



RANSKI CLUB

adventure : recreation : relaxation



May 2024 NEWSLETTER



The 2024 AGM dinner at Mount Buller

From the President

----- IAN MIDDLETON -----

Fellow members,
 Welcome to our newsletter that leads into the winter season. Here's hoping we get lots of snow! The AGM held on Saturday 27 April at the Buller Lodge has been and gone, and those that attended enjoyed a wonderful evening meal provided by the Buller team. Thank you to Adrian Hills and the Buller folk for the hospitality, and a huge BZ to Mike Rich and the team in the kitchen. Unfortunately, we had some technical issues on the day with *Zoom* for those who dialled in. We eventually got the sound back and thank you to those who persevered and stayed tuned in. The AGM voted unanimously to recognise our past President Peter Laver and past Vice President Perisher Rick McMaster as Honorary Life members! Thoroughly deserved and I join with our members in congratulating them and thanking them for their service to our Club over thirty plus years!
 I spoke at the AGM dinner about your Board's immediate focus for 2024: getting the development application for the rebuild of Thredbo lodge approved, increasing the recruitment of new members from Navy, and focussing on connecting with our members.
 On the last point, this newsletter is part of that effort (thank you Jeremy Butler

and the MMC team), but we want to do more than that. Your board is going to look for ways we can make all our members feel involved in the Club, especially the "family" and associate members. As an example, you will find in this newsletter instructions on how to add your family members email details to the primary account so they will also receive newsletters directly into their inbox. We are also investigating if we can open up booking privileges to family members through our new online booking system (CBD). All of our members, whether Ordinary, Associate, Family, and Honorary categories are of equal importance to the Club, and all should have an equivalent opportunity to get involved.
 Finally, enjoy the newsletter, and the ski season. Make a booking and consider staying at one of our other lodges for a change. NSW and ACT folk...book a midweek stay at Buller and enjoy the Victorian high country, and similarly for Buller folk...book a stay at Thredbo and enjoy the atmosphere of a true Alpine village. See you at one of our lodges!

Regards, Ian Middleton

From the Editor

Welcome to the latest edition of the Club newsletter.

There is a chill in the air and the first snowfalls have already hit the Alps. Although that snow didn't last long, everyone is getting excited about the upcoming season, with high hopes that it is better than last year!

Our new booking system is up and running. We've worked through a few teething problems, but the vast majority of members have found it easy to pay their subs and start making bookings for the winter.

Last month we received the sad news of the passing of one of our founding members, Guy Griffiths. He was instrumental in forming our Club and directing it in such a way that has ensured its longevity.

The 2024 AGM was held at the *Breathaker Lodge* at Mt Buller last weekend. There was a good turn out from members both in person and online via *Zoom*. Our thanks to the Buller crew for hosting and once again turning on a sensational dinner.

Not much more to say, but get your bookings in and keep those snow dances going!



STOP PRESS

The Club was sad to hear of the recent passing of another original member, Philip Michael Mulcare. Philip joined the Club as a young midshipman. He went on to have a long and distinguished career in the Navy, retiring as a Commodore in 1991.

We were also recently notified that another stalwart of the Club and early Associate member, Jim Logan-Bell, passed away in recent times. Jim was involved with the early days of ski racing in Australia and competed in many Club Championships. He was still skiing at Buller well into his eighties. Also an accomplished artist, Jim's paintings of the early Buller lodges are a wonderful legacy that adorn the lodge lounge.

RIP Gentlemen

Test your knowledge of our Club!



1. What year was the R.A.N. Ski Club established?
2. When was the first lodge built at Breathtaker Point, Mount Buller?
3. How much did the Club pay for the Buller site and partially completed hut?
4. When was the first Perisher lodge established?
5. How many of the current Club Directors are pilots?

(Answers on the back page)

The New Online System

Things you might not know...

To log into the new CBD Web online system, all you need is your member number and password. If you don't know your member number, you can retrieve it, as long as you know your email address. If you forget your password, or it is your first time logging in, you can also re-set it. So, the only thing you really need to remember is your registered email address!

In the **Manage Account / View My Details** section of your account, you can amend personal details such as address, phone number and email. You can add an extra email address by putting a comma or semi-colon after the first email. This is great if you want to add a family member so that they also receive emails from the Club. Please note that once a second address is registered, it will also allow the owner of that email to log into the account.

Please don't use "defence.gov.au" emails or "admin@" email addresses, as this will often prevent our news emails from getting to you.

Booking Enquiries

(02) 6295 6634

Tuesday to Friday

0930 – 1430

	2014	2022	2023	Annual change
Honorary	14	14	15	+7%
Ordinary	338	351	366	+4%
Associate	512	618	656	+6%
Family *	788	775	870	+12%
TOTAL	1652	1758	1907	+8%

Membership at capacity

The story behind the numbers

----- VICE PRESIDENT MMC -----

After almost a decade of moderate growth, our Club membership numbers took a relatively steep rise in 2023 and rose to above 1850 last October.

This triggered a ‘restricting new applications’ strategy that had previously been established by your Board.

The 1850 ‘CAP’ is based on a calculation of the total number of beds in our lodges across the peak ski season, noting that exceeding that number could compromise our ability to offer all members an opportunity to book in for at least a week period during the season.

The ‘restricting new applications’ strategy was implemented in November 2023 and remains in force until further notice. It means that the Club is currently only accepting membership applications for Ordinary membership and Associate membership for former child members.

The consequence of this strategy is twofold. Firstly, with the normal attrition of members, it will work to bring the total membership back within the CAP.

Secondly, by accepting predominantly Ordinary membership applications, it will also restore a better balance of Ordinary to Associate membership, in accordance with the Club charter and membership plan.

This current restriction on new Associate applications is only a temporary strategy. Since its inception, the Club has included Associate members as an integral and valued part of the make-up of the Club. It is just a matter of optimising the numbers and getting the balance right.

Notwithstanding the membership figures outlined above, true membership totals are never known exactly until well into the winter season. This is because only a minority of members who leave the Club give notice. The majority who leave just simply don’t pay their annual subscription or are prompted to pay their overdue subscriptions when they try and make a booking. For example, at the end of March 2024, only 1360 members were financial.

Later in the year, after final invoice reminders are sent out to all unfinancial members, those who don’t respond will be ‘retired’ and we will then be able to make an accurate assessment of total membership numbers.

At the moment, the Club is only accepting membership applications for Ordinary membership and Associate membership for former child members.

We anticipate accepting other Associate memberships applications again once the total membership numbers reduce.

Keep an eye on the website for updates.

Communications

Stay in touch with the latest Club news

The Navy Ski Club uses a variety of ways to keep you informed of Club business. These include our website, Facebook, newsletters and bulletins.

Like most organisations, email is now our primary method of Club communications.

Gone are the days when a few of our dedicated members would hand address and stamp a mailout twice a year. It’s just not practical or efficient to do this anymore with over 1000 addresses in our system.

Therefore, it’s so important that you keep your email address up-to-date. We still get many ‘bounces’ from invalid addresses when we send out newsletters and bulletins.

Data also shows that about 75% of our news bulletins are opened, so many of you may be missing out on important Club business. Please check to ensure emails from xxx@ranskiclub.com.au are not diverting to Trash or Spam folders.

We aim to send out a newsletter biannually (May and December) and periodic bulletins to keep you informed of important business.

Additionally, we use Facebook to advertise various events and activities.

Finally, the Club website should be your ‘go-to’ place for a wealth of Club information.

Suggestions and input from our members is always welcome.

Email

info@ranskiclub.com.au

Website

<http://www.ranskiclub.com.au>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/RanSkiClub>

Newsletter editor: Jeremy Butler

vpmmc@ranskiclub.com.au



You can always call Liz if you have enquiries about membership and bookings ☺



At the 2024 Annual General Meeting, the following members were elected;

Board of Directors

President:	Ian Middleton
Secretary:	Alan Moore
Treasurer:	Sean Noble
VP Membership, Marketing & Communications:	Jeremy Butler
VP Perisher:	Andrew Smith
VP Thredbo:	Greg Thompson
VP Buller:	Adrian Hills

Committees

MM&C:	Anne-Marie Tenni, David Garrett, Joachim Milsom, Joanne Briggs, Penny Middleton
Perisher:	Mel Hutton, Ian Morrow, Brian Campbell, Joanne Briggs, Suzanne Laver, David Garrett, Simone Jones, Blair Mullins
Thredbo:	Damien Smith, Phil Gregory, Mike Harrison, Geoff Cole, Geoff Greentree
Buller:	Fiona Peden, Sam Lane, Mike Rich, Peter Mioni, Wolfgang Gertis, Greg Williams, Trevor Buckley, Louise Dawson

BE PREPARED:

With the snow season looming, it's important to be prepared. Some exercises that will lessen the impact:

1. Go to McDonalds, order the most basic cheeseburger, but insist on paying \$24.50 for it. If you want fries, add another \$13.50. Also, make sure you stand in the longest queue.
2. Buy some new gloves, soak them in water, place in the freezer for 15 minutes, then wear them. Repeat every hour during the day. After one day, throw one glove away.

Lodge updates

Thredbo

After the relatively poor winter in 2023 the summer at Thredbo has been a ‘bumper season’! Lodge bookings have been solid throughout summer with a good number of ‘whole of lodge’ bookings. Participation in mountain biking and other summer alpine sports are increasing rapidly and Thredbo village is embracing the summer with vigour and our lodge bookings are following this increasingly popular trend to spend time in the alpine summer.

Progress on the Thredbo Lodge redevelopment over the past 12 months has been positive, albeit slow. Phil Gregory, the Redevelopment Committee and the building consultants have been toiling away in the background providing a plethora of technical information required by the NSW Department of Planning & Environment (DP&E) in following up our Development Application (DA) submitted in early 2023. The gathering of the required information has taken considerable time, but our aim is to eliminate or at least minimise the risks to the project during this approval phase. With this approach, we intend to enter the construction phase with great confidence, in the knowledge the final result will be achievable, affordable and present minimum issues or delays during construction. A more detailed coverage of redevelopment activities can be found in the President’s report at the 2024 AGM.

Looking ahead to the winter season, Thredbo is continuing its quest to become the ‘premier’ alpine resort in Australia with opening of Freddie’s Snowsports Snowrunner to provide increased snow access for the kids, and for the big kids, we’re all excited for the opening of the Thredbo Alpine Coaster for this winter – 1.5 kilometres of track at speeds of up to 40 kph!

These arrangements mirror those at Thredbo. The new number is 0466 066 636 and will be active from the opening weekend of the ski season.



Mount Buller

Buller work parties have been well attended and much has been achieved. In particular, final strengthening and reinforcement modifications have been made to the balcony pergola and it is now certified to withstand a Category 5 cyclone, should that ever be required.

The lodge is in great condition and ready for a big season ahead.

Don’t forget, with 60 beds available in the lodge, there are often some midweek vacancies when the other lodges are full. Midweek specials and ski-in/ski-out access make it an attractive alternative. If you are looking for a 5-day or 7-day stay, a slightly longer drive will get you to Mt Buller. For example, if you are driving from Sydney, it is only three hours further to get to Buller, rather than Perisher or Thredbo.

Perisher Valley

Perisher Work Parties have been well supported and productive over the summer assisted by some excellent weather. Our March attendees also had front row viewing of flying ops to dismantle existing chair infrastructure in preparation for construction of a new lift in summer 24/25. A Perisher announcement states:

"We are excited to announce that the existing fixed-grip 2-person Mt Perisher Double lift and fixed-grip 3-person Mt Perisher Triple lift will be upgraded to a new 6-person, high-speed chairlift (‘the Mt Perisher 6’) for the 2025 ski and ride season in Australia."

For more details:

<https://www.perisher.com.au/perisher-news/media-room/latest-press-releases/1690-newer,-faster-6-person-chairlift-announced-for-perisher%20>

Following the introduction of Sky Muster for Lodge internet access the club is moving to discontinue landline services. Consequently, the Lodge Phone number will shortly change to a mobile service. The mobile service will be more convenient for our Lodge Managers and generate a considerable cost saving from existing Telstra services.



Vale Rear Admiral Guy Griffiths, AO, DSO, DSC, RAN

Founding member

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing on 5th March of Admiral Griffiths at age 101. Guy Griffiths is recognised as a founding member of our Club.

Our club history records that in 1951, the crew of the aircraft carrier HMAS SYDNEY was in the United Kingdom standing by the ship. Following an expedition of some of the ship's company to the Austrian Alps, three young officers were inspired with the idea of forming a Club. In 1951, Guy Griffiths, Phillip Stevenson and Geoff Hood held their first brain-storming meeting in the ship's Gunnery Officer's cabin. It was here that the idea of forming a Club was born."

Guy Griffiths had a distinguished naval career. After graduation from the Naval College, he was posted to the Royal Navy for further training and joined the battle cruiser HMS Repulse. He survived the sinking of the Repulse by Japanese air attack on 10 December 1941. He served in several ships later in the Second World War. He was promoted to lieutenant in 1944 and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in May 1945 "For gallantry, skill and devotion to duty while serving in HMS Shropshire in the successful assault operations in the Lingayen Gulf, Luzon Island."

Griffiths saw service as Gunnery Officer in HMAS Sydney in the Korean War and commanded the guided missile destroyer HMAS Hobart in the Vietnam War. Later, as commanding officer of HMAS Melbourne, he assisted in relief operations in Darwin after Cyclone Tracy hit in 1974. In 1976 he was promoted to Rear Admiral and appointed Chief of Naval Personnel. In January 1979 he took up his final posting as the Flag Officer Naval Support Command. He retired in 1980.

After that historical meeting in 1951, Guy and his colleagues pursued the idea of a Navy Ski Club when back in Australia, and on 3rd February 1953, Naval Order number 50 formally established the RAN Ski Club. Guy was also instrumental in our philosophy of "leave rank and rate outside the gate."

In the much more traditional and classist society of the 1950s, this was truly visionary and has helped ensure the longevity of our Club.



Navy Ski Club traditions

Did you know?

The ship's bell has a centuries long tradition of use in navy ships. A ship's bell is usually made of brass or bronze and inscribed with the commissioning date of the ship to which it belongs. It is unique to the ship and commemorates the service of that ship. Bells are used for timekeeping, sounding alarms, and ceremonies.



A little-known fact is that members of the ship's company may have their children baptised aboard ship, using the up turned bell as a font. It is said that this brings new life and good luck to the ship. Everyone who is baptised in this manner has their name engraved inside the bell.

A bell hanging from the bar or anywhere in a Naval mess is an important item. The ringing of the bell indicates that the ringer is offering to buy a round of drinks for all present. Often this is done to celebrate the ringer's promotion. By custom, an inadvertent ringing of the bell, whether by accident or trickery, can be considered a similar offer!

Booking Rules

Terms and conditions (important to know!)

----- VICE PRESIDENT MMC -----

Online Bed Availability

Due to our need to closely manage bed allocations to take account of the gender and age mix of members and guests, we cannot allow all beds to be available for online bookings. We must keep a small number available for the Booking Officer to manage these issues. At times it is not possible to use all beds in the lodges.

This means that at some busy periods, Online Bookings will show no beds available when some might be. In these circumstances, members should contact the Booking Officer offline to check whether individual bookings can be taken, and to register interest in being placed on a waiting list in case of cancellations. Of course, you can always phone the lodge manager to check if any last-minute beds are available.

Changes

Please remember that all transfers of bookings from one member to another for the same period must be handled by the Club's Booking Officer. Members are not to transfer bookings between themselves. Such transfers may be rejected by the Club's Booking and Administration Officer where there is a waiting list or where the proposed change cannot be accommodated because of bedding allocation limitations.

Priority Bookings

Please note that only one priority Booking can be requested per year per member.

At the moment, these bookings are handled offline as it is not possible to easily identify who has work-party credits through the membership database.

Note that the priority booking period is now over.

Guest Bookings

Guests can only stay at our lodges as part of a booking made by a financial Member. The host member must be present at the Lodge for the duration of the booking, meaning that if the host member is unable to stay or needs to depart prior to the end of the booking, the guests are unable to remain at the lodge.

Payment for a member's guest booking must be made by the host member. This also applies to any amendments, cancellations or requests for refunds made to the booking.

Children

Family Members 18 years and over may stay in the lodges without their related Ordinary or Associate Member. Family Members under 18 years must be accompanied by an adult member (i.e. a member aged 18 or over)

There are no restrictions on accommodation of children at the Thredbo and Mt Buller lodges. Children under four

years of age cannot be accommodated in the Perisher Lodge during the snow season.

Children pay the same rates as adults. This is due to the fact that all our lodges are governed by strict limits on the number of persons that can be accommodated on any one night. So, because children, no matter how little, effectively take up a bed allocation, there is no special rate and they are classed as either a member or a guest, with the applicable member or guest nightly rate being charged.

The Buller lodge provides 'porta-cots' and 'hi-chairs' for our little folk. Check with the lodge manager prior to arrival.

Cancellations & Refunds

We continue to get large numbers of applications for refunds. Amazingly, there seems to be a correlation between poor snow conditions and members becoming sick or injured prior to their planned holiday!

The conditions for full refunds (more than 42 days' notice) and partial [50%] refunds (14 to 42 days' notice) are clearly articulated in our By-Laws and on the Accommodation Rates Form on our website.

Remember that there are no refunds for cancellations with less than 14 days' notice unless for exceptional circumstances (see below).

Additionally, some discounted rates (e.g. the midweek 'get 5 days, pay for 3 days' deal has a "no changes/no refund" policy). *It is important to consider all of this prior to committing to a booking.*

In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Directors may approve a full refund for a cancelled booking. Exceptional circumstances are those where the reasons for the cancellation could not have been foreseen and/or are outside the member's control. Changes in work and family commitments are not considered exceptional circumstances. Members are encouraged to consider travel insurance to protect themselves against these types of events.

Whether you are seeking an 'exceptional circumstances' refund or not, members are encouraged, as a matter of courtesy, to contact the respective lodge manager if plans change at the last minute.

IMPORTANT: Bookings must be cancelled with the Booking Officer prior to submitting a Request for Refund application.

Check the website for details and know the rules prior to booking!

CLASSIFIEDS

Save the Date

R.A.N. SKI CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

MT BULLER

3RD AUGUST 2024

X-country
Giant Slalom (skiers and snowboarders)
All ages and abilities welcome
Celebration and fancy-dress Awards dinner
2024 theme "The U.S. of A."

Work parties

Work parties generally commence early on a Saturday morning and conclude Sunday afternoon, although individual lodge work party leaders will specify particular timings to attendees as required.

Each of the lodges has one more work party scheduled in May, before the start of the 2024 winter season. See the website for details.

Quiz Answers:

1. 1953
2. 1955/56
3. \$4400 (equivalent)
4. Site purchased in 1962 and lodge open for business in 1964
5. Four!

News flash:

Best coffee in Victoria is now on the way to Mount Buller!

il salotto.

ITALIAN KITCHEN & CAFFÈ

Navy Ski Club members Mike Rich and Kath Bier have opened a fantastic little café in Mansfield. Open every day except Tuesdays and powder days.

Shop 3, 69 High Street, Mansfield VIC

www.ilsalotto.com.au