

DICK DUSSELDORP 2015

Gerardus Jozef Dusseldorp AO (nicknamed DICK) was a Dutch engineer who came to Australia in March 1951 whilst working for a Dutch house-building company that was building houses for the Snowy Mountains Corporation in Cooma.

Mr Dusseldorp established Civil and Civic around 1957, who were then awarded substantial contracts to build the Sydney Opera House. He subsequently set up the financial arm of the business – Lend Lease Corporation – shortly thereafter.

Dick Dusseldorp purchased the Thredbo Headlease in 1961 and from then until 1966, it was a time of great innovation and expansion of the slopes, lifts and village as well as the infrastructure that was crucial to a village. Dick had a background in town planning. He was a visionary and very hands on, and it was his personal ambition and drive that made Thredbo. He was so involved that he would come down from Sydney every weekend or two to personally inspect the work that he had directed to be undertaken the previous week.

Mr Dusseldorp was not a great skier and he was concerned that Thredbo did not have suitable slopes for beginners. That's how Ramshead Chair came about, as beginner lessons were then held in The Basin. He also had a vision to have a second Village up on the slopes, similar to some European resorts. This didn't come about, but Merritts ski area did, around 1964/65.

He was a big thinker and he believed in infrastructure building. He had visions of escalators and even a train to transport people within the village.

Civil & Civic was expanding in Australia and overseas so after 1966 he handed the reins to the management of Lend Lease, although he still had a personal interest in Thredbo.

The Lend Lease Master Plan for Thredbo was prepared by Dusseldorp and was so well conceived, subsequent Master Plans were found to fundamentally match his original footprint. He also established the principal for Thredbos year round operations.

Lend Lease sold the company, Kosciuzko Thredbo Pty Ltd, to Amalgamated Holdings Limited in 1987. Dick Dusseldorp died in Tahiti in April 2000 at the age of 82.

His contribution to the development of Thredbo as Australias premier alpine resort remains indelibly etched in the history of Australian skiing and Thredbo alpine village.