

# March 2011

KIAMA ALPINE CLUB NEWSLETTER



Members have until  
31st March 2011  
to request their winter  
booking preferences.  
**HURRY, BOOK NOW.**  
[www.kiamaalpineclub.org.au](http://www.kiamaalpineclub.org.au)

Photo courtesy [www.thredbo.com.au](http://www.thredbo.com.au)

## March 2011

In this issue:

President's Report

Summer Activities

Membership News

2011 Rates (attachment)

### 2011 Dates to Remember:

MARCH- Members Preferential booking 31<sup>st</sup> March

APRIL- Jazz Festival has moved to 15-17<sup>th</sup> April

MAY- AGM Kiama Leagues Club 14<sup>th</sup> May

MAY – Working Bee 21-22 May

### **Kiama Alpine Club Cooperative Limited**

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## President's Update

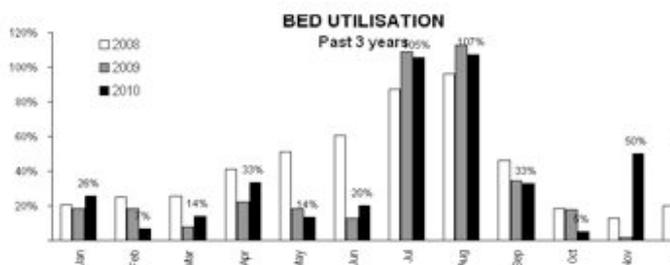
Hi everyone,

Included in this month's newsletter is the 2011 winter rates and I would like to explain some of the changes we have introduced in 2011.

### Accommodation rates 2011

Late last year the Board conducted a detailed review of our nightly accommodation rates throughout summer and winter.

Our yearly occupancy levels range from 31-37% over the last 10 years. In the peak winter months of July and August we achieve 90-110% occupancy (includes the Cooma room) reflecting the peak demand period. However, the usage throughout the other 10 months of the year is considerably lower. Summer utilisation is generally very low (less than 20%) except for Thredbo festivals and major public holidays. Below is the monthly bed utilisation over the past 3 years:



Ref: Kiama Guestmaster statistics.

Note: Utilisation calculations are based on 30 available beds, and actual includes the Cooma room which is used as an emergency overflow for racers. Hence in Jul and Aug the utilisation can be higher than 100%.

The pricing strategy for many years has been to increase the nightly rates by 2-3% per annum to reflect the average CPI rates. One of the exceptions being in 2000 when rates increased by 10% due to the introduction of the GST.



President Liz Wynn in Peru

#### Contact details

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Feel free to contact me with any suggestions, concerns or questions.

In assessing whether our nightly rates offered good value for money and whether any changes should be introduced, we assessed how we compared to other Thredbo club lodges and apartment style commercial accommodation across the summer and winter periods for members and guests.

We considered the inclusion of meals and linen if applicable, reviewed the check-in/check-out times, quality of the accommodation, the flexibility of the booking conditions, facilities such as car parking and ensuite bathrooms and for the club lodges, annual subscription and entrance fees. Reviewing their websites also allowed us to compare the website functionality for our own website redesign. We were able to obtain information on 12 Club Lodges and 11 apartment style commercial hotels plus include personal experiences of other lodges from members.

We also reviewed the feedback gained from the members survey conducted in 2009. The majority of members surveyed rated the lodge prices as excellent to good. Although some members felt the rates were too high.

The key findings of our review include:

- Our peak winter member rates in 2010 are highly competitive against other club lodges (between \$45 – \$60 per night allowing for meals)
- Our guest winter rates are also very comparable to other club lodges and are highly attractive compared to commercial lodges which average over \$200 night (although this includes 2 meals per day)
- Summer rates are very mixed – some offer a low rate eg Dulmison \$20, others seem to be discouraging summer usage eg KAC \$80. Commercial lodges average around \$70 per person per night but many have specials including lift tickets, picnic baskets and catering greatly reducing this price.
- Adult rates apply for children over 12 or over 15 years of age (Kiama is currently over 18 years)
- The vast majority of club Lodges offered little flexibility in terms of booking dates ie most had set 7, 5 or 2 night stays
- Arrival / Departure times for other lodges are generally check-in 2pm, checkout 10am (Kiama was in 4pm out 12pm in 2010)
- We offer a very good accommodation product. Many lodges have not been refurbished since the 70s or 80s
- Our annual subscriptions were lower than the few club who advertised the rates eg Happy Wanderers \$300, Brindabella \$240

The overall assessment was that Kiama Alpine Lodge currently offers a very attractive holiday package for members and guests particularly in the winter.

**Our key recommendations are:**

**1. Introduce summer specials and target mountain bikers and hikers to increase our summer revenues**

We have already introduced new, cheaper low season summer prices for members and guests reducing guest prices from \$45 per night to \$29 per night. This also means 2 adults and 2 children could stay for less than \$100 per night.



Photo courtesy [www.thredbo.com.au](http://www.thredbo.com.au)

We introduced a new special of one free night for more than 10 people to encourage group bookings (which are easier for Rob and Sally to clean etc).

Rather than introduce one low summer rate we kept a higher rate for the Thredbo festivals and public holidays to retain our best summer revenues.

We created two new summer activities to appeal to hikers and the adventurous – an abseiling weekend in January and Kosciusko walk in February. Both have been very successful for their first time and Karyn has provided in update in the newsletter.

Mountain biking and hiking are growing in Thredbo and represent a potential segment opportunity to market to in the summer. In February we promoted the Lodge to over 30 sporting clubs (particularly mountain biking and hiking) and high schools in the Illawarra and ACT highlighting our mountain biking facilities. The result has been a 25% increase in summer booking numbers over 2010, however, it is early days and we expect this will take 1-2 summer seasons to show sustained increases.



Photo courtesy [www.thredbo.com.au](http://www.thredbo.com.au)

Better summer usage does increase some of our costs such as gas, electricity and water and Rob and Sally manage this closely by grouping guests together within the Lodge heating zones. Plus we are using other expenses more effectively such as the cost for year-round Lodge Managers.

## 2. Increase winter rates for members and guests

The following changes will apply in 2011:

- Peak member rates will increase in 2011 from \$48 to \$55 per member per night
- Peak guest rates will increase from \$95 to \$98 per guest per night.
- Guest child ages will be reduced from 18 years to 15 years (members remain at 18 years)
- All 2011 winter rates are attached.

We understand some members will be concerned regarding the changes and obviously this will increase the cost of your winter skiing holiday so I would like to explain some of the key considerations in making these changes.

The peak winter demand offers the Club the best opportunity to increase our revenues to offset our operating costs and to save for future capital improvements. Whilst we can utilise our assets more effectively in the summer, unless KT invest in other sporting or business activities in Thredbo, the demand in the non-winter months will continue to remain low. By increasing the peak winter rates we estimate we will increase our revenues by approximately \$8,000 in 2011, which will be ear-marked for future capital works.

We have not increased the guest rates substantially rather we have elected to keep the rates below a \$100 per night price barrier.

With a very diverse age range across our membership the price increase targets a user-pays strategy rather than all members irrespective of whether they are using the Lodge or not sharing the costs. We want to retain as many older members as possible so they can continue to share the positive aspects of membership long after they have stopped skiing.



Photo courtesy [www.thredbo.com.au](http://www.thredbo.com.au)

### AGM 2011

The Annual General Meeting is set for 14th May 2011 and will be held at the Kiama Leagues Club.

Meeting time will commence at 3.00pm and will be followed by a buffet dinner.

Further information will be circulated with the Annual Report in late April.

2011 Thredbo Club Card information coming soon.  
An email will be sent out with details to apply.

### 3. Adjust our booking conditions to improve our operating efficiencies

The following changes will apply on 2011:

- Check-in time changes to 3pm and check-out time changes to 11am in all areas including rooms, kitchen and car park from June to September
- By checking-in earlier we can avoid driving in icy conditions in the late afternoon and checking out earlier will allow our Lodge Manager to better clean the Lodge.
- Cancellation fees will apply to bookings made during the Members Preferential booking period. With these bookings;
  1. During the school holidays we are only accepting one week bookings.
  2. Any alterations to a preferential period booking involving a reduction in nights staying, only a 50% refund will apply to the reduced nights over and above the normal cancellation provisions.
- NEW Cancellation Policy.
  1. Cancellation in excess of 45 days from commencement of stay-100% refund less the \$55.00 cancellation fee
  2. Cancellation within 30-45 days of stay-75% refund
  3. Cancellation within 14-30 days of stay-50% refund
  4. Cancellation within 14 days of stay-NO REFUND

### 4. Annual Subscription fees to remain unchanged in 2011

- Annual subscriptions will remain unchanged in 2011 ie \$205 (to be confirmed at the AGM in May)
- A new late fee will be introduced for unpaid annual subscriptions

After careful consideration, the Board has adopted all 4 recommendations effective in 2011. The full rates and conditions are included and are available at [www.kiamaalpineclub.org.au](http://www.kiamaalpineclub.org.au)

At the same time the Board has been developing a detailed 10 year capital expenditure estimate with a view to establish a sinking fund for future works and reduce our dependency on increasing the number of members. Later this year the Board will assess all funding strategies based on our cost estimates.

The Board welcome your feedback and we hope to provide updates on the cost estimates and funding strategies as soon as possible.

### 2010 Financial Position

The 2010 financial results are currently being audited. At this stage we estimate we have had a positive year:

1. Accommodation revenues increased by \$13,000 over 2009
2. Expenses were lower than budgeted with no major capital building expenses
3. Our 2010 cash position was positive with almost \$100k in the bank
4. Our bank loan was reduced to \$231,000

Full details will be included in the 2010 Annual Report due in April.

I hope this detailed update explains the strategic and long-term view the Board is taking to continue to improve our Club and Lodge. As always I look forward to seeing you at the Lodge.

Liz Wynn

## Summer Activities

This summer we experimented with a couple of activities to encourage more people to visit the lodge outside the ski season, both of which were hugely enjoyed by those who took part.

### Abseiling at Signature Rocks (Ramshead Range)

We had a great day rock climbing and abseiling at Signature Rocks on 22 January. The sun was shining and the wildflowers were blooming. We all (6 adults & 7 kids) agreed that it was wonderful to be out and enjoying the mountains from a completely different perspective. After doing the climbs we all felt an amazing sense of achievement. The day was fittingly rounded off by a hilarious group dinner back at the Lodge.



Photos courtesy Karyn Bartholomew

### Glacial Lakes Walk

On 26 February an enthusiastic group of 12 walkers, ranging in age from 10 – 74, walked the 22km Glacial Lakes circuit from Charlotte's Pass (including to the top of Kosi.) It was a long day, but well worth the effort. We were extremely lucky with the weather and the views over the range into Victoria were breathtaking. We rounded off the day with another fabulous Lodge banquet (a big thank you to Val Wynn and family for making that happen.)

Thank you to Peter and Acacia from K7 Adventures ([www.k7adventures.com](http://www.k7adventures.com)) who were wonderful guides at both events. We have talked about organizing some events later in the year, including the possibility of a snow-shoe walk out to Ramshead Range at some stage (maybe Club Weekend if conditions aren't good for a Dead Horse Gap run.)

Karyn Bartholomew



Photos courtesy Deb Dickens

## Membership News

### MEMBERSHIP

In keeping with our family friendly policies, children of members are invited to join the Club when turning 18 year's of age and we encourage spouse/partners of members to join at much reduced rates compared to new family membership.

Membership fees (inc.GST) as at 20<sup>th</sup> March 2011

18 year old - \$800                      Spouse/partner - \$2,450

Both include a \$250 share in Kiama Alpine Club Cooperative.

To apply or find out more, contact President Liz Wynn at [liz.wynn@hotmail.com](mailto:liz.wynn@hotmail.com) or Secretary Julie Christensen at [wynnjulie@gmail.com](mailto:wynnjulie@gmail.com)



Photo courtesy [www.thredbo.com.au](http://www.thredbo.com.au)

### WELCOME NEW MEMBER

**Alice Fraser**  
Daughter of  
Christine and Peter Fraser  
Gladesville  
NSW

### Hurry! Members Preferential Bookings Period closes 31<sup>st</sup> March.

Now is the best time to consider your winter breaks to the snow.

The "Members Preferential Winter Booking Period", where member booking requests have priority over non-member requests, closes 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

To request a booking, you can complete the booking request at [www.kiamaalpineclub.org.au](http://www.kiamaalpineclub.org.au), or email [lodge@kiamaalpineclub.org.au](mailto:lodge@kiamaalpineclub.org.au) or fax a request to 02 6457 6453.

You can also send requests for non-member winter bookings, however member bookings will take priority.

Preference will also be given to full week bookings, then Monday-Friday, then weekend only bookings.

Booking details will be confirmed and ballots conducted if needed, in the first week of April by our Lodge Managers Rob and Sally Walker. After this date, all available rooms may be booked by members or non-members (with the exception of the members-only periods) on a first-in basis.

We have already received a significant number of winter requests so don't be disappointed and send in your request today.

### Club Booking System

Our new booking system will be up and running for the start of the winter season.

We will then have one system that stores all our membership details as well as manage our accommodation bookings.

For those of you who haven't informed us of your email address or if you have a child who will be turning 18 soon, please contact us.

## NEW Check-in and Check-out Times in 2011

Our arrival and departure times are being adjusted to better suit members.

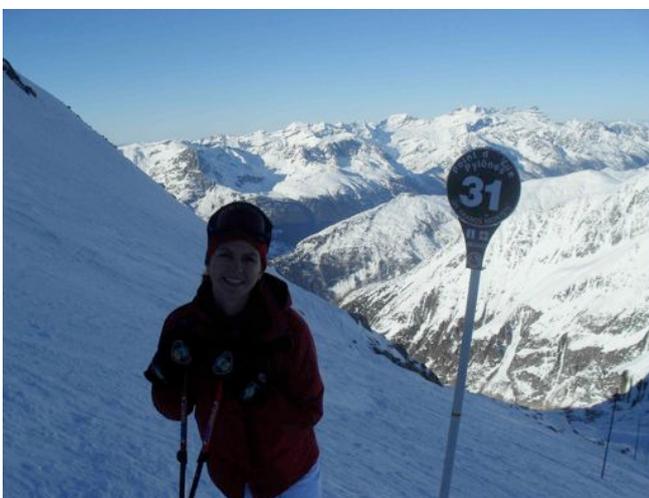
Check-in is now 1 hour earlier to allow for potentially icy driving conditions and to be prepared for evening meals.

Check-out is also 1 hour earlier to ensure ample time for Rob and Sally to have the lodge prepared for new guests and clear the car parking. On Sundays there is NO use of the kitchen between 11am and 3pm.

CHECK-IN 3pm CHECK-OUT 11am  
June to September



Rob Molino at Jackson Hole-Grande Targee



Tatiana at Chamonix –Les Grands Montets Glacier

## Winter Working Bee 21-22 May 2011

Come along and help James to have the lodge looking sparkling for the winter season. Please contact James at [jamesgarner.is@gmail.com](mailto:jamesgarner.is@gmail.com)

## DVD Donations

We are looking to start a DVD library in the games room for the kids. If you have any DVD's you would like to donate, please bring them to the lodge with you or contact Liz. Please keep in mind, they will have to be suitable for children.

## Members Updates

Please remember to update us with any changes that occur eg. Change of address, change in email address or birth of a child.

Email us at  
[lodge@kiamaalpineclub.org.au](mailto:lodge@kiamaalpineclub.org.au)

## Thredbo Jazz, Funk & Groove

In its 24th year, the Thredbo Jazz, Funk & Groove Festival includes 3 days of music, dance, fine food and wines.

Find out more

[www.thredbo.com.au](http://www.thredbo.com.au)

**NEW DATE**  
**15-17th April**

## Would You Like to become a Director?

The Lodge Operations Director role has become available. If you would like to take on this role for a three year term, please contact

Club President Liz on  
[liz.wynn@hotmail.com](mailto:liz.wynn@hotmail.com)