

Helen Howell

Helen became involved in ski patrolling at Perisher as a result of an injury that, she was told, would mean that she would never ski again. Hence she became the first non-skiing member of Perisher Ski Patrol, responsible for radio dispatch, accident data entry, skidoo transports and, in time, training and testing of trainee patrollers. She completed the ASPA Advanced Emergency Care Course and, as a qualified teacher/trainer/assessor, became involved in assisting Gary Grant and Maurice Stewartson in running the ASPA courses in NSW.

After about six years learning the ropes, she was elected VP Education, a role she filled for a



number of years. Apart from running the AEC courses, the main role was the initiation of the process by which ASPA became an RTO. This process involved collecting, collating, updating and writing many of the policies required by VETAB for RTO accreditation. As well as this, there was the new assessment tools for both the AEC and the Level 2 First Aid courses which ASPA conducts, updating our training guidelines for the ever-changing BLS protocols, writing the guidelines for use of the defibrillators, attending ARC meetings in NSW and the myriad administrative duties involved in keeping our patrollers qualified and active in our resorts. One could say that she put her heart and soul into the role.

When interviewed, she commented,

“Perhaps the most delightful part of being ASPA VP ED was the friendships I established with patrollers in other states. I always enjoyed my visits to Victoria and Tasmania to assist in the administration, assessment and validation of the ASPA AEC courses run in those states. The professional and personal friendships that have developed over the years have been a real highlight.

My role in ASPA has brought me into contact with some amazingly talented patrollers, course directors, trainers/assessors and administrators. We all bring unique talents into ASPA, quite amazing for a volunteer organisation. I could not have addressed the requirements of the role without the help of these dedicated people.”

Now, as her time patrolling takes a lesser part in her life, she looks forward to more recreational skiing, especially heli-skiing in Canada. For those who only ever saw her in an office, yes that is indeed her in the photo heli-skiing in the Monashees. Motorcycle touring and exploring other, non snow covered areas of Australia, is also now a passion taking her away from the cold snow-covered peaks.



Helen's final note in the interview bears repeating,

"I have loved my time with ASPA, and the Perisher and Thredbo ski patrols. My thanks to all who have been part of the journey – I know I have gained more from it than I ever anticipated."

November 2008