

Fourteenth Annual General Meeting

14th November 2006

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the SLOPES 2006 AGM . On behalf of the Committee I thank you for your attendance here tonight, and your support over the last twelve months.

At the risk of repetition I say again that our strength as SLOPES is that we talk for ALL the Club Lodges in Perisher, Smiggins and Guthega. The whole 88. It is our claim to fame, and we must have your continued support .

During the last Year we have been involved in some very heavy discussions, and the meetings usually open with clarification of just who does SLOPES represent. The 100% membership figure of ALL Clubs and the 55,000 people who are our members Associates and Visiting Friends gives us the right to be heard.

LAND OF THE NEVER NEVER:

Last year I reported Land of the never never. This year I report a land of so much going on that it has been difficult to cover the territory.

YOUR COMMITTEE:

We have appreciated the continued devotion of Bert Sherdian as our Exec Officer.

We continue to have a good cross section of Perisher Range on our Committee. We now have 2 Guthegarians, 1 Smigginsian, 4 North Perishians and 2 South Perishians on the Committee so we get a good feed in. Fortunately these tribes use a common language !!!

NPWS:

We welcome Andrew Harrigan as Resort Manager with NPWS. Andrew is a skier from way back. He has been a member of the Ski Patrol for over 10 years. He was looking after the Non-skiing part of the Park so knows the area particularly well.

IPART REPORT:

The Ipart Report was released and although on an overall basis we managed to deflect a fair proportion of the costs, the decisions re Guthega were unreasonable. Due to changes in Government a final draft was never released for comment. So by the time we saw it, it was cemented in place.

In the submissions process Perisher Blue put in a determined effort to have a major proportion of the costs loaded onto the lodges. Presumably their logic was to keep the costs down for the day trippers so as to sell more lift tickets. However IPART listened to our arguments against the first draft and the final split between day trippers and overnighters was as good as we could hope for, and much better than the Perisher Blues proposals. We saved some \$300,000 a year.

HOWEVER we were sadly let down when the Guthega Lodges were rated as equal costs with Smiggins and Perisher despite not having the same services provided. MSU Rates for Guthega increased by 70-90%.

Regrettably when we called a meeting of Guthega Clubs to work out a protest strategy, the attendance was poor. This probably did not matter as when SLOPES approached both Ipart and NPWS we were met with a brickwall that " the other Department was to blame". The realities were that once Government had signed off it would take a Ministerial signature to change the results, and this was not going to happen.

Also regrettably some Guthega Clubs became convinced that SLOPES had let them down., which caused strains . Nothing could be further from the truth, but these perceptions linger.

The results of **IPART** have meant an increase that will continue to grow in our MSU costs. Water is now charged separately and it is very expensive, so savings here are up to the individual Clubs. The sealing of roads and the rest of MSU costs are now a major item in Club Costings.

BED ALLOCATIONS AND NEW LEASES:

The process documents were release in February and to sum up were unacceptable. The conditions were harsh and the process convoluted and difficult to follow.

SLOPES took this up with NPWS before closing date for interest submissions but to no avail apart from a few obvious errors rectified.

A Special general meeting of SLOPES members expressed their thoughts in no uncertain fashion and passed motions strongly rejecting the offers. A similar meeting in Canberra had the same result. The Commercial Lodges echoed the sentiments of the Clubs.

Over 2000 letters of complaint were sent to Minister Debus from Club members , together with six newspaper articles and widespread commentary, and finally only 8 Club and Commercial Lodges submitted Expressions of Interest out of the 125 combined Club and Commercial Lodges.

(I express here my extreme disappointment at the actions of the few Club Boards who despite full knowledge of the overall feelings, still sought to gain an advantage for themselves at the expense of others. I can understand the actions of the Commercial Lodges who submitted as they had existing lease terms that were very different from everyone else, and they wanted this to be clearly registered. I can not understand the actions of the Clubs.)

SLOPES met with the Minister's Policy Adviser to back up the large numbers of submissions made. We also communicated frequently with every Member of Parliament through the Fairgo process and received encouraging support from the Independents. A detailed question was also asked in the House.

Following the collapse of the tendering process, NPWS have met with SLOPES and the Commercial Lodge representatives so far in three meetings endeavouring to remove the stings form the lease documents. It is pointless to outline the discussions as the final decisions on the new leases have not been made, so hypothetical solutions may only lead to disappointment. The first meeting was chaired by the Director General so that he would have first hand knowledge.

It is anticipated that the process will now take the form of clear offers being made with prices quoted for extra beds and /or lease extensions to 2057, and this should all take place in the next few months.

FIRE/SAFETY AUDITS:

At the same time as the new lease/beds proposals were released NPWS started to activate their Fire/Safety Audits. SLOPES have become more and more concerned during the year about these audits.

1. We do not like processes such as these being carried out by consultants, who come and go.
2. The Walker report several years ago and subsequent parliamentary legislation was intended to get NPWS out of property matters, as they did not have the expertise.
3. The Dept of Planning was set up in Jindabyne as the consent Authority for property matters.
4. The Plan of management in June stated that all building matters in the Park would be handle by DoP
5. The audits were stated as being carried out to the BCA standards, but it has now eventuated that this is not the case with the 15 Class 1(b) lodges.
6. Separate files will be building up on Lodges removing any hope of continuity.
7. The class 1(b) lodges have just been advised to hold up on their works.

It is a difficult situation as many Clubs have already paid large sums of money to consultants. We envisage that some \$4,000,000 could be spent on these Audits.

SMOKE DETECTORS:

IRRESPECTIVE OF ANY AUDITS, LEGISLATION HAS BEN PASSED BY PARLIAMENT IN JUNE 2006 REQUIRING EVERY CLUB TO TAKE ACTION IN INSTALLING SMOKE DETECTORS. THERE IS ONLY A 6 MONTH TIME SLOT FOR THIS. CLUBS MUST TAKE ACTION OR YOUR BOARD WILL BE EXPOSED.

The reason Parliament has acted is that there have been too many deaths where the Coroners have been scathing at the lack of smoke detectors that could have saved lives.

HEAD LEASE:

Regrettably there is no sign that Government is listening to our requests for a Victorian type of operation where a town Council in each region operates the whole area for the common good.

We have registered strongly our dislike of a Head Lease proposal unless it is on the Victorian Model where the management is by an independent Council. Regrettably there is strain between ourselves and Perisher Blue, as on some matters our interests are opposed. They must work for today's profits for their organization and extract the

maximum price for their services. We operate to provide our Lodges at the minimum prices and maximum enjoyment for our members.

PERISHER BLUE:

Peter Brulisauer has taken over from Ashley Blondell as Managing Director of Perisher Blue and we have worked in well with him on various items through the year. Peter comes from a well established Perisher family and has a wealth of knowledge of the area. Ashley is staying on the Board of P/B, but now lives at the Coast.

NEW VILLAGE CENTRE:

Here there is silence. We suspect it is all part of the bargaining going on. Rumour has it that P/B are looking for a substantial subsidy.

NORTHERN ROADS:

NPWS are now in the design process for concreting of the Northern Roads. This involves all the Northern lodges. A SLOPES Sub Committee chaired by Frank Walker is handling the representations to NPWS on this important subject. NPWS will be releasing their proposals for the handling of the roads in the next few months.

We have also gone in into print opposing the ideas of loop roads in the south or east Perisher.

THE 2006 SEASON:

A very bad season with inadequate snow from start to early finish. In the July School holidays Perisher Blue ran free night skiing most nights to compensate for the overcrowding in the daytime. This worked very well and was very much appreciated by all Clubs.

We must all be scared that the bad season is part of the global warming syndrome.

Financially most Clubs were not too badly hit this year , as those skiers who had preplanned their holidays still went to Perisher. The problem will be with the bookings for next year. A bad season ALWAYS causes our members to look elsewhere next time.

INSURANCES:

Running well and we are all still pleased with the end results. Some Clubs ask why do we not call bids from other brokers (including their uncles, brothers etc). Firstly the initial process of getting a reliable hard working broker of the ground was that we would give him a few years to get his efforts paid for. Just remember that all the other brokers were NOT interested in the work involved.

Secondly, having sweated hard in cajoling Clubs on the first time round, we can assure you that to get Clubs to follow the leader and support the bargaining strength is a tortuous process. Out of 88 Clubs we can usually count on 40 to join us quickly in a proactive manner in any sensible endeavour, but it is very hard to get the next 30.

Somewhat puzzled at one Club who reported " that their broker had now matched the SLOPES broker's offer, and this proved the value of competitive quoting" ??????????????

ELECTRICITY:

We have been requested by one Club to look at a bulk group deal for electricity. We have a feeling that for many Clubs it is not a major item, and hesitate to do all the work unless we knew in advance that Clubs would accept the group decision. Assuming a cost of \$5,000 a club, the total cost is \$440,000. A 15% saving is \$66,000. Not as exciting as the \$400,000 on insurances.

SKI LIFT DISCOUNTS:

We are pleased that Perisher Blue has continued the September ski lift ticket discounts to SLOPES members that are available to Commercial lodges. This year P/B insisted that the overriding 5% discount be passed through SLOPES to the Clubs concerned. Somewhat annoying to the SLOPES exec officer who does the work involved, as previously we retained the group discount.

WILLOW RD SNOW CLEARING/PARKING:

Very ably led by Paul Schott of our Committee, the Willow Rd Lodges have hired a design consultant and negotiated with DoPlanning and NPWS to what appears will be a satisfactory outcome.

SNOW BOUND VILLAGE:

The continuation of SLOPES preference for a snow bound village may be overtaken by events such as availability of snow!!

PLAN OF MANAGEMENT/EMS:

This has been released in June and is neutral to our Lodges. It is a very significant document and can be viewed on the WEB.. We are not sure if it is yet in print. It is recommended reading.

One point that is compulsory for all of us is the requirement in the POM for a positive attitude on EMS matters

The Perisher Range EMS Committee is being revitalized with an external Consultant as Chairman, and she happens to be a highly respected Lodge member of KSRC, so there will be more action in this area called for.

Graeme Anderson

PRESIDENT SLOPES