



**AUSTRALIAN ALPINE CLUB
FALLS CREEK**

AAC FALLS CREEK INC

ABN 77 885 651 266

**Annual
Committee Reports**

**For the year ended
31 December 2023**

Chairperson's report

Hello and welcome to AAC Falls Creek AGM at the Royal Brighton Yacht Club and via Zoom for the 2023 Calendar year.

Due to the landslip the Bogong High Plains Road was closed for the summer period which resulted in the club being shut for any summer works plus loss of revenue from membership bookings and from the Peaks Challenge cycling weekend.

Fortunately, Victoria's Big Build Roads was able to open the Bogong High Plains Road (only one lane) for the winter ski season. The lodge was fully booked for opening weekend and continued with strong bookings through July and August as you will read in Booking Officer Alan Long's report, until mother nature stepped in and stopped the snow falls and eventually forced Vail to close the resort earlier than expected.

Even with the reduced income from summer bookings the club still posted an operating surplus for the calendar year as the Treasurer's report by Will Zacharin expands on the club's strong financial position.

During 2023 there have been a few long-standing members that have played important roles at the club make the tough decision that it's time to put their skis in the rack for the last time. With requests to stay at the lodge one last time after their membership has been sold, it's heart-warming to know how big an impact the club has made on their lives and why membership to AAC Falls Creek is still strong and valued as shown by Lynn Cameron's Membership report.

The role of Lodge supervisor is shared between both Tom Harrington and Hugh James. As per normal there are the odd equipment failures that happen during the season which are taken care of quickly, but most of their hard work is done in the green season with updates to several areas of the lodge as per their report as well as the retraining wall in front of the lodge completed by Falls Creek Resort Management.

Communication Officer Tony Jordan stepped down from the role (and I would like to thank Tony for all his time and effort with us on the committee plus the laughs) Thankfully Jenny Hughes stepped up and fulfilled this position until we convinced Siobhan Barry to join the committee. As we look to improving the ways the club communicates with members via the various online platforms, newsletters still have the most reach.

Jenny Hughes takes care of two roles on the committee that of being the club's Secretary and IT officer. Jenny keeps everything running smoothly behind the scenes, but looking after both roles is very time consuming for a volunteer. So, the club is looking to add a dedicated IT officer to the committee and take the pressure of Jenny's shoulders.

Lodge managers Jess and Craig McAllister have now completed the second year of their contract. With a year under her belt Jess continued from the good work in 2022 keeping members and guest happy and the lodge running smoothly. Jess and Craig will again be the clubs lodge managers for 2024.

Thank you to Debra Poa and Daniel Maj from our accounting firm ProAcct, to the club's membership for trusting the committee with our little lodge on the hill and finally to my fellow committee members Will, Jenny, Alan, Tom, Lynn, Tony, Hugh and Siobhan who volunteer a lot of their time to the benefit of AAC Falls Creek a big thank you from me.

Justin Checcucci
Chair of AAC Falls Creek

Treasurer's Report

The 2023 calendar year was another successful ski season for the club. Winter bookings were again strong, but we had limited summer bookings, due to the road repairs.

However, our fixed costs continue to increase with insurance costs rising again from \$47,322 in 2022 to \$53,421 in 2023. The insurance levy of \$30 needs to continue for the foreseeable future, unless insurance premiums can be reduced through government intervention. It is anticipated that insurance costs will continue to rise, as observed across all sectors of the economy in 2024.

For the reporting period (1 Jan to 31 Dec 23), the Club posted an operating surplus of \$29,413 compared to \$88,903 in 2022. The reduced amount was mainly due to increased expenditure on capital items during 2023, including renovations to a number of rooms and lower bookings compared to the huge activity after COVID in 2022. Cash-at-bank at the end of the financial year was \$297,871 slightly lower than \$306,391 in the previous year.

The strong rebound from COVID and prudent financial management over a number of years has allowed the Club to build up a reasonable cash reserve. A short-term investment account has been established to assist the Club in funding future capital items and to provide a financial buffer against future poor seasons.

The biggest cost drivers for the annual budget are Insurance (\$53,421), Falls Creek Resort Management fees and rent (\$32,649) and Utilities (\$22,113). This means we have to spend around \$110k just to open the door each year.

As I write this report, the Committee and a number of members are planning for the annual working bee in late April. Improvements include more new mattresses and bedding, final repairs to spa floor and a new heater for the sauna and a general deep clean before the winter season. Wishing you knee-deep in powder for 2024.

Will Zacharin

Treasurer

Lodge Supervisor's Report

General

The lodge was very busy for the ski season and the club performed well after our busy working bee. Everything worked to standard - only a problem with one hot water system which was then replaced. We have found that the hydronic boiler system is in need of a full flush and valves are to be replaced over the summer. The system works on a valve system where we rely on members to turn them off when leaving the club. Failure to do that can be very wasteful and I ask that we all do our bit to save energy on the club fuel bill.

Normal wear and tear have happened over the winter and we have planned future painting of halls, bedrooms and bathrooms. Carpets were steamed cleaned by Andrew Rist and they really came up well for the start of the season. This needs to be done every few years. Items purchased were new vacuum cleaners and blinds in the games room

Resort management have begun work on the long-awaited new retaining wall below the lodge. It should be finished early in 2024.

Lodge Manager

- Jess was running the club as our manager on her own for most of the season, and she did a great job.
- The club was kept clean and always looked fresh when people arrived for their stay, no reports to say otherwise.
- Breakfast was always on time and there was a lot more variety to choose through the weeks of stay.
- Jess always is putting up social media posts from around the resort and always keeping the best interest of AAC at heart.

Assistant Lodge Supervisor

- Hugh James and I have carried out the Lodge Supervisor role as a joint venture and we have worked well together. We also appreciate the help of other club members throughout the year. Hugh and I organised the working bee together and achieved a lot over that weekend. Together we have booked in a builder to do room 13 and 14 bathrooms plus if time allows to complete the reno of room 7. Hugh is the main man that is organising this

Working Bee 2023

- The working bee was attended by 15 volunteers to do 2 days of maintenance and organisation of the club ready for the season
- Jess and Craig organised the food for the weekend. Job well done
- 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
 - General clean for the season opener
 - Soil stabilisation at front of the club wall, better drainage
 - Wood stacked away- still looking at ways to make it easier (any ideas would be great)

Capital Expenditure and Maintenance

- New BBQ
- New hot water system- one unit only
- Overhaul of the main fridge during summer meant that it ran very reliably throughout the 2023 season
- Projects that are booked in for next year 2024 – replace heater valves in rooms, complete flush of the hydronic heating system (needs to be done every few years), replace sauna heater and light, renovate rooms 13 and 14 bathrooms, renovate room 7 as a twin replace mattresses in 4 rooms.

Tom Harrington
Lodge Supervisor

Booking Report

Summer Bookings

Very few Summer bookings took place following Winter 2022 before the road was closed due to the landslide. Due to the situation, with virtually all of Falls Creek closed and a permit system required to get there, the Committee were left with no option but to close the Lodge till the Winter season opened.

Winter Bookings

A full Lodge kicked off opening weekend.

The remainder of June was quiet before school holidays began in late June to get Winter peak underway. From then on we were heavily booked for all of July and August. With the dwindling of snow September bookings never got going to anything significant.

But the weekend of September 1/2 I was inundated with requests which what looked to be the last hoorah of the season. The demand was amazing and I do regret that so many of you were unable to get in.

At last Years AGM, it was raised if we were able to open short term bookings (weekends) earlier than the booking guidelines allowed. Committee have discussed this at length and we have decided that if any particular week that is fully booked with week and midweek bookings but has space left for the weekend, then we will open the weekend in question early for Waitlisted booking requests for that weekend. Initially we did this from 1 June but this year we will do it from April where possible. This is only for members and immediate family (spouse and children). I will contact Waitlisted booking requests at the appropriate time.

The ski locker in the ski room was originally built with the idea that skis could be left at the Lodge through winter when members were making multiple trips through the season. Originally it was thought that people would then take their skis home at the end of their last winter trip. That tends to not happen. Skis required over summer months for overseas trips need to be taken home by the end of winter. Last minute decisions to access the Lodge to pick up skis might not readily be available as our managers are not always in a position to organise access for you in summer.

I would like to thank the Committee for their support. They work hard for you. Also Deb Poa for her administration support at Proacct.

Hope we have a more snow in 2024

Enjoy

Happy Skiing

Alan Long
Booking Officer

Membership and Events Report

Membership

Welcome new members Graham Thorn, Amber Sinclair-Crabb, Steven McKellar, Jonathan Gerstner-Stevens (Junior) - U/18.

Retiring Members

John Binning
Angus Harding
Janet Miller
Richard Pocknee
Sean Balding

Vale

Alan Williams

Family Transfers

Jeff Cornfoot to Scott Cornfoot (Son)
Michael Harper to Tom Harper (Son)
William Harding to Nick Critchley (Cousin, via Grandmother)
Colin Ketteridge to Diana Ketteridge (Daughter)

New Life Members

Nil

Membership Category Changes

Under 18 to Under 25 – Matthew Wall, Emma De Jong
Under 25 to Full Membership – Natasha Poon, Sam Wruck, Christopher Buseti.

Member Category	2022*	2023
Full	221	229
Overseas	4	3
Under 25	23	18
Under 18	11	10
Life	9	9
Wait to Sell	12	9
Total	280	278

* An audit of the member register for 2023 detected some inconsistencies in 2022 figures but these have been reported unchanged for consistency with 2022 report.

Events

This Queen's (King's) Birthday Long Weekend welcomed us with glorious weather, and just enough snow to make a few snowballs. Perfect conditions for catching up with your Winter buddies, hiking & bike riding.

This year AAC hosted the FCAA Mountain Muster. It was a very successful afternoon with guest speakers Dave Clarke, Stuart Smythe, Richard Phillips, Amber Gardner and Ali Wastie. Big thanks to Hugh, Vicky, Georgia & Luke for being drinks monitors.

We celebrated Christmas in July with decorations, gluhwein, fruitcake and carols.

School Holidays were very busy. Sadly, the snow didn't stick around for the September School Holidays.

Club Race

Race Week was a fun week with a successful weekend, sadly the visibility was poor for the race. The theme this year was Black & White for Race Night. Some terrific costumes appeared, not too many Collingwood supporters 😊, and several gentlemen looked extremely suave in their dinner suits.

Results as follows - Father Fosters Race Course.

Sam Barker Memorial

Reeve Rist
Carrie Hopkins
Gerard Borman

Women

Mel Cameron
Emma Pitt
Natasha Poon

Men

Ross Barker
Matthew Wall
Tim Cowie

Mummy Masters

Viv Wall
Bronwyn Wruck
Lynn Cameron

Men's Masters

Ross Barker
Gerard Gerstner Stevens
John Cameron

Interclubs Hosted By Falls Creek (Nastar Race Course)

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

Falls Creek won the Masters Trophy
Mt Hotham (Anton) 2nd

Leon Smith Presidents Cup Challenge –

David Owen - Perisher
Ian Mack – Dinner Plain
John Cameron – Falls Creek

Lynn Cameron
Membership & Events

Communications Report

The 2023 season was a year many finally got back to Falls Creek after pandemic interruptions.

Sadly, Tony Jordan had to step down from the Committee in June for health reasons. Jenny Hughes filled in until I took up the role in August. Thank you Jenny for all your help during this transition period.

Newsletters

In total there were 6 newsletters for the year, as well as some notices.

As part of our efforts to minimise risks to member privacy, we have changed the way that newsletters are sent.

This means clicking on the link to the newsletter, where you will find all the club news that you are used to receiving.

Website

Our website continues to be the key information source about the Lodge. Check out the “News” section of the site at www.aacfalls creek.com/news to see items between newsletters.

Social Media

If you want to follow us, check out facebook.com/fallshuette on Facebook and @lodgemanageraacfc on Instagram. Thanks especially to Jess and Ida for all their posts.

Summer Marketing

The databases used by Falls Creek Central Reservations and Ride High Country to promote the club in summer were updated with the much more appealing room photos.

The landslide in late 2022 meant that all summer events were cancelled, and the lodge was closed for almost the whole of green season. This, together with the change in who was in the communications role, have meant that summer marketing has had less focus in 2023.

Thank you very much to Tony Jordan for your efforts as our Communications Officer (they are large shoes to fill!).

Hopefully you have found our communications informative in 2023, please let us know if you have suggestions about what you would like to see in the newsletter, on the website, or if you have questions.

Siobhan Barry
Communications

Secretary & Information Technology Report

Secretary

2023 brought some different challenges on the secretarial front, some of which spanned the secretary and technology roles.

Cyber Security & Privacy

With increasing reports of hackers stealing personal information, we undertook a broad review of data protection, privacy and cyber security in the club. Since then, we have been working on addressing the highest priority recommendations. This includes a new Privacy Policy which is published at aacfalls creek.com/rules/32-membership-rules/61-privacy-policy.html, or via the Members page of the website.

We are no longer using the Talkbox service to send out newsletters. That represented an unnecessary extra place where personal information was stored. Instead, the booking system is used to send the newsletters.

The booking system is also now used to send out annual subscription invoices so that you can pay securely via the Eway payment gateway, and EFT details can be removed from subs invoices.

In line with the Privacy Act, members can now tick a box in the booking system to opt-out of “non-essential” emails (mainly newsletters). Booking related emails, subscription notices and AGM notices will be treated as essential. We hope you find the newsletters too useful to take that option.

In 2024 we will continue refining our cyber security and privacy practices.

Regulatory

The Victorian government has legislated that clubs, along with other organisations, have a positive duty to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation as far as possible. To support this, we have now published an Equal Opportunity Policy at aacfalls creek.com/rules/32-membership-rules/282-equal-opportunity-policy.html.

The regulations and model rules for Incorporated Associations were updated in November. Some associated changes to our Rules of association are recommended. The AGM will be asked to approve those.

Proacct

With Jenny Noye leaving Proacct, Deb Poa now helps us with administration and bookkeeping. It has also forced us to document procedures that were taken a bit for granted and created opportunities to review and improve some.

Information Technology

Lodge Internet and related facilities

Apart from a problem with the main TV connection, we received no complaints of unavailability or unusably slow service. If you have problems, try turning wifi on your device off and on. Let the manager know if the problem persists.

Research into Starlink concluded that the lodge’s view of the southern sky is too obstructed for this internet satellite service to be feasible for AACFC.

Minor changes

- The sound system in the wood cupboard now has an android tablet where you can control Spotify.
- A connection to the spa controller was installed to allow remote management.
- The server was replaced.

Booking System

There were no major changes to the booking system. We introduced optional registration of family members to make it easier for members to include them in bookings. Members are also encouraged to add an emergency contact in the Comment section of their member record (menu Members->View My Details)

A booking policy explicitly reminds members that the club cannot take responsibility for personal property. aacfalls creek.com/booking-policies/245-no-responsibility-for-property-of-members-and-guests.html

Thanks to all the committee members, Jess and Craig, Nik Dow at CBDWEB, Deb Poa and Daniel Maj at Proacct for their help and support throughout the year. Also a big thank you to Siobhan Barry for taking on the Communications Officer role when Tony Jordan had to step down, and to Tony for his work in that role and more generally on the committee

Jenny Hughes
Secretary & IT