



**AUSTRALIAN ALPINE CLUB
FALLS CREEK**

AAC FALLS CREEK INC

ABN 77 885 651 266

**Annual
Committee Reports**

**For the year ended
31 December 2022**

Chairperson's report

I am looking forward to welcoming members to our second combined AGM, at the Royal Brighton Yacht Club and via Zoom.

2022 saw the club open for the last part of summer and a full winter season after a couple of years of Covid-19 closures.

Summer events at Falls Creek are growing in popularity and slowly starting to show with bookings over the green season increasing and the lodge being fully booked for the 3 Peaks weekend.

Members will be pleased to read in Treasurer Will Zacharin's report that the club continues to be in a very strong financial position heading into 2023 and beyond even with ever increasing operating costs. Insurance is still being the biggest expense but our cover has improved. With the club's strong financial position, we plan to resume investing back into the club with plans for some renovations, internal and external, and moving towards more energy efficient equipment to help contain the ongoing running costs.

Tom Harrington, our lodge supervisor's, report will give you a snap shot into what maintenance issues we had during 2022 and touches on planned future works.

With the lifting of Covid -19 restrictions and with some resorts still closed to international travellers, members were itching to hit the slopes. The demand for accommodation was high from the opening weekend to the end of the season as highlighted in Alan Long's booking report. (A very busy year for Alan)

The membership report by Lynn Cameron shows interest in joining what I like to call "our little ski club on the hill" is still very strong with our membership numbers staying consistently around the 280 mark in total. Even though the weather wasn't the best Race Week was enjoyed by all.

Communication to our members is mainly via the club's website and newsletters and these are the best way for members to stay in touch with what's happening at the club. The Communication report by Tony Jordan highlights the challenge of keeping members informed. Thankfully Tony's efforts are being rewarded with increased social media numbers newsletter interaction.

Jenny Hughes, the club's Secretary and IT officer, looks after a lot the behind the scenes. This is work that members don't necessarily notice but has an effect of how they interact with the club. Whether it is via the website, internet, booking system, AGM documents, club rules, regulations and compliances, Jenny keeps it running smoothly.

We welcomed new lodge managers Jess and Craig McAllister and family to our club at the 2022 working bee and for first time lodge managers they handled everything that was thrown at them - from their own Covid infections, members' infections and fully booked season, they still made the club a warm and welcoming place to all members and guests. And I'm pleased to say they are back again for 2023.

Lastly thank you to Jenny Noye and Daniel Maj from our accounting firm ProAcct and to my fellow committee members Will, Jenny, Alan, Tom, Lynn, Tony, and Hugh who volunteer a lot of their time to the benefit of AAC Falls Creek, thank you.

Justin Checcucci
Chair of AAC Falls Creek

Treasurer's Report

The 2022 calendar year was very successful financially for the club. Winter bookings were strong after two years of COVID-19 lockdowns. Unfortunately, due to the landslide and road closure of the Mt Beauty to Falls Creek Road, all of our summer bookings had to be cancelled, as access to the mountain was severely limited. This loss of revenue had only a minor impact on our finances. The good news is the road will be open for the winter season fast approaching.

Our fixed costs continue to increase with insurance costs rising again from \$23,395 in 2020 to \$40,963 in 2021 and \$47,322 in 2022. The insurance levy of \$30 needs to continue for the foreseeable future, unless insurance premiums can be reduced through government intervention. I understand both State and Federal Governments are attempting to address this issue. Notwithstanding these rising costs, the club is in a reasonable financial position.

For the reporting period (1 Jan to 31 Dec 22), the Club posted an operating surplus of \$88,903 compared to a loss of \$33,813 in 2021. Prudent financial management by the Committee, with some new memberships, due to retiring members, resulted in our cash-at-bank at the end of the financial year being \$306,017 up from \$174,622 in the previous year.

The biggest cost drivers for the annual budget are the Falls Creek Resort Management fees and rent (\$44,056), insurance (\$47,322) and utilities (\$26,716). 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 expensive assets, such as the aging heating system, as well as other future structural improvements for the lodge.

The Club joined SLOPES last 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 had 100% cover for bushfires in 2022. This will continue into the future. SLOPES also provides a combined workcover insurance policy for all member lodges.

As I write this report, the Committee and a number of members are planning for the annual working bee in early May. Improvements planned include some new mattresses and bedding, a new BBQ with hood and other minor changes. Let's hope that a change to a El Nino weather pattern results in greater snowfalls this season.

Will Zacharin
Treasurer

Lodge Supervisor's Report

General

The lodge was very busy for the ski season and our busiest green season ever and ran well and efficiently throughout. Everything worked to standard with only two pieces of equipment breaking down. One of the freezers was replaced and the main fridge was fully rebuilt and resealed after the ski season.

Normal wear and tear have made their impact on carpet, walls, running equipment, mattress, and other fittings. We normally have an on-going maintenance programme to replace and update the main items we all use in the club and keep our stays enjoyable. Unfortunately, we have been unable to do any of the upgrades due to covid and a massive landside after the ski season that blocked the road from Mt Beauty. There were a few cases of covid in the club and our safety covid plan was used to contain the spread.

Lodge Manager

- Our 2021 Lodge Manager, Julia Mitas, took the chance to take over the business she previously managed. You can see her at the hole-in-the-wall coffee and snack bar in Slalom Plaza.
- Jess McAllister joined us as the lodge manager, with her husband Craig and their 3 children.
- Jessica and Craig have fitted in well with our members for their first year as managers. Breakfast cooking ran well and the club was in good running order over the season. When issues did arise they were dealt with in good time by Jess and Craig.
- They will be back with us in 2023 for another season on the mountain.

Assistant Lodge Supervisor

- I've also been very happy to have Hugh James join me as Assistant Lodge Supervisor

Working Bee 2022

- The working bee was attended by 14 volunteers to do 2 days of maintenance and organisation of the club ready for the season
- This was the first working bee for Jess and Craig, they provided all the food for the people who attended.
- The 2 days were done well and a lot was achieved across the club rooms.
 - Regular jobs to prepare the lodge for winter
 - A good chance to consider the larger expenditure items that are in front of the club
 - New fridge/freezer
 - Repairs to cladding on the front of the club.
 - Reviewing the locker spaces

Capital Expenditure and Maintenance

- Capital works have been put on hold due to no access to the mountain over the summer period as a landslide stopped reasonable access for maintenance and repairs to the club
- 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. This was meant to happen over the summer of 2022/23 but was held back due to the landside.
- Essential maintenance continues and forward planning continues until more favourable conditions prevail.
- The committee are committed to resuming capital works on the club over the next 12months - hopefully we don't have any more setbacks that are out of our hands. Main items are
 - spa floor
 - games room refresh
 - new boilers for hot water
 - new BBQ
 - new vacuum cleaners

- upgrades in kitchen
- updates, internal and external, including another bedroom, maybe 2

Tom Harrington
Lodge Supervisor

Booking Report

Summer

Post winter season, we looked like we were going to have good summer bookings with really strong bookings for the Ignition event in November and Peaks (in March 2023) not to mention interest in Christmas/New year, for it all to be cancelled due to the landslide causing the road closure from Mt Beauty. Not been a good 2022/23 summer period.

Winter

Wow, what a winter season in 2022. With the Lodge fully open following the lifting of Covid restrictions, and a wonderful snowfall before the season opened meant opening weekend was full. And lifts were OPEN. We even had some mid-June bookings! School holidays were full again with July and August continuing with heavy week and midweek bookings. This flowed into September with Off-peak/late season bookings being incredibly strong.

Our booking guidelines stood up well with our week and midweek keeping things uniform. Short term/waitlisted bookings unfolded at the appropriate time with most getting the requests they wanted. But some weekends in August were so heavily sought that we had more requests than beds. Demand at times for short term was quite staggering. But in the end, we only have so many beds and I sympathise with those that did miss out.

Our managers, Jess and Craig, were kept incredibly busy. Changeovers were still affected by Covid protocols so the workload was heavy. The change to only providing Continental breakfasts on Sundays has been adopted as a general practice to assist managers to complete bedroom changeovers as early as possible for the sake of incoming guests.

Unfortunately, Covid caused a number of people to cancel or cut short bookings at the last minute, which left us with some beds we were unable to fill. We also received word of a number of people testing positive after arriving home. So, Committee were kept busy checking on who and when certain people were in contact with others in the Lodge.

Special COVID cancellation provisions ended after the 2022 ski season.

Looking Forward

Unless government advice changes, the Committee does not envisage that there will need to be special Covid measures in 2023. If they are sick, be it Covid, Flu, Gastro or any other infectious disease, members and guests are expected to consider the well-being of fellow patrons and restrict their movements in common areas such as the kitchen and dining areas. They should consider wearing a mask if they are sick. If new Covid protocols are required, we ask that all staying in the Lodge follow them strictly, for the benefit of everyone.

Jenny Noye has been our contact at Proacct, for administrative purposes for many years. We are saddened to learn that she will be leaving Proacct at the end of March 2023. I cannot thank her enough for her work ethic and diligence over the years in keeping me up to date of the administrative information I need to keep bookings flowing smoothly. Her replacement, Debra Poa, I am sure will keep the information flowing in the same manner.

Thankyou

I wish to thank all the Committee for their support of me and their hard work and diligence in their individual roles. They really do put in for your benefit. Also, Jess and Craig, our managers for their hard work.

Happy Skiing

Alan Long
Booking Officer

Membership and Events Report

Membership

Welcome new members Andrew Bassingthwaighte, William Hutchins, Cameron Evans, Sally Leung, Clementine Oostermeyer U/18, Ethan Howlett U/18.

Retiring Members

Tadeusz Szumlak

Vale

Don Cameron (1st July 1929 – 26th May 2022)

Don was not a foundation member, but he played an integral role helping to establish our club in its current location.

In 1970, Don was 1 of 5 AAC Falls Creek Members who each supplied a \$2,000 bank guarantee to secure funding with the bank, therefore enabling the lodge to be built.

The total build was \$98,000.

That same year Don and Gladys joined their 3 children Lynne, John and Jenny @ \$200 per membership, also to help bolster the club's financial position.

At that point they had never skied.

John and Jenny are still skiing more than 50 years later, and are still active members.

Don passed his Membership onto his Granddaughter Melissa.

Family Transfers

Ros Chatfield to Paul Chatfield (husband)

Clive Brinsmead to Andrew Brinsmead (Son)

Elsbeth Brinsmead to John Brinsmead (Son)

Kim Turner to Fleur Lidgerwood (Daughter)

Anthony Poutsma to Adrianna Poutsma (Daughter)

Gladys Koetsveld to Peter Koetsveld (Son)

New Life Members

Nil

Membership Category Changes

Under 18 to Under 25: Ella Barker, Eliza Jordan

Under 25 to Full Membership: Henry Stogdale, Luisa Greco, Claudia Busetti, Remo Checcucci, Nicholas Farrow, Martin Long, Ben Ormorod.

Member Category	2021	2022
Full	222	218
Overseas	3	4
Under 25	23	23
Under 18	11	11
Multiple	4	3
Life	9	9
Wait to Sell	5	12
Total	277	280

Events

The Queen's Birthday Long Weekend started off with a bang. An amazing weekend of wonderful skiing, with plenty of snow and celebrating

We celebrated Christmas in July with decorations, glühwein and carols

School Holidays were very busy

Club Race

Race Week was fun, with a mixed bag of weather. The course was Father Fosters but on Race Day weather was appalling and all but the serious racers pulled out. Theme for Race Dinner was Commonwealth Games.

Results

Sam Barker Memorial

Ethan Howlett
Jonathon Gerstner Stevens
Reeve Rist

Womens

Mel Cameron
Natasha Poon
Jacinta Poon
Viv Wall
Heidi Fry
Kim Walker
Bronwyn Wruck
Fiona Cowie
Siobhan Barry

Mummy Masters

Viv Wall
Heidi Fry
Kim Walker
Bronwyn Wruck
Fiona Cowie

Mens

Ross Barker
Harry Cowie
Matthew Wall
James Cowie
Tim Cowie
Gerard Gerstner Stevens
William Cowie
Andrew Rist
John Cameron
Peter Howlett
Nigel Cowie

Mens Masters

Ross Barker
Gerard Gerstner Stevens
John Cameron
Peter Howlett
Nigel Cowie

AAC Interclub Races hosted by AAC Dinner Plain – Held at Mt Hotham

Anton (Mt Hotham) won the Roslyn Wesche Memorial Trophy
Falls Creek 2nd

Falls Creek won the Masters Trophy
Anton Mt Hotham 2nd

Leon Smith Presidents Cup Challenge
Ian Mack – Dinner Plain (Race Captain)
John Cameron – Falls Creek (Race Captain)

Special thank you to Jennifer Noye at Proacct. Her knowledge, passion and dedication for AAC Falls Creek has been simply amazing. Sadly, after 23 years Jennifer is no longer with Proacct.

Lynn Cameron
Membership & Events

Communications Report

Once again, 2022 was a challenging year for everyone at Falls Creek, with COVID causing its fair share of issues during Winter and then the road closure effectively cutting most people off from visiting Falls Creek from October until just recently. With such a challenging landscape in 2022, communications to our member base through our website, our newsletters and our social media channels was once again the key method of keeping everyone informed. We trust everyone managed to stay up to date on all the important Club news, COVID restrictions and the cancellation of most, if not all, Summer 2022 events through our channels. Thankfully, the prognosis for 2023 looks much better!

News on the website

The Club's website was again the key information source for all COVID restrictions at the Lodge, which thankfully lifted during Winter. We used the home page as a rolling status page, to provide quick and easy updates on a regular basis and this continued into the Green Season as we worked our way through the issues caused by the road closure.

During the working bee in 2022 Lynn Cameron and Letitia Harrington worked their room styling magic to take updated photos of most of our rooms. We used those new images to update our own website, but also our accommodation listing on the Falls Creek Central Reservations (FCCR) website which provides so much of our summer booking revenue. We will utilise the 2023 Working Bee to capture images of the remaining rooms at which point every room on FCCR will be looking its absolute best.

Newsletters

Our monthly Newsletter published via e-mail remains our most effective way of reaching the majority of our members. There were nine Newsletters released in 2022 and I'm glad to report the open rate averaged 69%, a significant increase to the 2021 rate of 58%, and the 2020 rate of 63%. Thank you to everyone who takes the time to read the Newsletter, we hope it's informative.

Social Media

Our Facebook and Instagram community is always growing with 112 Facebook and 158 Instagram followers currently. If you're not doing so already, please follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/fallshuette and on Instagram at #aacfalls. And please, continue to add your likes and comments and share our posts with friends to increase our reach.

Summer Marketing

The Green Season at the start of 2022 was well attended, and our Lodge benefitted from traditional events like Peaks Challenge and Easter, but also a new Falls Creek event, the Falls Creek Festival in February. 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.

The club was again accepted as an accommodation partner for Blue Dirt's Ignition MTB event for 2022, however due to the Road Closure, the event did not take place. We will continue discussions with Blue Dirt and investigate whether to continue our partnership for 2023.

We have also just recently surveyed 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. We'll update you on those results in a future Newsletter and look to use the results to potentially trial a Club Summer event in 2023 or 2024.

Thank you to everyone who visited our website, read our newsletters, and interacted with us on Facebook and Instagram in 2022, I look forward to interacting with you all again in 2023.

Tony Jordan
Communications

Secretary & Information Technology Report

Information Technology

Lodge Internet

In the busy 2022 winter at the lodge, the fibre connection and new traffic management approach performed very well. No one had to have their access slowed for high usage and we received no complaints of unusably slow service.

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

Booking System

There were no major changes to the booking system. Some members did take advantage of the ability to book exclusive single use of a room. We are planning to allow family members to be registered in the system to make it easier for members to include them in bookings

Website

When AAC websites were initially set up, it was with a budget hosting service in Canada. While adequate in some ways, it has been very frustrating from a support perspective. The AAC Falls Creek website has now been moved to much better supported Australian service

Secretary

2022 was another busy year on the secretarial front.

Covid arrangements

Thankfully Covid restrictions ceased in November. Prior to that, keeping up with changing Covid regulations was again a time-consuming project. Initially it was rather challenging to respond to covid positive cases in the lodge and soon after returning home from the lodge. However, our covid safe plan and procedures worked fairly smoothly.

Thank you to those who stayed in 2022 for your forbearance with changes to lodge operations. We look forward to being able to operate normally in 2023.

Lodge Manager Recruitment

With our 2021 lodge manager taking up an opportunity too good to refuse, there was another recruitment project and settling in of new managers Jess and Craig McAllister.

Thanks to all the committee members, Jess and Craig, and Nik Dow at CBDWEB for their help and support throughout the year. We have been informed that Jenny Noye will be leaving Proacct in March 2023. Her contribution to the smooth running of the club has been immeasurable and she will be very much missed. I thank her for her diligence and efficient support over many years.

Jenny Hughes
Secretary & IT