

17th November 2011

Nineteenth Annual General Meeting

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2011

Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcomes

Welcome to the SLOPES 2011 Annual General Meeting. I am Frank Zipfinger, President of SLOPES.

I particularly welcome our Guest Speakers tonight - Peter Brulisauer from Perisher, Andrew Harrigan and Andrew Logan from NPWS, Daniel James from Department of Planning and Infrastructure, Belinda Shore from the Perisher Chamber of Commerce, Tom Hazell from Thirroul Ski Club and Philip Woodman from the Perisher Historical Society. I am pleased that this year we have continued to maintain excellent relations with all our key stakeholders, many of whom are represented by our Guest Speakers.

I also welcome, and thank on your behalf, the Committee Members of SLOPES who have again done a terrific job this year in ensuring that SLOPES focuses on our principal task of representing the interests of our Member Clubs.

The Strength of SLOPES

As we do each year, I remind you that our strength as SLOPES is that we speak for ALL the Club Lodges in Perisher, Smiggins and Guthega. The whole 87. It is our claim to fame.

The 100% membership figure of ALL Clubs and the 55,000 people who are our members, associates and visiting friends give us the right to be heard. We need and look forward to your continued support.

Your Committee

This year we have maintained our spread of Committee representation across Perisher, Smiggins and Guthega. Our Committee has remained unaltered and all current members have nominated for re-election. There being no other nominations, they will continue to serve after this meeting and I thank them for their support. All members of the Committee can be contacted via the SLOPES email address: slopes.au@gmail.com.

On 30 June 2011 our Executive Officer, Bert Sheridan, retired after many years in that role. On your behalf I thank Bert for his valued contribution to SLOPES.

Your Committee decided not to appoint a new Executive Officer but instead, on a trial basis, to restructure the Committee somewhat and cover the tasks of the Executive Officer from within our ranks. Bill Coombes took on the role of Secretary with Noni de Carvalho the Minutes Secretary. Roger Glover as Treasurer took on key responsibilities for the accounts, financial reporting and tax returns. I am pleased to say that this team is working extremely

well. An additional advantage of this approach is the saving of the Executive Officer remuneration which has allowed us to invest in things like the new SLOPES website (see below) and a computer. These improvements will add to our efficiency and enhance continuity of information over time as people change in the various Committee roles.

Finally, several Committee members have indicated that they would like to step down over the next year or so, having served now for many years. This will give us the opportunity to bring on people with fresh ideas and from different backgrounds. At the next AGM please give some thought either to nominating yourself or encouraging others with suitable skills to do so.

Back to Perisher Weekend (BtP)

Over Easter 2011 we held our third Back to Perisher event in conjunction with NPWS. Dave Read and Noni de Carvalho were the key organisers from SLOPES and did a great job of organising this event. They were ably assisted by representatives from NPWS, particularly Dave Woods who is a terrific contributor; Dave will be greatly missed next year while he is on extended leave from NPWS.

The BtP weekend went extremely well. In fact, it was our best ever, favoured as it was by some marvellous weather. In particular the “Duck Race” was exceptionally popular, with the number of plastic ducks (100) needing to be doubled again next year to avoid disappointment!

Particular points to note:

- a) BtP was run over a weekend rather than a week to make it more accessible and this format worked really well (the dates in 2012 are Friday 6 April to Monday 9 April – so please diarise!)
- b) in addition to past established events such as the 6.1km Fun Run (120 runners this year) and the Duck Race (280 participants, with proceeds donated to the Perisher Volunteer Ski Patrol) there were some new events on the Sunday including “The Guthega Super Sleuth Treasure Hunt” and an interpretive bike ride around Perisher Valley which provided the opportunity for kids – and big kids – to see bush rats, broad tooth rats, antechinus, frogs and forest bats. There were also walks organised by NPWS on the Monday to The Porcupine and to Blue Lake specifically for SLOPES Members.

The **Guthega Hotel** was open all Easter, as was - for the first time - the Kiosk at the bottom of the Eyre T-bar. **JAX** was open for drinks, finger food and the “Perisher Fun Run” presentation on the Saturday evening. **Charlotte Pass Resort** also opened **The Chalet** for lunches and beverages over Easter and the **Kosciuszko Triple Chair** was running up to the Kangaroo Ridge scenic platform.

In 2012 Back to Perisher will be bigger and better than ever including, we hope, the running of the Mt Perisher Chairlift at various times over the weekend.

We are also hoping with NPWS to co-ordinate things so that over the same weekend there will be a chemical clean-out facility provided which will assist the many Clubs who use the weekend as an opportunity to prepare lodges for the upcoming ski season.

So, please think about making Perisher Range Resorts a destination with family and friends in Easter 2012 – and please encourage others in your Lodge to do the same.

For more information and to register your interest with any of these activities, contact Dave Read from SLOPES on 0418 419 938 or email djread@bigpond.com or slopes.au@gmail.com.

SLOPES new website

We have launched the SLOPES website at: www.slopes.org.au.

The site includes all our contact details and links to related sites of relevance to Members. We expect to enhance the website early next year to make it an easy access point for SLOPES Member emails and commentary generally on issues of interest to our Clubs. Please use the site and give us feedback. We are especially interested in your views on what additional material we can put on the site that will be of interest to you. SLOPES thanks Lisa Chandler from Kandahar Ski Club for her excellent work in designing the website and making the updates and changes as we require them.

Sustainability Conference 2011 at Lake Crackenback Resort

Gerald Lynch and I represented SLOPES at this conference held at the Lake Crackenback Resort outside Jindabyne over 9-10 May, 2011. A number of our Clubs attended, with NPWS also being well represented. It was an interesting Forum with excellent speakers covering a wide range of topics from sustainability to marketing. For more information see the Forum website at: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/alpineresorts/ARSF2011.htm>

Snowy Mountains of Music Festival

Perisher Range Resorts' own Snowy Mountains of Music Festival ("the only music festival in Australia in the snow") was held over the June long weekend (10-13 June 2011) organised by the Chamber of Commerce showcasing over 35 bands and 130 concerts. As a new initiative this year, SLOPES Members were offered a free CD when purchasing a Weekend Festival Pass. The Music Festival is on again over the long weekend in June 2012 - please try it.

National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS)

Tonight we have with us two key SLOPES liaison contacts at NPWS, Andrew Harrigan, Manager, Visitor and Business Services and Andrew Logan, Manager of the Municipal Services Unit.

Between them, they have a multi-faceted role involving responsibility for the Kosciuszko National Park including the Perisher, Smiggins and Guthega Resorts. From a SLOPES perspective, this includes key issues such as lodge leases and bed numbers, Village development proposals and operational matters such as waste transfer and roads.

They also co-ordinate a team of engineers who are charged with getting the IPART monies spent properly in putting in all the new Perisher Resorts infrastructure. The MSU team includes the people who run the water supplies, sewage handling, road supervision and controls. They are effectively our Town Council.

Income tax and Encouragement of Sport

SLOPES constantly reminds all Members of the importance of retaining the exemption from income tax through the “ENCOURAGEMENT OF SPORT”. SLOPES has appointed one of our Committee to work on an encouragement program to provoke Clubs in their thinking. We strongly recommend that each Club appoint one of its committee as their “Sports Encouragement’ Officer” to do the same.

There are now useful links on our new SLOPES website to other organisations which can assist you to promote sport within your Club.

Clubs actually do a lot to encourage sport but they often do not think about it that way – nor do they keep records of their activities. Participation in The Perisher Cup (PHS reports that 14 teams were entered in 2011 - a 40% increase on last year) is an example. As is the School Events Week and promotion of it in the Clubs. Please take this issue seriously as you never know when it might emerge in the context of your Club.

Department of Planning

We welcome Daniel James who is with us tonight. Daniel is the Team Leader of the Alpine Resorts Team at the Department and is based in Jindabyne. The Department has overall planning responsibility for development in the Perisher Range Resorts (including fire safety and building audits). We encourage all SLOPES members to consult with the Department early on in relation to all development proposals affecting lodges. The key message here is: “Ring the Department of Planning and drop in to see them and talk about where you stand BEFORE YOU SPEND THE MONEY”.

Perisher Resorts – Perisher, Smiggins, Guthega and Blue Cow

In 2011 the snow guns again made a valuable contribution to our skiing pleasure and greatly extended the season. We also saw the introduction of the new MyRide Ticketing System - an excellent initiative and one which, if properly promoted within our Clubs, has the capacity through the saving on lift ticket costs it provides, to encourage members to ski for multiple weeks rather than just once a season. Joining the MyRide Club also offers benefits like Early Bird Lift Tickets and discounts at various outlets plus the ability to reload the card online, avoiding the need to queue for tickets. SLOPES applauds these initiatives and congratulates Perisher for introducing them as ways of making skiing in the Perisher Range Resorts more affordable and convenient. Tonight we welcome Peter Brulisauer, the Perisher CEO. Peter will speak about the Perisher Range Resorts and on some new developments.

X-Country Skiing

Once again the NSW Cross Country Committee did a great job informing us daily as to the skiing conditions and generally in promoting the sport of cross country skiing. SLOPES thanks them for that and the work they do in helping us all to promote sport.

Insurances

Generally, our progress on Club insurances, both the range and cost of cover, has been outstanding. This is despite the fact that this year for the first time in many years we saw

some premium increases due to the extraordinary global conditions affecting the insurance industry. In this, SLOPES has been greatly assisted by Leroy Bowmaker, the Managing Director of All Class Insurances. The benefit to SLOPES Members comes from being able to write cover and negotiate advantageous premiums on behalf of a large group of lodges. It is very important that Members remember this and continue to support the insurance products offered to us all on this basis.

There continues to be a relatively poor uptake of the Directors & Officers (D&O) insurance. It appears that some Member Clubs might not recognise the value and importance of taking out this insurance. SLOPES was offered an extremely competitive premium on D&O insurance by All Class Insurance on the expectation that there would be significant take up by our Members. So far 34 Clubs are participating – up from 24 last year when Leroy addressed our AGM on this topic, which is excellent. Please consider taking out D&O insurance if you have not done so already as further discounting power will only be available to us if we reach the 40-50 mark.

Perisher Waste Transfer Station

The latest position as summarised in the NPWS publication Resort Round-up Issue No 11 is as follows:

Following public consultation and providing additional information to the consenting body (Environmental Planning and regulatory group) of the Office of Environment and Heritage, approval to build the Waste Transfer Station (WST) to service the Perisher resorts was granted in June. The location for the WST is behind the existing essential services buildings including the Fire Brigade and Ambulance stations. The concerns raised in submissions included noise, odour and vehicle interactions with cross-country skiers moving between the carpark and Nordic trails. These were addressed in the environmental assessment report with conditions placed on the approval that included monitoring of the waste transfer operations and regular meetings with neighbours in the precinct. Construction is planned to commence in October 2011.

As a precursor to the WST, a whole of Perisher and Smiggin Holes waste and recycling collection service has been rolled out for the 2011 ski season. Starting the collection service early will allow operational issues to be corrected in readiness for the 2012 season when the WST will be operating.

The principles behind the WST and collection service are to implement a more operationally efficient, cost effective and environmentally prudent waste management program across the Perisher resorts. Besides a better recycling stream, another of the measurable benefits is to reduce the amount of skidoo traffic in the centre of Perisher Valley that is inherent with the former self-service operation. The small size and location of Guthega Village precludes a lodge collection service with the benefits described above, but a new waste transfer hub will be constructed this summer with newly designed hoppers to replace the existing bins.

Throughout the 2011 ski season SLOPES liaised with NPWS regarding the new waste and recycling collection service. There were a number of teething problems. But this was to be expected given the short notice of commencement and the scope of the task. Based on feedback from Member Clubs, various changes were made by NPWS to improve the system including the provision of many free 'Otto' bins for lodges and, where needed, increased frequency of collections.

The latest news is that construction has started on the Waste Transfer Station and NPWS believes it will be in place and operating by the start of the 2012 ski season (subject to all the usual caveats about weather etc). Andrew Harrigan and Andrew Logan from NPWS will be at our AGM and will report on progress to date and what lies ahead in this space plus answering questions from attendees.

SLOPES Finances

Our finances are in good shape since our expenses were much the same as last year. Matters look quiet at present but they generally do until something goes wrong!! As we said in our email earlier this year sending Renewal Notices:

Fortunately this past year we have not had any major issues on the agenda - so your subscriptions have covered our running expenses and further built our reserves. However, over the next year we expect there will be (1) a major IPART review into Resort costs and revenues in the future (we are now more than 5 years into the current 10 year plan) and (2) significant work in relation to land values, land tax and the implications for the new leases in terms of turnover rent which becomes payable after year 5 of the leases.

These will be MAJOR matters affecting all Clubs. They will involve complex issues and have significant financial implications. SLOPES will be closely monitoring these matters on behalf of all Members, which we expect will include making submissions and commissioning necessary expert reports in support of those submissions.

The key is to have reasonable reserves available at all times to fund initiatives in support of the interests of Member Clubs as they arise. As things currently stand, we appear to be in that position. In the circumstances, the Committee decided that there was no need to raise the subscription for 2011/12 - the fee has remained unchanged now for the past 4 years.

SLOPES Emails

Often SLOPES is advised that people do not know about events or issues that SLOPES is working on. SLOPES relies on the contact people for each SLOPES Member Club passing on to their membership information we send out which is of interest to Club Members generally and not just the Board of Directors of the Club.

Communication of key issues is an important part of what we do and helps to ensure co-ordinated action in the interests of all SLOPES Member Clubs – be it reducing insurance premiums or supporting the Back to Perisher Weekend.

We ask that all Member Clubs please promptly circulate to their members relevant SLOPES bulletins and emails, especially on events and general information. Please also let your members know that increasingly information on SLOPES and our initiatives can be found on the new SLOPES website: www.slopes.org.au.

Perisher Range Resorts EMS Reporting (PREEMS)

Reporting under the Perisher Range Resorts Environmental System (PRREMS) is mandatory and is part of the lease obligations of Member Clubs. Generally, compliance has been excellent but this year for the first time we excelled with SLOPES Members achieving a 100% reporting result. Well done to all!

Last year NPWS established an Awards program to acknowledge exceptional performance in this area. Inaugural winners in 2010 were The Sundeck Hotel and the Waratah and Edelweiss ski lodges (with Highly Commendable Certificates awarded to Hus-Ski and Yeti lodges).

In 2011 the winners of the Awards were the **Australian Ski Club** for “Outstanding Achievement in Resource Efficiency” and **Thirroul Ski Club/Maranatha Lodge** for “Outstanding Environmental Commitment”. Congratulations to both Clubs.

One of our AGM Guest Speakers is Tom Hazell from Thirroul who will talk about that Club’s rehabilitation program to restore endemic vegetation to the Maranatha lodge surroundings which led to the Club winning the PREEMS award this year. The initiative was supported by NPWS in various ways and there is scope for other Clubs to do something similar.

New leases – Annual financial statements reporting to NPWS

SLOPES has issued some emails this year on this topic – and there will be more to follow. The background is that many Clubs are on the new lease terms which came into effect on 1 July 2008. Under that lease starting in year 6 the rent is calculated as **the higher of Base Rent and the Turnover Rent**. NPWS this year has initiated a financial statements reporting regime so that Clubs and NPWS will have this in place when the Turnover Rent calculations commence. Another important issue will be the scope of definitions relevant to the calculation of the Turnover Rent such as “Gross Revenue”. There are variables and grey areas here that could impact the calculations for some Clubs. For example: are levies for capital works or R&M included? If a club has more than one lodge and not all of them are on the new lease, how should total club revenue be apportioned between the lodges? SLOPES is in contact currently with NPWS on questions like these and soon we will issue to all Members a summary of key points to assist in this area.

Perisher Historical Society (PHS)

The Perisher Historical Society is generally dedicated to recording the history of the Perisher Range Resorts. Fifteen of our Clubs are members of PHS - others are encouraged to join. PHS also assists in promoting sport by running the annual Perisher Cup event. Tonight we welcome Philip Woodman who is the President of PHS. Members interested in contributing memorabilia or in obtaining more information about PHS or in assisting with their projects are asked to contact PHS on phsadmin@iprimus.com.au or on (02) 9488 7475. See also their new website at www.perisherhistoricalsociety.org.au.

Frank Zipfinger

President

SLOPES

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