

Christiania Ski Club  
69<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting  
23 November 2023

## **President's Report**

I'm pleased to present the annual report for 2023 to members of CSC in what has been a much-improved season for snow, but another trying year financially.

### Snow

After four years of little snow, and no pre-season snow-making this year because of RAL's financial situation, it was a relief to see how much fell in July.

The quantity and quality of snow remained excellent for much of the season until the weather started warming late in September.

Having opened the lodge one week later than usual, we closed it a week before the season ended due to a lack of bookings but had some great skiing in between. Unfortunately, this wasn't enough to help get our booking income back to where it was in previous years.

### Bed nights

Christie's finances rely on members paying subscriptions, school groups, and the number of nights we have folks staying in the lodge during the year. Since the year before the pandemic lockdowns, approximate season bed night numbers have been:

- 2019: 1,900
- 2020: 1,500
- 2021: 900
- 2022: 900
- 2023: 800 (actual 789)

It's disappointing to have had fewer bed nights than the two previous years, and half the number we had four years ago.

Some members have noted how the uncertainty around RAL, and the previous years' poor snow, led them to book South Island trips early in the year. Many of those later commented how they regretted missing out on visiting Christie, the great snow we had this season, and spending thousands less than a week in Queenstown! Let's hope there's a resolution to RAL's problems soon, and those members return next season.

In addition to lower member bookings, we had two school groups instead of the planned four—two of the schools understandably not preparing in time given the uncertainty over opening.

It's worth noting that school group numbers are included in the bed night figures above, and that if we'd had the two extra groups bed nights for 2023 would have been closer to 1,000.

The Club had a deficit this year of \$22,500, up from \$10,000 last year. If it wasn't for Te Awamutu Intermediate's two weeks, this number would have been c.\$14,000 worse, and conversely would have been c.\$14,000 better if we'd had all four planned school group weeks. More about this in the Treasurer's report.

Next year's initial provisioning cost is estimated to be c.\$5,000 less given the significant supplies currently stored in the lodge after this year's lower occupancy.

### Lodge Maintenance

In March the dining room parquet flooring was sanded and resealed, and the lodge exterior partially stained by five enthusiastic clubbies for the first time in six years.

The cedar cladding was dry and overdue for staining, and despite the best efforts of those who attended this work party some inaccessible areas were not reached. The committee decided in April to purchase an innovative, lightweight aluminium scaffolding system from Club member Peter Chapman's company INTAKS (intaks.com), who generously supplied the equipment at a 33% discount, paid monthly over the season. Thank you, Peter, for your generous support. The scaffolding is now stored in the lean-to off the pantry which previously held a large amount of scrap timber. Staining the lodge exterior will now be a safer endeavour we can do more frequently and will be completed this summer.

### Club Events

The 2023 Christiania Derby would have been the 65<sup>th</sup> to be held but this year RAL cancelled support for all Club racing. In its place a hugely successful combined club race was held early September with a big party at Rangatira afterwards, as well as the juniors weekend a week later. Thanks to Club Captain Rachel Ward and Vivian Oskam for your efforts with these events.

In other news, Men's Few Days has now been running for ten years. Long may this great tradition continue.

### In Memoriam

Neil Callaghan passed away at his home by Lake Tarawera on 11 March 2023. Neil was Christie's Club Captain (1973—1975), President (1977—1981), Life Member, and made a huge contribution to the Club from the 1960s through 1980s. I personally knew Neil, and it was no surprise that his funeral attracted three times the number of expected mourners. In a special Bunkum (16 March 2023), Doug Downs wrote, "we owe you a big debt for your dedication, time and commitment to the Club over many years". The committee and members of Christie extend their deepest condolences to Ngaire, Michael, Fleur and Paul, Jane and Neil's five grandchildren.

Ken McKenzie passed away surrounded by his family on 1 January 2023. Ken was a core part of the team that refurbished and upgraded the lodge in 2011. The time and technical expertise Ken generously gave to the Club transformed Christie's lodge into the most comfortable on the mountain, to the benefit of thousands of visitors since and for many years to come. Personally, I miss my occasional calls to Ken with questions about the lodge, both for the impressive way he could provide a detailed answer, and his kind, gentle, thoughtful and friendly manner. The committee and members of Christie extend their deepest condolences to Julie, Sam and Susie, and Sean.

Linda Danen passed away unexpectedly at the home she shared with husband Reid Mossman in Turangi on 28 July 2023. Linda was Christie's Club Captain (2007—2010) and more recently President of the Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association. Linda was a positive, energetic and much loved (former) member and friend of Christie, and the wider Mountain community. The committee and members of Christie extend their deepest condolences to Reid and Linda's family.

### The People of Christie

After twelve years at Christie, Dallas and Pedro have confirmed they will return next year for a thirteenth season. They just don't stop, and we're extremely glad for their continued presence.

Thank you to your committee for its outstanding work during the year and, as always, an enormous thank you to the two most loved and hardworking members of the Christie team, Jenny Muir and Gary Verberne, whose efforts in managing bookings, membership and publishing Bunkum make Christie run so smoothly every year.

For me, Gary's comment in Bunkum #6 is a call for what we hopefully get more of next year: "Christiansians - it's looking fantastic on the mountain at the moment, the lines are short, there's lots of space in the lodge. Those that know tell me: Get your a\*\* up there!"

Best wishes,



Steve McLennan  
President

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