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SLOPES - Village Meetings on 24 June 2017 - Report

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Dear SLOPES Members and Associates

These Village Meetings were notified in our email of 5 May and took place on 24 June.

Attached is a detailed report prepared by SLOPES on the discussions at those meetings.

The Report covers matters of general interest to all Clubs in Perisher, Smiggins and Guthega.

Topics covered in the Report include:

1. **Fire safety** - Fire & Rescue guidelines and reminders for fire safety especially during the winter season; tips re false alarm fines; FRNSW visits to lodges planned in winter 2017
2. **Hans Oversnow** - information relevant to operations
3. **Resorts** - update by Perisher/Vail Resorts on resort operations and capital works programs
4. **PRREMS** - update especially re reporting; congratulations to SLOPES Clubs 2017 award winners Guthega Inn, Corroboree Lodge and Mirrabooka Ski Club
5. **Guthega** - comments re snow making, lift opening times and arrangements, snow clearing and waste collection
6. **No smoking policy** - update on the position for for PRR
7. **Feral animal control** - latest news and reminder to report sightings
8. **Waste operations** - update [reminder to take care what goes into the organic/compostable waste bags - no knives and forks, Vegemite sachets, oyster shells and the like]
9. **Bikes, drones and companion animals** - guidelines
10. **Litter** - update on NPWS programs

The Reports is long - 10 pages this year - but Clubs are encouraged to read it and circulate relevant information to their members and guests.

Regards

Frank Zipfinger
President
SLOPES

 SLOPES Village meetings 24-6-17 report.pdf
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**SLOPES report on on Village meetings held at Guthega and Perisher
24 June 2017**

SLOPES thanks the NPWS (Ryan Petrov) for convening the meetings, all those who gave their time to present and answer questions, and those from clubs and lodges who came along. Special thanks also go to KAC for its notes taken at the meeting, and the Guthega Inn and the Man from Snowy River for hosting the meetings

Ryan Petrov (OEH/MSU, Village operations)

Governance/Management Review.

[postscript: OEH announced two days after the Village meetings that the review has concluded, a head lease is the preferred management model for KNP resorts, no offer at this time has been made for a head lease over PRR, a sustainable service delivery model is important for the future of the resort, government is investigating better cost recovery options for the Perisher Range. See SLOPES email to clubs of 26 June 2017.]

Roads, oversnow transport, access

- **New work and repairs.** \$300,000 has been spent on upgrade/concreting of Porcupine Road; work done on Perisher bridges over summer to rectify problems revealed after heavy rains last season. PRR capital works budget only \$13k in 2017-18.
- Following some feedback about interim carparking arrangements this season the present status of Perisher roads D (resort management /authorized vehicles only) will revert to resort management only a couple of days before the first winter dump to give time to move cars out. Quad chair area is for day parking until then. Link road, under RMS control, will remain open till first dump or weather dictates.
- Hans Oversnow is operating on reduced hours. While Roads are Status D, Hans Oversnow will be available from 6.30 am to 6.30 pm Sunday to Thursday and 6.30 am to midnight on Friday. Book if required outside these hours. Ryan welcomed views on this arrangement. One person was critical of the lack of full service.

- New OEH plate ticketing Park entry system will not be commissioned until enabling legislation is passed. Cameras to monitor entry fee compliance have been installed with 97% success on testing so far.
- all drivers on provisional licenses must display P plates whilst in control of an oversnow vehicle. All oversnow drivers must carry State and NPWS licenses. The Police have a new oversnow vehicle and may conduct enforcement operations.
- the NPWS Text messaging system to lodges re road conditions is in operation

For further details and report of the last MSU consultative meeting see SLOPES email to Clubs of 8 June 2017

Waste/garbage

- please use only clear garbage bags to facilitate sorting. The new high volume composting system continues but is still in development and a salmonella strike infected 120 tonnes of compost. MSU is now targeting better recycling. If garbage is not collected within 3 days during the current shorter roster period before the snows come, call Hans Oversnow.

Tim Hassiotis, FRNSW,
permanent city fire station commander on rotation

There will be 3 rotations to Perisher Fire Station of permanent staff, from 9 June to 2 October. The station is not manned outside winter but relies on retained staff out of Jindabyne and Perisher.

Fire Safety Checks

FRNSW plan to visit each lodge this winter to enable fire crews to familiarise themselves with building layouts and advise on fire safety, alarm, fire proofing, Reg 184-186 of the BCA. They want to help train and prepare lodges for fire protection, not only over winter but during the summer shut down.

This is not an enforcement program and FRNSW will respect confidentiality of all leaseholders and not release results to other agencies. FRNSW staff are pro-active, not just re-active.

Call the Fire Station (02 6457 5037) for advice on fire safety procedures and rules. Let them know about any change in lodge fuel storage, oil, gas, diesel

Fire Alarms, (97% are false), fines and waivers , fire wardens, evacuation

Lodges should not isolate or turn off alarm systems. Call FRNSW or your club service provider to check any fault. *“If there is an inquest after a fire where an alarm had been isolated there will be difficult coronial questions to answer.”*

False alarms occur as a result of condensation, bugs, dust, spray deodorant, aerosols, steam, weather events and burnt toast etc.

Replace batteries and old detectors. Intelligent smoke and heat detectors, such as they exist, are preferred. There is a 20 page booklet available on the FRNSW website relating to detector maintenance.

A lodge is allowed multiple false alarms over a 24 hour period, without penalty, and then if no further false alarms within 60 days then the penalty free false alarm period restarts.

No fines for weather events. If you are having false alarm problems and you are working closely with your alarm service company, then fines can be waived. See list of listed grounds to support a waiver. An application to waive the fine must be made within 180 days.

Set up evacuation procedures with neighbours, including where to shelter occupants off site in an emergency. Account for all guests if a fire occurs. Of course we must save/rescue people before property. Have a lodge fire warden roster.

Peter Brulisauer, Perisher/Vail

Last summer the Resort spent

- \$2m on upgrading the ski tube (electronics, sound system), Tube now has a life expectancy of another 25 years.

- And 2m on other resort improvements, including 2 new cats – a groomer and a wincher. Perisher now has two **winch cats** and 80 winch points on the hill. He also stressed the hazards of winch lines and the need to stay clear of ski slopes outside lifting hours.

(See SLOPES email of 3 June 2017 to clubs on Winch Cats and lines)

Perisher/Vail has obtained development approval for a Chairlift to replace the T bar at an estimated cost of \$3M when built. Major resort development is on hold while the governance of the resort remains undecided.

Peter asked the attendees what they saw as the biggest winner for the resort - *his answer - the local Epic Australia Pass which came with 10 free days at Whistler. Season pass sales are up 76% since Vail's acquisition and up 20% last year.*

He noted the carparking concerns and restrictions distinguishing Perisher's role as lessee of the public carparks from the day to day parking control by OEH/NPWS.

Guthega

In answer to a question about snowmaking in Guthega, while it was on the list of long term plans, it would not be any time soon. Guthega often has more snow than most other areas on the PRR, water availability can be an issue as well as other priorities for serious capital investment currently on hold pending resolution of the PRR governance.

Lift opening times and arrangements in Guthega are the same as last year. Scheduled arrangements in the resort can't always be met. Resort operations in Guthega can be affected by exigencies of the time and day including weather, competing priorities elsewhere and other factors. Operational constraints are such that the resort has to be opened in stages because it simply can't clear all the runs to open at the same time. Opening it for limited access to Blue Cow only won't work because of abuses and this creates a major safety hazard.

SLOPES comment: But on the other hand we now have access to a much bigger resort that we all enjoy and wouldn't do without. It is worthwhile restating over time there have been two related complaints from Guthega lodge guests, firstly lifts have been subject to early early and late season closing when the resort is operating on limited mountain services but has skiable snow ; and secondly, the opening times for Guthega lifts are too late for Guthega guests to get to appointments on time in Blue Cow and other parts of the resort. Note that Perisher runs an early shuttle service for its guests to book.

NPWS will streamline snow clearing and waste collection at Guthega following suggestions from Ralph Wese of Guthega Ski Club

As a follow up to the discussion on car park clearing, when the Guthegarians remove their cars from the overnight car park and park in the day car park (for snow clearing

of the overnight car park), if access to the overnight car park is not controlled, day skiers tend to use this for day parking and then thwart the efforts to clear the car park of snow.

As suggested, could you ensure that one of your personnel control the clearing operation and to assist this if they were to use portable bollards (similar to those used in the lift lines) with bunting strung between them this may deter day skiers from inadvertently parking here prior to the snow plough completing the clearing operation. Your personnel should be there very early in the day say @7am as this is when many cars are being moved.

Also given that the bins are also to be cleared on Fridays, when this coincides with the overnight car park clearing operation, your personnel can also ensure that truck access to the bins is afforded to the contractor. RW GSC

Virginia Logan (EMS, PRREMS*)

* <http://wp.slopes.org.au/perisher-range-resorts-environment-management-system-prrems/>

Virginia announced the PRREMS prize winners on energy and water ratings for 2017 were Guthega Inn, Corroboree lodge and Mirrabooka Ski Club. Alpenhof was well regarded. Others were mentioned in despatches. Some lodges say its not reasonable to compare their enviromental performance with the commercials.

Earthcheck reporting is now more streamlined and the number of questions has been reduced by 25%. Free form comments often contain valuable insights. More of them are welcome. Of the 21 main targets, 17 are stable or improved. 80% of lodge reports were in by end of May. If your lodge has not reported this year, please do so asap. Late reports make collations harder and less timely publication of summary results.

There is a marked improvement in awareness of the environment at lodge committee and board level. The biggest enviromental risk is a leak from an obsolete in ground fuel tank. If you have a rodent problem call the enviromental liaison team. Parks in conjunction with Perisher are targeting littering.

For more detail on EMS/PRREMS activities see report of the last consulative meeting, SLOPES email to Clubs of 8 June 2017.

Keith McFadden (Environment)
Part Time Environmental Liaison Officer (Thursday and Friday)
Resorts Environmental Services Team (REST), Southern Ranges Branch
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

Keith spoke about enforcement and compliance of regulated activities in the KNP including use of drones, companion animals, smoking, littering, bike riding on trails and feral animal control. REST is reintroducing the Resorts Roundup Newsletter news. Full details follow.

Answer to Question on Notice re Bridge out near Guthega Power Station

At the Village Meeting in Guthega I asked was a question regarding the bridge over the Mungyang River seriously damaged at its piers by the run of the river last winter. The bridge is currently closed for access by hikers and skiers to the Disappointment Spur trail. Snowy Hydro who used the bridge for maintenance purposes plan to install a new one, hopefully next summer after engineering plans are done and a contractor found.

I hope this answers the question for interested SLOPES members. KMc 29/6
Thanks Keith.

Village Meeting Presentation Notes prepared by Keith McFadden

Feral Animal Control

On 16th of June NPWS Officers conducted an aerial shooting operation. The results of the aerial cull across all of Kosciuszko NP included 80 fallow deer, 1 sambar deer and 8 pigs were shot within a relatively short flight time (good return for effort). The aerial shoot was not specific to the Main Range but included Dainers Gap, Plains of Heaven and areas around the back of the resorts.

On top of the 8 pigs shot last week, there were also 12 removed by ground shooting and tracking over summer in the Dainers – Pipers – Porcupine area. This work will continue. RMS are also planning to put up Deer Warning signs on the Alpine Way and Kosciuszko Road.

Rabbits

- Summer rains and subsequent green grass reduced the effectiveness of rabbit baiting since last winter. Some localised rabbit baiting in burrows has been conducted.
- Reliance upon ground shooting using NPWS staff and contractors – total of 380 rabbits and hares removed.
- Some winter baiting will be trialled.
- Latest strain of Calici virus likely to be trialled this spring/summer
- Myxomatosis 'kicked' in the rabbit population in Thredbo over summer. Attempted to transfer the virus into the rabbit population in Perisher and Smiggins.

Cat and Fox Feral Control Programs

Foxes and feral cats have been implicated in predation on threatened species Mountain Pygmy-possum and Broad-toothed Rat and past research has indicated that numbers are higher in and around ski resorts. Winter also provides an opportunity for foxes to access food and shelter.

Fox Programs

- Winter 1080 Baiting programs have been ongoing in and around the Ski resorts areas since 1999.
- The winter baiting program will commence around mid-July after the school holidays and pending snow arrival. Baiting is undertaken in winter as it is an effective time as foxes move into the resort areas looking for food and are more likely to take baits. Baits are buried along established transects at 500m intervals and include areas around the Ramshead Range, Perisher Ranges, Guthega, Mt Stillwell, Whites River, Schlunks Pass, etc. Notification will be broadcast across resort areas and signs will be in place identifying localities where baiting is being undertaken – all baiting will be outside of the ski resort boundaries.
- Snow transects are monitored for fox activity (foot prints) before and after control. This year we will also be deploying remote cameras to record fox activity.
- An autumn 1080 baiting program was completed in April and baiting was undertaken in the Dead Horse Gap, Mt Stillwell, Mt Kosciuszko & Guthega areas. As a result 29 baits were taken during this program.

Feral Cat Programs

- 'See a cat, catch a cat' – this program relies on members of the community reporting cat sightings. NPWS then respond with the provision of cage traps. NPWS staff will assist setting up the traps and lodge members or visitors are encouraged to monitor the trap. Once an animal is trapped it is removed from the site and euthanized.
- Various soft jaw trapping programs (10 day programs) are undertaken from November – April. This program targets both feral cats and foxes from resort areas and adjacent National Park areas with an emphasis on the MPP habitat. Remote cameras are used in and around the boulder fields during this time to assess predators prior to and post the control programs.

Cohabitation of Fauna in lodges.

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) does not approve the use of snap-traps to control pest species as the devices are not designed to discriminate between different animals. NPWS response to dealing with native species inside buildings is to use Elliott Traps (live traps) and to relocate the animal. Elliott traps have been issued to most lodges or are available from the Perisher NPWS Office. A trapping protocol will be provided to anyone using an Elliott trap to relocate without harming any native animals found in buildings. A poster is available from the NPWS Perisher Office or Jindabyne Office to help visitors and lessees identify small native ground mammals. Pest species such as house mouse or black rat can only be baited after receiving approval from OEH. You can also call the Environmental Liaison Officer 02 6450 5616, or 0418 689 250, or look on the OEH Alpine Resorts Website at <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/alpineresorts/living-with-wildlife-alpine-resorts.htm>.

Drones – Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

The *Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management 2006 Section 8.17.3* 'prohibits landing and take-offs of powered aircraft for recreational purposes.' While the intent of

this was meant for passenger-carrying aircraft, the term aircraft has now been legally accepted to include UAVs.

NPWS Position on UAVs in Resort Areas

Based on visitor and staff safety, safety to approaching and departing rescue helicopters, resort infrastructure, and visitor experience, the NPWS:

- Will not permit the recreational use of UAVs within resort areas.
- Will consider commercial use of UAVs if the commercial operator has been contracted by the resort for aerial filming or photography. In this circumstance the UAV operator does not need to apply to OEH for a commercial film or photography licence. However, an Activity Consent by NPWS is required to operate the UAV. All NPWS Activity Consents to operate UAVs need to be approved by the NPWS Director, Southern Ranges Branch.
- Will consider commercial use of UAVs even if the commercial operator has not been contracted by the resort, but only if approval from the resort operator has been given in writing.
- If the activity involves commercial filming or photography, then a commercial film and photographic licence will need to be obtained as well as an Activity Consent to operate the UAV; these would be assessed at the same time.
- Will consider use of UAVs for NPWS management purposes, Search & Rescue operations, and any other emergency service requirements. In these situations resort operators will be notified.
- No alpine resort operator currently supports the recreational use of UAVs within their lease or licence area, and the resorts will only support commercial UAV use if it is in the operational or marketing interests of the resort.

Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)

The airspace over Kosciuszko National Park is managed by CASA. CASA also regulates restricted airspace. For example, you cannot operate within 3 nautical miles of an aerodrome, near people, or at night.

Bikes.

Over last winter and last summer there were reports of bikes and fat bikes riding on walking tracks and on the cross-country ski trails. Both walking tracks and ski trails are no go areas for bikes. The basic premise is that where you are allowed to ride a bike in Summer, which is on designated tracks and trails, you are allowed to ride in winter – but nowhere else, unless of course when the tracks are seasonally closed over winter or after bad weather such as the TVT. You cannot ride on cross country ski trails or the Porcupine Walking trail. This is not a new policy but one that has been in place across most parks for many years. NPWS will have more cameras out this year to ensure that bikes are not riding on XC ski trails and walking tracks around Perisher.

NPWS recognises that bike and FAT bike use and related issues will grow significantly before they decline in Australia, considering this if a group of people or an organisation

are keen enough to get together and discuss the management issues with NPWS we are willing to meet and hopefully come up with suitable areas to ride.

No Smoking Policy

NSW national parks are no smoking areas from 1 May 2016, the smoking ban applies to all parks, with some exceptions. The Resort areas of KNP have been given an indefinite Exemption by Mick Pettitt Director, Southern Ranges Branch. Visitors are still allowed to smoke within the resort areas. However, the *No smoking in Parks Policy* does still apply to picnic areas, campgrounds, walking tracks, and on national park roads outside of the resorts. More info available at <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-policies/no-smoking-in-parks>

The smoking ban in NSW national parks and reserves is intended to:

- Reduce the risk of accidental bushfires from discarded cigarettes
- Reduce littering in national parks
- Reinforce government initiatives to reduce smoking in NSW
- Reduce the effects of passive smoking, particularly in high visitor-use areas.
- Reduce the spread of hazardous chemicals found in cigarettes (including arsenic and lead) in our precious environments.
- Focus on community education, with on-the-spot fines issued only as a last resort.

Litter.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service, Resorts Environmental Services Team (REST) in Jindabyne has been successful in acquiring funding of \$20,000 from the NSW Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a "Hey Tosser" radio campaign this winter. The radio promotion will target people over 18 years of age travelling to the snow for the weekend and listening to the regional radio stations along the way to the New South Wales ski resorts. The "Hey Tosser" radio advertisements are an opportunity to target people when they are heading to the snow and heading back to their homes and lodges for the evening.

This winter NPWS intend to display "Hey Tosser" banners in the ski resorts and Kosciuszko National Park. NPWS will also be distributing "Hey Tosser" posters and Report a Tosser cards at the Snowy Region Visitors Centre and the Vehicle Entry Stations. A combination of awareness, infrastructure and compliance options is being explored. NPWS will be conducting compliance operations in the Park and car parks targeting people who litter. Mainly on weekends. We will also do our end of season cleanup days in conjunction with Perisher staff and gather statistics on volumes of litter as in past years.

The Roads and Maritime Service (RMS) Variable Message Signs (VMS) on the Alpine Way and on the Kosciuszko Road will also be utilised to display littering information when there are no RMS road operations taking place. More information is available at <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/heytosser/>

Companion Animals

The *Companion Animals Act 1998* and the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1997* give authority (through appropriate certification) for people to come into a national park with a companion or assistance animal. The NPWS Pets Policy (August 2013) recognises such access for short periods of time.

Entry of a companion animal requires certification and approval by the Director, Southern Ranges Branch. This approval process takes time to be considered so it is not possible to turn up at the park expecting entry without prior approval. Guests will need to allow time to apply with all appropriate certification, and documentation for the application to be considered. Compassionate consideration for companion animal's entry approval will be considered for persons with mental, physical or emotional dependence on the animal.