



President's Report  
36<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting  
14<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Welcome to ski patrol member delegates, sitting ASPA executive committee members and all other interested parties to the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual General meeting of the Australian Ski Patrol Association. The Snowsports industry has now had two consecutive years with a better than average snowfalls resulting in renewed confidence in the ability of the industry to provide a product that meets the expectations of the market. This is a far cry from the difficulties that previous poor seasons had left us with, and let us hope for more good ones to come.

The renewed interest in the sport has again resulted in accidents that have claimed lives and this is despite the best efforts of resorts and their patrols to improve the safety of the slopes for all users. ASPA has worked hard to assist these efforts utilizing the Snowsafe brand to deliver the safety message of the revised Alpine Responsibility Code, via tower signs, stickers and the Snowtime Activity Book for children to name a few. Helmet promotion has factored highly in these publications and it is a core safety theme for the future.

Under the guidance of the manager who was contracted last year the RTO has met all its obligations under VETAB and now is on a stable footing. We have been working to collate all course records from 2005 to the present and to make these available online to both candidates and patrol administrators. This part of the project is in the finishing stages and should be working smoothly for the coming year. Completion of this will allow the application for an increase in the number of Units of Competency we are authorized to deliver thus meeting better the needs of members.

For her efforts in managing all the varied affairs, providing good advice on related matters and especially her patience when things didn't go quite right, I would like to thank Deanne McCrea, she has made a big difference when it counted.

We have continued to hold certification and recertification courses for patrollers in NSW, Vic and Tas, at some considerable subsidised cost. These courses are recognized by all resort operators and ASPA qualified patrollers have the ability to carry and administer S4 drugs, which was a point of concern this year in Victoria, which will necessitate further review in the coming months. The Extended Care Module continues to develop and will become a mainstay course in the future. In addition to the above courses, we are expanding the instructor base though additional training for those interested in gaining these skills.

Much of our product is in documentary form, which allows for the use of electronic media. In fact in order to maintain consistency across the geographical distances involved it has become mandatory that our web-based systems improve in order to deliver these resources. It is now possible to complete online course applications and payments, pre-course questionnaires, retrieval of results, and updating of user information. Patrol administrators can view the entire membership or their patrol, edit and download results.

Last summer the Victorian bushfires destroyed houses, families and created a monumental recovery mission. Lake Mountain ski patrol, which is a volunteer organisation with a small membership, was devastated and ASPA was approached to assist in the replacement of essential first aid equipment. With the approval of the Dept of Housing and Ageing, some funds were diverted to provide this assistance allowing them to operate as close as possible to normal for this year. Rik Head needs to be commended for his work in processing the claim and ensuring it happened in time for the snow.

In the media, snowsports and helmets continue to be associated whenever an accident occurs and research is continuing into the effectiveness of all forms of protective equipment. ASPA supports helmet use by all patrollers and many resorts now mandate their use while at work. To assist this ASPA provided a subsidy that patrols could utilize to put helmets on their members, and we have a good response so far. In NSW, largely through the efforts of Peter Kaim, President of Perisher Ski Patrol, the NSW Govt provided sufficient funding for helmets for all NSW patrollers.

SnowSafety Inc over the years has become a recognised safety message vehicle and brand, having a very good uptake in Victoria and ASPA has supported its operation, holding 2 positions on the committee. In return we have been able to co brand our safety initiatives and deliver them to those who chose to take them up. Recently, due to difficulties in communication the delivery of the Snowsafe product has not been effective resulting in some resorts now choosing not to be financial members. This will be a task for the incoming committees of Snowsafe and ASPA to consider.

Much of the above work would not have been possible without the support of the Dept of Health and Ageing who have continued to fund the public safety initiatives that we propose, and also allows us to develop a model that will continue to provide and expand the services that our members and the industry need both now and into the future. This funding has a downside as some now feel that we should offer our courses for free, and provide funds for other purposes, ideas which all have merit but do not fit into the current funding model that is approved as a part of the agreement. ASPA welcomes feedback that we can utilize to expand the programs that we offer providing that they meet approval.

As ASPA is largely staffed by volunteers who provide their services and time for no reward, it is important to reflect at this time on their efforts. From the likes of Peter Findlater (Rocky), the Treasurer, who has been on the Executive for 10 years to Robert Decker, VP National Patrol, they have all delivered and continue to deliver excellent service. Their passion for the sport says volumes and their commitment must be made mention. I would especially like to thank those that have chosen to step down and wish them well, and look forward to a rewarding year working alongside the new committee.

Mark Spilsbury  
President