

# Off Piste



Storm boulder near Mt Tate. Photo: Lachlan Kennedy



Snowy River near Illawong. Photo: Lachlan Kennedy

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## Newsletter Contributions

- Photos of trips, lessons, snow country, meetings or social events.
- Reports on tours, lessons and races and CCCSC events.
- Letters to the editor.
- Articles about XC skiing, snow conditions or related topics.
- Items to buy or sell.
- Please send emails to [cccsceditor@gmail.com](mailto:cccsceditor@gmail.com)
- The deadline for the next newsletter is Mon 19 October.

**The Club's Annual General Meeting will be held on  
Wednesday 23 September at the Turner Scout Hall.**

## Presidents Piece

The 25th **Kangaroo Hoppet** (42 km), Australian Birkenbiener (21 km), and the Joey Hoppet (7.5 km), were held at Falls Creek on Saturday 22 August in rather warm conditions, but apparently forecast rain held off.

Valerio Leccardi from Switzerland claimed his third Hoppet victory in six years (in 1 hour 31 minutes) while the first woman across the line was Maria Graefnings from Sweden (1 hour 39 minutes). Maria added this Hoppet title to her win from 2012. The first Australian across the line was Callum Watson just 7 minutes behind the winner.

The original 42 km course was modified to 32 kilometers because of early fog and high winds.

Maria had a mishap midrace, snapping off the tip off her pole. However she quickly received a replacement pole from 4-time Hoppet winner Ben Derrick, who in turn received a pole from the crowd to ski on for 9<sup>th</sup> overall.

Congratulations to all club members who competed. No club members won, which maintains the club's perfect record from previous years.

Particular congratulations to Rowan Christie and Ken Moylan who completed the Kangaroo Hoppet. For some of us 42 kilometres is a two day trip, so well done guys.

Congratulations also to Peter Ward, Peter Cunningham, Bruce Porter, Alan Levy, Dick Roe and Gale Funston who all completed the Australian



Kangaroo Hoppet winners, Valerio Leccardi and Maria Graefnings.

Birkenbiener. (Apologies if I have missed anybody.)

The Hoppet award for the most committed skier must go to Andre Viry from France, who came first in the under 80 category, with a time of 4hrs 22 minutes.

Bob Cranage came first in the under 75 category in the Birkenbiener. (Deep bows to Bob, who taught a clumsy floundering Lachlan Kennedy to cross country ski in the 70s.)

There was a huge turn out for these races. It is wonderful how popular cross country skiing is.

*Lachlan Kennedy,  
President*



Lachlan with the Sundeck Cup.

## Perisher XC week - Perfect despite the blizzard!

The **Perisher Cross Country Ski Week** was held between 1st and 8th of August. In that week there were 2 blizzards (and some rain), and the Charlotte's pass race had to be cancelled.

But it was sunny on the 2 days on which Wayne Petherbridge held his mystery coffee tours. The average attendance for these tours was about 36. Wayne has the knack of picking the most picturesque glades near the Perisher trails which makes his temporary cafes the best place in the world to make new friends over coffee and cake.

True to form, it blizzarded for the KAC on the Wednesday. So the race was run over 7.5 kilometres around the Perisher trail instead of the planned course to Charlotte's Pass. Visibility was such that the only race instruction

was 'if you find yourself in soft snow it means you have probably skied off the course'.

The Sundeck Handicap was held on Friday. This is a race sponsored by the Sundeck at Perisher specifically to raise funds for Australia's junior cross country ski racers. It is promoted as a race in which the most unlikely person can win'. How true that was this year. It was won by your President, surely the most unlikely of the unlikely to have ever won a ski race. But what a LARK! Even though the handicapper will be on to me next year, I will definitely be back.

With so many events, and such a friendly crowd, we could not have enjoyed the PXC week more.

*Lachlan Kennedy*



Wayne — the skiing barrista.  
Photo: Lachlan Kennedy

## 'Here be dragons' (or 'how I learnt to ski the western slopes of the main range')

We all put up fences in our minds, and one of my fences, erected 30 years ago and carefully maintained ever since, is that I should never, ever, venture down the slopes on the western side of the main range.

The western slopes off Watson's Crags, Mt Twynam, Mt Townsend or Mt Tate or any place between look great from a lunch spot on the top of the main range. But they are so steep and remote that they could lead skiers to over achieve, and excited by the descent, to go too low, go too far, stay out too long, and, well, then the snow dragons might get them.

What a delight then to recently discover, with the guidance of Paul Daniels, and in the company of my partner Victoria Clare, that you can ski the western slopes safely. Experience of others shows that it can even be done on a day trip from Canberra.

A couple of things are required though.

The first thing is fine weather. The main range is no place to be if it is windy, cloudy, or blizzarding. So check the weather forecasts. Good forecasters are the Bureau of Meteorology, the Norwegian weather bureau (weird but true - get the app 'YR' for your smart phone), or the US weather bureau, which I access through the weather app on my iPhone.

Use skis and boots that make it easy to turn. Full length steel edges are essential. Rent or buy Fisher S-bound 88s, Madshus Epochs, or their equivalent. Ski length of between 160cm to 180 cm will suit most people. You will be a happier skier if you use plastic boots (e.g. Garmont excursions) and cable bindings - they make turns fun.



Victoria crossing the usual icy pavements on top of the main divide, on a saddle just north of Mt Twynam heading for West Twynam Ridge. L -R Blue Cow, Mt Perisher and the Paralyser in the back ground. Photo: Lachlan Kennedy

From Guthega take the route towards Illawong Lodge (about 1 hour with day packs). After about 2.5 kilometres you can see the wire rope bridge over the snowy river. Cross the river and start the 500 metre climb to the top of the main range. Allow a minimum 1.5 hours for the climb.

Kicker skins or, better still, full length skins, make for efficient climbing with minimum of traversing, even on ice. For this kind of trip, they are essential.

When you cross a saddle on the main divide (find one on the map that is wide and fairly flat) you are likely to encounter ice and hard wind packed snow. Nothing to be scared of here, but chose a route that keeps away from steep drop offs.

Then you have to find the best snow for your descent. Most winter blizzards come from the south west. So south western facing slopes get wind blasted during storms leaving icy slopes scoured of snow. As the wind passes over the ridges and saddles, big eddies form, the wind slows down and it drops its load of snow onto the north eastern, and eastern, facing slopes. These therefore always tend to have the best powder stashes.

Above is West Tywnam Ridge. The rocky out crop is known locally as the 'lunch box'. The powder stash is on the north eastern face (to the left of the gully), and the skiable part of the ridge continues round the bend and way down to the tree line (a descent of about 400 metres). The slope on the right of the gully appears benign but is a mixture of ice and hard wind packed powder - not a fun place.

Now you have found your descent, you will want to ski it. The key to skiing the western slopes is a reliable turning technique. This makes for a safe descent. But it also makes for a fast descent, allowing plenty of time in the day for the return climb to the main divide. Depending how far down you go, this can take up to 1.5 hours. You will definitely need skins for the return ascent, or if it is steep enough, you may prefer to hoik your skis onto your pack and walk back up. Then, unlike us, you may have the time and energy to do it again. Once you have climbed back to the top of the main divide, your shorter parabolic skis, plastic boots

(Continued on page 4)





Icy pavements on the south exposed section of the lunch box. Take care, but what a view!  
(as enjoyed by Victoria Clare and Paul Daniels, who showed us the way.

Photo: Lachlan Kennedy).

## Trip Report — Thompsons Plain — Saturday 15 August

It was a small group that headed out on a sunny Saturday morning from Dainer's Gap. Just two club members, Margaret Mahoney and Mike Hinchey and a couple of local skiers from Jindabyne, Walter and Rita. It had been intended to finally ski to Rainbow Lake from above but this wasn't to be. While there was snow on the sheltered side of the valley leading down to the lake, there was also dense timber. We decided it wasn't worth the effort and instead headed off for a wander around Thompson's Plains. With brilliant views towards Mts Perisher, Dicky Cooper and even Twynam, we ascended a small knoll that gave us an eagle's eye view of the lower Thredbo valley downstream of the road.

What followed was a bit of a circum-perambulation of the plains with lunch in the snowgums adjacent to a lovely practice slope. We then headed off towards Smiggins and the upper reaches of Prussian Creek before picking up the pole line to Dainers and making an early return to the car. A pleasant day that made the most of probably the last skiable snow on the plains for the season.

Mike Hinchey

## Trip Report – Teddys Hut – Saturday 8 August

Our group congregated at the bakery at Nuggets at Jindabyne at 8:15am before heading off to Dead Horse Gap. The traffic queues in Jindabyne were the worst I have ever seen, being backed up from the roundabout past the old shopping centre. After we negotiated the traffic, we headed up the Thredbo Valley and arrived at the Cascade Fire Trail carpark at 9:30am. Even here it was difficult to get a carpark. The mountains are definitely busy in mid-August.

On the trip were Mike Hinchey, Trish Woods, Carol Taylor, Adam Lilley, Ken Smith, John Giacon, Cameron Colbatch and myself. The weather was perfect and the snow cover looked excellent in this area. We left the cars about 9:50am and headed along the

(Continued from page 3)

and (maybe) cable bindings will enable you to do a quick descent to the bridge on the snowy, and then it is a rolling amble back to the car park at Guthega.

Lachlan Kennedy

Cascade Fire Trail up the Thredbo River Valley. The first part of the trail was in shadow and quite firm, so most of us walked the first few hundred metres until the trail flattened out and we reached the sunshine. Once out into the open valley, the snow was softer and great to ski on.

We skied to the bridge over the Thredbo River and continued towards the Chimneys area. As the snow cover looked good all the way up the valley, I decided to go to Teddys Hut instead. We skied for about an hour and stopped for a morning tea break on a small hill half way up the valley. Adam was using some wooden skis and Cameron was on his first cross-

(Continued on page 5)



Group skiing along the Thredbo River Valley towards Teddys Hut. Photo: Cameron Colbatch

(Continued from page 4)

country ski tour and coping very well. As we continued further up the valley towards the hut the centre of the valley was a bit icy in places, having been swept by the wind, so we stuck more to the side slopes with its softer snow. We climbed the last rise then had an easy ski into Teddys Hut, arriving around 12:45pm. There were two tents set up near the hut, and shortly after we arrived Steve Warild and Bruce Barnett arrived, having skied in over the Brindle Bull.

We had lunch in the sunshine outside the hut. We then left at 1:30pm and retraced our ski tracks back to the cars. The snow was good to ski on and the gradual descent made the skiing much easier. After a short break at the bridge, we skied along the river below the fire trail all the way back to the car park, arriving at 3:30pm. We then headed back to the bakery at Jindabyne before heading home. A great day's skiing.

Alan Levy



Group having lunch in the snow outside Teddys Hut. Photo: Alan Levy



Skiing next to the Thredbo River at the end of the day.  
Photo: Cameron Colbatch.



Adam Lilley and Mike Hinchey, with Adam's wooden skis. Photo: Alan Levy



## Photos from the 2015 Ski Season

Skiing near Langford Gap  
under an ominous sky,  
Sun 16 Aug.  
*Photo: Alan Levy*



Keith Vallard, Trish Woods, Dick  
Roe, Carol Taylor & Sue Williams  
having lunch at Kellys Hut,  
Wed 19 Aug.  
*Photo: Alan Levy*

Kellys Hut.  
*Photo: Alan Levy*



## Photos from the 2015 Ski Season (cont.)



Sonia Weinberg and John  
Giacon on the 10km trail at  
Perisher, Sat 29 Aug.  
*Photo: Margaret Mahoney*

The Coffee Tour near the  
Perisher trails — Tues 4 Aug.  
*Photo: Alan Levy*



Monika Binder below Mt  
Anderson, with Watsons  
Craggs beyond—Sat 5 Sept.  
*Photo: Monika Binder*

## CCCSC TOUR PROGRAM 2015

**It is important that tour participants ensure that their abilities match the skill levels required by the tour** – a description of the Terrain, Distance and Skill Level descriptors is provided below and under Tours/Tour Grading on the club's website.

### TERRAIN

**Rolling** — Flat to gently rolling hills, no big hills to climb or descend. There may be some steep sections but these will be short and easy to negotiate.

**Hilly** — Large rounded hills requiring several turns to descend but not technically difficult. There may be some steep sections but these will be short and easy to negotiate.

**Steep** — Steep skiable hills including black runs at resorts, cornices and chutes. Technically difficult slopes to descend.

### DISTANCE

**Short** — Under 8km/day and < 200m vertical climb. A moderate level of fitness is required.

**Medium** — 8km to 15km/day OR 200m to 600m vertical climb. A moderate level of fitness is required.

**Long** — Over 15km/day OR > 600m vertical climb. A high level of fitness is required.

### SKILL LEVELS

**Basic** — Can maintain control and perform the following skills on gentle terrain: kick turns, snow plough, side step, herringbone, traverse and diagonal stride.

**Intermediate** — Can maintain control and perform the following skills on hilly terrain: kick turns, snow plough turns, step turns, side slip, side step, herringbone, traverse, diagonal stride and self arrest.

**Advanced** — Can maintain pace over long distances. Has intermediate skills plus able to link stem, parallel or telemark turns.

**It is important to book on a tour as early as possible. At the latest, an indication of a wish to join a tour should normally be made 3 days before a day tour and a week before an overnight tour.**

If you are interested in participating in a tour, please contact the tour leader where one is listed. Please provide:

- your contact details (telephone numbers and address); and
- transport situation (ie, whether you need a lift or can offer one – and, if the latter, how many passengers).

The Club's guidance on transport costs is contained on the Club's web site.

If you are interested in leading a tour, please contact the Touring Coordinator at [cccstours@gmail.com](mailto:cccstours@gmail.com)



# CCCSC TOUR PROGRAM 2015



DATE	DESCRIPTION	LEADER
	New ski tours will be advertised to members by email and on the Club website and Facebook page, in addition to the newsletter.	
Saturday, 12 September	<b>Guthega Area</b> <b>Basic-Intermediate Skills      Rolling Terrain      Short Distance</b> The tour will start from Guthega and either head up the Snowy River Valley towards Illawong Lodge and beyond, or cross the dam and head up to Guthega Trig and beyond.	
Sunday, 13 September	<b>Mt Piper</b> <b>Basic Skills      Rolling Terrain      Short Distance</b> An easy tour starting at Perisher or Smiggins, and heading around Mt Piper. Interesting terrain and good views.	
Saturday, 19 September	<b>Tate West Ridge</b> <b>Intermediate Skills      Rolling &amp; Hilly Terrain      Long Distance</b> Start from Guthega, cross the dam and climb up to Guthega Trig then continue out to Consett Stephens Pass and Tate West Ridge. Great views of the Geehi Valley.	
Saturday, 26 September	<b>Mt Kosciuszko Attempt</b> <b>Intermediate Skills,      Rolling terrain (except for the climb to the summit)      Medium length</b> Take the chairlift up Thredbo and try to bag the summit of Mt Kosciuszko. This will depend on forgiving snow and fair weather. Should the snow be icy or the weather foul, expect to be someplace less exposed.	
Saturday to Monday, 3 to 5 October	<b>October Long Weekend - Trips to be advised</b> Any new tours for this weekend will be advised on the web site.	
Saturday & Sunday, 10 & 11 October	<b>Main Range Snowcamp</b> <b>Intermediate Skills      Medium Distance      Hilly and Rolling terrain</b> Spend the weekend camping in the snow somewhere on the Main Range. The intention is to ski from Charlotte Pass up the Summit Road and set up the tents near the Snowy River. The rest of the weekend can be spent exploring the surrounding peaks and terrain.	
Saturday & Sunday, 17 & 18 October	<b>Lodge Weekend at Charlotte Pass</b> Tours will be arranged for those staying at the Southern Alps Ski Club lodge and for anyone who wants to come up to join the group at Charlotte Pass. Tours will be conducted on the Main Range or around Charlotte Pass, depending on snow.	



## CCCSC Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Wednesday 23 September 2015 at 7:45pm  
Turner Scout Hall, 5 Masson St, Turner

Please come along and have your say on how we can best run the club and vote in the new club committee.

Matters on the **Agenda** will include:

- Acceptance of Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting.
- Acceptance of Minutes of the 2015 Special General Meeting.
- Committee Reports.
- Election of Committee and Non-Committee positions for 2015-2016.
- Membership Fees.
- Other Business
- Activities for 2016.

## October Lodge Weekend

The Club lodge weekend will be held at the Southern Alps Ski Club lodge at Charlotte Pass on the weekend of 17 & 18 October. Accommodation for the nights of Friday 16 & Saturday 17 October has been arranged.

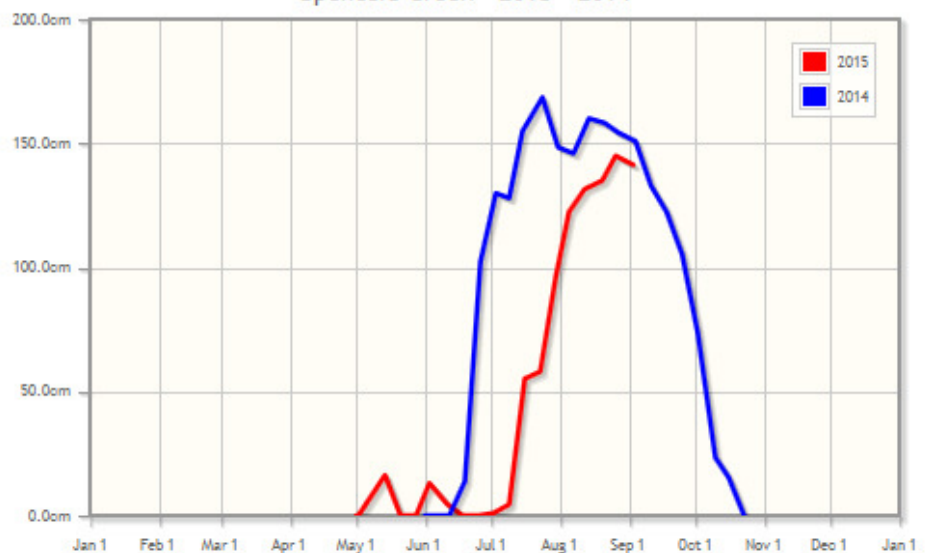
This is always a popular weekend, with Club ski tours held around Charlotte Pass or on the Main Range on the Saturday and Sunday. At present there is a deep cover of snow on the Main Range, so there should be good skiing during October.

The intention is to have a community dinner on the Saturday evening where people bring along an entree, main course or dessert to share with others.

Please advise myself as soon as possible if you are interested in attending.

The cost per person for accommodation is \$40 per night. Once confirmed, payment will need to be paid prior to the weekend, either by sending a cheque to the Club (payable to "Canberra Cross Country Ski Club") or via the Register Now site, details of which will be advised on the web site.

Spencers Creek - 2015 - 2014



Snow Depth at Spencers Creek as at early September, compared with 2014.

### Club Discounts

When buying items from the outdoor shops in Canberra and Jindabyne it is worth mentioning that you belong to the CCCSC as you are likely to receive a discount.

### Web Page Password

The Webmaster has advised that the password used during 2014 to access the Members section of the club website will be removed soon.

# Kosciusko Tour Results



All photos taken by Sonja Weinberg

Sunday 30 August 2015  
Course: Perisher Trails  
Length: 14km  
Weather: Sunny  
Snow: Softening

## Mens Classical

1	Michael Brennan	56:48.9
2	Sven Howarth	1h00:39.0
3	Warren McCourt	1h03:47.9
4	Peter Ward	1h05:50.9
5	Garry Lewis	1h05:58.7
6	Karl Penny	1h08:59.5
7	Jason Slingo	1h09:07.2
8	James Finnie	1h10:11.4
9	Chris Welch	1h12:12.1
10	John Sim	1h12:58.1
11	Chris Hopkins	1h13:17.4
12	Arnold d'Bras	1h23:30.5
13	Patrick Howlett	1h28:18.7
14	Bruce Porter	1h28:29.2
15	John Granich	1h28:39.7
16	Alan Levy	1h34:23.2
17	Nigel Nutt	1h40:17.5
18	John Giacon	1h43:59.3
19	Alan Civil	1h44:44.1
20	Ken Moylan	2h21:31.0

## Womens Classical

1	Wendy Hopkins	1h06:26.6
2	Karina Ward	1h18:53.4
3	Lisa-Jane Lewis	1h23:54.3
4	Margaret Mahoney	1h34:25.6
5	Jasmine Howorth	1h40:16.1
6	Maria O'Donahoo	1h41:11.9
7	Sue Williams	1h44:35.9
8	Karen Civil	1h58:13.1

## Mens Freestyle

1	Rowan Christie	1h21:02.7
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## Womens Freestyle

1	Katrina Nicholl	1h05:52.2
2	Deborah Purss	1h15:31.9



## A Guaranteed Cure for Canberra Summer Blues

Canberra cross country skiers always hanker after cold weather in summer. Some migrate to the northern hemisphere for a while. Some stay at home and become a burden to others.

But have you ever thought of going further south?

The New Zealand Department of Conservation charts a yacht every summer to transport volunteer rangers to South Auckland Island. Why not volunteer for this cool weather escape from Canberra's summer time blues.

The Auckland Islands are the largest of New Zealand's sub-Antarctic islands with the richest flora, the largest number of sub-Antarctic invertebrates and some of the rarest birds on earth.



It's simple. Go to [www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/volunteer/in-your-region](http://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/volunteer/in-your-region) and find the link to the Southlands region and apply.

Volunteers for this trip need to be able to jump ashore from dinghies—most wet landings are on boulder strewn beaches. The trip to and from the Auckland Islands takes around 2 days on a yacht and seasickness is a major issue. A medical sign-off will be required.

Accommodation is on a 15 metre yacht with shared bunkrooms and limited space.

Cost is \$6000 per person contribution to food and transport.

YOU WILL ONLY LIVE SO UNCOMFORTABLY ONCE



On the trails at Smiggin Holes — Tues 8 Sept.  
*Photo: Michele de Courcy*

## Useful Web Links for Skiing

The following web pages provide useful information on snow conditions and weather when planning trips to the mountains:



### Perisher X-Country

Under the Perisher X-Country web site [www.perisherxcountry.org](http://www.perisherxcountry.org) click on the 'Reports' menu, which then has links to the following pages:

- **Ken Green's Main Range** report — Ken's weekly reports provide a great summary of snow conditions throughout the backcountry, including the Main Range, from Dead Horse Gap, Guthega, Munyang, Mt Selwyn and the more remote areas.
- **Grooming Report** — provides a daily update of the grooming and snow conditions on the Perisher cross country trails.
- **Backcountry/Ski Touring** — Wilderness Sports daily report of snow conditions in all areas of the park.
- **Weather Reports** — links to the Bureau of Meteorology, Weatherzone and The Frog's weather forecasts for the mountains.
- **RTA Road Report** — provides details of road conditions, including in the Snowy Mountains.



### Richard's Thredbo Report

This web page [www.ciau.com.au/snow/rrr.asp](http://www.ciau.com.au/snow/rrr.asp) is updated regularly throughout the season and provides a good indication of conditions at the top of Thredbo and at the southern end of the main Range.

### Ski.com.au

This web page [www.ski.com.au](http://www.ski.com.au) contains Snow Cams, Weather Forecasts and numerous Forums covering conditions at the downhill resorts and backcountry skiing.

### Mountainwatch

This web page [www.mountainwatch/snowforecasts](http://www.mountainwatch/snowforecasts) contains detailed 7 day snow forecasts for ski resorts in Australia and around the world.

## Club Committee Contacts

President Lachlan Kennedy	cccscpresident@gmail.com
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Tour Coordinator Alan Levy	cccsc tours@gmail.com
Instruction Coordinator Deb Purss	cccsc training@gmail.com
Kosciusko Tour Coordinator Jo-Anne Clancy	cccsc racing@gmail.com
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Newsletter Editor Alan Levy / Tony Brown	cccsc editor@gmail.com
Webmaster Ken Moylan	cccsc webmaster@gmail.com



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COUNTRY SKI CLUB

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Fun and fitness in the snow



### Club Snow Camping Gear for hire

The following gear which is owned by the Club is available for hire to Club members. These prices are cheap. The commercial hire charge for a 2-person tent is \$45 per week-end.

**Tent** (Macpac 3-4 person) - \$20/weekend ; - \$30/week

**Trangia stove** - \$3/weekend; - \$5/week

**Snow shovel** - \$4/weekend; - \$6/week



### Club Safety Gear for use by Tour Leaders

The Club has four Personal Locator Beacons (PLB), two GPS units and some first aid kits which are available free of charge to members leading Club ski tours.

**PLB** (GME MT410G)

**Contact** Alan, Jo-Anne, Bruce or Lachlan.

**GPS** (Garmin Etrex Vista HcX)

**Contact** Alan & Jo-Anne



## Social meetings 2015 — all welcome

**Wednesday 9 September 2015**

### **Skiing Photography from around The Globe**

Club members will show a selection of photographs from their skiing adventures in Australia and around the world.

**Wednesday 23 September 2015**

### **CCCSC Annual General Meeting & “Winter Dreaming” movie**

Please come along and have your say on how we can best run the Club, and vote in the new Club Committee. See AGM agenda items on page 10.

Following the AGM Stephen Curtain’s ‘Winter Dreaming’ movie of skiing in the Australian Alps will be shown.

**Wednesday 7 October 2015**

### **Overseas Skiing**

This meeting will focus on overseas skiing, with Club members showing photographs from their overseas skiing adventures.

**Meetings are held at the Turner Scout Hall, 5 Masson St, Turner, Canberra (adjacent to Haig Park) on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month from mid May to October. Door opens at 7.30 pm for 7.45 pm start. Light refreshments will be provided.**



Photograph from this year's Kangaroo Hoppet, held on the cross-country trails at Falls Creek, Victoria, on Saturday, 22 August 2015. Pictured are Ken Moylan (Club member), Paul Photios (former Club member) and Bruce Wharrie (known to many Club members), all competing in the 42km race. Ken finished in a time of 5:12:52.85, Paul in 5:15:22.90, and Bruce in 3:45:27.21.