

DECEMBER 2008

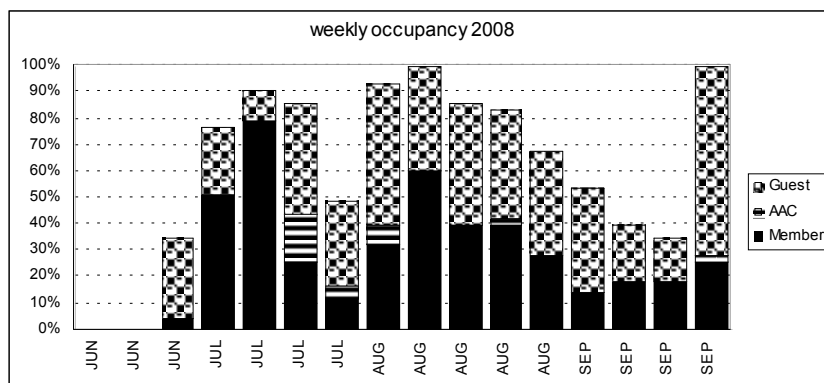
# FALLS CREEK newsletter

## Double Victory at Perisher

Falls Creek maintained its grip on the AAC silverware in the national races held on first Saturday in September at Perisher, defeating teams from Anton, Dinner Plain, Niseko and Perisher. Victorious Open team members for the Wesche Trophy were Ross Barker, Emma Pitt and Melissa Cameron. Victorious Masters' team members were John Cameron, Doug Pitt and Marg Pitt. The Southern Alps Ski Club, based in the Snowy Mountains, also provided some 'friendly competition' in the race.

The 2009 Races will be held on Saturday 5 September 2009, hosted by AAC Dinner Plain and conducted at Mt Hotham.

## Accommodation statistics 2008



After a poor start to the 2008 Season, there was plenty of vacant space (and still plenty of snow) for most of September.

## Wanted! Your e-mail address

E-mail messages about the on-line membership survey and the accommodation booking status revealed considerable gaps in the coverage and accuracy of our mail address list.

Our goal is to have an e-mail contact for every AAC Falls Creek member. Please ensure that you supply a valid e-mail address when you pay your membership subscription.

The reason why we need your e-mail address is to reduce the costs of communicating with you, to make communication more interactive (e.g. the membership survey) and to enable us to promote accommodation vacancies or special events.

The membership survey also indicated very strongly that e-mail was the preferred means of communication.

**Colour Newsletters**  
The expense of colour printing this newsletter would be prohibitive but the colour versions copies can be viewed or downloaded from [www.aacfalls creek.com](http://www.aacfalls creek.com).

### design :

sisko design  
Natasha Mathers  
t. 03 5985 1291  
[design@sisko.com.au](mailto:design@sisko.com.au)

### feedback :

on document to  
Ian Farrow  
[ian.farrow@gmail.com](mailto:ian.farrow@gmail.com)



# VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

## Surveys

2008 has been the year of the surveys. So far we have been asked to respond to the: Village transport survey; Falls Creek Staff accommodation survey; the AAC National survey of committees; and our own membership survey for AAC Falls Creek. A summary of our survey is shown later in this newsletter. I also include some of the comments from the FCRM surveys in the end of season wrap.

## End of Season wrap

The Falls Creek Resort Management board led by Ross Passalacqua presented the 'end of season wrap' up at Falls Creek in September and at a special meeting of the Falls Creek Alpine Association here in Melbourne in late September. Ross brought his usual enthusiasm to the presentation with interesting facts and figures. The full presentation is available at <http://www.fallscreek.com.au/Publications>.

One of the key pieces of feedback to FCRM was ski-in ski-out. This was seen as a major marketing advantage for Falls Creek and highly desired feature of the respondents to the survey. FCRM is looking at ways that this feature can be kept for as much of the season as possible and still head towards the 2020 strategic plan. The strategic plan is also available on the falls creek web site under publications. The Bogong High Plains road is to be sealed this summer. This will make summer attendances easier and its likely that more visitors will come to Falls Creek over summer with the road from Falls to Hotham to be fully sealed. Work has already commenced on the road.

## Farewell Marg and Jodan

Marg has been looking after us for the past 3 years as our lodge manager. I am sure a number of us will be sad to see Marg leaving. Her friendly face each morning and her cheerful Sunday night 'meet and greet' will be missed around the lodge. We wish them good luck with their new ventures and I am sure we will see both Marg and Jodan around the mountain in the years to come.

For season 2009 we will have new managers, the committee have appointed Greg and Jenni Frendo as our new managers and they will have 2 years to settle in. I am sure everyone will welcome them and their daughter Georgia who will be with them in the flat. Greg and Jenni have been around the mountain most of season 2008 and have experience in running accommodation and catering for large groups.

## What's on for Summer

Our summer season will include some building repairs as the roof is getting quite old. We already have some bookings for the summer, so start thinking about a trip to the high country now. Falls Creek has its usual events including: kids activities from 26th December; "Taste of Falls Creek" 18-20 January and the Mile High Dragon Boat festival on 26-27 January.

## The Winter Season

It was an almost full house at opening weekend, unfortunately no skiing was done. The start of the Victorian School holidays was VERY disappointing with the first time in 10 years where grass was the dominant view from the lodge. Within 4 days however the snow started to fall and it kept going for the next month. Our snow coverage (as per the report from Falls Creek resort Management at the end of season wrap) was that we exceeded the 10 years average for everyday of the season from after the Victorian School holidays. International was open from the second week of the Victorian school holidays and didn't close till very late in September. Summit lift was open till within less than a week of the closing of the season.

Attendances were very good over the season with opening weekend being well attended with summer rates available for that weekend only. Considering the lack of skiable snow, everyone still had a good time. We will be modifying the accommodation rates to try to get a better spread over the season with some weeks being lightly attended.

## AAC National Meeting

I also attended the AAC national meeting on 25th October. This is where we hear from our sister projects at Dinner Plain, Hotham, Niseko, Mt Buller and Perisher. As well as these projects we have representation from Southern Alps ski club which has 3 lodges in the NSW snow fields where we have reciprocal arrangements. Check these out at <http://www.australialpineclub.com/> and <http://www.sasc-aus.com/>.

The AAC national office-bearers for the coming year are:  
President: Margaret Campbell (Dinner Plain)  
Secretary: Mike Gregson (Niseko)  
Treasurer: Richard Tress (Perisher)

## Membership

We are currently in a great position regarding our membership. We have closed the membership temporarily as we don't have anyone on the wait to sell. We have a wait to buy list (a very small one). We expect this will open up again in January 2009. As we have done very well with our wait to sell list, we are also removing the member-get-member incentive which was started a while ago.

## Ski Lockers

The ski locker has now been there for more than a season and the enquiries have been extensive. We will be looking at who has skis and boards in the locker at the working party in May and will start to charge an annual fee to leave equipment there. The keys themselves cost money and the main reason to charge is to keep a track of who has equipment in there. Equipment left outside a ski/board bag will be removed each year and equipment that is not labelled will also be removed. We are currently thinking \$10-15/year to the subs but have yet to make a final decision.

Noel Poon *Chairman*



# Money Matters



## Club Finances : in good shape after a strong season

The AAC Falls Creek has had a financially successful season in 2008. Revenue from accommodation bookings were slightly lower than 2007, due to a higher proportion of members using the lodge and thus reducing Guest accommodation, resulting in a slightly lower overall cash receipt.

In spite of a slow season commencement, the latter part of the season was well booked.

Costs are rising and we anticipate that one of our major costs, being site rental levied by the government, is expected to rise by about 25% for 2009. This is one of the top four costs for the Club and it is important that we have adequate cash on hand to accommodate these rising costs.

However, due to higher amounts of cash on hand during 2008 and some other prudent cost control, the Club has increased its cash reserves as we build up to some major works planned around enhancements to the lodge as we approach our Lease renewal.

While no commitments are being made yet, it is anticipated that there will be a constant build up of cash in order to minimize any call on members' funds or borrowings in the future when we commit to capital works.

Summer accommodation revenues are becoming a noticeable element of our overall income profile as both members and guests visit Falls Creek in the off season. Falls Creek Resort Management have provided lots of encouragement to visit the mountain in the summer and we are well placed to deliver a great atmosphere for those that wish to visit the lodge and then venture out to discover the high plains.

Bookings for summer are open and members should contact Alan Long who will be happy to guide you through the summer booking arrangements.

## Falls Creek Resort Management : End of Season Wrap

The CEO of FCRM, Ross Passalaqua, gave a presentation to mountain stakeholders in the latter part of September. Snow was in plentiful supply - but not until July. The average depth of snow was higher for the time it was there, but the season average was a little under the long term average. For those interested, the long term graphics of snow depth give no indication of any material or noticeable alteration to the historically erratic nature of snowfalls.

The cross country skiing element of Falls Creek continues to grow and is now recognised as the premier location for XC skiing. The Kangaroo Hoppet had 1083 entrants this year, with 185 International participants from 25 countries.

St Falls is on schedule to complete the second tower before season commencement 2009. The builder and developer are both committed to completion. We shall see.

The Bogong High Plains Road is being sealed now. The expectation is that it will be completed by May 2009. The road will not be open in the snow season, but will offer off peak travel for many more visitors than ever before. FCRM are planning a host of events, ranging from motorcycle journeys to cycling races and tours.

Summer activities are planned in detail with numerous events scheduled for January 2009. The Summer brochure has the details. Go to:

[http://www.falls creek.com.au/uploads/downloads/Summer\\_Mktg/FC\\_Summer\\_09MiniBroDL.pdf](http://www.falls creek.com.au/uploads/downloads/Summer_Mktg/FC_Summer_09MiniBroDL.pdf)

Charges for Resort entry will rise by 3.5% in 2009 over 2008. This is a good result given the higher increases for 2008 over 2007.

## Booking rates for 2009

There is a small rise in booking rates for 2009. These are the rates with notes for your guidance:

### AAC FALLS CREEK 2009

	Winter Tariff			Off Peak			Summer Tariff		
	Memb.	AAC	Guest	Memb.	AAC	Guest	Memb.	AAC	Guest
<b>Week</b>	252	300	546	176	211	396	132	156	186
<b>Midweek</b>	168	200	364	118	141	264	88	104	124
<b>Weekend</b>	84	100	182	59	71	132	44	52	62
<b>Night</b>	42	50	91	29	35	66	22	26	31
Minimum Summer booking \$220.									

Member subscription rates unchanged for 2009.

Member accommodation rates rising broadly by 5% over 2008 rates.

Guest rates for Season 2009 rise by \$2.00 per day.

Children Under 17 years old at time of stay are charged at 50% of adult rate.

Childrens' week not offered in 2009.

All children under 3 years old at time of stay are FOC.

Mid-Week is five nights, Sunday to Thursday (still only charged for 4 nights)

Off peak from season open to week commencing 28 June 2009 and from week commencing 30 August to end of season.

Season opening weekend special offer of Summer rates.

Summer rates apply at all other non season times.



## YOUR COMMITTEE 2008 aacfallscreek@gmail.com

<b>Chairman</b>	Noel Poon
<b>Secretary/ Treasurer</b>	David Stogdale
<b>Lodge Supervisor</b>	Nigel Cowie
<b>Membership</b>	Peter Bannerman
<b>Bookings</b>	Alan Long
<b>Communications</b>	Ian Farrow
<b>Lease Renewal</b>	Andrew Blogg

### KEY CONTACTS

Lodge Manager - Greg & Jenni Frendo  
aacfallscreek.lodgemanager@gmail.com

ProAcct - Jenny Hood  
jhood@proacct.com.au  
(03) 9880-9600

### THE LODGE

21 Falls Creek Road, Falls Creek VIC 3699  
T: (03) 5758 3209 F: (03) 5758 3264  
E: aacfallscreek.lodgemanager@gmail.com  
W: www.aacfallscreek.com

### CLUB POSTAL ADDRESS

PO Box 140 Deepdene VIC 3103

### BOOKINGS

c/- Ken Long Tyres  
138 Stanley Street, West Melbourne VIC 3003  
T: (03) 9328 4491 F: (03) 9329 8839  
E: mrkflong@bigpond.com

## Summer at Falls Creek

- **Gourmet Guided Walking Tour** 26 Dec - 1 Jan 09
- **Mile High Boxing Day Cricket Match** 26 Dec 08 : NEW
- **Summer Kids Club** 27 Dec - 30 Jan 09
- **New Years Eve Party in the Stars** 31 Dec 08
- **Big Fella Festival** 1 Jan 09 : NEW
- **Falls Creek Billy Cart Derby** 10 Jan 09 : NEW
- **Falls Creek Bush Dance** 10 Jan 09 : NEW
- **Taste of Falls Creek Food & Wine Festival** 17-18 Jan 09
- **Victorian Mile High Dragon Boat Championships** 24-25 Jan 09
- **Audax Alpine Classic - Road Cycling Race** 25 Jan 09
- **Gourmet Guided Walking Tour** 30 Jan - 5 Feb 09
- **Mile High Tennis Tournament** 14 Feb 09
- **Falls Creek Artists Camp / Master Classes** 6-8 Mar 09
- **Terra Australis Mountain Bike Epic** 29 Mar - 4 Apr 09 : NEW
- **Easter Family Festival** 10-13 Apr 09
- **Bogong High Plains Road Sealing Complete** 15 Apr 09
- **Anzac Day Dawn Service** 25 Apr 09

More details at <http://www.falls creek.com.au/>

## We're listening – 2008 membership survey

### snowsports / season

< 5 days	9%
5 to 10 days	41%
10 to 15 days	24%
> 15 days	24%
None	3%

### typical bookings

Week	71%
Weekend	18%
Don't stay	12%

Taken together, this suggests that many members are probably booking for one full week, plus a couple of weekends in each season.

### future capital works

The lounge / dining area emerged as the part of the lodge where the majority think work needs to be done. The Committee is considering future capital works in this part of the lodge (while preserving the section of 'heritage wallpaper') in addition to other work that may be necessary as part of the lease renewal process.

### open comments

Some interesting, sometimes very direct comments. No single common theme, but the Committee has read them all with interest.

### bookings

Usually able to book desired period	68%
Have difficulty booking desired period	32%

### alternative bookings

book another period	48%
AAC reciprocal booking	23%
other non-profit (incl friends)	13%
commercial booking at Falls Creek	3%
commercial booking at another resort	3%
non-snow holiday option	8%

Members appear to generally be able to book for the period they desire, they are prepared to be flexible about booking periods, will consider reciprocal bookings, but will generally avoid commercial bookings.

### reciprocal stays in past 5 yrs

Have not stayed	45%
Anton	24%
Perisher	7%
Dinner Plain	12%
Falls Creek	6%
Niseko	2%
Southern Alps	7%
Collegians	2%
Don't stay	12%

Anton and Dinner Plain are likely favoured due to the proximity to Falls Creek and the common ticket arrangements.

### preferred communication

e-mail	58%
website	10%
project newsletter	31%

This would have been influenced by the use of e-mail to encourage participation in the survey; however it suggests a fairly strong preference for e-mail communication.