

Christiania Ski Club  
70<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting  
21 November 2024

## **President's Report**

This year marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Christiania Ski Club Inc.

In 1954, a small group of enthusiastic skiers formed a committee, and on 23<sup>rd</sup> September held a public meeting in Hamilton that attracted sixty people to the now long-gone Whitiora Bowling Club. The minutes of this meeting noted

*“Several people present urged that this new Club should join the Waikato Tramping Club and gave their reasons in support of this move. However, after considering this matter it was decided by those present that a separate Club should be formed.”*

Under the headline “*Enthusiastic Meeting Forms Ski Club*”, the Waikato Times quoted Chairman of the committee, architect Ewen Christie, saying

*“When the club is formed immediate preparations will be made to build a club lodge at Ruapehu”, and that “this would be essential because of the difficulty of obtaining accommodation on the mountain.”*

The article went on to note, “*one of the objects of the club would be to foster interest and provide facilities for juniors in the sport of skiing*”. This remains one of the Club's objectives to this day.

After a few more meetings, the name Christiania was chosen, and those involved began the process of fund raising and building the lodge we all know and love today, albeit smaller than currently.

While a glamorous black-tie event at The Chateau marked Christie's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, your committee has decided to delay any further celebrations until the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary for cost reasons, given the losses we've incurred in recent years.

## Snow

The great snow of 2023 followed four years of poor snow that started in 2019, and sadly this year was nearly as bad as 2022 when the lower mountain didn't open at all, and Christie had no ski-in-ski-out all season. A herculean effort by RAL, including snow making in the Rock Garden that produced great skiing there in August, and staff literally hand-shoveling snow in the Valley, saved the season from being much worse.

The upper mountain had periods of excellent skiing on the Knoll-T, but as the warm rain started falling it soon disappeared, along with lodge bookings.

Pedro and Dallas kindly offered to end their contract early, and RAL soon followed suit closing the season before Labour Weekend.

### 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
- 2024: 450 (actual 457)

Economic conditions are suspected to have played a significant part in this year's dramatic drop in numbers, in addition to the poor snow coverage. Our usual four school group weeks dropped to one—down from two last season—and if it wasn't for that and a large group from the Waikato Regional Council organised by Bryan Clements, these numbers would have been even worse.

This year, the Club has a deficit of \$22,232, slightly down on the \$22,522 deficit last year. These figures include unfunded depreciation of \$10,860 meaning our cash losses these two year were closer to \$11,500. Read more about this in the Treasurer's report.

Once again, 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 low occupancy.

### Lodge Maintenance

In March, the exterior cedar cladding was stained using our new INTAKS scaffolding, with two coats applied more safely and faster than before, leaving the lodge looking great and protected for the coming years.

In April, the pantry was completely emptied, and all surfaces cleaned, sanded and painted or stained in preparation for provisioning, which happened later that month.

### In Memoriam

Ewen Christie passed away in Auckland on 21 December 2023, aged 99. Ewen was chairman of the committee that led to the formation of Christiania, and its first president once the Club was incorporated. As noted above, Ewan was the architect who designed the lodge, and helped fundraise and build it in the 1950s. Like his wife, Ailsa, and other founding members, we owe Ewen a huge debt for his vision and years of work establishing the club and lodge.

## The People of Christie

After thirteen years at Christie, Dallas and Pedro have confirmed they will return next year for a fourteenth 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.

Best wishes,



Steve McLennan

President

[president@skichristie.co.nz](mailto:president@skichristie.co.nz)

021-727 850