

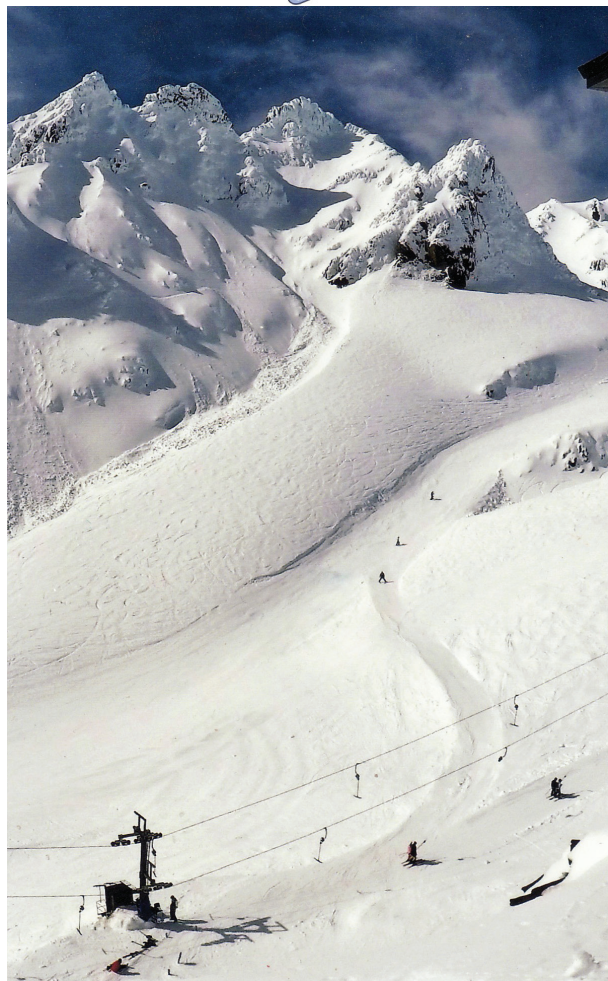
The Bulletin

RUAPEHU SKI CLUB

Volume 86, No. 4



December 2021



Skiing in Te Heuheu Valley. This T-bar was built in 1981, replacing a Pomalift built in 1962.



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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Kia ora koutou, hello everyone.

Well! That was not the ski-season we were hoping to have! At the time of my last column we were expecting a short lockdown after which we'd be back to a snow-drenched mountain.

Instead somewhere over 80 percent of our members, from Northland, Auckland and the Waikato had limited or no ability to go skiing again after Haensli Cup weekend.

While the lockdown has had a huge impact on people at an individual level, I'd like to outline its effect on the Club also.

Our annual accounts, which will be presented at our next AGM, will show the full financial impact but meanwhile here's a quick summary of where we find ourselves.

The 2020 and 2021 seasons (with 2021 being the worse of the two) have been the most challenging we have faced since the blows of 1995-1996 eruptions shortening both seasons, and the introduction of the 4 term school year seeing school holidays move from snow-rich August to end-of-the-season October.

This saw a major drop in bunk nights and therefore income, but these drops were nowhere near as severe as we have suffered during Covid.

Last year we managed just under 3000 bunk nights (over 8000 in 1995!).

This year in spite of a successful summer season seeing over 500 bunk nights we've still only managed 2500 for the year – under 2000 bunk nights for the ski season. We aim for 5000-6000 at least.

We rely on bookings to pay not only variable costs such as food, but also a percentage of our fixed costs, which continue to rise year after year.

Some fixed costs this year include:

Community Levy \$17,000, DOC Lease \$8000, Fire and Safety Checks \$14,000, Sewerage Levy \$9000, Line Charges \$19,000, Rates \$16,000, Insurance \$73,000. Overall fixed charges are approximately \$200,000.

In addition, we need to average \$60,000 a year on maintenance and repairs, something we've delayed over 2020 and 2021.

This is not a saving, as we will have to spend this money on top of future years' budgets to keep our buildings in a good and safe state.

Against this, 2021 subs received total \$175,250 including GST, with \$15,500 still outstanding. We normally look for booking fees to contribute \$15,000 to \$70,000 each year to fixed costs. Any shortfall in subs means bookings have to make up even more of the shortfall.

It is important to note even in a good year we never make a 'profit'. We instead are able to build reserves, which we need to reduce in bad years. We'll be reducing reserves considerably this year!

One way we can improve our financial situation in 2022 and beyond is by increasing the use of our buildings over summer.

We're relaunching our Summer Membership this year, so if you know people who may not be interested in snow but love tramping, who go exploring or belong to walking groups, talk to them about RSC! We also have a range of Summer Events organised for you all.

Perhaps talk to your work colleagues and friends about a group weekend away.

Our buildings, located in one of the most beautiful and easily explored parts of New Zealand, sit empty most of the year. Let's change that!

Noho ora mai.

Phill Thomass
RSC President



This method of riding a T-bar is not recommended. At best it puts a strain on the equipment. At worst it can derail the wire. Photo: RAL.

THROUGH THE LODGE WINDOW

Whakapapa and Turoa were totally closed for three weeks from August 25th to September 8th due to a nationwide Covid-19 virus pandemic lockdown.

Both mountain roads were closed to public traffic, up and down.

All ski fields around NZ then reopened on September 8th with some limitations especially in respect of social distancing.

Also, folks in Auckland could not go skiing as that city remained in lockdown.

As luck would have it, Ruapehu then endured a six-day blizzard with very little skiing, but at least there was good snow cover for non-Aucklanders when the gales receded.

Whakapapa and Turoa both finally closed for the season on Labour Day.

RSC HUT. *Earlier this year with an eye on the financial implications of a potential interruption to the season caused*

by Covid-19, RSC Committee reluctantly made the decision not to staff nor open the Hut for the 2021 season.

This was a temporary measure and we look forward to having the Hut open again next year.

RAL said on September 8th that all skifield races, events and night skiing were cancelled for the rest of the season.

It said races could not be held under Covid-19 level 2 and there was no early return to level 1 in sight.

“This decision has been made with participant, spectator and staff health and safety in mind. It is really disappointing for us that this outbreak has happened now, given all the work that has gone on behind the scenes to create our event calendar. We will be back next year.”

SEASON PASSES. *We remind members that RAL regularly sells discounted early bird season passes.*

If this is for you, keep an eye on the RAL website mtruapehu.com.

**THE
RUAPEHU SKI CLUB**

(inc) Founded 1913

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Chalet Officer: Ron Bonfrer
Turoa Officer: Donald Webster
Heritage Fund Guardians: Robin
 Dallas, Richard Nelson, Bernard
 Smith, Phill Thomass
Fund Treasurer: Mike Wardle
Glacier Hut Custodian:
 Bernard Smith

SKIFIELD LIMITS: At pandemic level 2, RAL said it could operate to a maximum capacity of 3050 guests at Whakapapa and 2550 guests at Turoa, compared with 5000+ at each field in normal times.

Visitors were asked to use their cars as day lodges when eating their lunch or pausing for a coffee as there were limits on social distancing in all the cafes.

Turangi Police hunting for snowboards stolen from Turoa and Whakapapa skifields made a more significant discovery.

As well as getting back the snowboards they found three firearms and seized several hundred cannabis plants.

Five people involved in the snowboard thefts will be trespassed from both Whakapapa and Turoa skifields for two years.

NEW HANDBOOK: We have recently updated our RSC booking rules for 2021-22 and created a Members' Handbook with helpful information for staying on the mountain.

Hopefully, this will become a go-to resource and answer those curly questions about Club life.

If you have any suggestions for additional content, or things that might help out our new members, feel free to contact Ceana in the Office.

You can download the handbook from the RSC website:

<https://www.rsc.org.nz/members-handbook>.

The deadline for the March Bulletin will be Friday February 18th.

All items should be with the Editor in Wellington by that date.

THE BULLETIN

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DO SOMETHING NEW

This summer in the Ruapehu District.

The winter ski season didn't work out so good for a lot of us, but have no fear we have two lower mountain buildings available for accommodation, so you can explore the Tongariro National park in the summer season.

It's time to plan all those activities you've thought about doing, but were too busy skiing to do!

Take a hike to the top of Ruapehu, check out the Silica Rapids, Tama Lakes, Taranaki Falls or the Tongariro Alpine Crossing from a base at the Chalet.

Waitonga Falls, Mangawhero Falls, Bridge to Nowhere trip and old Coach Road bike rides can be done from our building in the Turoa Alpine Village at Ohakune.

Summer rates for these building are: members \$28 and non-members \$33 .

We have a few activities planned for the summer, see table below, and there are also a couple of events in the area that are happening over summer. You can also arrange your own groups to use our buildings, or even book the whole building, at a special building rate.

MONTH	Event	Dates	Champion
January	The Goat Tongariro run from Whakapapa to Turoa	22nd	www.thegoat.co.nz
February	Bridge to Nowhere - bike ride - Ohakune	26th - 27th	Will Geddes
March	Ring of Fire Volcanic Ultra - incorporating the Tussock Traverse	12th	www.rof.co.nz
	Tongariro Alpine Crossing	12th - 13th	Sonia Quinn
April	Waihohonu Hut trip - Chalet	1st - 2nd	Catherine Gafa
May	T42 trail run, bike, walk the Central Plateau	7th	www.t42.co.nz

If you are interested in joining any of the RSC organised events please make your bookings online through the website, and contact the Office via email, so we can let you know more information closer to the date about that event.

If members are interested in doing a more advanced mountain bike ride, please let the office know, and there is a possibility this can be arranged.

Project Tongariro (Tongariro Natural History Society)

Runs a very extensive summer programme of events during January. Some of the events are listed below

DATE 2022	EVENT
Jan 1st	Flying Kites at The Chateau Tongariro
Jan 2nd	Guided walk of the Whangaehu Lahar Volcanic Floods
Jan 6th	Turoa Alpine South East Basin Meander
Jan 9th	Te Matapuna Wetland Walk
Jan 11th	Waipakihi River Helihike
Jan 14th	Okupata Caves
Jan 14th	Mt Tihia Tramp
Jan 15th	Bat evening Owhango alive
Jan 19th	Te Porere Redoubt cultural visit
Jan 22nd	Lake Rotopounamu walk
Jan 29th	Maunga clean up and Sky Waka Gondola experience

For more information and to sign up for the events go to -

<https://www.tongariro.org.nz/mahi-aroha>

Updates about other activities and events in the Ruapehu District will be shared in our Members Facebook group – “Ruapehu Ski Club – Members Group”, so join the group if you haven't already.

Happy Holidays!

Catherine Gafa



*Alpine skiing members of the NZ team for the Winter Paralympics in March.
From left: Corey Peters, Adam Hall, Aaron Ewen.*

WORKING PARTY DATES

Members and prospective members are invited to attend RSC working parties on the following dates.

February 19-20.

March 19-20.

April 15-16 (Easter, truck weekend).

May 21-22.

June 18-19

July 2-3 (Cooks weekend, by invitation).

SUMMER HOURS

With the end of the ski season, the RSC Office is moving to summer hours. They are Tuesday to Friday, 9am to 3pm.

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E admin@rsc.org.nz

SUMMER BOOKINGS

Grab a bunk at the Chalet and Turoa for summer adventures.

The website booking system has been updated for summer self-catered rates, which will run through until next ski season. There's plenty to do while the white stuff isn't around.

The Lodge and Hut are closed over summer and are unavailable for bookings

ALICE IS ELEVENTH

Alice Robinson (NZ) came a disappointed 11th in the season opening alpine skiing World Cup race at Sölden (Austria).

She was seventh after the first run and failed to improve on the second run.

The race was won by Mikaela Shiffrin (US) who scored her 70th World Cup career win as she chases the women's record of 82 wins by Lindsey Vonn (US).



The first five NZ team members chosen to contest the Olympic Winter Games in China in February. From left: Zoi Sadowski-Synnott, Margaux Hackett, Alice Robinson, Finn Bilous, Nico Porteous. Photo: Snow Sports NZ.

OLYMPIC SELECTIONS

Five athletes were named in September as the first selections in the NZ team to contest the Olympic Winter Games at Beijing in February.

They are

Zoi Sadowski-Synnott (snowboard slopestyle and big air).

Nico Porteous (freeski halfpipe).

Alice Robinson (alpine ski giant slalom).

Finn Bilous (freeski slopestyle and big air).

Margaux Hackett (freeski slopestyle and big air).

Further Beijing 2022 selections will take place until January.

Additional alpine, cross-country and freeski and snowboard athletes will be working towards qualification, as well as athletes from ice sports including speed skating, figure skating, luge and curling.

PARALYMPIC TEAM

Para alpine skiers Aaron Ewen, Adam Hall and Corey Peters were

named in November as part of the NZ team for the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games.

Further appointments will be made at a later stage.

ALPINE SKI PATHWAY

Snow Sports NZ have outlined a two-step overlapping pathway for Alpine athletes, moving from grassroots and development to international elite.

Step 1: The athlete pathway facilitates appropriate domestic competition opportunities for athletes to develop and excel.

The support focus for SSNZ is to prepare athletes for domestic and international competition up to U16 and through the early stages of the transition to FIS.

Step 2: SSNZ support our FIS and selected NZ Alpine athletes where possible in conjunction with High Performance where athletes meet carding criteria.

It is a given that the model may change over time however will still accommodate the same mission and vision.

RAL SPECIAL MEETING

RAL has postponed a special general meeting of the company which was to have been held shortly after this Bulletin went to press.

The meeting was to change to the company's constitution in a way that would abolish RAL's previous tax free status and pave the way for the issue of new shares.

Currently since its founding in 1953 RAL has paid no tax in return for paying no dividends and returning profits to its mountain facilities.

Less than a week before the meeting, RAL advised shareholders that its early bird season pass campaign had seen high subscription rates. This coupled with the continued support of ANZ now placed the Directors in a position to postpone the special general meeting.

The SGM would be replaced by an update online session with questions and answers, to be followed by shareholder forums at Wellington, Ohakune, Hamilton and Auckland in February 2022.

Post these meetings it remained the Directors' intention to recommend a restructure of RAL's constitution and corporate form to enable the company to source new capital.

WHITE ISLAND FINDING

An independent review by David Laurenson QC into the 2019 eruption on Whakaari/ White Island where 22 people died has found that WorkSafe fell short of good practice in its regulation of activities on the island over the 2014-19 period.

It said improvements are needed in WorkSafe's management of the adventure activities sector. It also recommended changes to WorkSafe's

systems, processes and practices.

The review said WorkSafe should recognise that activities carried out on Whakaari/White Island are their own adventure activity, rather than as part of trekking/mountaineering activities.

TRIAL DATE SET

The trial for the 13 organisations and individuals charged in the wake of the 2019 Whakaari/White Island eruption will start on July 10th 2023.

Judge Evengelos Thomas said the Covid-19 pandemic made a 2022 trial impossible. The trial is likely to last four months.

February 2022 has been set for a hearing to decide where the trial will take place. Options are Whakatāne, Auckland or Tauranga.

Twelve of the individuals and organisations have entered pleas of not guilty.

CORONER BUS FINDING

A bus crash on Mt Ruapehu that killed an 11-year-old girl in 2018 should not have happened if the driver used the brakes appropriately, a coroner has found.

The Mitsubishi Fuso bus, carrying 31 passengers, went over at the 9-kilometre mark in the Ōhakune Mountain Road at Tūroa.

Coroner Brigitte Windley found the crash was caused by brake failure due to the manner of driving by an RAL employee.

A lack of seatbelts, the bus not being designed for alpine environments and no dedicated run-off area on the road in case of brake failure all contributed to the death, Windley found.

PANDEMIC ISSUES

RAL offered a 50 percent refund to all season pass-holders who spent four days or fewer on the mountain in 2021.

Some patrons welcomed this but others said that was not good enough as Auckland was in lockdown in Auckland for most of the season.

One customer said he got only \$320 to \$480 worth of snowboarding from a pass that cost over \$600.

RAL chief Jono Dean said there had been a significant opportunity for Aucklanders to make use of the early part of the season in the 45 days before the lockdown started.

Most of the feedback regarding the 50 percent refund for season pass holders had been positive, he said.

Worldwide 25 million people have contracted the Covid-19 virus and 5.2 million have died from it.

In NZ up to mid-November there have been 9000 infections and 37 deaths.

Three Auckland men aged 18 to 23 were arrested in Ohakune after travelling to Turoa during the pandemic lockdown in August.

They were detained after skifield staff became suspicious of the documentation they used to obtain ski passes.

Turoa skifield was open at the time under pandemic level 2 but Auckland was in total lockdown under level 4.

An Auckland couple sparked outrage after they were accused of using an essential worker exemption to drive to Hamilton and then fly to a family holiday home in Wānaka.

The 35-year-old man is prominent in equestrian circles and the woman aged

26 is a lawyer. They were charged with failing to comply with the latest pandemic health order.

Chinese organisers have confirmed that participants in the Winter Olympics in February will be strictly isolated from the general population and could face expulsion for violating Covid-19 restrictions.

They must remain in a closed loop for training, competing, transport, dining and accommodation.

All participants must have been fully vaccinated at least 14 days prior to their departure for China. Family, spectators and sponsors from outside the country will not be allowed to attend.

Ski resorts across Canada are desperate for staff as seasonal workers struggle to enter the country.

Staff at Big White Ski Resort said they are heavily reliant on seasonal workers from all over the world to stay afloat, but the pandemic is keeping them out.

Quarantine requirements and a shortage of flights from South American have helped produced the staff shortage.

It was much the same in the United States where thousands of jobs at Colorado resorts remained unfilled as the ski season opened.

NZ skifield operators gained \$2.75 million in wage subsidies for 2453 staff to cover revenue lost during the August 2021 pandemic lockdown.

NZSki, which manages Coronet Peak, The Remarkables and Mt Hutt, claimed \$1.2 million for 1045 workers.

Cardrona Alpine Resort, which also owns Treble Cone, claimed \$956,080 for 861 workers.

Ruapehu Alpine Lifts was granted \$620,968 for 547 staff.

EXCITING NEW TALENT

RSC junior member Mischa Thomas is off to Switzerland to train in freestyle skiing with a hope of making the NZ Olympic Winter Games team in 2026. She was first in the girls under-14 nationals in slopestyle and halfpipe this year.

Her family writes:

Our family joined RSC in 2013 when Mischa was 5.

She had done a few days here and there over at Turoa but 2013 was her first real skiing as well as her first hike up to the Hut.

Back then she and her sisters were featured in the Bulletin as the first RSC triplets. (Tasmin, Reese, Mischa).

Up until 2019 Mischa has been involved in much that RSC has had to offer. She completed a number of years of RSC squads, school holidays and Club races.

She and her older brother especially loved it when terrain park was set up by the Corona Bar in the October holidays when a large posse of RSC kids would walk out and test their skills.

Mischa always had a fondness for jumps, drops and extreme stuff at Whakapapa including the Chimney which she got a taste for in the RSC squads but it wasn't until she was lucky enough to do a day training with a Woodward Park trainer at Copper Mountain that it became a priority for her.

Winter 2020 saw her venture to Cardrona for her first season with the High Performance Centre on a part time basis. She boarded with an Auckland family down there and hit the ground running.

Her time spent adventuring around Whakapapa made for a fabulous foundation for her skiing. Her progression was steady with her going from learning to ride a rail in January 2020 to a heavy concussion in



Mischa Thomas aged 8 jumping off rocks at the back of RSC Lodge in 2016.

late July whilst learning to back flip, then recovering from that to come back and win the U14 freestyle series and the overall U14 girls national title and turning a few heads along the way.

Summer 2020-21 saw no international travel so she did what could be done over the summer. She travelled to Wanaka in December 2020 to participate in a training camp which involved dry land training at Snowsports NZ on their trampoline and dry slope.

Being in Auckland we are lucky enough to be able to use Snowplanet and there were two further camps held there with the National Development squad before the season began.

Mischa also trains on the trampoline all year round to learn and practise new tricks.

She needs to perfect them on the tramp before putting them to snow. She also has gym training to keep up her fitness and strength and to try to prevent injury.

Winter 2021 saw Mischa, Tasmin (another of the triplets that's into alpine racing) and Nina (mum) head to Cardrona for the season.

Nina was working as a ski instructor whilst the girls trained in the High Performance Centre, Tasmin with the Wanaka Ski Team and Mischa back with the Parks Squad.

This season was a tricky one and with a lockdown right in the middle of the season, it meant that training was disrupted and almost all the competitions were delayed until late in the season.

Again it was a massive year for her, she progressed with the difficulty of her jumps and finished the season taking first in the U14 slopestyle and halfpipe at the NZ Nationals while missing out on the two overall titles by the narrowest of margins.

To top it all off she landed her first Cork 7s on the final day of training. That's 720 degree spin with one off axis rotation, and we think that she's the youngest girl in NZ to achieve this.

We feel very lucky and privileged to be members of RSC. The support of our amazing Club members, dedication of the Committee over the years and the nurturing of the younger members through organised training like the weekend squads, holiday programs and races, Club events, work parties and Swiss Instructors.

The Maunga and the Club are definitely a very special part of our family and we credit Mischa's early start at the Club to how she has progressed so far to date.

Mischa is now focusing on an invitation to head to Laax in Switzerland to train over the NZ summer (January-April) and



Mischa Thomas gets some big air.

continue her progression with a view to 2022 where she will compete in the Open division against much more experienced riders.

We are currently fundraising to support her training with the support of Ohau wines who are offering a 10 percent discount using the code SKIERS on orders of six bottles or more with \$10 being donated to Mischa and one of her training partners, Liam Richards. Delivery is also included so it's a great offer.

<https://shop.ohauwines.co.nz/discount/SKIERS>

You can follow Mischa's progress online Instagram @mischa.thomas and we will endeavour to keep you updated via the Bulletin too.

If you'd like to support Mischa without purchasing wine she has a give a little page <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/freestyle-skiers-aiming-high>

Nina Thomas

TRY THE YOONER

A new craze called the Yooner has hit Otago's slopes, and it's a blessing for those who don't know how to ski or snowboard.

This slightly mysterious French invention looks like you're riding an elaborate broomstick down a mountain.

At the start of the last century, French kids in the Manigod Valley would ride a primitive wooden invention down snow-covered roads to get to school.

It was called a paret and looked like a sled crossed with a single ski.

Fast-forward a hundred years, and a French company has brought the design into the 21st century, adding shock absorbers and a braking system and called it a Yooner.

Yooners were available this winter at Coronet Peak, The Remarkables and Cardrona.

You don't even necessarily need a lesson. It's a little like a bike to ride. Just lift your feet and start sliding down the hill.

Steer by leaning to each side and brake by pulling back on your grip stick. You can keep your feet dragging in the snow for additional balance.

Cost is \$50 for a day hire or \$99 for hire and lessons. See yooner.co.nz

FROZEN ANTARCTICA

Amid a record hot summer in large parts of Northern Hemisphere, beset by devastating fires, floods and hurricanes, Antarctica was mired in a deep, deep freeze. The chill was exceptional, even for the coldest location on the planet.

The average temperature at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station between April and September, a frigid minus 61 degrees Celsius, was the coldest on record, dating to 1957.

However, the current temperatures are

still some distance from the coldest ever observed on the continent. In 1983 the Russian station at Vostok plummeted to -89.6C. Satellites have detected temperatures as low as -98C.

The conditions over Antarctica are in stark contrast to much of the rest of the planet which notched its fourth hottest June through August on record. The Northern Hemisphere registered its second hottest summer.

Scientists credited a very strong polar vortex, or a ring of strong winds in the stratosphere, surrounding Antarctica for the intensity of the cold.

They said the record cold over the South Pole in no way refutes or lessens the seriousness of global warming. Antarctica is notorious for its wild swings in weather and climate which can run counter to global trends.

MAP MAKER QUILTS

Renowned ski artist James Niehues has retired after 35 years of painting resort maps from Cardrona to Colorado.

Now aged 75, the artist from Colorado is the talent behind more than 430 hand-painted maps used by more than 200 ski resorts around the world, including New Zealand.

Niehues starts each map with an aerial photograph of the mountain. This is then sketched onto a special parchment paper called vellum before detail and colour is added using airbrushes and watercolour paint.

He said he had a soft spot for slopes in New Zealand. "I really like to do the mountains in New Zealand, because there are no trees there."

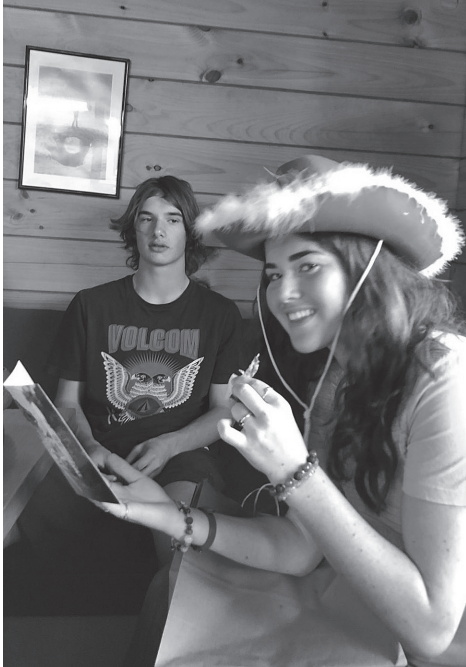
From the Niehues website you can buy coloured trail maps mounted on wooden frames.



Upper: Stringing the wire on the Far West T-bar at Whakapapa. **Lower:** Ruapehu chairlift ice is the heaviest found at any skifield worldwide. Photos: RAL.



Whakapapa avalanche. *Following a big snowfall in August, a ski patrol safety explosion triggered a significant avalanche in Te Heuheu Valley. Photo: Whakapapa ski patrol.*



Left: Anna and Nick joined RSC when they were 6 and have had nearly every birthday at an RSC lodge, usually Turoa. Families converged to celebrate the 18th milestone and make it special. **Right:** Mike cooked roast lamb for the occasion. Photos: Stephanie Coulman.



Nick and his Larkin cousins who are also Club members. Thanks RSC for another fun birthday! Photo: Stephanie Coulman.



Upper: Skiing in Te Heuheu Valley in 2021. **Lower:** The K Road ski run at Whakapapa in 2021. Photos: Peter Otway.

RSC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dec 2021	3	Ski Waka reopens for sightseeing at Whakapapa DOC summer activities RSC summer walks and cycle rides
Jan 2022	22	Goat Adventure run
Feb 2022	19-20 26-27	Working parties Bridge to Nowhere bike ride
Mar 2022	12-13 12 19-20	Tongariro Alpine Crossing Ring of Fire run Working parties
Apr 2022	1-2 15-16	Waihohonu Hut walk Working parties (Easter, truck weekend)
May 2022	1 7 21-22	RSC ski season bookings open T42 trail run, bike, walk Working parties
June 2022	23 18-19	RSC AGM at Auckland Ski season opens (Happy Valley) Working parties
July 2022	8 9 2-3	Ski season opens (upper mountain). Turoa opens Working parties

NEW MEMBERS

RSC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

Senior

- Mark Williamson (Auckland).
- Fran Hopkins (Pukemoremore).
- Bobbie Cornell (Tauranga).
- Mark Stirling (Auckland).
- Ashley Ruth Stirling (Auckland).

Junior

- Jamie Jones (Tamahere).
- Celeste Williamson (Auckland).
- Ihakara Karaitiana (Tauranga).
- HineAio Karaitiana (Tauranga).

CHINESE FUR SKIS

First used centuries ago, fur skis are making a comeback in villages in the Altay prefecture in China.

Local herdsmen use a pair of planks wrapped with horsehide which allow for both walking uphill and skiing downhill.

According to rock carvings, such skis have served for around 12,000 years as a means of transportation.

The fur skis gradually lost their popularity but in response to the nation's goal of kindling grassroots enthusiasm for ice and snow sports, Altay prefecture is working to promote itself as the place where skiing might have originated.



Skiing and snowboarding at Mt Ruapehu.



Ski racing in 2019 at Ruapehu. Photos: RAL.



Most events at Ruapehu were cancelled in 2021 due to pandemic lockdowns but the Mini X-Games at Whakapapa were held as usual. Photos: RAL.



More pictures from the Mini X-Games at Whakapapa this year. Photos: RAL.



Upper: RSC Vice-President Liza Fitzsimmons presents Theo Marshall with Elan skis won by the Marshall family as a spot prize at the Haensli Cup. Photo: Damon Forsyth. **Lower:** The Marshall family of Taupo Ski Club turned out en masse for the Haensli Cup. Photo: Taupo SC.



Haensli Cup sponsors for 2021.



SKI CANCELLATIONS

The following events at Mt Ruapehu were all cancelled this season due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

- Rangatira Trophy.
- Ngauruhoe Trophy.
- Tongariro Juniors.
- NIPS
- Secondary school champs.
- RSC Club champs.

This was the second year that the RSC Champs had to be cancelled. All ski and snowboard racing was off once the skifields were in Covid level two.

The annual Winter Games NZ at Wanaka were also cancelled.

NZ MOUNTAINS BOOK

Ron Hay of Canterbury has published a new book of his personal stories of alpine adventures over five decades and reflections on the spirituality of the mountain world.

From student days until retirement, he has found adventure and refreshment of spirit amid the peaks and valleys of the Southern Alps.

The book is called *The Spirit of the Mountains* and contains 168 pages with many fine photos. It is published by Mary Egan Publishing.

Ron was initially a secondary school teacher. He then did a theology degree and entered the Anglican ministry to be vicar of Temuka and then Sumner-Redcliffs.

Ron is a member of the New Zealand Alpine Club and has contributed articles to the NZ Alpine Journal and to Wilderness magazine.

He and his wife Liz live at Castle Hill Village near several Canterbury ski fields.

SNOWGUNS BATTLE FIRES

Ski field staff in California at Lake Tahoe, Kirkwood and Heavenly used snowmaking guns in September in an attempt to douse a raging wildfire that threatened nearby houses, ski lifts and lodges.

One fast-moving fire imperiled the Lake Tahoe region, forcing unprecedented evacuations in the city of South Lake Tahoe. More than 1000 houses were destroyed.

Lifties and firemen used their snow machines as supersized sprinklers to save key infrastructure such as base lodges, pump houses and garages that store groomers.

California is not the first place to use

this strategy. Snow guns date from the 1950s when a trio of men who owned a company called Tey Manufacturers built the first machine at Mohawk Mountain in Connecticut.

By 1959, more than 20 ski areas in New York and Pennsylvania boasted permanent snow making systems and changed the nature of skiing.

By 1971, Killington in Vermont had set the gold standard for snow making, covering hundreds of skiable acres, top to bottom

Snow guns are widely used in NZ and at Roundhill skifield (Tekapo) they enabled the field to reopen after being closed for several years due to a lack of snow.

A feature of some snow guns used in Central Otago skifields is that they look remarkably similar to water guns used by local gold miners 150 years ago to sluice their claims.

ZQN VERSUS WKA

Drums are beating in Wānaka for the town to secede from the Queenstown Lakes District Council.

A petition asks the Local Government Commission to review the current structure. It calls for the Upper Clutha council to include Wānaka, Hawea, Luggate and Makarora where the population is 13,000.

Key points in the petition are that the council is ineffective and undemocratic, that rates income is not fairly distributed and Wānaka residents do not feel represented at the council table.

Wānaka serves three ski fields, namely Treble Cone, Cardrona and Snow Farm.

Queenstown also has three ski fields, Coronet Peak, The Remarkables and Invincible.

ZQN is the code for Queenstown Airport.

WKA is the code for Wānaka Airport.



Ski mountaineering is set to become an Olympic Winter Games medal event in 2026.

SKIMO IS POPULAR

Ski mountaineering (skimo for short) is a rapidly growing sport which involves racing over a series of ascents and descents, either carrying or wearing skis, towards a downhill finish.

Ski mountaineering made its debut as a medal sport at the Winter Youth Olympic Games in Lausanne in 2020 and will be an Olympic Games medal sport at Milan-Cortina in 2026.

Climbing on skis or carrying them depends on the steepness of the ascent. Racers climb and descend under their own power using backcountry skiing equipment and techniques.

More generally, ski mountaineering is an activity that variously combines ski touring, telemark, backcountry skiing and mountaineering, plus descending on skis.

There are two major categories of equipment used: free-heel telemark skis and skis based on alpine skis where the heel is free for ascents but is fixed during descent.

Competitive ski mountaineering is typically a timed racing event that follows an established trail through challenging winter alpine terrain while passing through a series of checkpoints.

There are events for men and for women, and a mixed relay is planned for the Olympics.

Initial events were held in the 1990s in France, Italy, Slovakia, Andorra and Switzerland, and soon after were raced in Asia, North America and South America.

Three important races are the Italian Mezzalama Trophy, the Swiss Patrouille des Glaciers and the French Pierra Menta.

The 2026 Olympics ski mountaineering is to take place in Bormio, nestled near the Swiss border and the Italian German-speaking region of South Tyrol.

Equipment:

Bindings should be reliable, light, and durable.

Boots: Should be light and flexible.

Skis: Should weigh 4 pounds (1.8 kg) or less.



Sign of the times. A visitor signs in at Whakapapa. Photo: Karen Williams.

OLD SKIS FOUND

The melting of an ice sheet in Norway has revealed a pair of incredibly well-preserved skis that have laid untouched for some 1300 years.

The archaeologists who stumbled upon this discovery believe they might be the best-preserved pair of skis from prehistory ever discovered.

The first of the skis was discovered at the Digervarden ice patch in the Norwegian county of Innlandet by Secrets of the Ice, a team of glacier archaeologists who scour the receded ice sheets for long-lost treasures.

The team headed back in September this year and discovered the second wooden ski.

It was measured at 187 centimeters

(74 inches) long and 17 centimeters (6.5 inches) wide.

This was around 17 centimeters (6.5 inches) longer and slightly wider than the first ski discovered.

However, it's clear that both were part of a pair due to the similar foothold, made out of three twisted birch bindings, a leather strap, and a wooden plug.

The foothold also shows signs of repairs, indicating the ski was well used.

It likely that skiing evolved as a practical means to travel across snow capped plains and hills, rather than a recreational sport for fun loving hunter-gatherers.

The skis were laid in disorderly, chaotic fashion. This raises the possibility of two options: either the skis were scattered by a small avalanche or the skier was injured.



This café near The Chateau, seen in snow this season, has buildings which are close to 100 years old. The centre building was erected in 1925 as bunkrooms and is named Fergusson's Cottage after the Governor-General's wife Lady Alice Fergusson who stayed there. The building on the right is the original 1925 laundry, while the entrance to the left incorporates the original ablution block. Photo: RAL



Flashback to 2020. *An RSC party pauses for a rest on their way to the crater at Whakapapa. Photo: Prue Johannessen.*

WINTER OLYMPICS

The Olympic Winter Games are a multi-sport tournament held every four years on snow and ice.

Events include skiing (alpine, snowboard, freestyle, cross-country and jumping), ice skating (figure, speed, hockey), curling, biathlon, bobsleigh and ski mountaineering.

The coming Olympic Winter Games will be held at Beijing (China) on February 4-22 next year.

There will be three competition zones at central Beijing, Yanqing and Zhangjiakou.

Beijing will become the first city to host both the summer and winter Games, and as usual the Winter Paralympics will follow the Olympic events.

The following winter event will be held in Italy in 2026 with skiing at Cortina d'Ampezzo and skating in Milan.

The Olympic Winter Games began in 1924 and have been held since then, apart from the years of World War 2.

Up to 1992 they were held in the same year as the summer Olympics. From 1994 they have been held in their own years.

The Games have evolved since their inception. Some sports such as alpine skiing have earned a permanent spot on the Olympic programme.

Some others, including curling and bobsleigh, have been discontinued and later reintroduced; while others have been permanently discontinued.

Still others, such as speed skiing, bandy and skijoring, have been demonstration sports but never incorporated as Olympic sports.

The Games have been hosted on three continents by 12 countries.

They have been held four times in the United States, three times in France and

twice each in Austria, Canada, Japan, Italy, Norway and Switzerland.

To date 12 countries have participated in every Olympic Winter Games. They are Austria, Canada, Finland, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

New Zealand first entered in 1952 and after a miss in 1956 has contested every Games since then.

Three medals have been won.

Annelise Coberger won a silver medal in alpine skiing slalom in 1992.

Zoi-Sadowski-Synnott won a bronze medal in snowboard big air in 2018.

Nico Porteous won a bronze medal in freeski halfpipe in 2018.

Near misses were Jossi Wells fourth in freeskiing, Beau-James Wells fourth and sixth in freeskiing, two NZ teams fourth in short track speed skiing and Janina Kuzma fifth in freeskiing.

Kiwis have also contested bobsleigh, luge, skeleton, biathlon, cross-country skiing, long track speed skating and curling, plus speed skiing as a demonstration sport.

The only country to have won a gold medal at every Winter Olympics is the United States while Norway leads the all-time medal table.

RSC REPRESENTATION

RSC members who have competed in the Olympic Winter Games are Margot Blakely, Fiona Johnson, Stuart Blakely, Michael Dennis, James Hamilton, Todd Haywood, Bill Hunt, Brett Kendall, Scott Kendall, Robert Palmer and David Scott.

RSC members who have been Olympic team managers and assistant managers have been Stan Blakely, Arnold Cooper, Dick Duncan, Austie Hayward, Murray Laird, Roy McKenzie and Bill Ward.



Upper: The Silica Rapids walkway at Whakapapa. Photo: DOC. **Lower:** Late afternoon skiing at Turoa. Photo: RAL.

ACROSS THE SKIING WORLD

The next Cool Runnings team, in the style of the Jamaican bobsleigh riders, could be the Saudi Arabia ski and snowboard team which is trying to qualify for the Winter Olympics in February.

The desert kingdom has recruited coaches from throughout Europe and has trained in the Swiss alps as it looks to have seven skiers and snowboarders qualify for the Olympics.

“It’s the same concept,” said snowboarder Faisal al-Rasheed in comparison to the 1988 Jamaican bobsleigh film *Cool Runnings*.

“It’s inspiring how they did it when nobody thought it was possible.”

Saudi Arabia has seen a growing interest in hitting the slopes. There are plans for an indoor ski slope that will cover 10 acres in a Riyadh shopping mall.

NZ Olympic freeskier Beau-James Wells, 25, has retired from international skiing.

Wells finished sixth in the halfpipe at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games at Sochi and fourth in the same event at the Pyeongchang in 2018 when he carried the NZ flag in the opening ceremony.

In 2014, Wells won the junior world halfpipe title and defended it one year later.

The International Ski Federation (FIS) has voted to keep its name, after two alternative names were voted on.

The two proposals were the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (ISSF) and the International Snowsports Federation (ISF).

After winning an initial elimination vote, the International Ski and Snowboard Federation won a run off with the current name by 66-49.

But this was only 57 percent support whereas two-thirds was needed to make a change.

Australian actor Chris Hemsworth

showed off his snowboarding skills on a family trip to Thredbo (NSW) in September as he urged Aussies to consider domestic destinations.

The 38-year-old posted a clip of himself snowboarding down a slope.

He also posted a photo of his seven year-old twin sons Tristan and Sasha at the top of the highest point accessible by chairlift at 2037 metres.

Squaw Valley Ski Resort in California where the 1960 Winter Olympics were held is now named Palisades Tahoe.

The old name has been deemed offensive to women.

The word “squaw”, derived from the Algonquin language, may have once simply meant “woman”, but over generations, the word morphed into a misogynist and racist term.

The valley, in the Lake Tahoe area 200 miles northeast of San Francisco, is within the ancestral homeland of the Washoe people.

NZSki wants to build a 230 metre tunnel near the top of The Remarkables, more than doubling the skiable area and creating a world-class resort.

The company will seek Department of Conservation permission to open up back country terrain, known as The Doolans, behind the existing ski area.

The skiable terrain at The Remarkables would expand from 385ha to 900ha.

The first stage of work would include a 1.4km chairlift in the new terrain, as well as infrastructure including snowmaking. It could be opened within three to five years.

The International Ski Federation said it has taken steps to become the first Climate Positive International Sports Federation by 2022 through its FIS Rainforest Initiative.

This initiative will offset FIS carbon footprint many times over through conservation projects of rainforest, initially in Peru.

FIS carried out an internal carbon footprint audit of its competitions staged during a full season.

It was then able to estimate the overall carbon footprint across its thousands of events and to take action to mitigate the impact of these events on the climate.

The FIS Rainforest Initiative is aimed at preventing future deforestation equivalent to many times the estimated carbon emissions that FIS activities generate each year.

NZ Ski are bringing back their no questions asked refund policy for 2022 three peak season pass and Mt Hutt season pass holders.

If they purchase a 2022 season pass before April 1st 2022 patrons have until June 1st to decide if they would like to use their pass for the 2022 ski season, and can request a refund.

Outdoor gear manufacturer Smith (US) is selling ski goggles that are custom 3D-printed to fit the face of each client. Buyers are sent a code along with instructions to form a 3D scan of their face at home.

The scan data is subsequently used by Smith to 3D-print the frame of the goggles, tailored to the exact contours of the client's face.

According to Smith, the custom goggles have much fewer pressure points, air leaks and light leaks than other models.

They are also claimed to provide a wider field of view, as the lens is able to sit closer to the wearer's face.

The goggles are not cheap at \$US450 a pair.

A 5 km downhill race starting in Switzerland and ending in Italy will be added to alpine skiing's World Cup programme as soon as next year, it was announced on October 1st.

The International Ski Federation has confirmed the plan, so men's and women's races beneath the Matterhorn are likely in November 2022.

Vail Resorts has announced \$US320 million worth of mountain renovation projects for the 2022-23 North American ski and ride season in what will be the company's largest single-year investment.

There will be 19 new chairlifts, including 12 high-speed lifts, a new eight-person high-speed gondola and six new fixed-grip lifts.

The projects span 14 resorts coast-to-coast including Whistler Blackcomb, Vail Mountain, Park City Mountain, Keystone, Breckenridge, Stowe Mountain and Mount Snow.

Vermont State (US) is to feature a jumping snowboarder on its new \$1 coin.

State Governor Phil Scott says he is proud to have snowboarding representing his state.

"Vermont is the birthplace of modern snowboarding, and this coin represents Vermont's many contributions to the sport," he said.

The Dawson Falls mountain lodge, which has hosted guests on Taranaki Maunga since 1896, has closed ahead of a rebuild.

The lodge is owned by Te Rere o Kapuni, a subsidiary of Te Korowai o Ngaruahine. It will be demolished this year and the new lodge will be completed in late 2022.

The building is 905 metres above sea level on the south-eastern slopes of the mountain.

It is the start point of the Taranaki Crossing trail that traverses Mt Taranaki and which is currently being developed into a first-class walkway.

Colorado couple Jenn Ridder and James Owens decided to get out of the house at the pandemic last winter, so they skied all of Colorado's 33 ski areas.

Their favorite small ski areas: Cranor Hill with one Poma lift and Chapman Hill which has a rope tow.

They also liked Lee's Ski Hill which officially cost \$5 to use a rope tow, but they couldn't find anyone to give the money to.



CLUB ITEMS & SERVICES FOR SALE

RSC Administration Office, P.O. Box 8064, Symonds Street, Auckland 1150

Website: www.rsc.org.nz

email: admin@rsc.org.nz

Lockers

Lockers are available for hire in the Hut at Turoa and occasionally in the Lodge.

email - admin@rsc.org.nz to find out what is available.

Annual Locker Rental Rates- applicable from when you are allocated a locker-

Ski- \$57.50

Gear \$28.75

Club Items

(Add \$3 for each order to be posted)

Name Badge (free to new members) \$12

PHONE NUMBERS

RSC Office 09-377-3856

Lodge 07-892-3824

Hut 07-892-3822

Chalet 07-892-3823

Turoa 06-385-8767

NEW MEMBERS COSTS

Two working parties.

Senior joining fee \$199

Junior joining fee \$99

Annual senior subs \$269.00 incl GST (\$233.91 plus GST)

Annual junior subs \$98 incl GST (\$85.22 plus GST)

ACCOMMODATION FEES (Effective May 1st 2021)

Members Senior	18 years and over	\$55
Members Teen	14-17 years	\$48
Members Junior	13 years and under	\$37
Members' children	7 years and under	\$29
Non-members	14 years and over	\$101
Non-members	13 years and under	\$68
Life Members		\$0
School group children		\$68
School group parents		\$90

Off season rates (Chalet and Turoa) 2021/2022 summer

Members Senior and Junior \$28

Non-members Senior and Junior \$33