

THE PERISHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY – how it began

Our ski heritage and the colourful characters that have graced the Perisher Range has been the subject to many conversations over the years. Capturing this rich historical tapestry into some type of organisation has also been a talking point and ambition to many people, but like many ideas, taking that next step and turning an idea into something real requires determination and commitment. Fortunately the timing was right when encouragement by former Perisher Blue CEO - Ashley Blondel espoused enthusiasm for Pam Woodman and Judy Thomson of Kuring-gai Alpine Lodge to forge the idea and put in motion the structure for such a group. With assistance from passionate volunteers and collaboration with Perisher Blue and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, the foundations for the Perisher Historical Society have been established and are celebrated tonight with this inaugural dinner.

In 2006 a steering committee was formed to guide the initial process of forming the organisation, and on 6th August 2007 the Perisher Historical Society was registered with the Department of Fair Trading. Simon Berry of Berry Buddle Wilkins Lawyers kindly provided legal assistance with registration. The name Perisher Historical Society was selected to be inclusive of what is often called the Perisher Range Resorts. The terms Perisher Range and Perisher Range Resorts, whilst an accurate reflection of all localities in this area (eg. Perisher Valley, Smiggin Holes, Guthega and Blue Cow), tends to be associated with resort planning and administration. It was deemed important by the steering committee that no ambiguity was construed in the name as well as imbue an identity of what the society was about. The steering committee felt that 'Perisher' was synonymous with the general area and that the community and future members would accept this wider interpretation. The intrinsic historic relationship Charlotte Pass Village has had on the development of the Perisher area has not been overlooked and therefore Charlotte Pass is also of interest to the Perisher Historical Society. To give the Society an easily recognisable identity, the logo you now see was kindly designed by Jason Reid of Reidesign - the concept combining the resort, mountain and snow environment with a feeling of the past.

In due course, consideration will also be given to the group for affiliation with the Royal Australian Historical Society that will help give access to reasonable insurance rates should public liability or voluntary worker insurance be required (amongst other benefits).

What we would like to do now...

Whilst the Perisher Historical Society will soon form a statutory committee with other ancillary roles and functions, there is now a call for membership. If you would like to join the Perisher Historical Society, please take and complete a membership form. Also take the opportunity to promote membership amongst your family and friends. The success of the Perisher Historical Society will depend on continuing membership and interest from people like you.

It is also timely to commence some of the activities that will help consolidate the type of history the society wishes to interpret. There are many possibilities for the direction of the burgeoning Perisher Historical Society, but in the first instance we would like to start collecting old photographs, articles, skiing equipment and other snow-related memorabilia. Given the history of skiing in the Snowy Mountains and the context for the development of skiing in the Perisher Range, material does not have to be Perisher specific. However, anything that helps communicate stories about ski club and ski lodge development, travelling in the mountains, interesting anecdotes including funny misadventures etc., would all be welcome.

As part of their 50-year celebrations, a number of lodges have been producing commemorative booklets and DVDs. Clubs with similar upcoming celebrations may also wish to consider contributing these or any other historical snippets that are snow sport or resort related to the Perisher Historical Society. Photographs will always be a welcome contribution. Copies of transcripts and photographs would also be welcome should individuals or clubs wish to keep the originals. The Society can arrange for copying of originals. The Perisher Historical Society is also collecting oral history from various personalities, rekindling memories of their time and experiences in the snow and the development of snow sports.

What we would like to do in the future...

Having a repository for contributions is one thing, but being able to share and provide information is another. The ultimate goal for the Perisher Historical Society is to have a museum exhibiting a range of memorabilia. However, opportunities for show-casing some collections in places like Blue Cow, Perisher Centre, Ski Tube and the NPWS building are also being explored. Winter events and special gatherings will also provide opportunities to share in the delights of our skiing history.