

# PERISHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc NEWSLETTER

ISSN 2653-1615

Issue 32 Winter 2024

## Notes from the President

Winter Season 2024 opened with a whimper rather than a bang. At the June long weekend the small polka dots of snow on Perisher Front Valley were fought over vigorously by many young and not so young skiers who did not seem to mind the paucity of snow. The annual music festival brought many to Perisher and was enjoyed by all.

No sooner had we left Perisher than the resort had a very good fall of snow setting up a good base for winter. It now looks as if the season might be better than forecast, fingers crossed.

At the June long weekend PHS held its annual lunch at Corroboree lodge, with our wonderful hosts, Bob, Anna, Dominique and Sam Tait. This is our third year at Corroboree and all the lunches have been great. This year we had 39 guests in attendance, a modest increase on 2023. Perisher CEO, Nathan Butterworth, outlined his long attachment to Perisher, Rick Walkom described his trip to Park City, Utah to collect a Skade Award from the International Skiing History Association for his latest edition of *Skiing off the Roof* and Peter Southwell-Keely gave a Powerpoint presentation to launch his latest book, *The Day Family, Snowfields Pioneers*.

The Day family managed the Kosciusko Chalet at Charlotte Pass from 1930 to 1949 when it was the centre of NSW skiing, and major advances in ski technique, standards of Australian skiing and uphill transport took place, as well as two international competitions. George Day, while managing the Chalet became the best alpine skier in Australia and his children all represented NSW or Australia. Bill Day became Australia's first triple winter Olympian.

The original Mt Perisher chairlift (opened 1961) has been demolished and in its place will soon arise a new six seater chairlift which will extend beyond the top of the old chairlift, making it the highest lifted point in Australia, which is currently at the top of Karel's T-bar at Thredbo.

A unique event in the history of Perisher Resort took place on the Saturday of the June long weekend in the Skitube terminal in Perisher Valley. The resort began auctioning off all the chairs of the original chairlift. The auction was attended by hundreds of people and the Skitube terminal was jam packed. The first chair went for over \$7000 and, although the rest did not reach that level, many went for about \$4000. The auction was not completed



## Contents

President's Report	1
News and Diary Dates	2
June Long Weekend	3
Annual Lunch	4
ISHA Awards	6
Kosciusko State Park	8
To Kosciusko by Rail?	10
Ski Lodge Design	12
June Long Weekend - 70 years ago	13
Farewell Mt Perisher Chairlift	14

**Perisher Historical Society Inc.**  
**PO Box 242 Terrey Hills 2084 NSW**  
**[perisherhistory.org.au](http://perisherhistory.org.au)**  
**[info@perisherhistory.org.au](mailto:info@perisherhistory.org.au)**

on the Saturday but continued online during the following week. Proceeds will go to local community groups.

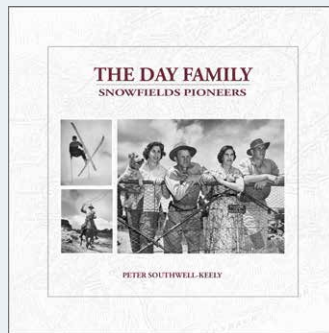
PHS thought it should take advantage of the large crowd to promote its books and advertise itself. Barney Davis arranged for a table to be present for PHS use and Jan Glover, Raylene Jarvis and Brian Farmer displayed and sold our books behind a striking PHS banner. Our stand created a lot of interest and many PHS flyers were handed out. Congratulations to all concerned.

Best wishes to all for a great ski season.

Peter Southwell-Keely

## New Publication

### THE DAY FAMILY - SNOWFIELDS PIONEERS



*The Day Family - Snowfields Pioneers* is now available for purchase from our website: <https://perisherhistory.org.au/bookshop/printed-books/>

A history of the Day Family, managers of the Kosciusko Chalet at Charlotte Pass from 1932 to 1949. It was a time of great development in the NSW snowfields and the family faced many challenges in this remote location. The Chalet was destroyed by fire and rebuilt, roads and ski lifts constructed, guests were accommodated, entertained and taught to ski. Members of the family became skiing champions, one a triple Olympian.

## International Skiing History Association

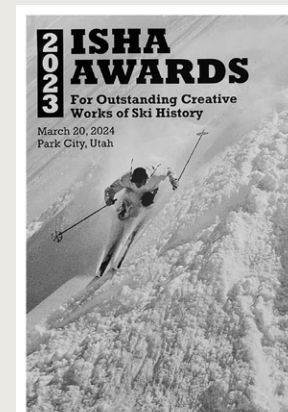
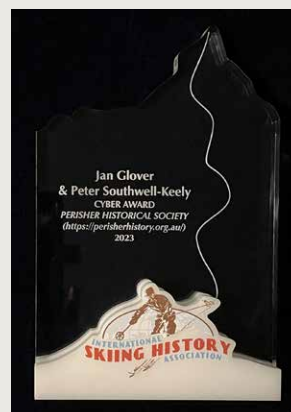
Perisher Historical Society was announced as the winner of the Cyber Award at the ISHA (International Skiing History Association) Awards in Park City, Utah on 30th March 2024.

The Cyber award is presented for creating a website that contributes substantially to the preservation, distribution and expansion of skiing's historical record.

We are delighted to have received this award from ISHA which is a not-for-profit corporation, whose mission is to preserve and advance the knowledge of ski history and to increase public awareness of the sport's heritage.

Our award was collected at the presentation night by fellow PHS member Rick Walkom who just happened to win an award too – a Skade Award for his fourth edition of *Skiing off the Roof*. The Skade Award is presented for an outstanding work on regional ski history. (A report on Rick's visit to Utah is on page 6.)

Congratulations to the PHS website team, and to Rick Walkom, all have made an important contribution to our skiing history.



## DIARY DATES

### Cross-Country Ski Week

3-11 August 2024

<https://www.perisherxcountry.org/events/xc-week/>

### Hello in the Snow

Tuesday 6 August

4 pm at Marritz Alpine Hotel  
Enquiries to Philip Woodman  
0488 159 888

### Alpine Events

<https://www.snow.org.au/disciplines/alpine-calendar/>



# June Long Weekend 2024

The weather was fine and sunny in Perisher for most of the King's Birthday Weekend, but serious winter blizzards had not yet arrived. Some remnants of man-made snow were rearranged on front valley to provide a beginners area (with the magic carpet in operation) and a unique "walking terrain park" with obstacles (but no lifts) for those who had ski passes. The Peak Music Festival was an added attraction on Saturday and Sunday.



On Saturday afternoon the chairs from the recently demolished Mt Perisher Chairlift were auctioned in the Perisher Ski Tube Terminal, with local Nick Kirschner wielding the gavel and attracting bids of thousands of dollars from skiers who had fond (or otherwise) memories of the chair lift, which had been built over 60 years ago.

Alan (Barney) Davis assisted PHS by setting up a table adjacent to the auction for us to sell our publications. Our display attracted a lot of interest and quite a few sales were made.

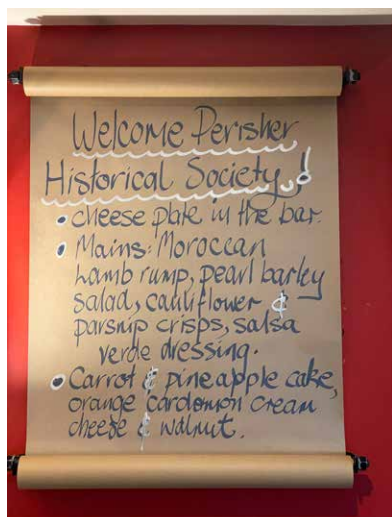




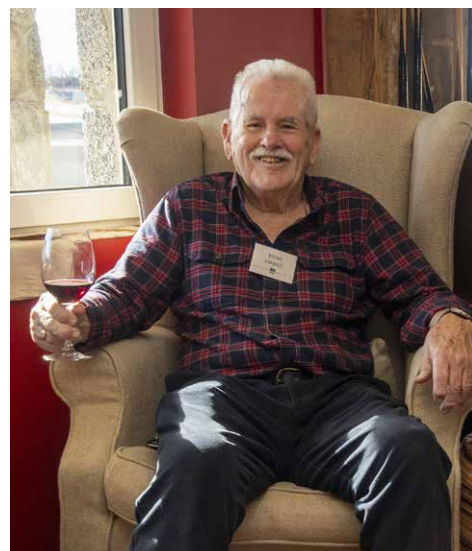
# Annual Lunch

On Sunday 9 June the PHS Annual Lunch was held at Corroboree Lodge, generously hosted as usual by Anna and Bob Tait with Dominique and Sam. With an excellent attendance of 39 guests it was a very successful event, and it was pleasing to see many new faces.

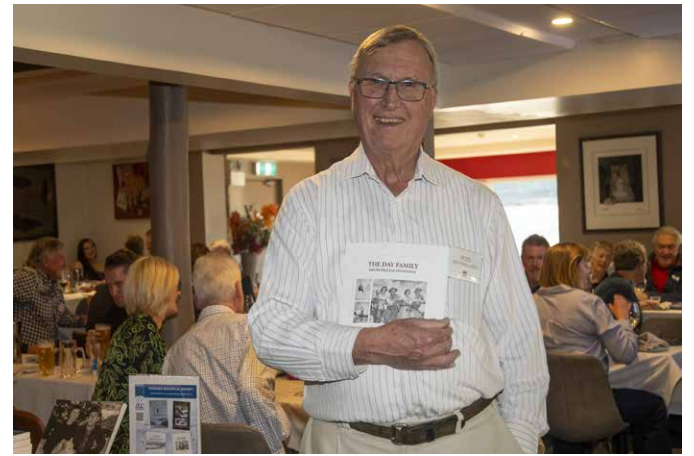
Nathan Butterworth, General Manager Perisher Resort gave a quick summary of Perisher news, Rick Walkom talked of his visit to Park City, Utah to receive a Skade Award for his recent update of *Skiing off the Roof*. Rick also picked up Perisher Historical Society's Cyber Award for our website. Peter Southwell- Keely launched his new publication *The Day Family – Snowfields Pioneers*, and gave an overview of the book with a Power-Point presentation. Unfortunately none of the Day family were able to attend the lunch; however copies of the book have been posted to members of the family.



*Photos from top Right:  
Philip & Pam Woodman  
Brian Farmer  
Bob Tait and Frank Zipfinger  
Raylene Jarvis and Nathan  
Butterworth  
Photos courtesy Steve Cuff, Snowy  
Mountains Magazine*







*Photos Left from top:  
Peter Southwell-Keely, Nathan Butterworth, Roland  
Everingham, Frank Zipfinger and Roger Glover  
Lloyd May, Paula Versace and Rob Lloyd  
Sue Ward, Mal Rackley, Karen Day and Judy Thomson  
Author Rick Walkom*

*Photos Right from top:  
Trevor and Pamela Brown with Ryan Guthrie and Simon  
Brown  
Helen and Cliff Brake  
Author Peter Southwell-Keely  
Photos courtesy Steve Cuff, Snowy Mountains Magazine*



# International Skiing History Association Awards

In March of this year, the International Skiing History Association (ISHA), held its awards ceremony in Park City, Utah. The awards are presented to authors of outstanding histories, in printed or electronic formats, films and for lifetime achievements in ski journalism. The honoured works are judged to have added significantly and artistically to the historical record of skiing. There were two recipients from Australia this year. Rick Walkom's updated book *Skiing Off The Roof* won the Skade Award for his outstanding work on regional ski history. The Perisher Historical Society won the Cyber Award for creating a website that contributes substantially to the preservation, distribution and expansion of skiing's historical record.

Rick, who flew over to Utah to collect his award said:

"I guess I slogged away for over 35 years recording the history of skiing in NSW (4 editions) so to be presented with a prestigious book award after so long, by the Americans no less, was a big thrill. Having to make a speech about Australian skiing in front of many of the 'Gods' of the sport - pioneer hot-doggers, extreme skiers, Olympians, World Cup racers, US Hall of Fame inductees, Warren Miller film stars, glamorous Ski Magazine cover girls, ski fashionistas and industry luminaries - was a knee trembling experience to say the least. At the magnificent Alf Engen Olympic Museum I had the pleasure of meeting people like Wayne Wong, Scot Brooksbank, Junior Bounous and Suzy 'Chapstick' Chaffee. These were legendary characters of the 70s and 80s, whom I only ever saw in Warren Miller movies or in glossy magazines. Sitting in the bar late at night with my 'old' pin-up gal, Suzy Chapstick (an Olympian, model and three-time world freestyle champion) whilst she discussed her passion for environmental issues and her pet Native Voices Foundation and yarn about all the US Presidents she had got to know through skiing was quite surreal. Approaching 80, she still skis on 150 cm's and wears vintage Scott boots!"

"One thing stood out for me in particular during the 4 days of skiing with the celebrities and the celebrations - the Americans take their



*Collecting the Skade Award*

rich ski heritage very seriously indeed. They are very proud of it and spend much time and money preserving and celebrating it. They have some very qualified, dedicated, high-powered volunteers running ISHA who have a background in film history, journalism and the sport. They revere their stars of yesteryear and in turn the yesteryear stars love attending functions such as the one I attended. Many industry personalities are also happy to donate money to the ski and snowboard museums scattered across the country. One deep-pocketed character, stood up during the Park City museum fashion parade and stunned everyone by writing out a cheque US\$1m! Match that Aussies."

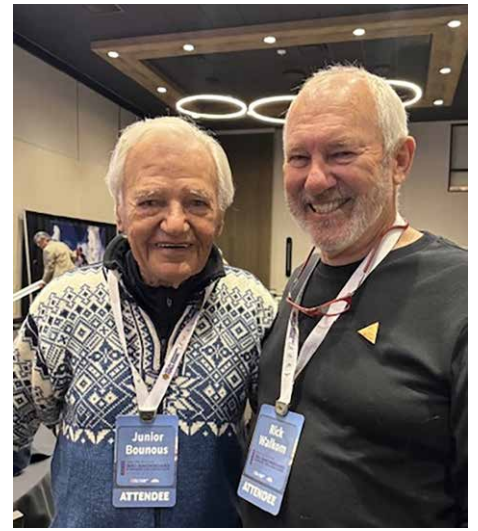
"There's one frightful issue however in the more glam resorts over there ... if one doesn't have a Season Pass, a breathtaking \$500A for a day ticket is not uncommon!"

"My sincere thanks must go to the Perisher Historical Society who encouraged me to attend the marvellous celebrations. Being able to collect the well deserved PHS Cyber Award at the same time was a great honour."





*An ageless pioneer hotdogger, Wayne Wong with the generous woman who donated a cool US \$1M to the Alf Engen Olympic Museum during the ISHA Celebrations. Seen here auctioning off a pair of his trademark white sunglasses for \$2,000 US*



*The revered American skier, Junior Bounous, aged 98 who still skis the number of days of his age each year.*



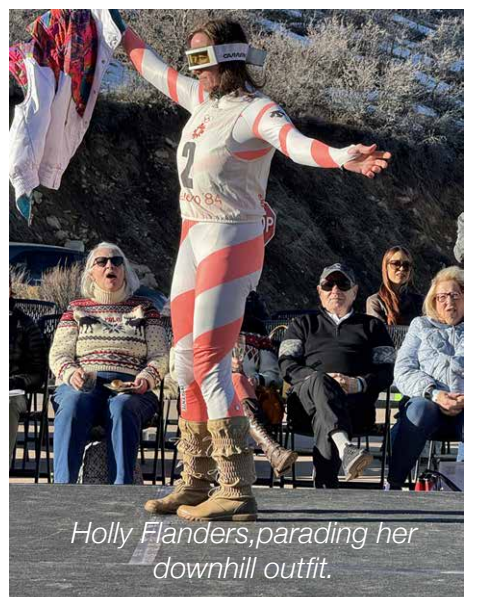
*The ISHA award winners*



*Meeting a native hotdogger.*



*Ski magazine 'Cover Girls' from the 70s and 80s. Almost all are US Olympians. A tall Suzie Chaffee is in the centre.*



*Holly Flanders, parading her downhill outfit.*



# Kosciusko State Park - 80 years

by Linda Groom

19 April 1944 was the date of assent to the Kosciuszko State Park Act, which laid the foundation for Kosciuszko National Park. This far-sighted act was celebrated at an event at the Thredbo Alpine Hotel on 19 April this year.

The celebration was organised by the National Parks Association of NSW. It's not unknown for worthy events like anniversary celebrations to have trouble attracting attendees. KNP80, as it came to be called, had the opposite problem. The organisers started with a target of 80 guests, but found many more wanted to come. The fan base of Kosciuszko National Park is huge; the budget of the National Parks Association NSW is not. With the help of generous sponsors, the guest list was expanded. Around 100 people attended.

After a very eloquent welcome to Ngarigo country by Elders Aunty Kathy Jones and Aunty Ellen Munday, historian Deirdre Slattery described the context of the Kosciuszko State Park Act. Her talk was illustrated with slides of the devastation caused by cattle grazing and the subsequent soil conservation work. The Ambassador of Poland, H.E. Maciej Chmieleński continued the historical theme. Many in the audience, who only know the name Strzelecki as the first European to climb Mt Kosciuszko, were surprised to hear of his humanitarian efforts, including a massive program of food distribution during the

Irish famine of 1846-47. Dave Darlington, as a former regional manager with responsibility for Kosciuszko, gave a more personal view of history, filled with memories that resonated with the many retired Parks staff in the room.

That completed the historical part of the program, and the focus turned to the next generation. Ranger Campbell Young acknowledged the work of all those who had preceded him – traditional custodians and Parks staff – and described the pride he felt in being entrusted with working in this very special national park. The audience then heard from the generation who will one day replace the rangers of Campbell's age. They spoke through a video, prepared specially for this event: primary school children, each reciting a fact about Kosciuszko, with deep breaths and delightfully deep concentration.

In preparing the program, the organisers had wanted to give the final word to some Park users, but were faced with the problem of how to select anyone from the incalculable numbers who have benefited from the experiences that the Park provides. The solution, reflecting the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, was to invite some people born in the same year as the Kosciuszko State Park Act. Four 80 year olds - Esther Gallant, Meg McKone, Chris Roper and Patrick Condon – attended the celebration as special guests for the celebration. Patrick and

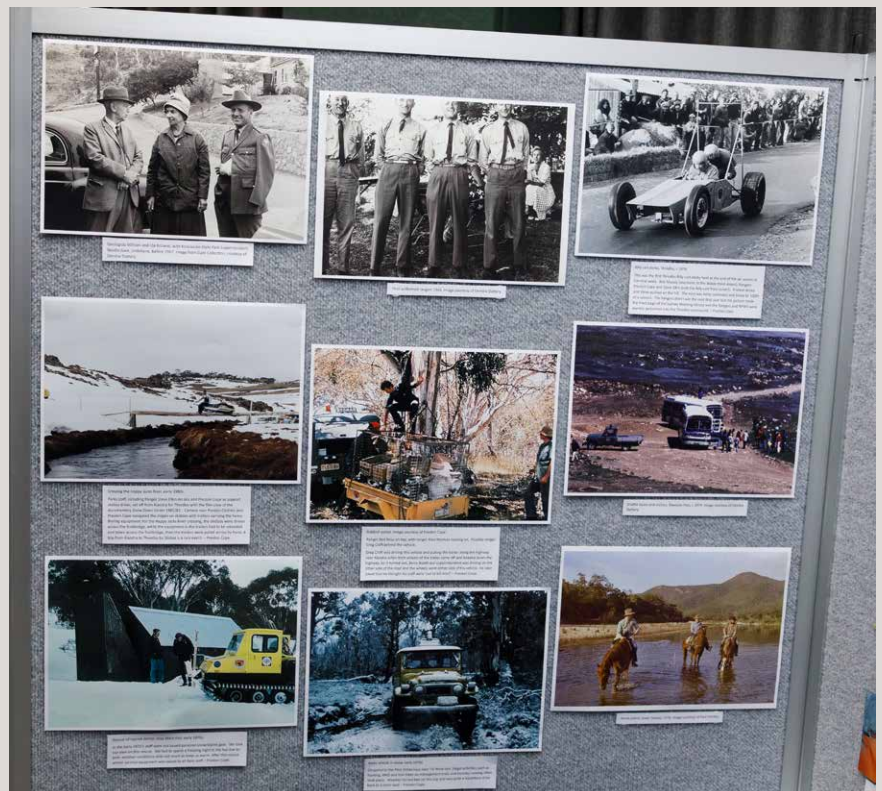




The program ended with a stunning video, by David Gallan and Stuart Cohen, of the beauty of the Park.

The audience was as interesting as the program. Drawn from a cross-section of supporters of Kosciuszko National Park, the guests found themselves in some surprising combinations during morning tea and lunch. It's likely that Glenys and Terry Maddren, representing Cooma Rotary, were not expecting to find themselves posing for a photograph with two young Polish dancers in national costume – but the smiles show that it was a very happy conjunction.

And yes, there was a birthday cake, prepared by the Thredbo Alpine Hotel's own chef. Happy birthday Kosciuszko National Park!



*Linda Groom, KNP80 Volunteer  
Organiser for the National Parks  
Association of NSW*

# To Kosciusko by Rail?

*The following article appeared in the 1928 Australian Ski Year Book; the author was not named. The Jindabyne referred to in the article is Old Jindabyne, now under the waters of Jindabyne Dam together with the Creel fishing lodge.*

## Route up the Snowy Valley

The late Mr Eddy, Commissioner for Railways, had the idea of connecting Kosciusko by rail, and, had he lived, doubtless the project would have come to fruition. As the final station would have been somewhere in the Snowy Valley, beyond Charlotte's Pass, we can assume that our sport would have advanced considerably beyond the stage it has reached today had the railway been constructed.

The line would have traversed the Snowy Valley from the junction of the Eucumbene just about where the present road bridge crosses the Thredbo at the Creel, and it could have been kept free from snow by the use of snow sheds such as are erected over the railways in the Sierra Nevadas and the Canadian Rockies.

The project was reported on in March, of 1900, but at the hands of an unsympathetic surveyor, it received short shrift and went no further. Backed by a man like Mr Eddy, there is no doubt that Premier Carruthers would have constructed the line. All ski-runners and lovers of Australia should agitate for it.

The report of Surveyor Stuart traces the proposed line from Barney's Range, a little distance from Berridale, as follows:- Passing round a spur

the line follows the Cooma-Jindabyne road and down the valley of Rush's Creek to within a few miles of Jindabyne; from this point the line would bear northerly, and after crossing the Snowy River would follow up the course of that river on its left hand side, crossing the Crackenback River, Diggers Creek, Piper's Creek, the Perisher Creek and Spencer's Creek, en route, and would end up on a plateau near the head of the Snowy, about 334 miles from Sydney, within a mile of the summit of Mt Kosciusko and nearly 1000 feet below it.

In locating this line, on the standard gauge portion, I have arrived at a limiting grade of 1 in 40, with 10 chain curves; in places this will be difficult to obtain, especially in the crossing of Barney's Range, and in the descent from the upper part of Rush's Creek Valley to the Snowy River; this portion of the route would compare very favourably with the present main line from Goulburn to Cooma.

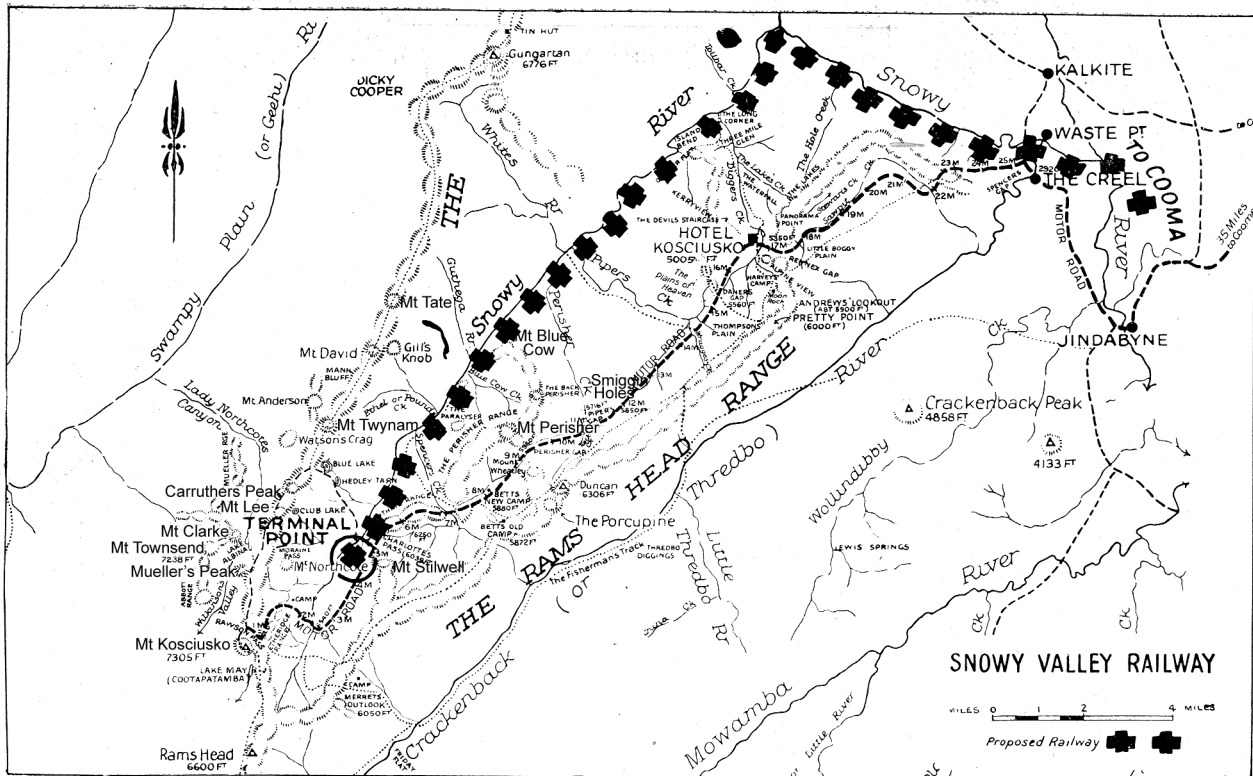
On the narrow gauge portion of the line, that up the Snowy River, the 1 in 40 grade can be maintained without any difficulty up to Piper's Creek, thence steeper grades will have to be employed, the curvature throughout will be very much sharper, this latter is necessitated by the bends in the river and the very steep sidings cutting into

it, the mountain on both sides rising to heights of from 2 to 3 thousand feet above the river and the sidings in places being very steep and precipitous, especially between Piper's Creek and the end of the Perisher Range; further up the slopes get easier, gradually merging into boggy flats before the foot of Mt Kosciusko is reached.

Owing to the very circuitous route up the Snowy River and the heavy nature of the country encountered, I examined that taken by the present track which, after a quick rise from the Snowy River, practically follows the summit of the Ram's Head Range; this I found was impracticable, the rise in the first 10 miles after leaving the Thredbo crossing being about 3000 feet and that not continuous but broken into alternative rises and flats; and even if this ascent had been possible the summit of the range, although approximately level is very broken necessitating a large amount of curvature and in places heavy works.

Taken as a whole the line would be difficult and expensive to construct, especially on the upper or narrow gauge portion where there would be no facilities for getting material brought up, other than by the line itself, and on this part the waterways would require to be large to permit of the rapid discharge of





flood waters and to allow for the melting snow: this latter would also interfere with and impede the progress of the works. Speaking generally as far as local requirements are concerned, there is nothing to justify a railway, even as far as Jindabyne, so the whole proposal would have to rest upon its merits as a tourist line.

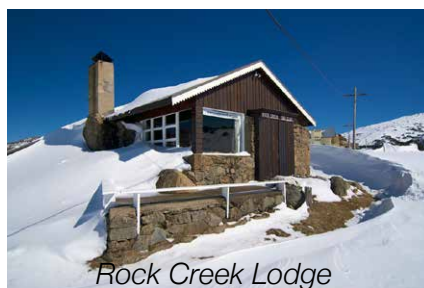
The life of the season available for tourists would be precarious. First, owing to the heavy falls of snow which would block the upper portion of the route and throw that section idle for the time being; and secondly, even under the most favourable conditions, the climate near the summit is so variable as not to throw out much recommendation

for the locality as a sanatorium. If it were considered advisable to make a railway of a cheap character, I would recommend it not being carried further than the foot of the ranges, say to the end of the proposed standard gauge section a few miles north of Jindabyne. This, if carried out of the usual type, would probably cost about £5,000 a mile, but a very considerable saving could be made by using sharper curves and steeper grades. The different lengths by the diagram map are:-  
Standard gauge section, 42 miles.  
Narrow gauge section 26 miles.  
This latter length would probably be considerably increased in order to maintain the gradients with a minimum of work.

# Design Evolution of the Pioneering Ski Club Lodges

by Donald Johnston

From 1909, when the Hotel Kosciusko was opened, numerous ski clubs were formed in the NSW snowfields. Most of the first 16 ski clubs vacationed in the NSW Government owned and operated Hotel, which was completely destroyed by fire on 18 April 1951. The loss of this popular winter accommodation set in train events that have, for the past seven decades, influenced the recreational lifestyles of thousands of ski aficionados.



By contrast, today the premier NSW ski resort areas of Thredbo, Perisher and Charlotte Pass contain over 140 private ski club lodge buildings, offering some 60,000 club members a shared financial ownership in their own ski lodge buildings. Nine decades after recreational skiing began in Australia private ski clubs were able to proudly boast of a “lodge of their own”.

The architectural design, quality, facilities and comfort of private ski club lodges enjoyed by their members today are a far cry from those first lodges that grew out of the loss of the Hotel Kosciusko. Pioneering ski club lodges are those lodges that emerged broadly across the decade 1950 to 1960 with many occupied well in advance of the establishment of the first commercial ski resorts. Club members’ passions soon overcame funding shortfalls, construction challenges and post occupancy privations.

The private ski club lodge has developed as a unique communal housing type that is inextricably linked to its alpine environment, its snowfield recreational focus and the camaraderie of its occupants. Those early lodges became exemplar design forerunners to the boom period of ski club lodges that emerged over the following decades. Their design evolved to address their club members’ desire to embrace communal living and develop their club ethos and has continued across generations. Club lodge design longevity entwined with their historic communities have been formally recognised as possessing important social and cultural heritage.

I have been researching in depth the design evolution of those pioneering ski club lodges across the KNP ski resorts for a forthcoming publication where you can:

- Learn of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century administrators and entrepreneurs who responded to ski clubs’ demands to embrace new visions for communal living and recreational experiences in the snowfields of the Kosciusko State Park.
- Meet the architect whose alpine design guidelines encouraged his architectural contemporaries to create distinctive ski lodge designs appreciated by their ski club clients. Examine their designs that shaped the visual quality of today’s vibrant alpine communities.
- Hear from pioneering ski club members who overcame challenges and privations to build and sustain their first lodges. Explore how those pioneering lodges have been recognised for their heritage significance and cultural legacy.

Many ski clubs have made generous contributions of original architectural plans, club histories and members’ anecdotes of lodge construction challenges, but I am still keen to receive further contributions. Contact email: [johnston@acenet.com.au](mailto:johnston@acenet.com.au) or mobile 0412428207.

Donald Johnston is a PHS committee member, ski lodge historian and heritage architect.



# June Long Weekend Adventure – 70 years ago

*Sydney Morning Herald, Wednesday 16 June 1954*

## **Ski Party Safe After Battle With Blizzard**

A party of skiers marooned by a blizzard near the summit of Mt. Kosciusko since Sunday reached safety yesterday after a 12-mile descent over a treacherous route. With visibility down to zero, the skiers had to depend on compass bearings during their hazardous trip.

The party included Miss Dorothy Peaslee, daughter of the United States Ambassador, Mr. Amos J. Peaslee, and William Davy, 22, of Sydney, and his sister, Miss Christine Davy.

Others in the party included Bob Arnott, of Cooma; Alec Shand, Ross Allen, and Geoffrey and Constance Hughes.

Dr. Ashleigh Davy, of Woollahra, father of Mr. and Miss Davy, said last night: 'The party went to Mt. Kosciusko for the long week-end and made the Albina Hut, six miles above the Chalet, its headquarters for skiing excursions.

"They intended returning on Monday morning, but were able to proceed only a few miles to Kunama Hut, where they were forced to take shelter for the night.

"Fortunately they were all experienced skiers."

Dr. Davy said the party broke through yesterday morning. He had received word that the whole party was fit and well. The party would reach Sydney early this morning, a day late for work.

Miss Peaslee and some others of the party reached Canberra last night.

Mr. Peaslee said: "They had

a fine time and they were all experienced skiers.

"Nobody was worried. They were just held up by bad visibility, and got back a day late.

"My daughter is sitting in front of the fire now, and the others are coming in a few minutes."

Mr. Peaslee said his daughter had spent some time in Switzerland, and was an expert skier. Miss Davy won the Australian, New Zealand, and New South Wales Slalom championships last year. Mr. Arnott represented Australia at the 1952 Helsinki Games.

Below freezing temperatures were recorded in the Kosciusko area yesterday.

All roads above 5,000ft at Spencer's Creek are impassable.

## **A Update on the Adventurous Participants**

**Christine Davy** was the first woman to represent Australia at the Olympic Winter Games when she participated in the Downhill, Giant Slalom and Slalom events at Cortina d'Ampezzo 1956. Four years later she competed in the same events at the Squaw Valley 1960 Olympic Winter Games, where she also became the first Australian to break into the top 30 in an international skiing event, coming in 27th place in the Downhill race. After retiring from skiing, Davy became a pioneering female airline pilot.

<https://www.snow.org.au/legacy/medal-christine-davy/>

**Bob Arnott** was one of the top Australian ski racers of his day and represented Australia at the 1952 Olympic Games. His involvement in the development of skiing culminated with his appointment as the first Australian member of the International Ski Federation (FIS), the sport's international governing body, in 1963. Together with United States FIS delegate Bob Beattie, Arnott developed a system for ranking international competitors and streamlining the process of assigning start list positions. Their system was introduced in 1967, ahead of the 1968 Grenoble Winter Olympics. While it has had some modifications since, it is still the basis of the FIS points system used for ranking skiers around the world today. It is affectionately referred to as the "2-Bob Rule" or just the "Bob Rule". For many years Bob served also on the Ski Council of NSW and its successor, the NSW Ski Association.

<https://www.snow.org.au/legacy/medal-bob-arnott/>

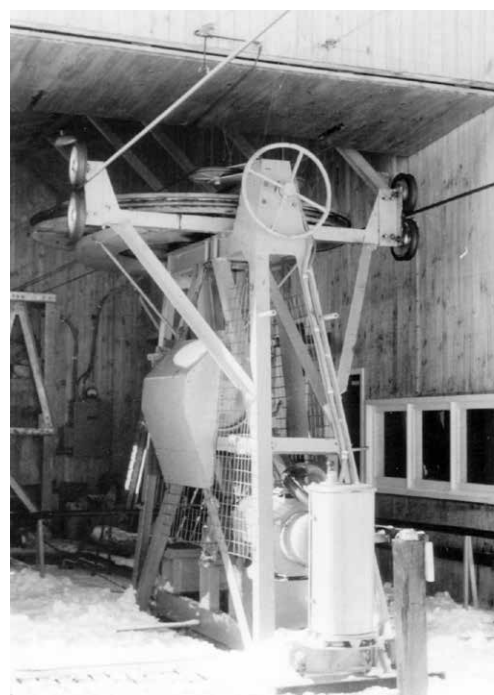
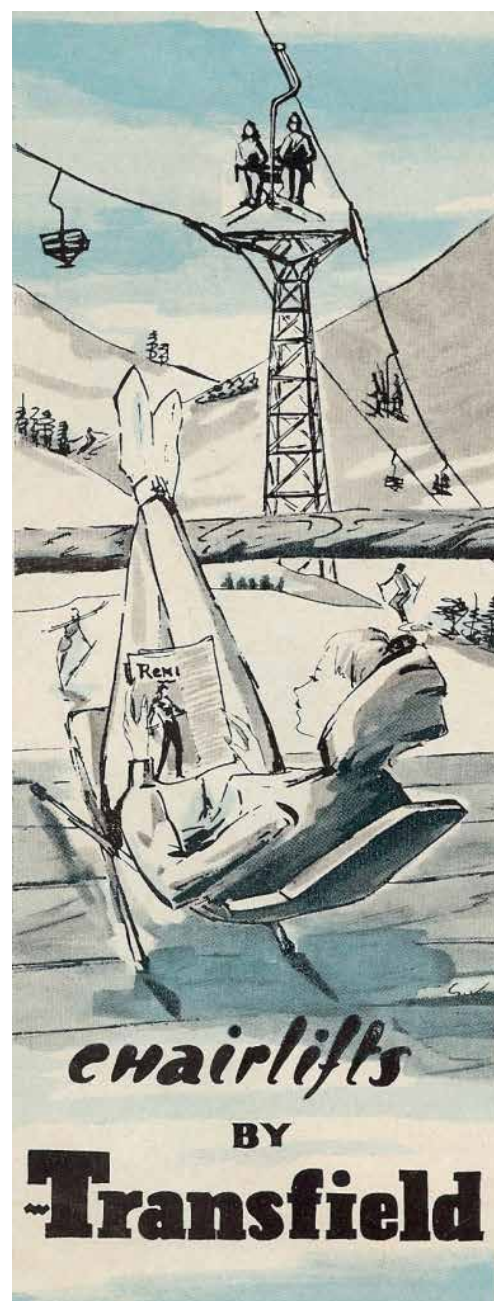
**Geoffrey Hughes** was one of the main players in the early development of Thredbo – as outlined in his publication *Starting Thredbo* and designed the first Thredbo ski tow.

**Constance Hughes (Crisp)** (1926 – 2015) was his sister and designed the original Crackenback ski Lodge – the first in Thredbo. She was an excellent skier who represented NSW in interstate skiing competitions.

# Farewell Mt Perisher Chairlift

The Mt Perisher Double Chair was Perisher's first ever chairlift, a two-seater, fixed-grip chairlift that first opened to skiers in 1961. Ken (K.G.) Murray commissioned Müller-Transfield Pty Ltd to construct the chairlift spurred on by the appetite for longer runs and the interest to open up new skiing areas on the Perisher Range.

Transfield had built the original Thredbo chair a year earlier, and their experienced construction workers, mainly immigrants, practically built the lift by "bare hands" as described by John Davis in his memoir titled *A History of the Early Development of Perisher-Smiggin's*: 'All the time the workers were running up the slope carrying all sorts of loads, running not walking. The Perisher locals were transfixed by their fitness and progress'. After tackling early season snowfalls, torrential downpours, and gale force winds all while building by hand, they completed the 'Mile Long Chairlift' in time for the 1961 snow season. Lift operations commenced on 9 June, opening up new terrain and possibilities to skiers of all levels. A mid -station was installed just above the final slope due to concerns that the final drop would be too steep for most skiers, however this was removed after a couple of seasons.



*The short-lived Mid-Station (Murray/Baglin collection)*

*Transfield Advertisement from the Ski Year Book*

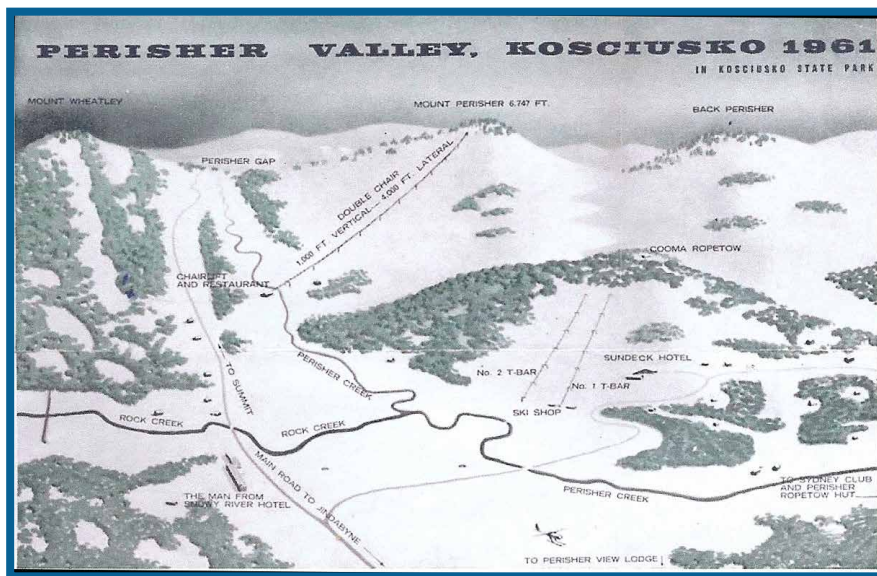
*Original Bottom Station (Davis collection)*

*Next Page: Perisher Map 1961*

*Perisher Chairlift (National Archives of Australia)*

*Mt Perisher Chairlift (Davis collection)*





Many stories can be told about the chair. On one occasion in the early days the motor stalled and the chairlift started to run backwards, gathering speed. The emergency handbrake was applied but nothing happened. Passengers desperately bailed out before they reached bottom station. A large length of timber shoved into the winding gear did the job and the chairlift stopped. (More stories can be found in John Davis' book referred to earlier).

Skiers sometime failed to get on the chair properly, some fell off. A chair was shorn off at a tower. There were queues too – on weekends in the 1960s there was often a wait of 45 minutes to get on a chair. Skiers arranged themselves neatly into pairs in the queue, however the long queue gradually snaked its way up the hill, causing great frustration to those who were looking forward to showing off their technique on the final pinch. But of course the 45 minutes were not wasted as one usually knew someone else in the queue – new friendships were made and lodge parties arranged.

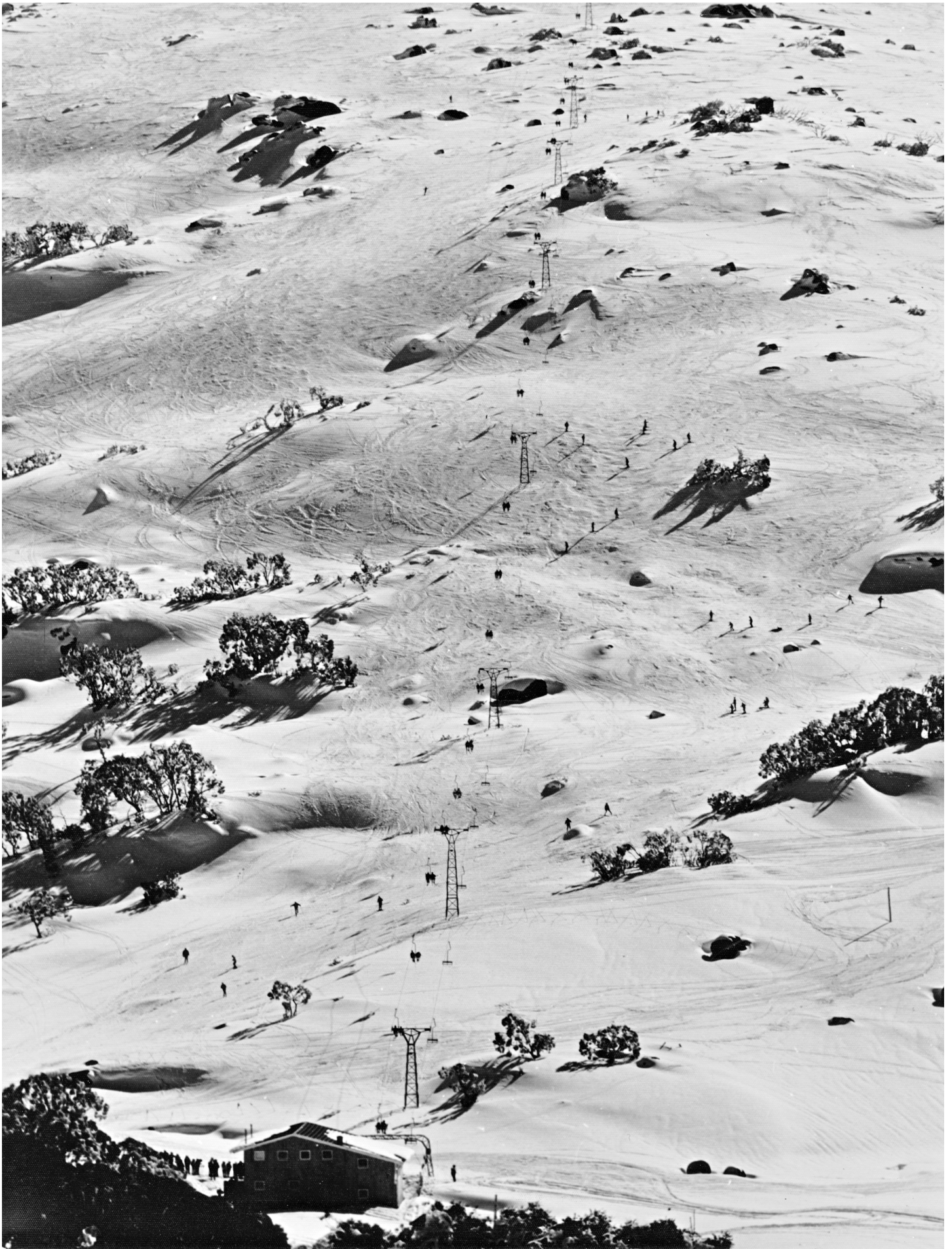
Over the years modifications and safety improvements were made to the chairlift.

In 2016, one year after Vail Resort's acquisition of Perisher the Mt. P Double's original chairs were replaced. The lift's original chairs, stored and kept by Perisher, were auctioned on the June long weekend 2024, with proceeds planned to go to local community organisations.

The old chairlift was demolished early in 2024 with work immediately starting on the new high-speed 6 seater chairlift, expected to be ready for use from the 2025 snow season.







*Mt Perisher Chairlift - mid 1960s.  
Photo by Joe Gois. Perisher Historical Society collection.*