

Burrumbeep Ski Club – Mount Hotham

Presidents Report – 2013

Dear Members,

I am pleased to present my report as President of the Burrumbeep Ski Club covering the 2012 – 2013 year.

The 2012 snow season produced consistent snow cover with over four metres of snow falling during the 2012 winter. The Mount Hotham resort achieved the highest number of visits to the mountain since they have been keeping records (447,294 visitor days in 2012, compared to 325,804 in 2011). Burrumbeep members enjoyed the conditions, and we experienced strong usage by members and guests during the season, with the accommodation revenue rising by about nine percent over the 2011 number.

The Club's finances are in good shape. We have a strong cash position which we manage conservatively, and which enables us to make improvements to the lodge on an ongoing basis. I think you will all agree that the new booking system is working very well, and our sincere thanks go to Tim Lewis for his ongoing management of bookings. We are keen to explore further ways of improving our ability to communicate with members, including the potential use of social media.

The lodge is in good order. New ovens were installed prior to the commencement of the 2012 snow season, and a dishwasher and the satellite dish were replaced during the year. Significant items of maintenance were undertaken during the course of the year by various work parties, and I thank all those members who have contributed to the welfare of the lodge by participating in work parties. By using member time we are able to minimise our reliance on outside maintenance services, thus making a positive contribution to our bottom line. New cooktops will be installed prior to the commencement of the 2013 season. Peter Leeke continues to do an outstanding job as co-ordinator of our work party programme, and I want to

point out that he has been at Burrumbeep during the last week overseeing our latest project, the installation of double glazing in all of the bedrooms. This is a major initiative for the Club, which will enhance comfort, reduce running costs, and improve security.

I want to comment on the recent fires which raged around Mount Hotham for several weeks in late summer. Most of you will be aware that the Hotham Village was directly under threat on many occasions during that period and that the lodges (including Burrumbeep) in the Davenport subdivision had a close shave and were probably only saved by the intervention of DSE/CFA and the Hotham management team. Whilst the Hotham management comes in for a fair amount of criticism from time to time from the lodges through the Hotham Ski Association, they did an outstanding job during the fires, in protecting both public and private assets on the mountain, at considerable personal risk and stress. I have thanked the management team on behalf of Burrumbeep for their efforts on our behalf. Sadly, two professional firefighters tragically lost their lives on the mountain. We should not forget the efforts and sacrifices of others in this experience.

As a result of the fires, and subsequent heavy rain and storm activity, considerable damage has been done to the Great Alpine Road, with multiple road slips between Harrietville and Hotham Heights, and huge activity is currently being undertaken to restore it prior to the snow season. As I write this, it is snowing at Mount Hotham, a real reminder that they don't have long to make the road good. There is currently only limited access to the mountain, and as a consequence of that, serious financial hardship is being experienced in the local economy. In our own small way, we have been impacted by the loss of summer/long weekend/Easter bookings.

Last year I reported on the position of our lease renewal negotiations. It has taken almost a year, but in the last couple of days we have received advice that the site valuation (which is used to determine the rent) has been completed and that instructions have been issued to the Government lawyers to prepare a new lease. Our current lease expires in October this year so hopefully the paperwork can be completed within that timeframe. The Committee has not yet had an opportunity to consider the implications of the valuation, but we

will do that very soon. This has been a painfully slow process, and is still subject to Ministerial approval.

Also last year I referred in my report to the rising costs of running the lodge. In the main this is being driven by the service charge from MHRMB which covers services and other infrastructure, village transport etc. As I flagged last year, we have increased our accommodation charges by a modest amount to help ameliorate this highly inflationary charge from the MHRMB. However the reality is that the best way for us to offset the charge is increased usage, and particularly in the green season. Members have a part to play in supporting the Club by considering usage options. Mountain management have undertaken a number of projects which have enhanced the attractiveness of Mount Hotham as a summer destination. This includes three walking tracks which have opened up the potential for other tourism activities such as bike riding, alpine fishing and exploration of old gold mining sites. The most recently completed track is the Hotham to Dinner Plain Trail which provides an exciting new option for both walkers and cyclists.

The Committee is keen to support initiatives for greater use of the lodge facilities, and to this end Rob Joyes has agreed to take responsibility for the development of a marketing plan.

On a sad note I record the recent passing of one of our former members, Rick Stevenson. Rick was one of the founding members of our Club.

I would like to thank all the Committee members for their support during the year. All have assumed responsibility for different activities during the year. In particular I record my thanks to the other office bearers, Murray and Ceal, for their diligence in undertaking their roles. Two Committee members do not seek re-election this year, and I want to record our sincere thanks for the contributions made by Leon Price and Mike Kermode.

In doing so, I can't let the opportunity pass without formally recording the amazing contribution which has been made to this Club by both Mike and Marg Kermode. I think it was about 1982 when Mike first joined the Committee, and since that time Mike has had many roles within the Club, including as President. However he and Marg will probably be best remembered for their role as booking officers over a very long period of time,

a role they undertook without the aid of modern technology, and in a patient and courteous manner they always dealt with members ringing on the wrong night, confusing their bookings and forgetting to pay. We intend making a small presentation to Marg and Mike on behalf of the membership of the Club to reflect our gratitude for a job well done and to acknowledge the esteem in which they are held by the members. I have no doubt they will remain closely involved with Burrumbeep.

In closing, I want to thank our members for their support, and we all look forward to a great snow season in 2013.

John Slattery,
President.