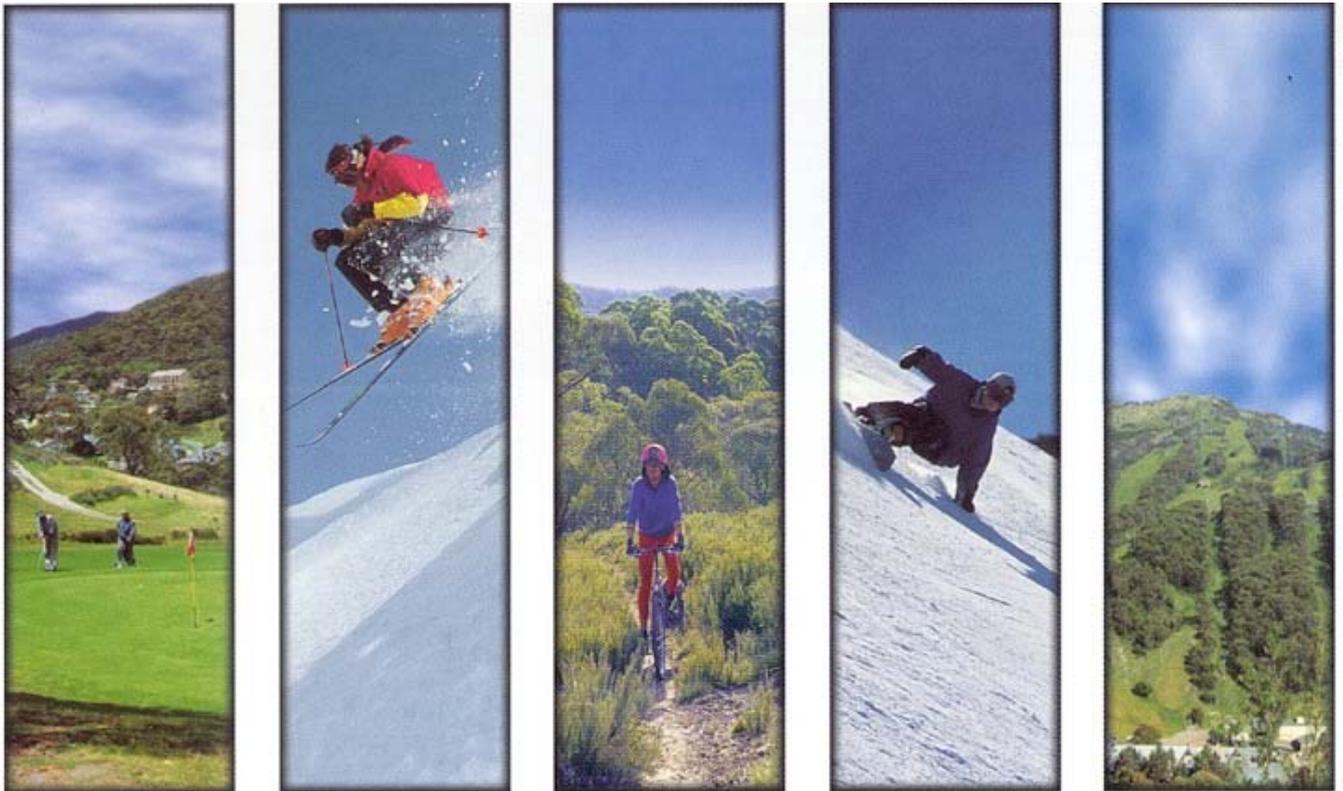


Rascal

incorporated

7–9 Banjo Paterson Cres, Jindabyne, NSW, 2627

... summer, autumn, winter, spring ... summer, autumn, winter, spring ... summer, autumn, winter, spring ...



... skiing, snowboarding, hiking, bike riding, sailing, photography, fishing, relaxing, golf, swimming ...

Autumn Newsletter – March 2014

Rascal Inc Information Board

Rascal Lodge

7 Banjo Paterson Crescent
Jindabyne, NSW 2627

All telephone enquiries

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02 6296 1002

(Leave messages on the answer phone
when number unattended)

Mailing address

PO Box 1700, WODEN, ACT, 2606

Internet: <http://www.rascal.asn.au>

E-mail: OfficeManager@rascal.asn.au

2013/14 Committee
committee@rascal.asn.au

President

Jack Cornell

Vice President

Jerry Schwab

Secretary

Merril Markham

Treasurer

Linda Swift

Public Officer

Noel Ward

Lodge Manager

Alan Laird

Committee Members

Gavin Holmes
Lee-Ann Swift
Julie Pettit
Toby Hartley

FROM THE PRESIDENT



From the President

It's been the hottest summer I can remember (at least since my teenage years growing up in Canberra) and not a good year for the veggie garden with plants (tomatoes and green beans in particular) showing heat stress. On the other hand, the mountains have therefore been a great place to be this summer.

Implementing the Strategic Plan

You will have read in the previous Newsletter that our analysis has shown that, without a massive injection of funds from members (either direct or via increased fees), we cannot afford to either build onto the Lodge or re-build the Lodge. And I continue to detect NO desire amongst members for such an impost.



So we are now concentrating on making the interior of the Lodge better for our mem-

bers though a refresh of the rooms and top floor.

You will have, at some point, experienced the crowding we get on the top floor when the Lodge is anywhere close to its capacity (currently 28).

From my personal experience, more than 20 staying in the Lodge results in very significant overcrowding of the top communal level with lack of space to sit and eat and, with people leaving dishes to air-dry (for whatever reason), a lack of space in the kitchen.

The Committee, at its February Meeting, considered a proposal from me for the internal updating of the lodge over the next few years, including converting the Games Room into a comfortable room with beds for larger groups. From contributions at the meeting, I will be updating that proposal for approval at the next Committee meeting and will talk about the Lodge Interior Refresh at the AGM.

Lodge Interior Refresh – Improving Amenity

As the first stage of a Lodge Interior Refresh (and drawing on the work done by the Building Sub-Committee over a number of years), we are working towards Room 2 being re-

freshed by this coming winter, though, at this juncture, getting a carpenter/builder to do the work has proven challenging with the odd “let down” occurring.



Sydney member Warwick Mann has very generously offered to provide some designs for improving the Lodge interior without the need to make modifications to internal walls.

We are implementing his Room 2 design (before winter this year, all things going right) and then hope to move onto changes to some of the bunkrooms (probably those on the middle level) across next summer.

We can do this refresh from our bank savings. I will be interested in your thoughts on the design when, down in the Lodge this winter, you see it at first hand.

Top Bunk Use Risk

Since the Lodge was first built in the 60's with top bunks, our membership has aged significantly and community and legal attitudes (as to what is acceptable) have also changed very significantly in the intervening decades.

About a third of us would now be classed as “seniors”. Neither Angela nor I can now get into, or out of, a top bunk either easily or safely yet, over the course of the night, have a need to do so. My future in Rascal will be determined by my ability to comfortably stay in the Lodge. If it continues to not meet our needs, we will, at some point, not renew. As our declining membership shows, we are not unique in this.



I might add that, when I look at Committee members and work-party attendees (that is, the ones who keep the Club and Lodge running for the rest of you), many are now in the “senior” category and report “issues” with top bunks.



The Committee is receiving a growing number of complaints about the safety of the top bunks (access and egress), some in writing. It is a risk we, as a Club, cannot ignore and MUST now address.

Being aware of a significant risk, and then NOT addressing it, would probably be considered negligent at law if an accident subsequently happened and, in such a situation, members of the Committee could become personally liable (irrespective of insurance cover and irrespective of the protection being an incorporated sports association bestows on the actions of Committee members).

So we have a choice, lose this group of members and expose the Committee to litigation or fix the top bunk issue. The Committee has decided we will do the latter.

In the longer term, the top bunks will probably have to go.

For now, Rascal will address the risk issue through changes to the Booking System to ensure that every person being booked states whether he/she can safely access a top bunk.

The Booking System will then allocate rooms in a way to ensure that everyone who cannot handle a top bunk is allocated a room with sufficient bottom bunks for them. It therefore presumes that, in a party, persons who can handle a top bunk DO END up in a top bunk and do not take the bunks intended for the less flexible in that party.



As always, the member booking is responsible for their party and particularly for all their guests. If you are the person making the booking, the responsibility is now on you to nominate any person in your party who CANNOT safely access a top bunk.

The Booking System will now require the member making the booking to certify that each member and each guest of the member can handle a top bunk (or not). If one or more persons in your party cannot handle a top bunk, then the booking will only proceed if it can be filled without utilising top bunks for those individuals.

This policy, and any costs associated with it, will be reviewed at the Committee's annual Lodge Meeting after the winter (when fee and subscription rates are set each year).

Reversing declining membership

Since November, we have been operating on reduced joining fees to attract new members (our fees are now roughly comparable with the joining fees of some, on-snow, new lodges). The new rates are:

Full Adult Admission Category	Admission
New Full Adult (for the 1st Full Adult Member at a residence)	\$960
New Full Adult (at same residence as an existing Full Member)	\$480

We want to encourage ex-members to re-join Rascal and have introduced special readmission rates (information on the web-site).

To date, we have not been inundated with new, and re-join member applications. Whilst it is early days, I am seriously looking at a “Plan B” which would accept that we may, for the next decade, continue with a slowly declining membership and look to put in place measures that recognise this fact.

I am aware of the membership’s strong desire for Rascal to continue to operate as a communal Lodge with affordable fees.

Recognising Outstanding Individual Effort over a long continuous period

Our new Fellow members (not many as the criteria to qualify for such recognition are quite onerous) are Greg Fraser, Richard Emerton, Alan Laird (current Lodge Manager and Webmaster), Ian McNeill, Rod Roberts and Linda Swift (current Treasurer). We continue to appreciate the efforts they made, and often continue to make, to keep Rascal viable.



Online Credit Card Payments



Rascal is introducing Online Credit Card payments for bookings and membership. This will (shortly) be available to you when you book and when you renew.

The credit card facility is provided, and operated, by the Commonwealth Bank on its own systems. This is much more secure for you as Rascal never sees your credit card details.

It will also allow Kim, our Office Manager, to provide a more personalised service to members as her time will not be taken up with manual processing of credit cards and cheques and, to a lesser extent, the reconciliation of direct to bank payments with bookings and renewals.

Cheques, in particular, require heavy manual processing (including entering the payment, copying the cheque details to the bank deposit form, manually taking the deposit to a bank branch and then reconciling the deposit with the banks statement each month.) This is a high cost in time for the Office Manager (which we pay for) and one we are seeking to minimise so that Kim’s time is better used for Rascal’s benefit.

The annual review of the Office Manager’s duties revealed that Kim is now needing to undertake significant follow-up work on outstanding payments. We are a Club. We operate on an honour system. This should not be an issue for us. The online credit card facility should minimise this. Additionally, for bookings made online within a week of the booking stay start-date, payment by online credit card will be obligatory.





AGM

Which brings me to the AGM and next year's Committee. At least four members of the current Committee will not be standing for election for the 2014-15 Committee. We need fresh, active people on the Committee.

Under our Constitution (completely based on the ACT Incorporated Associations Act's "Model Rules"), we have four defined positions: President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary and another six Committee Member positions giving a Committee of ten.

If there are no volunteers for the Committee, then we will need to pay for more services, Lodge updating work will be much slower, possibly being done over more years, prices may have to rise (to cover services now needing to be paid for) and the nature of the Lodge and its membership will change as a consequence of any significant price rises. I have seen it happen in another lodge-owning ski club and the end result is not one I'd like to see repeated at Rascal.

It's up to you. If you want a good Club and a relatively smoothly running lodge, then you should consider contributing: - that's the nature of Rascal and its communal ethos.

Do not be constrained by thinking a position is taken and you should not nominate for it because of that.

Like others in Rascal, I've been here on the Committee, on and off, since the 1990's and would welcome an influx of new, preferably younger, members to take over the mantle.

To nominate for a Committee position, you need to complete a nomination form, get it endorsed by two financial adult members and then sent to the Secretary, Merril Markham so that it is received 7 days before the date of the AGM. The AGM is on Wednesday 26th March at the Yacht Club (part of the Canberra Southern Cross Club) at Yarralumla Bay.

Official positions under the ACT legislation (mirrored in our Constitution) are President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Rascal has six "Committee Member" positions. A Public Officer is mandatory but is not, in itself, a designated, named Committee position.



The process for filling positions is set out in the ACT legislation governing Rascal Inc. and mirrored exactly in our Constitution.

In the event of more applications being received for a position than there are places for that position, a ballot will be held at the AGM for that position. (Committee Member is the only position with more than one place). If there is a position unfilled at the AGM, nominations can be taken from the floor for that unfilled position.

I hope to see you at the AGM (and at the dinner get-together beforehand).

Jack Cornell - President



Rascal Inc

Annual General Meeting

2014

Wednesday 26 March 2014

8:00 PM

Southern Cross Yacht Club

Lotus Room Lotus Bay, Mariner Place,
Yarralumla ACT 2600

Optional:

Join us for the **pre-AGM dinner at 6.15 pm** at the Yacht Club.

A table has been booked under 'Rascal members' at the restaurant. Members can order from the restaurant menu and pay for your meal on the night. The menu can be viewed on the Yacht Club web site.

RSVP For dinner:

Merril: secretary@rascal.asn.au / **Kim:** OfficeManager@rascal.asn.au.

(Please RSVP by Monday 24 March 2014)

The AGM will start at 8pm in the function room. Members wishing to attend the AGM but not the dinner will be welcomed with complimentary tea and coffee, and a cake trolley. The evening promises to provide a great opportunity to meet with members, catch up with friends and elect your new Committee for 2014.

We look forward to seeing you there!

If undeliverable, return to:

**Rascal Incorporated
PO Box 1700,
WODEN ACT 2606**

Details for the RASCAL Inc 2014 AGM inside!