

THREDBO ALPINE MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 87 | August 2025



Presidents Report

TAM is busy going from the analogue age to digital. Since the beginning of TAM in 1997, members have collected tons of historical photos, videos in many formats, documents, including oral histories and 1000's of items including skis, clothes, posters and even Olympic medals. Led by Chrissi Web, untold hours have been spent collecting and storing these items as well as setting up the Museum in it's current form.

Since Errol Hanlon and Randy Wieman were elected Presidents in 2021, their goal has been to make all of the TAM collection accessible online and to make the Museum more interactive. A new website has been created: <https://www.thredboalpinemuseum.org.au>. New accession numbers have been created to identify many items in the Collection. The most important aspect for TAM is to create a website and digital system that can be built on into the future. This is being accomplished. A Committee has been nominated to do the same with the physical aspect of the Museum.

Some of the members will meet with a Social Media expert to develop a template to systematically upload photos and stories to Facebook and Instagram. The goal is to get more activity on our website and in the Museum to increase the visibility of TAM and the glorious history of Thredbo.

On top of the website and Museum, TAM organizes three events each year which have become increasingly popular and raising more funds to implement our new direction.

TAM returned to the Royal Australian History House for its Sydney pre-winter get together. There was a full house as Brad Spalding delivered a most informative and fun talk about the History of the Thredbo Ski School. One of the main points was that because of the Austrian Connection, Thredbo has access to the best Ski Instructors in the World which helped the Aussies become World Class. Check out his talk: <https://youtu.be/1mTz1jq76Nk?si=3icMegaXUEzJvt43>

TAM changed the date of it's early season get-together in Thredbo to Saturday of the June long weekend. The newly renovated Schuss Bar was the new venue. This proved a hit with around 100 in attendance including Alan Rydge, TAM's patron, to hear Brad present his talk for the second time but to a local audience.

We look forward to seeing you at the TAM Faces of Thredbo dinner on Monday 8th September.

Randy & Errol
TAM Presidents

WINTER DINNER

& Faces of Thredbo Awards

A Fabulous Night of Mirth, Merriment & Celebration!

Celebrating the lives and contributions of

Robin Dyke

Principal architect of Thredbo

The Deseo Family

Builders of Candlelight Lodge

Plus

LIVE AUCTION BY ROWEN KELLY

HELEN NAJAR "THREDBO SKI SCHOOL – THE UNTOLD STORY"

GREG HUGHES "THE FIRST DAYS OF THE KOSCIUSKO THREDBO COMPANY"

DINNER

Two-course dinner with welcome drink on arrival.

For dietary requirements, allergies, or special requests, including creating your table of 10 please email: randy@hotshots.net.au

DATE & TIME

Monday, 8TH SEPTEMBER 2025.
Doors open at 5:30 PM for a 6 PM start.
Event concludes at 10 PM.

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP OFFER

\$75 for Members \$95 Non-Members
\$120 for Membership and Dinner

VENUE

Kosciuszko Room

DRESS CODE

Dress to Impress!

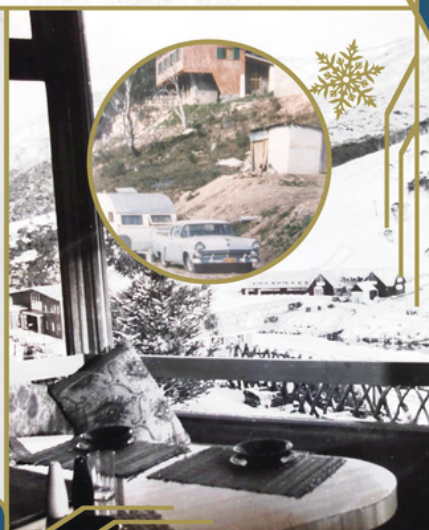
FOR A GOOD CAUSE

All proceeds raised on the night will go to the Thredbo Alpine Museum Foundation.



Ski THREDBO this year!

**AUSTRALIA'S NEWEST
AND GREATEST ALPINE RESORT**



BOOK ONLINE:

Click: www.thredboalpinemuseum.org.au/events

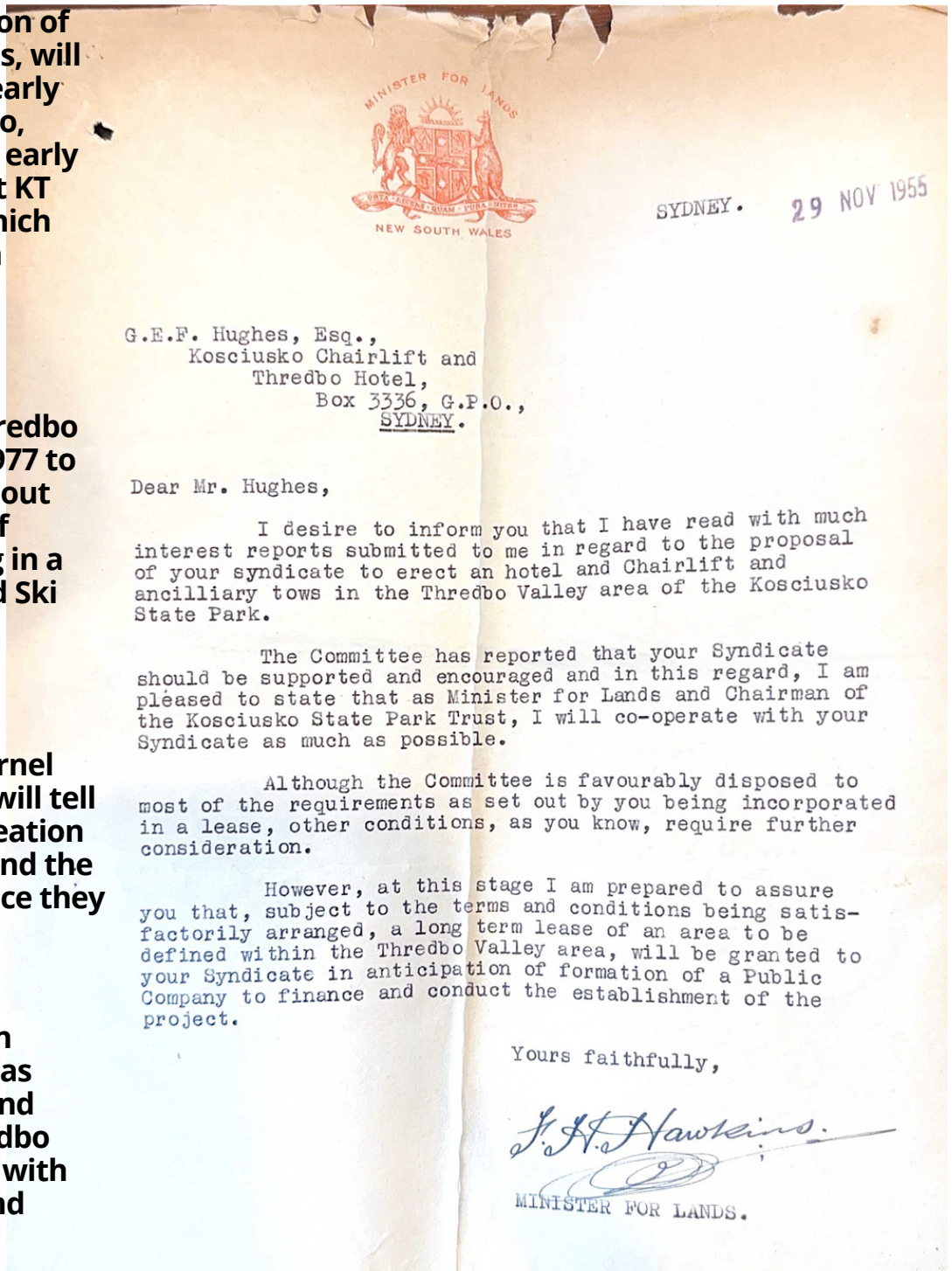
Guest Speakers at the Faces of Thredbo Dinner Monday 8th September 2025

Greg Hughes - son of Geoffrey Hughes, will talk about the early years of Thredbo, particularly the early work of the first KT syndicate, of which his father was a founder and shareholder.

Helen Najar, Thredbo Ski Instructor 1977 to 1979 will talk about the early days of women working in a male dominated Ski School.

Mark Davidson, Grandson of Kornel and Sue Deseo will tell us about the creation of Candlelight and the wonderful service they initiated.

Robin Dyke is an architect who has helped create and transform Thredbo Village working with KT, the Parks and developers.



Faces of Thredbo

HONOUR BOARD

Recognises those who have made significant contributions to skiing and or the development of Thredbo as an alpine resort.

Those honoured are recognised below

;2014

Leonhard Erhartert
Barry May
Michael Milton
Sasha Nekvapil
Frank Prihoda

2015

Charles Anton
Dick Dusseldorp
Cees Koeman
Tony Sponar
Tommy Tomasi

2016

George Freuden
Geoffrey Hughes
Andrew Thyne Reid

2017

Elyne Mitchell
Rudi Schatzle

2018

Albert van der Lee
Bela Racsko

2019

Ludwig Rabina
Wayne Kirkpatrick

2021

Kim Clifford
Bob Arnott

2022

Michelle & Heinz Reichinger

2023

Steve Breathour
Ian Foster

2024

Ron Finneran
Kurt Lance

2025

Robin Dyke
The Deseo Family

Brad Spalding - Ski School

Brad Spalding's speech notes delivered in presentations in Sydney and Thredbo 2025

The History of the Thredbo Ski School: A Chronicle of Gemütlichkeit and Guest-Centred Excellence

...Good evening, Skiers and Snowboarders,

Thredbo Ski School has long been the beating heart of alpine education in Australia. Its story, infused with the warm, welcoming spirit of Gemütlichkeit, stretches back to the late 1950s, when the very foundation was laid by its inaugural director, Leonhard Erharter.

Origins: A vision takes shape (1957 – 1960s)

Gemütlichkeit - a German word without a perfect English translation- conveys warmth, good cheer, belonging, and conviviality. From its earliest days, the spirit became the core of Thredbo Ski School. Instructors weren't just teaching skiing; they were crafting experiences, forging connections, and making every guest feel truly valued. This ethos was deeply rooted in the school's Austrian heritage - a reverence for the mountain, for ceremony, and shared alpine joy.

Whether it was helping someone balance on skis for the first time or sharing a tale over a post-ski schnapps, the message was clear: skiing wasn't just a sport, it was a celebration.

It was Leonhard Erharter, a master of the Austrian tradition and a graduate of the Austrian Federal College, who built the Ski School itself.

As director from 1958 to 1977, he instilled a culture of Early 60s, and heartfelt hospitality that remains the soul of Thredbo to this day.



Leonhard understood that a ski school wasn't just about instructions – it was about mountain experience and snow craft.

Under his guidance, Thredbo instructors became ambassadors of alpine warmth, whether leading lessons on the Bluff or sharing gluhwein by the fire, they embodied a philosophy that continues to define the school.

Growth and the Golden Age (1970s – 1980)

Brad Spalding - Ski School cont...



The **1970s and 1980s** were a time of strong growth under two influential directors: Arnold Konrad and, later, Roland Wanner. Arnold raised the bar for instructor training and played a pivotal role in shaping Australia's national Snowsports curriculum through his work with Australian Professional Ski Instructors (APSI). Roland brought an infectious energy and a passion for events and community that helped the ski school evolve into a high-performing, close-knit team of professionals. Boom Time instructors from Australia, Austria, North America and a Greek from Jindabyne.

Being in the Southern Hemisphere gave us an extraordinary advantage – we attracted the best instructors and coaches from around the world, from Bundesportheim in Austria to the great North American programs. The vibe was electric, and it wasn't just about perfecting technique – it was about Team of Instructors Top. Con Poulos Left middle. Kent Carpenter Right middle. Mark Sedgwick Bottom. Sean Campbell fun, camaraderie and building a culture that people wanted to return to—season after season.

These were the Boom years, when fun, tradition, and high standards were the pillars of every guest's experience.

Brad Spalding's Tenure (1990s – 2003)

Before I arrived in Thredbo, I had the privilege of training in the Austrian Federal College –Bundesportheim in Obergurgl, St. Christoph, and Innsbruck University. It was a crucible of alpine technique and culture, where leadership, discipline, and joy were all part of the curriculum. What I learned there, I brought to Thredbo: that skiing isn't just about performance – it's about experience, integrity, and magic. As Chief Examiner for APSI, I had the opportunity to help define Australia's national standard of instruction and mentor the next generation of elite instructors.

Anecdote – Professor Hoppichler's Advice One of the best pieces of advice I ever received came from Professor Hoppichler:

If you're lucky enough to run a ski school, look deeply into its culture. Work with it. Nurture and improve it. But whatever you do, don't try to change it completely."

As Director, my goal was to honour the legacy that came before me, while growing it in meaningful ways. One of our biggest leaps forward was Thredboland at Friday Flat – a purpose-built zone for children to fall in love with snow sports. To make it magical, we introduced a cast of Aussie animal mascots – Syd Koala, Eddy Emu, Rocky Cocky, Ruby Roo, Wolly Wombat, Eric Echidna and the unforgettable Extreme Rat, dreamed up by Dan Taylor. These characters weren't just cute – they represented progression and skill levels, making learning feel like an adventure. And then came Friday Flat Freddy – a skidoo-powered "Train" that helped ferry kids across the area. Born from practicality, Freddy quickly became a legend in his own right.



**Original Illustrations
of
Thredboland
characters by
Brad Spalding**

Brad Spalding - Ski School cont...



The Austrian Mountain Boys

The spirit of the Austrian Mountain Boys – Joyful chaos, impeccable skiing, and a whole lot of heart.

Led by Christian Klaunzer, they brought theatre to the ski school. From slap-dancing in the Keller Bar to hosting the Austrian Masters race Presentations, Thredbo Land Theatre, Adult Snow Sport Instructors Flare Runs, and introducing the Children's Fiberoptics Flare Runs, they understood that tourism needs more than structure – it needs spectacle.

The fibre optics, the mascots, the theatre, the Extreme Rat's Wheel of Fortune – these were experiences no training manual could ever teach. But they built bonds that lasted. We didn't aim to be the biggest. We aimed to be the most loved. Every guest, every child, every instructor was part of the story. Not the Biggest but the Best.

Special thanks must go to Angela Beresford, Miriam Sodergren, Natasha Hosie, Monika Spalding and Donna Poulos, whose vision and heart made Thredboland, what it is today.

We raised ski school participation, and we did it by focusing on one simple thing: making every holiday unforgettable.

Post-2003: Transition and Continuity

When I stepped down, the ski school passed into the capable hands of Adam Hosie, who continued to lead with warmth and care. Today AJ Jones holds the reins. The titles have changed, but the values – Gemütlichkeit, joy and guest-centered excellence – remain unchanged.

Brad Spalding - Ski School cont...

Anecdote – “Forget your Beginners ...”

My professor once said, “Forget your beginners, and you forget your future.” That’s a lesson we’ve never let go of.

Conclusion: The Legacy of Gemütlichkeit Thredbo Ski School’s legacy isn’t measured in medals – it’s measured in memories. In returning families. Instructors who danced in their boots and wiped away children’s tears. In guests who came once and then returned for a lifetime.

To every instructor past and present – Thank you. Your passion, your humour, your skill, and your generosity built something truly timeless. Let us never forget – we ski, not “ride.” May all your ski dreams be Powder dreams. And finally, thank you to TAM (Thredbo Alpine Museum) and Randy for your invaluable support and the rich visual history from the TAM Archives.

Let it snow – and have a fantastic Winter.

Brad Spalding
June 2025



Vale - Beryl Jean Clifford (Thomas)

Beryl Jean Clifford (Thomas) Jan 1918 – June 2025

Beryl started skiing in her early teens at Hotel Kosciusko and the chalet. After the war Beryl moved to England and met and married Victor (Vic) Clifford (Aust), Vic was a pilot during the war, Beryl had done several years of medicine and worked in labs during the war then became an air hostess. Hence where they met.

They returned to Aust in early 1957 after having 4 children all born in England with 2 ½ years apart, whom the English government was largely funding to the tune of hundreds of pounds per child.

They purchase a block of land (1957) in Newport, and they build at home, Victor was flying for Qantas at that time. Beryl's love of skiing led to them building and operating a commercial lodge in Thredbo, the lodge was / is Winterhaus which was like all commercial lodges in Thredbo at that time, Dinner, Bed and Breakfast. They operated the lodge from 1960 to 1974.

During this time the Clifford family became avid skiers with all 4 children competing at different levels with Steven and Kim representing Australia at Olympic games. They went on to operate several motels on the south coast of NSW.



After selling Winterhaus to the Francis Family, they purchased the next-door property called Puddenweg (Clifford Lodge, Pure Chalet), which Kerry (daughter) operated for numerous years as a luxury lodge.

Beryl and Vic had a waterfront property next to the Royal Price Alfred Yacht Club in Newport from the mid 1960's, and Victor became avid Sailor campaigning 5.5 yachts around the world. Vic passed away in 1988.

Beryl remarried Alan Smith and they continued to live in Newport and Beryl and Alan continued to travel and world and continued to ski until age of 93. Alan passed in 2024. Beryl lived in lifestyle village in Avalon until the last 8 odd weeks or so.

15/06/2025

Feedback from our visitors

**Philippe Liniere SYDNEY "Worked here in
1968/69/70 & 71"**

**Casey Hartnett WINCHELSEA VIC "Fantastic, great and
extremely interesting"**

Thayma Oliviera BRAZIL '(:)'

Jamie McLaughlin CANBERRA 'staying warm, great museum'



**THREDBO
ALPINE
MUSEUM
OPEN
FREE ENTRY**

**TOTAL Visitor Numbers for
Jan – June 2025**

1,692

Events

EVENTS 2025

Monday 8th September 2025
6pm - 10pm @ Thredbo

TAM Winter Dinner & Faces of Thredbo Award

Celebrating the lives of Robin Dyke (principal architect of Thredbo) and the Deseo Family (builder of various Chalets & Lodges, including Candlelight).

AASHA (Australian Alpine Snowsports History Association)

2025 Conference was cancellation in Falls Creek due to inadequate numbers.

NAMA (Mt Buller) had its meeting last week and decided they would like to offer to host the next AASHA Conference. Proposed weekend Friday April 30th to Sunday May 2nd 2027

Genevieve Fahey will keep us posted.

TAM COMMITTEE

Co-Presidents:

Randy Wieman 0408 453 632
Errol Hanlon 0439 646 313

Vice President:

Wayne Kirkpatrick 0184 766 484

Secretary:

Maureen Roberts 0490 365 987

Treasurer:

Raylene Jarvis 0414 679 409

Committee:

Alan Fredericks 0417 401 403
Andrew Koczanowski 0401 958 321
Judy Lenne 0419 973 306
Brian Farmer 0428 619 788

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

Randy Wieman, Errol Hanlon, Alan Fredericks, Kris Laird Hardman

If you have a story for the newsletter, please email it to
Alan @ alanf@bigpond.com

**We thank our team of community
volunteers that have enabled TAM's
doors to be open 84 days throughout
this summer season.**

Membership & Opening Times

Become a TAM member today

Individual, Family, Lodge & Corporate memberships available.

TAM MEMBERSHIP FEES 2025/26

Individuals

1 year \$45
5 years \$225
10 years \$450

Family

1 year \$60
5 years \$300

Group/Club Lodge

Annual \$220/year

Corporate

Gold: \$1500/yr
Silver: \$1000/yr
Bronze: \$500/yr

**Membership payments direct deposit
Thredbo Alpine Museum
BSB 032 728 Acc. 106314**



<https://www.thredboalpinemuseum.org.au/membership-payment>

Winter Opening Times

12 – 4 pm

OPEN DAILY subject to volunteer availability

**TAM Membership 2025 renewal
now due....support our local
Thredbo Alpine Museum now
and renew your membership
now.**

**Business/Corporate Membership is
available too!**

**Become a TAM
member today online**

<https://www.thredboalpinemuseum.org.au/membership-payment>

INVITATION

Contributions for the newsletter from the TAM membership are very welcome.

Newsletters out Feb, June, August & November.

Please forward contributions by email to Alan Fredericks: alanf@bigpond.com