



**AUSTRALIAN ALPINE CLUB
FALLS CREEK**

AAC FALLS CREEK INC

ABN 77 885 651 266

**Annual
Committee Reports**

**For the year ended
31 December 2024**

Chairperson's Report

Hello and welcome to AAC Falls Creek AGM at Quest Brighton on the Bay for the 2024 Calendar year. Thankfully this year I'm not having to start my report talking about the Bogong High Plains Road landslide or the retaining wall in front of the lodge.

To quote a nautical term 2024 has been a "steady as she goes" year.

With the upgrades to the bathrooms in rooms 13, 14 and the renovation of room 7, summer revenue was down slightly. The lack of snow at the back end of the season and the closing of the chairlifts early for a second-year meant winter revenue was also affected, but as you will read in the treasures report by Will Zac the club still had an operating surplus for the calendar year and is in a strong financial position going into 2025.

Each year Alan works his magic in trying to fulfill every member's booking requests. His report will confirm the slow start to the year the club had and a consistent pattern in winter bookings. Interestingly Alan is also getting a few enquiries about using the lodge for altitude training in the summer months which may help revenue in the years ahead.

Membership is "steady as we go" as Lynn's report will show membership numbers staying consistent over last few years. The committee is always working to keep the right balance of membership numbers so everyone has an opportunity to book and stay at the lodge while still ensuring that we bring in new members to replace those no longer able to use the lodge.

Tom Harrington and Hugh James share the role of lodge supervisor, Hugh took the lead on the ensuite upgrades to rooms 13 & 14 and conversion of room 7 into a two single bed room, while Tom worked behind the scenes improving the hydronic heating system, the replacement of both the kitchen dishwasher and one of the two hot water units.

The dishwasher was over 20 years old and the hot water at least 14 years.

Jenny Hughes in her role of Secretary dealt with the club's regulatory concerns including our Not for Profit status and the Victorian short stay levy, plus the changes to the club's rules of association from the AGM last year.

In her shared role of IT with new committee member Peter Lodewijks, upgrades have been made to the look of our website, better security and privacy through the booking system as well as more secure ways on how the information is stored and a more secure way for electronic transfer payments.

Communication Officer Siobhan Barry kept members informed through the club's newsletter. It is always a balancing act between oversupply and undersupply of information to members. In 2025 we will review our use of the platforms (e.g. newsletter, Facebook, Instagram) and which are most effective in communicating with members.

I'm happy to announce (and many members will be pleased to know) that Lodge manager Jess McAlister and family have signed on for another two years at AAC Falls Creek.

Each year in my report I forget to thank John Cameron our Race Club captain and director for all his efforts, so thank you John.

Thank you to Daniel Maj and Deb Poa from our accounting firm ProAcct. Will and I deal with Deb on a weekly basis and she makes the finances flow smoothly.

Thank you to the members of AAC Falls Creek who entrust the committee to keep the club running smoothly.

To my fellow committee members, Jenny, Alan, Lynn, Tom, Hugh, Siobhan and Peter thank you for the time and effort you put into serving on the committee.

And finally, to Will Zacharin who has been the club's treasurer for the last 5 years who has, to finish where I started my report, kept the club '*steady as she goes*' thank you very much for your time and commitment.

Bring on the white stuff

Justin Checcucci

Chair of AAC Falls Creek

Treasurer's Report

The 2024 calendar year was another successful ski season for the club, with accommodation revenue rising about \$30,000 on last year.

Our fixed costs continue to increase with insurance costs rising again from \$53,421 in 2023 to \$55,962 in 2024. The insurance levy of \$30 needs to continue for the foreseeable future.

For the reporting period (1 Jan to 31 Dec 24), the Club posted an operating surplus of \$26,526 compared to \$29,413 in 2023. Cash-at-bank at the end of the financial year was \$319,400, which includes a term deposit account of \$150,000.

The biggest cost drivers for the annual budget remain Insurance (\$55,962), Falls Creek Resort Management fees and rent (\$39,758), up \$7,000 on last year and Utilities (\$28,155), up \$6,000 on last year. This means we have to spend around \$123k just to open the door each year. However, the club is in a strong financial position due to annual subscriptions and booking fees keeping pace with inflation. Capital expenditure and maintenance upgrades have ensured that member services and comfort remain at a high standard.

After 5 years as Treasurer, I am standing down to give a younger member a crack. It has been rewarding and a pleasure to have served on the committee with other passionate members. Thanks to all the committee members and other club members who have assisted with the running of the club and the working bees over this period. Thanks also to Deb Poa from ProAcct, who has been diligent and efficient in providing financial support to the committee.

Wishing you knee-deep in powder in 2025.

Will Zacharin

Treasurer

Lodge Supervisor's Report

The 2023/24 summer season was a great time for the club to finally get some major projects ticked off after covid and the landslide had set us back. Whilst a lot of work was done during this period, most of it was organised during the years prior.

The main objectives where for us to update the three oldest bathrooms in the club (rooms 13, 14 and 15), to upgrade room 7 to allow for more space for singles and to fix the spa floor.

Bathrooms 13 and 14

Although we aimed the to renovate all three bathrooms, the committee deemed it important to make sure one room would be always operational. That way, if we suffered any delays there would still be a family bathroom available. This meant only rooms 13 and 14 have been done. We intend to update Room 15 bathroom in the not too distant future.

While giving the bathrooms a long-awaited facelift, we upgraded the bath tubs to have shower screens and hand held shower heads. This should help the families who often use these rooms.

Room 7.

Twin rooms cater better for people who do not stay as couples. For some years we have wanted to convert Room 7 to a twin, similar to Room 12. Although this looks like we could just put in two new beds it was an opportunity to make less obvious improvements. We took all the panelling off the walls re insulate the noise from the kitchen (particularly the dish washer) and move the heater over to the bathroom wall to fit everything in. This turned out great with a few other items added as well.

Spa floor.

The spa floor has been having issues for a few years now basically caused by self -leveller, which is not suitable for wet areas particularly in an environment where the temperature outside and inside is so different. The tiles lifted which was not only causing a tripping hazard but also forcing water out into the hallway. We needed to replace the self-leveller layer in the floor, which meant taking the floor back to concrete and basically starting again. So far it looks great and is performing very well.

Other items for noting.

- One of the hot water service units failed and was replaced.
- The dishwasher was replaced with a new unit after it failed early in the season.
- Hydronic hot water system was completely drained and flushed out.
- All control fittings on in-room heaters were replaced and now provide easier adjustment of heat level. These provide the future option to adapt electrical control units to each heater for remote operation.
- Carpets where dry cleaned throughout the club
- The retaining wall below the lodge was completed by Resort Management

The club is still investigating methods to keep running costs and maintenance low, however it's always an interesting battle. We have a building in a unique environment with its own challenges. We are investigating some further building upgrades, like replacing the cladding at the front of the building with stone.

Special thanks to all the members who put in their own time to help when they can, and a special mentions to John for keeping the spa warm and to Risty for helping in emergencies.

Tom Harrington & Hugh James
Lodge Supervisor & Assistant Lodge Supervisor

Booking Report

Summer: Jan 1 – June 1 & Oct 1 – Dec 31.

Our Summer Bookings in the first half of the year were less than overwhelming. Room 13 and 14 were closed for ensuite renovations early on and Room 7 closed for the first half of the year to be fully renovated into a room with two single beds.

It really did not affect bookings to a great degree as we had a full weekend mid February, a walking group for the first five nights of March, followed by a full lodge for the Peaks challenge. Easter was approximately half full and we finished with a small group on the weekend before opening weekend.

Through Oct/Nov/Dec we had about a dozen people join as Summer Associate members. Most of these people are elite athletes looking to have somewhere to use as a base for high altitude training for their summer season in early 2025. They stayed for multiple weeks and through them our summer revenue has increased for the first part of summer 2024/25. A quick survey amongst them indicated they were more than happy with the facilities and indications are positive for future use. At no stage during the final three months of the year were we fully booked so there was still room for full members to use our lodge. Some did, but not many.

Winter

Our winter bookings followed the similar pattern as normal. Opening weekend was about half full, followed by a few weeks of nothing till early July. School holidays through July and into the first three weeks of August were very strong considering the snow conditions. End of August had some space and early September dropped away very quickly, understandably with the looming closure of the lifts. We had an empty lodge from September 8. Three families decided to keep their bookings commencing September 15 despite the lifts being closed but that was it. Closure of lifts led to closure of restaurants and other venues across the mountain.

Considering, the snowfall we had, the accommodation revenue was good. Let's hope 2025 brings a lot of what we love.

Thankyou's

I would like to thank Jenny Hughes for her work in setting up the online booking system for us to use, and guiding me through the pitfalls on the administration side of it. Could not do it without her. Peter Lodewijks is rapidly learning those ropes too. Deb Poa at Proacct keeps me up to date with the details I need, and the Committee in general for their hard work in their respective positions to keep AAC FC running smoothly. Our Lodge manager, Jess, has extended her contract and we look forward to the next two years at least with her (and the family) looking after us. Lastly, Our Treasurer, Will Zacharin, has decided to move on from the Committee. Thanks Will for your input over the last five years.

Hope you have a wonderful 2025 at AAC FC.

Alan Long
Booking Officer

Membership and Events Report

Membership

Welcome new full members Sean Roberts, Sophie Wall, Sue Hopkins, Martin Donohue, Kate Forkosh. Ted & Gus Oostermeyer, Flynn Abroms, Oliver & Hogan Hutchins (All Junior - U/18).

Retiring Members

Bradley Callaghan
Melinda Kemp
Anna & James Coldham
Susan & Stephen Ferguson

Vale

Peter de Crespigny
Michael Waterfield

Family Transfers

Jill McIntyre to Kristin Old (Daughter)
John Harding to Madeline Critchley (Sister-in-Law)
Peter McIntyre to Gwendal Guery (Brother-in-Law)
Verity Lichte to Felix Lichte (Son)
Jane Thorn to Niamh Thorn (Daughter)

New Life Members

Nil

Membership Category Changes

Under 18 to Under 25 – Nil
Under 25 to Full Membership –Felix Lichte, Niamh Thorn

Member Category	2023	2024
Full	226	229
Multiple Members (excluding Life)	3	3
Overseas	3	2
Under 25	18	19
Under 18	10	11
Life	9	8
Wait to Sell	9	7
Total	278	279

Events

The King's Birthday Long Weekend welcomed us with glorious weather. Not a natural snowflake in sight, making the conditions perfect for catching up with your Winter buddies.

This year AACFC again hosted the FCAA Mountain Muster. It was a very successful afternoon organized by David Stogdale. Guest speakers were Dave, Stuart, Richard, and Peter, culminating with a first-class view of the fireworks from our balcony.

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

July School Holidays were very busy.

Unfortunately, the snow disappeared again this year in early September, bringing the season to another early close.

Club Race

Race Week was as usual a fun week, with sensational weather. A successful weekend, and sunshine for the club race. The Race Night dinner theme this year was French. With Moustaches on most gents & ladies looking oh so chic. Results as follows - Father Fosters Race Course.

Sam Barker Memorial -

Reeve Rist
Flynn Abroms
Hamish McAllister

Womens –

Mel Cameron
Natasha Poon
Viv Wall

Mens –

Ross Barker
James Cowie
Matthew Wall

Mummy Masters –

Viv Wall
Nadia Barker
Lynn Cameron

Mens Masters –

Ross Barker
John Cameron
Nigel Cowie

Interclubs Hosted Mt Hotham

No race – No snow

Lynn Cameron

Membership & Events

Communications Report

Focus for my first full year on the committee has been on making sure the club's communications are informative, easy to absorb and welcoming – just like a visit to our Lodge.

Newsletters

There were five newsletters released in 2024 with more than one in three members reading the newsletter on the club website, which is a similar level to previous years.

A communications calendar was developed for the committee to guide the timing and content of newsletter articles.

Website

The website remains the key information source about the lodge. Thank you to Jenny for the software update and refresh completed at the end of 2024 (see more in the Secretary / IT report).

Bookmark the “News” section of the site at www.aacfalls creek.com/news to see items of interest between newsletters.

Efforts were made to document all our past Presidents and Life Members during the year, which will be published during 2025. If you can help with this Club history, please get in touch by email to comms@aacfalls creek.com.

Balcony Cam

At the beginning of the snow season, a Balcony Cam photos page was created in the News section of the website to fill the gap in the Resort's snow cameras.

This was the brainchild of a discussion with club members in late June. Photos of our views of the Summit and Falls Creek Road were posted 6 times across the snow season.

The Balcony Cam page was viewed nearly 1,200 times, so we'll continue the practice in 2025.

Social media

Marketing and promoting our club lodge to the public on social media has not been a focus this year as we have healthy membership levels, and continued interest from new potential members.

Thanks to Jess and Ida for all their posts on Instagram and Facebook during the year.

In 2025 we will seek member views about the role of social media for the club.

In conclusion

Your suggestions for what you would like to see in the newsletter, on the website, or your queries about the lodge or Falls Creek are always welcome so please email me any time at comms@aacfalls creek.com and the committee and I will do our best to help.

Wishing you all plenty of time at Falls Creek in 2025!

Siobhan Barry
Communications

Secretary & Information Technology Report

Secretary

Once again, the year brought some challenges on the secretarial front, some of which spanned the secretary and technology roles.

Regulatory

Regulatory changes at both federal and state level have caused much concern and research. Victoria has introduced a Short Stay Levy on many accommodation providers. The committee is satisfied that, unlike many ski lodges, the club is exempt because it qualifies as a hostel under relevant legislation.

The ATO is changing arrangements for Not For Profit organisations. Our research is leading us to the conclusion that we will continue to qualify as a Not For Profit sporting organisation. We will need to finalise this in early 2025. It is worth noting that our treatment as a Not For Profit hinges largely on our primary purpose of “encouraging and developing skiing and alpine sports”.

Governance

In May, most of the proposed changes to the Rules of Association were adopted by the Special General Meeting (as part of the AGM). Wording of some changes relating to disciplinary hearings and appeals required further work. The improved proposal will be circulated to attendees at that SGM for feedback. The changes will be put to the May 2025 SGM/AGM.

In line with the changes to our Rules in 2024, a Conflict of Interest Register has been established.

Cyber Security & Privacy

The Member Register was overhauled, making it easier to extract reports and removing unnecessary personal information. Personal information held in the booking system has also been reduced.

Security of the booking system was also increased with an AAC National initiative to introduce passwords and multi-factor authentication.

A PayID has been established to provide a more secure way of receiving electronic funds transfers. This allows payers to verify who owns the account before submitting the payment. Payment by Eway gateway in the booking system is also very secure.

The revised Privacy Policy was published in March. Changes to the Rules at last AGM underline its importance.

Information Technology

Skills and support

The club becomes increasingly dependent on information technology to operate efficiently and communicate effectively. It is prudent to have a number of committee members who are able to support our use of information technology. Peter Lodewijks joined the committee in 2024 to assist with IT tasks. His main focus to date has been on the booking system, arguably our most important piece of information technology. The committee would like to hear from other members who can assist the club with IT related tasks.

Booking System

As mentioned above, security and privacy have been tightened. We also managed to iron out some minor issues that had been causing some inconvenience.

Website

The website was upgraded to more modern software versions and given a fresh look, especially the home page. In 2025 we intend to use the website to emphasise our support for alpine sports in winter and green season.

Lodge Internet and related facilities

A security camera system has been installed. Initial cameras have been mounted to monitor the front entrance and doors to the boiler room and games room. We hope to install some additional cameras but only to monitor the outside of the lodge.

File storage and email

The committee has been using free google accounts for email and storage of club documents. We have begun a transition to paid google services which will improve security and our ability to backup and manage our files. During 2025, members can expect to see new email addresses for committee members.

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 Peter Lodewijks for his assistance with the IT role.

Jenny Hughes and Peter Lodewijks
Secretary & IT