

HOTHAM SKI ASSOCIATION Inc.

2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7:30pm 21st November, 2016

German Club - Tivoli

291 Dandenong Road, Windsor Vic 3181



Meeting Open: 7:30pm

Introduction and Apologies – Bruce Blackman (Chair).

Introduction to guests Jon Hutchins (CEO of MHARMB) and Eddie Wilson (Industry & Product Development Manager – Cycle, Snow & Nature at Tourism North East)

Apologies –

Lindsay Perry	– Tallawarra Ski Club
Gary Young	– Peninsula
Pat Corr	– Trap Door
Phil Stott	– Arrabri
Belinda Trembath	– Ski Lift Company

PRESENTATIONS and discussions (7.30 to 8.40pm):

MHARMB update - presented by Jon Hutchins

Q & A – Bruce Blackman & Jon Hutchins

Focus has been representation of stakeholder's sustainability, improving the balance sheet with driving income and bums in beds. Increasing visitation and reducing expenses.

PowerPoint presentation on the HSA Website.

- Jon discussed swindlers valley project, on time and on budget.
- 2016 visitation has been lower in the 10-year average
- There are 3 interested parties for the RMB Building Expressions of Interest project. A developer wanted to start this year, but realistically looking at demolishing at the end of the next winter. The RMB are unsure of where they will be. Plan will include a Medical Centre and Ski Patrol as part of the deal.
- There is a masterplan for the Falls and Hotham walk
- Looking at putting a restaurant on top of heavenly valley
- Bright is booming with 92 events, the challenge is to drag the people up to Hotham

- Marketing – RMB are looking at their brand and where Hotham sits. Hotham is moving away from steeper and deeper and widening the market.
- A lot of discussion on the End of snow season. During the Grand Final weekend and Cup Weekend, people were still skiing. The weather was 6 weeks behind the snow season, and flowers that only open out in September were visible. Lodges would like to see the season opened for an additional week, especially for South Australia school holidays, the mountain is closed and lodges are missing out on income.
- Suggestion was to drop the entry fee in September, Jon's reply was that the free Wednesday did not make a difference to visitation.
- Murray Neilson requested the deadline be changed for the grass clearing due to the weather. Jon suggested to give the RMB a call if the lodges cannot complete, and also ensure all windows are closed in case of fire and ember attacks.
- The CORSA event is still in existence. If the paperwork is sanctioned, then it will go ahead
- The General will not be running the Cool Summer Festival next year but every second year.
- The Dinner Plain runs and trails were successful on the 22nd November
- The Adventure Kids Festival will also be run again.
- Discussions on the site of the medical centre and not wanting to cross the road. Jon replied that the medical attention is usually Big D and Summit, and is more practical, but patients can be dragged across.
- Discussions on the parking in front of White Crystal being cut back, causing difficulty in getting luggage into the lodges. RMB are looking at drop off zones
- Falls sent out Early Bird Mountain access, similar to a Hero Pass, is Hotham going to do the same? Jon's reply, Hotham cutting prices does not increase visitation, then the budget will need to be filled from another income stream.

Question on gas usage and gas contracts – Jon replied that it was sent due to tenants not wanting to pay and the RMB was losing money.

Question on the RMB transparency, how regular is the market being revisited. Jon replied that there are 2 gas suppliers Elgas and Origin, no transparency with Elgas but there is a fixed rate negotiated with Origin. Jon will put a policy through the HSA.

Tourism North East update - presented by Eddie Wilson

PowerPoint presentation on the HSA Website.

Who we are and where we are going

- Australia – trying to get the right people to the country
- Victoria – getting people to the state
- Tourism North East is regional focused on Products and Events
6 Shire councils and 3 Snow Resorts – developing product
Eddie is responsible for Nature, Cycle and Snow

Their long term strategic and vision

- Responsible for regional marketing eg 7 peaks ride to get more people up to the mountain, ride high country – cycle across the mountains

- Product development – identify gaps in our regional offer, Alpine experience what to do in the area. When someone comes up with an idea, TNE connect the dots to get it moving
- Long term sustainability for the business – eg. 2-3 years to get the Longevity Infrastructure – invest secure funds (alpine and valleys)
- Advocating – there to help anyone
- Research – secure funds for the research space
- Strategic planning – development of destination plan for the region, 3 year plan, drive further position growth. eg. Ned Kelly walk
Attract life style leaders to share experience and new product. Focus on the area including the hills eg. trails and what brings the people, do research, get people onto the website and receive newsletters.
www.tourismnortheast.com.au
Suggestions is to do cross promoting of an event on the TNE website and link across to your lodge website to drive visitation.
Promote social media.

Lodges and businesses can book in for a one on one mentoring session to discuss what can be done to promote a product.

Tourism dollar is \$700,000,000 and North East have 20% of the gross

How to get grants? TNE look for grants available and the government bodies to identify where there is a need. There is a lot of grants for events available.

Grants are available for lodges and individuals. TNE have a kick start campaign, one session per year in the regions for a collaborative product, eg. Motorbikes provide a weekend package with another business.

People research at least 22 websites before planning a trip. They want to be told what to do on their trip. Suggestion is to add a “what to do” to your website eg. 2-day Walking trails.

Hotham during the summer is difficult to eat unless it is The General, a major Kickstart is needed to give to our restaurants to be open longer.

HSA AGM Business (8.40 to 9.30pm):

Approval of previous minutes: movement to be adopted, Roger Davies from Austen, all in favour

Presidents Report – Bruce Blackman

Full presentation - PowerPoint slides on the HSA website.

- Jon started 2 years ago, and the HSA questioned and discussed RMB costs. For the last 18 months is has been a positive progress and influence.
- Visitation slide focuses on the last 13 years, RMB focus is now marketing

- Visitation on the three mountains, families are going to Falls, not Hotham due to Hotham not being accessible, the ski lift company closed, there is nothing for people to do

The HSA have not had a lot of workshops. We have put out case studies, and need to give the feedback to the board. Would like to keep the resort open for the additional week. At the Consultative meeting, the Ski Lift Company advised that they would close on the gazetted weekend. Suggestion is to have all the mountains close at the same time.

Discussions on the commercial issues, not being able to open. The clubs/lodges are part of the commercial outcome and believe that everyone has to be on the same page for it to work. The HSA need to be more the "Chamber of Commerce" than the Hotham Ski Association.

There is not enough general acknowledgment of the bad financials for the clubs that were represented in the case study.

Discussions on a lodge where the next generation are not becoming members as it is easier and cheaper to be a non-member. Rory asked if there could be a program to get the young members, there is no kinship with the next generation, kids are more mobile and go overseas, but there is nothing happening on the mountain to bring them up; lack of advertising, Kids are the now generation and habits have changed.

HSA need to set up a Targeted workshop.

Treasurers Report – Brian Vowles

Details on the website

- Rates were updated for the year, not everyone has paid – Approx. \$4000
- Expenses have gone down
- Trade Creditors - The General invoiced for 2 years – one invoice has paid and another still left

It was suggested that a workshop be setup to make it seen that the HSA are doing something with their money and then they might pay on time. Murray advised that we do projects with other organisations that use up our funds from time to time. We try to keep costs down and have not had a project recently.

Election of Office Bearers

Bruce Blackman – president (elected)
Peter Sandow – vice president (elected)
Murray – ARWG representative (continued)
Rob Anderson – Secretary (elected)
Brian Vowles – Treasurer (elected)
Gary Young – (continued)
Rory McDermott – DP representative (continued)

General Business

Dinner Plain (Rory Mc Dermott)

- Good year, good winter - accommodation booked out and snow making was good
- In the Green season – they held a running event at DP including Hotham
- Wyndham group is coming into DP, purchased Rundalls and 30 chalets and will be open for business next month, December 6th

DP Laundry

It was noted that the DP laundry is up for sale. Concerns on what is happening to the service and hoping that additional people will make it more viable to continue. It is a problem for visitor that do not carry linen such as cyclists.

Fire Safety Issues

It has been noted that Electrical Tags will be more frequent. The HSA will go back to the board for advice, but is not a board decision. Inspectors/Phil Davern are trying to apply normal general (State Regulation) rules for a seasonal product. David Risby will forward a list of providers to assist. Bruce to follow up.

AGM Closed at (9.30pm): 9:20