

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2014

Happy summer holidays everyone. I hope you have had enjoyable breaks over Christmas, New Year and Australia Day, and you continue to enjoy the glorious summer weather or have enjoyed some northern hemisphere snow.

Following a poor Australian snow season, we have had a busy lodge over the summer months. Thanks to a number of large group bookings and a huge effort from our Lodge Manager Michelle and Booking Director James Garner, we have achieved over 500 bed nights in January. We normally average around 300 bed nights in January so 518 bed nights is a record summer month and a fantastic result. Although summer is lower revenue than the winter season, it's great to see the lodge being well utilised in the school holidays. Not only does it help offset our year-round costs but many guests have expressed an interest in visiting in the winter months and some of the groups have already tentatively booked dates for 2015.

I was lucky to enjoy New Year at the Lodge this year and I was blown away by some of the enthusiastic positive comments from our members and guests. One group of avid bushwalkers and their Jindabyne guides let us know our lodge is *"the best club lodge in Thredbo with great views, excellent facilities especially the kitchen and the best car parking"*. We all know that but it's certainly nice to be reminded by others who are new to our lodge.

Michelle, John and Liam continue to manage our lodge to an outstanding level of service and cleanliness. Recently members Diane and Cameron Hinton let me know, *"We think Michelle and John are doing an excellent job. We recently spent a week at the lodge and it struck us both what a fantastic job Michelle is doing (John is away in the UK) and how lucky we are to have her as our Lodge Manager. She is very professional, yet still friendly and caring and nothing is ever too much trouble. The lodge is also looking very well cared for. We hope that Michelle and John don't have any plans to leave any time soon!"*

In December, Jordan Rogers, Managing Director of Kosciusko Thredbo and Stuart Diver announced some exciting new developments for Thredbo. In 2014 the snow guns will be further expanded and new this year the water will be refrigerated cooling the water by 1-2 degrees to allow more snow making days. Stay tuned for further details on tobogganing and the plans for a future new lift.

Over summer we added automated email confirmations to our systems. Now whenever you send a booking request from the website or if you send an email to our lodge managers you will now receive an automated email to confirm we have received your enquiry. Michelle endeavours to respond to emails within 72 hours so if you have anything urgent please feel free to call the lodge and speak to Michelle. Thank you to Michelle, James Garner and Alistair Waters for making this happen. I'm sure everyone will feel happier to know their email has been received rather than wondering if it has gone into the internet ether!

Fabulous news. During March and April we are updating the upstairs bathrooms. Although our accommodation revenues were lower in 2013 than expected due to the poor snow, the Board are confident we are still able to afford to update the bathrooms having kept \$50,000 invested for this project. Vice-President Tony Lloyd is working with member and builder Craig Morris on the

renovation works. Tony, myself and some of the Board are helping Craig demolish the bathrooms so if you can spare some time we would greatly appreciate your help.

The Board have also determined to open family membership this year to help reduce our loan and ensure the long-term financial viability of the club. We intend to limit the opening of membership to only one or two families each year so as not to over saturate our membership. Those families who have already expressed interest in joining our club will be contacted and interviewed over the next few months (in chronological order) and we will keep you informed of the outcome. If you know of anyone interested in potentially joining or club please encourage them to send a message through our website.

Not only has the Kiama Alpine Club Board been busy working on major capital works, but over the past few months, the Board have been establishing the ground work for a long-term strategic plan for our Club. Where are we heading? What are our goals? How are we going to address the potential repercussions of climate change?

Before we can develop a long-term plan to address these issues, we are asking a broad cross-section of our members to tell us what they love about the Club and what attitudes, beliefs or behaviours have contributed. Would you like to be involved? If so please contact me at liz.wynn@kiamaalpineclub.org.au or our Club Secretary karyn.bartholomew@kiamaalpineclub.org.au

The 2014 calendar of events has been released and you will see we have responded to your feedback on adding another under 3's week, we are hoping to add a uni weekend and a social get together in May if we have enough interest. The winter accommodation rates will also be released shortly and we have tried hard to respond to your feedback on the booking conditions and pricing.

Thank you also to those members who recently paid their 2013 annual subscriptions. Treasurer Steven Walker and his accounting team in Tumut have been moving our financial reporting to a "cloud based" accounting system for real-time reports allowing greater access and control for the Board no matter where they are located. This has meant some teething issues for the annual subscriptions and unfortunately some emails seen as junk. Please feel free to contact Steven's team if you have any concerns regarding your annual subs.

Finally, I'm very pleased to report the next chapter in the Kiama Alpine Club history book "A Place in the Mountains: the Continuing story of Kiama Alpine Club, 1997 – 2013" is progressing well and we hope to launch the book at our AGM in Kiama in early May. Chas Keys is doing a sterling job interviewing members, conducting background research, writing the text, checking the information throughout the appendices and gathering photos that help tell our tale over the last 26 years of our Club's history. It's been very enjoyable to work with Chas over the past 12 months and I'm sure you will all enjoy reading the book later this year. Thank you to the many members who have contributed information and photos. We'd love your favourite family or group photo from Thredbo during the period 1997 to 2013. Please email liz.wynn@kiamaalpineclub.org.au

I hope to see you at the bathroom working bee.

Cheers

Liz Wynn, President