

## **Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association (RMCA) AGM**

### **Council Report**

*September 2023*

#### **Introduction**

It is with sadness that we begin this report by acknowledging the passing of our friend and RMCA President, Linda Danen, in late July. Linda's commitment and dedication to the clubs and our community was unparalleled. Her legacy will continue to inspire us.

#### **Leadership transition**

In light of Linda's passing, the RMCA has appointed both Judith Hamblyn and Angus Winstone as interim co-presidents, a decision made to ensure continuity of leadership within the Association.

#### **Challenges faced by clubs**

The Ruapehu mountain clubs have faced several challenges in recent times, including:

- the impact of 2020/21 COVID-19 affected seasons
- 2022 season with minimal snowfall
- the 2023 financial turmoil caused by Ruapehu Alpine Lifts (RAL) liquidation.

RAL liquidation and impartiality

- The administration and subsequent liquidation of RAL have brought uncertainty to our clubs. We recognise that opinions among clubs may vary and RMCA has chosen to remain impartial to ensure we can have open dialogue with all stakeholders. RMCA feels any new operator needs to understand the key stakeholders and be able to work with them.
- RMCA engaged with potential bidders, the Ruapehu Stakeholders Association presented at the RMCA Forum in May, and we facilitated an online forum with Whakapapa Holdings Ltd. We also established contact with Pure Tūroa, Tūwharetoa and the liquidators PWC.

We acknowledge that the process has been slow and frustrating and wrote to the Minister for Economic Development and several MPS earlier this year expressing our concerns.

Despite a slow start, the 2023 season has delivered good snowfall. We hope this has translated into improved income for clubs compared to the last few seasons.

#### **Whakapapa ski field concession**

If there is a new ski field operator, they will need apply for a new concession from DOC. As a major stakeholder, RMCA expects to be consulted. Of particular concern are retaining clubs' existing rights of access, parking, and visitor numbers.

#### **Whakapapa clean-up**

We have been asked by DOC to champion a clean-up at Whakapapa, underscoring our commitment to preserving the environment and ensuring a sustainable future. We have instigated discussions with Iwi, RAL and other local community groups and will provide more information to clubs as plans progress.

### **Emergency planning and safety on the maunga**

RAL approached the RMCA about management of hazards such as avalanche, medical events and volcanic eruptions while club members are on the ski field. RMCA worked with clubs several years ago to update the health and safety planning and clubs will already have these hazards noted on their risk registers. However, it's important to keep these risks top of mind and RMCA will be helping RAL develop and distribute some information resources.

### **Conclusion and Linda's legacy**

In conclusion, we pay tribute to Linda's dedication and vision. The challenges we face as clubs and as an association require unity, resilience, and continued commitment to our shared passion for snow sports. It is incumbent upon us, as club members and clubs, to ensure the survival of snow sports in the North Island of New Zealand. We must actively promote our clubs and invite friends to join us in our shared passion.

Together, we will carry forward Linda's legacy, and with determination, we will overcome the obstacles ahead.

Angus Winstone

**Interim Co-president**

Judith Hamblyn

**Interim Co-president**