

Ian's love of mountains started at 14 when he learned to ski and rock climb through the Venturer Scouts. He completed schooling in 1979 at Normanhurst Boys High in Sydney where he gained his early leadership potential with the Queen Scout Award and CUO of The School Cadet unit. Ian's early years were marked by adventures from hitchhiking around Australia to working jobs like dish washing at Jenolan Caves House that allowed him access to his passions and rock climbing on his days off.

His transformation to the ski bum life began in New Zealand, in the 1980 Winter season. Over the next 10 years he would do seasons in Canada, Switzerland, France and Japan. Ian made Val d'Isere his European base for 4 years where he met Thredbo skiers like Malcolm Browne and Dave Kuhn who sold him on the allure of Thredbo and the people there. In Val d'Isere he met his "Cornish Rose" and lifelong partner Jill there in 1983. During his ski bum decade he took on a variety of jobs to sustain his lifestyle, like taking candid party photos for patrons at Les Girls transvestite cabaret, seismic survey work in the gas fields of Wyoming, oyster shucker at Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco and multiple jobs around the globe as a cleaner, waiter, dish washer, ski tuner, ski boot fitter, DJ, bouncer, cook and hotel receptionist.

Jill returned with Ian to Jindabyne in 1986 and as a keen horse rider she quickly fell in love with the Snowy Mountains and its people. 1995 saw a focus on village wide staff development opportunities with the launch of the Aussie Host Staff Training Program (that led to 'local staff discounted lift passes') and community development through the creation of the Village Voice Newspaper.

In 1997, Thredbo faced a significant challenge with the road collapse, and Ian found himself representing the community in the media, juggling the demands of his family and business with a profound sense of responsibility. It was during this time that he realized the extent of the Thredbo community, extending beyond the 250 residents to encompass the thousands who had worked and vacationed in Thredbo over the years.

1998 saw Ian's commitment to the Thredbo Chamber working hard with Thredbo to get traction before winter. While bookings were down, and businesses were struggling but snow making meant Thredbo was the only Australian resort with skiing until July strengthening bookings and the resort was back up and running.

In 1998 Ian was offered an opportunity to write a book on the Snowy Mountain for Australian Geographic. Along with Ross Dunstan, a good friend and gifted local photographer, Ian spent 6 months researching, and writing the book while Ross dragged him around the country side capturing images of the mountains and its people. The book was launched in 2000 and was a sellout success over 3 print runs. As the years passed, Ian's dedication to Thredbo remained unwavering.

He witnessed the ups and downs of the ski industry, from challenging seasons to the introduction of snowmaking that kept Thredbo operational. Through it all, Ian continued to work tirelessly to build and rebuild the Thredbo community. In 1999 and 2000, Thredbo saw the development of essential infrastructure, including the Leisure Centre, Community Centre, and Chapel, thanks to government support and

community efforts. The Thredbo Chamber of Commerce rebranded as Tourism Thredbo and played a vital role in securing grant funding for the town's marketing initiatives and increasing the summer events program. During the 2000's Ian's journey as president led to significant achievements for the Thredbo Chamber, making their mark on businesses and the community. Securing the Snowy Ride final checkpoint and presentations in Thredbo with the chamber facilitating the entertainment program.

Ian's love of the stage also led to create a local spin on the Aussie Host Program seeing him roping in committee members to perform in a small play portraying a village approach to how visitors experience Thredbo and how to treat them like customers. It was a laugh and broke the ice for new winter staff because free drinks were always on offer along with 'The Little Black Book' a handy guide (that came with free condoms) for staff to help them navigate life living and working a season in the ski industry. In fact, whenever the chamber wanted to get as many of the village businesses, staff and community to a meeting, free drinks on offer always confirmed attendance! In 2008,

John McIntyre took over as president of the Chamber, marking the end of Ian's 15-year tenure. However, his journey was far from over. Ian faced new challenges as his partner, Jill, fell ill, redirecting his focus to support her and spend more time with his family. Additionally, their move out of the village in 2001 shifted his attention to what was happening beyond the immediate confines of Thredbo.

Ian Foster's legacy in Thredbo serves as a testament to the power of vision, community, and unwavering commitment. As we look back at the path he traversed and the achievements he unlocked, we are reminded that the true essence of any community lies in the dedication and passion of its members. Thank you for your attention, and may we continue to explore the fascinating stories that make up the tapestry of Thredbo's history