

WARRUGANG NEWS



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THEMES OR NOT?

For the last two years, Steve Hunter has bravely volunteered to organise Daiquiris before Dinner, which led to discussion of the parties and theme nights in Warrugang's earlier days.

That led to thoughts as to whether members might like theme or party nights at the Lodge; not necessarily involving alcoholic drinks (although I must say that the daiquiris were spectacular) but which could involve (eg) a dinner each week themed to a particular cuisine and as much fun as members would like to add.

Obviously, this would involve an amount of planning and discussion by the Board with Lodge management, but before that we are seeking to see if members are interested in the idea of theme or party nights and what form they might take.

Please send feedback to timdoubleday@optusnet.com.au or write to Tim at 83 Cassia St Dee Why, New South Wales 2099.

WINTER WRAP

The snow this season was great - the biggest complaint was that visibility was low because of the falling and windblown snow! It was definitely a season to make sure you'd packed the goggles.

At Warrugang, there was, of course, warmth inside but snow on the roof, snow on the balcony and plenty on the ground for a giant snowman, complete with carrot nose and skis.

As usual, it all crashed into rain as September progressed, but the season gave us lots of snow and plenty of fun.

Although many lodges and commercial businesses were said to be achieving less than 70% occupancy during peak season, Warrugang occupancy was 84% for

the main 12 weeks of the season - the weeks between the end of June and the end of the third week of September - outside which there was little snow and, not surprisingly, few people in the Lodge. That's great support from Warrugang members.

Perisher Blue came to the party with an extensive addition to the area covered by snow guns - now from mid-station through Goats Gully and Centre Valley down to Front Valley, with some of the guns looking remarkably like oversized shower heads, while others were obviously very high-tech; computer controlled to variations in temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction, which made the world class ticket prices a little easier to bear. And there's snowgun top-up for Eyre and Towers coming in 2009!



Steve Hunter working daiquiri magic



Snowguns above Goats Gully

"CHAINS, THE RTA'S GOT ME LOCKED UP IN CHAINS"

(with apologies to Gary Goffin and Carole King)

The RTA has released a discussion paper entitled "Introduction of winter tyre and snow chain regulation", prepared by the Authority's Wollongong Branch, and which commences with the statement that the RTA "is proposing a new regulation that will require vehicles with four wheel drive transmission systems to be fitted with winter tyres or to carry and fit snow chains when directed. The regulation will apply on designated snow and ice risk sections in the Alpine Region between the June and October long weekends and will include large off-road vehicles, sports utility vehicles and all wheel drive vehicles".

It is also said that this is proposed to reduce the number of crashes occurring above the snow line in the Alpine Region and that it will affect "users of 4WD vehicles".

The paper states that "the possibility of creating a more forgiving road environment on key routes to the alpine ski resorts is severely limited by the mountainous terrain and adverse weather conditions. The RTA has implemented both asset and traffic management strategies to address the road safety concerns. The introduction of the requirement for 4WD vehicles to improve their performance capabilities in snow and ice conditions by either using winter tyres or carrying snow chains will be an additional strategy to assist drivers in the snow."

It would be easy to dismiss the paper (which is illustrated by photos of 4WD vehicles in ditches & in difficulty in the snow) by assuming that the aim is simply to remove the current 4WD exemption from carrying chains in ice risk sections, such as the Alpine Way to Thredbo or the Kosciuszko Road into Perisher. That is correct but is not the complete picture.

The sting for Warrugang members and SkiTube users is that the proposed amendments will also increase the extent of the Alpine Way coverage beyond the existing legislation by designating the section of Alpine Way between Penderlea and Bullocks Flat as an ice risk section. The Authority states that this snow and ice risk section has been identified based on the crash history of the area and that recorded events over the past 3 years have identified a need for vehicles to fit snow chains prior to leaving Bullocks Flat during "exit events" — RTA parlance for the evening peak return to Jindabyne. The paper states that often these events occur despite fine mornings, when vehicles could have reasonably entered the snow fields without anticipation of the need for snow chains in the evening when drivers are heading home.

It is difficult to be absolutely certain where the Penderlea start-line will be as the RTA map is not precise, but the Geographical Names Board describes Penderlea as a locality on Wollondibby Creek about 8 km ENE of Bullocks Flat.

The paper says that on average there have been 8 extreme weather days per season which would require all vehicles without winter tyres to fit chains — just under 7% of the ski season. No information is provided as to whether the Penderlea-Bullocks Flat section of the Alpine Way was sufficiently affected on each of those days to have raised an ice risk alert or whether the risk section was on some other part of the designated ice risk roads.

The Authority acknowledges that the regulation will see an increase in the demand for snow chains, stating that "hire companies have an extensive selection of snow chains available for hire for all makes and models of vehicles (*ed - later acknowledging that not all vehicles can be fitted with chains*). Suppliers of snow chains have advised that they should be able to cater for the increased demand in snow chains should this regulation proceed."

The paper states that snow chains can be hired for \$30 to \$50 per day or purchased for approximately \$200. A quick Web-check shows that chain hire is closer to \$50-\$65 per week, still not inexpensive, particularly for something with an over 93% chance of sitting unused in the boot at Bullocks Flat.

After reading the paper, your editor was left with the thought that surely there must be some other option with respect to the Penderlea — Bullocks Flat section that is less expensive than the purchase or ongoing hiring of chains to cover a very small possibility of a problem on a short section of road.

SLOPES has weighed in with—

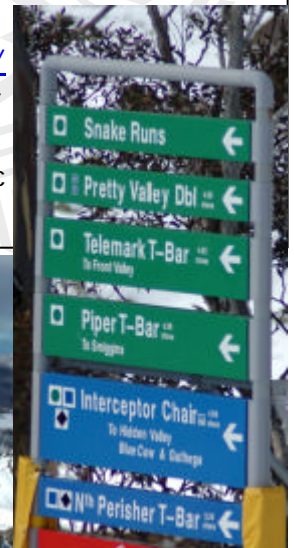
"No one objects to sound safety measures, but they must be practical in implementation. The costs to the community will be high in this blanket approach.

With 750,000 visitors to the snow at the rate of 3.3 people per car, there must be some 225,000 car visits per year to Perisher and Thredbo.

At a cost of \$30 per car to hire chains the cost will be \$6.75 million per year. No wonder the local shops said they would be pleased to supply!!

The majority of this cost can be avoided by proper indication by clear signage in the periods that actual implementation is warranted, rather than just a calendar date system, irrespective of the season or the weather."

A copy of the paper is available at <http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/rulesregulations/downloads/snowlegislation.pdf>. Members are encouraged to read it and consider making a submission. The mailing address for submissions is Winter Tyre and Snow Chain Discussion Paper, Attention Leigh Madden, Roads and Traffic Authority, PO Box 477, Wollongong 2520



WARRUGANG NEXT SEASON

While continuing to work on having the builder rectify the warping external cladding - with prospects of work commencing in the New Year - the Board is considering interior aspects - looking at extra towel rails and shelves or drawers in the bathrooms as well as moving the ski racks to the airlock.

The change to the ski rack position would not only place the skis more conveniently to hand as you leave but also free up an area in the boot room that could be used as an alternative relaxation area by children or adults during the day or in the evenings, thus getting more mileage out of this room and its heated floor.

That would require a combination lock on the front door that will withstand the alpine conditions and a movement or similarly activated light so that members could enter the appropriate code after dark, together with blinds in the boot room and airlock room for security.

The proposed boot room relaxation area furniture is aimed at passive play and enjoyment - some cushioning on the benches and some bean bags to encourage games and reading with an inexpensive DVD player and video screen so children or adults could watch their DVDs.



**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY
NEW YEAR TO ALL**

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It is not proposed to provide television - one reason is that the reception is extremely poor and frustrating to watch.

The Board is also looking at the very high cost of heating the Lodge to see if we can reduce both the cost and our carbon footprint.

We are still waiting for the new lease from National Parks but are planning the purchase of additional bedding and the accommodation details for the booking officer to cover the additional beds.

In the meantime, we are planning a working bee over the Easter long weekend to co-incide with the SLOPES "Back-to-Perisher" week which runs from Saturday 11 to Saturday 18 April 2009.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

- * How much deeper would the ocean be without sponges?
- * There's an age where you have to forget health food - you need all the preservatives you can get.
- * Will your wild oats turn into All-Bran and prunes?
- * Is a day without sunshine like night?
- * The reason a dog has so many friends is that he wags his tail instead of his tongue.
- * We know the speed of light, but what's the speed of dark?
- * Half the people you know are below average - but does it matter?
- * On the other hand, you have different fingers.
- * The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese in the trap.

NEWSPAPER STORIES

(yes, they're real)

- * Caskets found as workers demolish mausoleum.
- * Federal Agents raid gun shop, find weapons.
- * Attorney accidentally sues himself.
- * Utah Poison Control Centre reminds everyone not to take poison.
- * County to pay \$250,000 to advertise lack of funds.

And the advertisement of the year -

- * get 50% off or half price, whichever is less.