

Tony Jordan
Communications

Secretary & Information Technology Report

Information Technology

Lodge Internet

The new internet fibre connection was installed in early 2021. It also provides free to air TV signal and the kitchen phone line.

The service is comparable to a household service so we need to take some care to not have too many people using too much data at the same time. Traffic management settings have been used to protect small data transfers like email and simple browsing, and to favour the club TVs. Both club TVs have Chromecast so you can cast from your device to a big screen. The Games Room TV also has some built-in apps including Netflix and Foxtel. Data used by the club TVs, even when casting, does not count against individual allocations.

Two Netflix profiles have been created for the club – one for young children and one for everyone else. Netflix R18+ content has been blocked to prevent easy access by children.

Lower lodge occupancy at the lodge last year did not really stress the system but all indications are that it is a big improvement on the old broadband.

New wifi access points will be installed above Rooms 13 and 14 to improve reception in this blackspot.

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.

The developer of the system has been steadily migrating to a modern software base. Much of this has been invisible to members, but in 2022 some screens will look a little different while still working in much the same way. In particular, there will be an option for a simplified booking matrix on phones and tablets. Unfortunately the software migration brought some instability but this is now seems to be settling down.

Some booking system changes have been made to support the new policy on exclusive use of a room. This means that a member can book themselves into a room without needing to share. This is covered in more detail in the Booking Officer's report.

An unfortunate member from another club had a booking system email criminally intercepted and altered to give false details for payment into a bank account. Please be vigilant when paying any accounts that have arrived by email. This type of fraud is becoming more widespread.

Secretary

2021 was another abnormally busy year on the secretarial front.

Covid arrangements

Keeping up with changing Covid regulations was again a time-consuming and frustrating project. At times it was very difficult and stressful to obtain definitive information from government on how the rules applied to ski lodges with shared facilities. The club website was frequently updated with the most up-to-date information and there were several iterations of the CovidSafe Plan. Many changes were also needed to signs in the lodge to reflect changes such as capacity limits and mask rules.

Thank you to those who could stay in 2021 for your forbearance with changes to lodge operations. Hopefully we will be able to operate more normally by ski season 2022.

Lodge Manager Recruitment

With the appointment of a new lodge manager, the committee reviewed the contract to ensure that it could still meet the club's needs. What started out as a few tweaks turned into a significant rewrite. There was significant work to make sure that the new format preserved the important aspects that the club requires.

Our wonderful new lodge manager Julia has been offered another opportunity that was too good to refuse. While we are happy for her, it is sad for the club to see her go. It also means more work to find another manager and settle them in.

General Meetings & Rules of Association

A Special General Meeting on 13 April 2021 approved changes to the Rules of Association to more explicitly address how AGMs and election of committee could be handled when some members were attending via video conference.

The new Rules were in place for the AGM in May 2021. Covid restrictions meant that once again the AGM was held via Zoom. The committee was pleased that Zoom has enabled a broader range of members to attend. When face to face AGMs are possible again, the committee intends to provide for video conference attendance as well as in person presence.

Thanks to all the committee members, Julia Mitas, Jennifer Noye at ProAcct and Nik Dow at CBDWEB for their help and support throughout the year. Special thanks to John Burnett who worked tirelessly on these complex matters before needing to step down.

Jenny Hughes
Secretary & IT