

Southern Tasmanian Ski Association

Presidents Report - November 2018

The 2018 season was a memorable one for a number of reasons. STSA Volunteers continued their outstanding efforts in maintaining and improving the infrastructure at the Mt Mawson Ski Field, and we watched with great interest as the new Public Day Facility started to take shape. The snowfalls this season were not great, but STSA still managed to offer skiing to the public on 4 successive weekends in August and September.

A total of 13 working bees were conducted over the Summer, with 32 volunteers working on a wide range of activities. Key achievements included the repair and construction of improved snow fences at the top of the Mawson run, installation of a new photovoltaic power system on the Mawson tow hut to supply batteries and inverter in the new Day Shelter, commencement of the removal of protruding rocks from the lower part of the Mawson run, and the repair of the Rodway tow poles which had been damaged in last season's extensive snow falls. The University tow received a thorough service, including the installation of the new clutch assembly to ensure effective operation of the mechanical elements of the safety circuit, and an extension piece was fitted to the top of a pole on the crest of the Mawson run to reduce the risk of the rope being buried in drifting snow.

The positive attitude and energy of the band of volunteers that keeps the Mt Mawson Ski Field operational is truly inspirational. Whether it is carrying heavy timber up the mountain, or working out how to fabricate replacement new steel components for the tows everyone is always positive and energetic. The volunteers often work in cold Tasmanian mountain conditions, and this year work was still being completed well after snow cover was well established. A few key people inspire others because nothing is too much trouble, and problems are opportunities to be solved. I would particularly like to mention Craig Larsson and Paul Vince who have showed great leadership in getting numerous challenging tasks completed on the ski field this year – thanks Craig and Paul for all your efforts.

This year saw construction commence of the long awaited new Mt Mawson Day Shelter and First Aid Room. As with many building projects there were delays at the outset meaning that the builders (Vos Constructions) found themselves undertaking much of the building works in late Summer and Autumn as the weather started to deteriorate. They persevered even as snow settled around the building, and were able to complete the roof and main structural elements in time for the ski season opening. STSA is very grateful to Vos Constructions and the Department of primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment for allowing STSA early access to the building to enable skiing to be offered at Mt Mawson this season. Feedback from volunteers and visitors was very positive, and the early access also enabled a test run of how the building will work when fully complete.

Once the season did get underway it was one of those frustrating seasons where it tended to be warm during the week, with snow falls and strong winds on the weekend. The Bureau of Meteorology data confirms that the Winter Season in Tasmania was wetter than normal, but with both maximum and minimum temperatures higher than the long term average. This tended to reduce visitor numbers, and with the shorter season STSA income was 57% below last year. Volunteers from STSA-affiliated clubs, however, persevered despite the conditions, and hardy Tasmanian snowboarders and skiers continued to ski and board whilst ever the tows were running.

Towards the end of the season the Mawson tow rope broke and was re-spliced, but then failed again the following weekend. It was concluded that ice and UV degradation had damaged the rope, and it is planned to install a completely new rope in preparation for next season.

It is always important to acknowledge the work of the volunteer ski patrollers of the Mt Mawson Ski Patrol, without whom it would not be possible to continue to offer skiing and boarding at Southern Tasmania's only operating downhill ski field. Stalwarts of Ski Patrol, Andrew Davey, Liz Koolhof and Paul Vince continued to put in a lot of work both on the mountain and off, and this year we were pleased to welcome new patrollers Dr Sam Hamilton and Dr Katherine Davis for their first season. We also thank Dr Elizabeth Webber, who resigned from the Ski Patrol this

year. I would also like to extend my personal thanks to Simon Allen, Karen Wild-Allen and Bishwa Oakes who evacuated me from the mountain when I injured my leg this year – no helicopter needed!

STSA is a great volunteer organization, providing an opportunity for winter sports in Tasmania's great outdoors. I encourage more people to get involved as there is always plenty to do, and it is a great way to put back into your community.

Thank you to my fellow committee members for their contribution to STSA's activities this year, and we look forward to an even better season next year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Peter Davis

STSA President 2017-2018

28 November 2018