



# **New Zealand Alpine Club**

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## **Huts Review Progress Report**

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March 2001



## **New Zealand Alpine Club**

### **Huts Review**

### **Progress Report**

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## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The objective of the huts review is to draft policy for the development and management of Club huts.

### **1.2 Scope**

The Review Team is working to the terms of reference given in Appendix A. The Team will consider, but not be limited by, the following:

- where the Club is going with accommodation
- accommodation management options (e.g. status quo, trust, others)
- all relevant issues relating to the objective
- other matters such as:
  - administration matters including centralising records, huts data base
  - financial management including asset management plans
  - service standards
  - huts agreements and agreement management
  - Club security and consistency in its management of its huts and hut management agreements with other parties
  - views expressed in Annex II of Appendix A
  - matters raised in the proposed Accommodation Manager job description (Annex V of Appendix A)
  - matters listed in the possible huts issues list (Annex VI of Appendix A).

A list of huts and associate management features is given in Appendix B.



## **2 Context**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The context in which the Club provides accommodation is fundamental to the review. The context is considered under the following headings:

- Vision and Mission
- Stakeholders
- Roles and responsibilities
- Sources of risks to the Club and the Club's accommodation.

### **2.2 Vision and Mission**

#### **2.2.1 Background**

Developing a vision and mission may be considered as a starting point. Should the Club continue to own and operate huts? If it is agreed that the Club should own and operate huts, then questions such as the following arise.

- How many huts? For example, should the Club continue with all of the huts that the Club currently owns and operates, or should it aim to provide more huts, or should it aim to reduce the number?
- Should the Club focus on a particular kind of hut? For example, should it focus on base huts, such as Unwin and Arthurs Pass Huts, on alpine huts such as Pioneer and Centennial Huts, or on basic huts such as Cascade, Elcho, and Godley Huts.
- Should the Club pursue more hut management agreements such as the one with the Department of Conservation for the management of Aspiring, French Ridge and Colin Todd huts?
- What levels of service should Club huts offer? For example, should the levels of service be similar to those currently provided, or should base huts be improved to be more competitive with backpacker hostels, or should alpine huts have fuel and primuses?

The Club has substantial hut assets. The values used for insurance purposes give a total asset value of approximately \$2 million, as shown in Appendix D. Hut valuations have not been undertaken for some time. The total replacement value would well exceed the valuations given.

Reasons for the Club having huts include:

- providing shelter in the mountains
- a tangible benefit for members through hut fee discounts
- giving the Club status as the premier mountain club in New Zealand
- huts being part of the long standing Club heritage
- fulfilling an obligation to past members to honour their work



- engendering a Club spirit, a sense of belonging to something tangible
- creating opportunity for all in the mountains of New Zealand
- strengthening the Club's rights of participation in the mountains e.g. submitting on national park management plans.

Conversely, there are reasons why the Club may choose not to continue with huts including:

- the financial burden and managerial responsibilities
- the necessity of huts has diminished because of the improvement of equipment
- the imposition of manmade structures in pristine mountain environments.

Managing huts has changed dramatically over the last decade or two. Changes include:

- meeting the requirements of the Resource Management Act (e.g. The Club has total containment system toilets at four high huts, with human waste being flown out; three more are planned in the near future)
- meeting the requirements of the Building Act, which means having building consents for and meeting minimum standards of construction
- meeting the requirements of the Department of Conservation, which for huts in National Parks includes having structural and geological inspections carried out regularly
- having to apply for concession licences for having huts in National Parks
- finding the necessary professional and technical skills within the Club when possible to carry out a wider range of work
- finding volunteers to carry out hut maintenance works.

Setting a vision and a mission for Club accommodation is a significant task.

### 2.2.2 Vision

The Review Team has considered the Club's provision of huts to be vital to the well being of the Club and to sustaining an effective climbers lobby in the future management of alpine and other climbing areas. It proposes the vision of:

**“To be a leading provider of alpine accommodation in New Zealand”.**

### 2.2.3 Mission

A mission is how the Club intends to work towards the accommodation vision. The mission proposed by the Review Team is:

**“To actively manage and improve the Club's network of base accommodation and mountain huts so as to provide a sustainable resource and service for Club members”**



## 2.3 Stakeholders

Those who may consider themselves to have a stake in the future of NZAC huts are:

- Club members
- Department of Conservation
- Guiding and professional outdoor operators
- Tourism operators
- Schools and other educational groups
- General outdoor uses
- High country run holders
- The public
- Overseas climbers
- Helicopter operators
- Local bodies and central government
- Affiliated and related clubs and organisations
- Funding bodies and agencies
- MSC, SAR, Police.

## 2.4 Current Roles and Responsibilities

The current roles and responsibilities relating to Club accommodation are outlined in Table 2.4.1.

**Table 2.4.1: Roles and Responsibilities**

Item	Currently Responsible
Funding of Buildings	The activities of members in applying for grants, etc. members bequests, DoC, commercial operators.
Funding of Maintenance	The activities of members and other in paying hut fees, volunteer wardens in collecting hut fees, section manager in collecting fees, agreement trust accounts; Club funds as administered by Club Treasurer.
Employment of Wardens	Sections, HQ, Accommodation Convenor and DoC
Safety Compliance	Sections, HQ, and Accommodation Convenor
Environmental compliance	Sections, HQ, and Accommodation Convenor in conjunction with local bodies and DoC.
Management and Administration	<i>HQ:</i> Central records, payment of accounts <i>Convenor:</i> Co ordination, designs, consent applications <i>President:</i> Presidential overview, legal opinions



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Item	Currently Responsible
	<i>Aspiring Agreement Committee</i> : Aspiring hut projects, DoC partnerships. <i>CCM</i> : Overall approval of management
Marketing and promotion	Publications, website, membership brochure
Partnerships	Club officers and members

**Currently there is little or no definition of roles and responsibilities.**

## 2.5 Sources of Risk

Risk management is being used more and more to assist in the management of asset management. A methodology is given in NZS 4360. The Review Group used the risk management method to identify and prioritise risks.

Sources of risk where considered to be:

- Financial risk sources
- Organisational risk sources
- Social risk sources
- Competition risk sources
- Legislative risk sources.



### **3. Risk Identification, Prioritisation and Mitigation**

#### **3.1 Major Risks**

Risks were identified under the headings of Financial risk sources, Organisational risk sources, Social risk sources, Competition risk sources, and Legislative risk sources. A summary of the risks identified is given in Appendix E. The major risks and consequences were assessed to be:

- Poor payment of hut fees resulting in poor huts income and undermining the sustainability of Club huts
- Landlord alienation and possible loss of concession licences
- Lack of definition of Club roles resulting in a fragmented approach to huts management
- Lack of skills and knowledge within the Club to the detriment of managing Club huts
- Lack of Club policy to the detriment of the Club's image and huts management
- Hut fees being too low resulting in poor huts income and undermining the sustainability of Club huts
- Public employment issues such as volunteer wardens being unaware of the basis of Club huts management that lead to poor public and warden relations
- Perception of Club huts being DoC huts with a consequence of poorer hut fees payment and loss of Club identity
- Partnership breakdowns (such as the Aspiring Huts Agreement with DoC) resulting in major disruption to huts management
- New competition which results in fewer people using Club huts and a downward spiral in level of service provided at Club huts, particularly base huts
- Damage or potential damage to huts and occupants resulting from natural hazards such as rock or snow avalanche, ground instability and flood waters (e.g. Empress was closed for a period while the risk of rock fall was reviewed, one of the earlier Pioneer Huts was crushed by rock fall, and Unwin Hut was damaged with flood waters)
- Damage to huts resulting from inadequate maintenance with possible huts closure (for example, Murchison Hut was closed for this reason)
- Non-compliance with regulatory requirements which may result, for example, in the Club being prosecuted.

#### **3.2 Risk Mitigation**

Ways of mitigating were identified for each of the above risks and are summarised against each risk as bullet points.

##### **Non-compliance of hut fees**

- Management contracts, such as those for the Matukituki Valley huts
- Publicity and marketing



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- NZAC management improvement and greater professionalism
- Agencies with stakeholders for collecting hut fees or providing other services to the Club
- Tougher enforcement with paying hut fees.

## **Landlord alienation**

- Communication through networking
- Ensure professional conduct
- Newsletters.

## **Lack of definition of roles**

- Roles being defined
- Drafting of responsibilities for National and section representatives.

## **Lack of skills and knowledge**

- Hut warden induction package
- Partner support
- DoC consultation
- Hut standards

## **Lack of policy**

- Role of sections
- Role of HQ staff
- Role of partnerships

## **Hut fees too low**

- Review of hut fees
- Comparative analysis / benchmarking

## **Public employment issues**

- Hut warden briefings and induction programmes
- Agreements between wardens and the Club
- Huts brochure
- Branding – complete and consistent

## **Perception of hut being DoC**

- Branding
- Signage
- Colours

## **Partnership breakdown**

- Professional relationships at personal levels
- Good public relations, Christmas cards etc
- Documented relationships and record keeping

## **New competition**

- Improve the Club's hut standards
- Looking for opportunities to expand services



**Damage to huts**

- Natural hazard assessment
- Routine structural and maintenance inspections
- Maintenance plans

**Compliance requirements**

- Central record keeping
- QA system.

**3.3 Analysis of Mitigation Measures**

An analysis indicated that mitigation measures generally fall into three types, namely:

- Type 1 Accommodation Management Methods (e.g. methods include management contracts with individuals such for at Unwin Hut and with DoC such as under the Aspiring Huts Agreement, and section management) including a method for rationalising whether to pursue ownership and management of new huts and a method to rationalise divestment of huts
- Type 2 Publicity, Marketing and Branding (e.g. Club logo and Club colours, huts brochures)
- Type 3 NZAC Systems (e.g. centralised hut database, hut asset management plan, hut standards, standardised hut fees, baseline surveys for structural condition and geological stability).

The priority risks have been assigned a mitigation type in Table 3.3.1.

**Table 3.3.1: Priority Risks and Mitigation Characterisation**

Priority Risk / Mitigation measure	Mitigation type
<b>Non-compliance of hut fees</b>	
• Management contracts	1
• Publicity and marketing	2
• NZAC management improvement / professionalism	3
• Agents with stakeholders	1
• Tougher enforcement	1/3
<b>Landlord alienation</b>	
• Communication / networking	1/3
• Ensure professional conduct	3
• Newsletters	2
<b>Lack of definition of roles</b>	
• Roles / definitions written	3
• Drafting of section / national responsibilities	3
<b>Lack of skills and knowledge</b>	



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Priority Risk / Mitigation measure	Mitigation type
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hut warden induction package</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner supporting</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DoC consultation</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hut standards</li> </ul>	3
<b>Lack of policy</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Role of sections</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Role of HQ staff</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Role of partnerships</li> </ul>	1
<b>Hut fees too low</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of hut fees</li> </ul>	1/3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comparative analysis / benchmarking</li> </ul>	3
<b>Public employment issues</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hut warden briefings / induction</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreements between wardens and club</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Huts brochure</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Branding – complete and consistent</li> </ul>	2
<b>Perception of hut being DoC</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Branding</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colours</li> </ul>	2
<b>Partnership breakdown</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional relationships at personal levels</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PR, Christmas cards etc</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documented relationships and record keeping</li> </ul>	3
<b>New competition</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up our standards</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not miss opportunities to expand</li> </ul>	1
<b>Damage to huts</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural hazard assessment</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular structural and maintenance inspections</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safety plans for fire and other hazards</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cashflow planning</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintenance plans</li> </ul>	3
<b>Compliance requirements</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central record keeping</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QA system</li> </ul>	3
<b>Accidents</b>	



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<b>Priority Risk / Mitigation measure</b>	<b>Mitigation type</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety plan</li></ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minimum standards</li></ul>	1/3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complying with laws</li></ul>	1/3
<b>Alienation of members</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Publicity and marketing</li></ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participation in decision making</li></ul>	3



## **4. Objectives**

Provisional objectives for the implementation of risk mitigation measures are proposed for each of the mitigation categories as follows:

### **Type 1-Accommodation Management Methods**

- to investigate the alternative options of ownership of facilities
- to increase Club revenue from huts
- to continue to improve accommodation services.
- to make Club accommodation available to the non-members at commercial rates
- to provide Club accommodation at discounted rates for members and in certain circumstances preferential use.
- to investigate means of improving income from, and the quality of service at base huts, without compromising services to members
- to develop a decision making process for acquisition of new huts and divestment of existing huts.

### **Type 2-Publicity, Marketing and Branding**

- to strengthen the Club brand e.g. review the Club logo and Club colours
- to develop Club marketing material and marketing avenues
- to strengthen associations with stakeholders.

### **Type 3-NZAC Systems.**

- to establish huts management policy
- to establish a national hut category system
- to review the hut fees system
- to establish a comprehensive huts asset management plan, which incorporates long term financial plans
- to maintain an auditable huts database centralised at the Club office
- to implement training of Club employees including utilising resources of other parties (such as any DoC hut warden induction programme).



## **5. Next Steps**

### **5.2.1 Review Team**

It is proposed that the Review Team carry out the following activities:

1. Circulate the Progress Report to the Peer Review Group for their information and preliminary comment (noting that further review comment will be sought following the Review Team addressing the work listed below)
2. Finalise the Progress Report together with preliminary recommendations for the Club Committee meeting in May 2001. The Progress Report will need to be finalised and ready for circulation by 7 May 2001
3. Undertake further work as outlined below.

### **5.2.2 Peer Review Group**

The Progress Report will be issued to Peer Review Group members with a request for comments by Friday 4 May 2001.

### **5.2.3 Club Committee Meeting**

The Review Team will move that the Club adopt the Vision and Mission proposed in the Progress Report and will seek comment on the work reported in the Progress Report.

### **5.2.4 Consultation**

The Review Team will liaise with the NZ Climber editor with the objectives of keeping Club members informed about the Hut Review process and seeking Club member input.

### **5.2.5 Further Work**

The Review Team will:

- review Accommodation Management options including new hut procurement and hut divestment procedures
- review marketing, promotion and branding options
- review NZAC systems.

Each review activity will involve:

- recording what the current status is and associated issues including what currently is being planned (e.g. hut signs, hut brochure)
- identifying what activities should be carried out and prioritising these activities



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- proposing a method of carrying out these activities, with the method proposing responsibilities and timetables.

The Review Team will initiate the further work after the May 2001 Club Committee meeting and will plan on submitting a final report to the Club Committee Meeting in November 2001.



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## **Appendix A: Terms of Reference**



## Appendix B—Huts List

Hut	Land Owner/ administrator	Occupancy right	Manage r	Warden <sup>4</sup>	Warden's quarters	Locked	Key/ combina tion	Radio/ Sched <sup>7</sup>
Arthurs Pass	NZAC	Freehold	C/W section	No	No	Yes	?	No
Aspiring	Crown/DoC	Licence	DoC	Yes – p	Yes <sup>2</sup>	No <sup>5</sup>	-	Yes/Yes-s
Cascade	Crown/DoC		O section	No	No	Yes	DoC- Wanaka	No
Centennial	Crown- WNP/DoC	Licence	C/W section <sup>1</sup>	No – I	Yes	No <sup>5</sup>	-	Yes/?
Colin Todd	Crown- MANP/DoC	Licence pending	DoC	No – I	No	No <sup>5</sup>	-	Yes/ yes
De la Beche	Crown- MCNP/DoC		N/M section	No	No	No	-	Yes/yes
Elcho	Crown/DoC		NO section	No	No	No	-	No
Esquilant	Crown- MANP/DoC		S Section	No	No	No	-	No
French Ridge	Crown- MANP/DoC	Licence pending	DoC	Yes - p	Yes	No <sup>5</sup>	-	Yes/Yes-S
Godley	Crown- MCNP/DoC		SC section	No	No	No	-	Yes/No?
HEL Porter	Private	Lease	N/M section	No	No	Yes	AGL	No
Homer	Crown- FNP/DoC	Licence	S section	Yes-p	Yes <sup>3</sup>	No <sup>5</sup>	-	No
Murchison	Crown- MCNP/DoC		NO section	No	No	No	-	Yes/yes
Pioneer	Crown- WNP/DoC	Licence	DoC	No	No	No <sup>5</sup>	-	Yes/yes
Ruapehu	Crown- TNP/DoC	Licence	A section	No	No	Yes	A section	No <sup>8</sup>
Unwin	Crown- MCNP/DoC	Licence	SC section	Yes	Yes	No	-	No-phone
Whangaehu	Crown- TNP/DoC		CNI section	No	No	No <sup>6</sup>	-	No

Note:

1. Agreement with DoC under which DoC will manage is pending
2. New wardens quarters proposed; hut bunk space will increase
3. New warden's quarters proposed
4. P = part-time, I = intermittent
5. Condition of license is that hut remains unlocked
6. Gate on access road is locked
7. S= Summer time radio schedule



## **Appendix C—Huts Income and Expenditure**

Insert spreadsheet – Appendix C



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## Appendix D—Hut Values

Hut	Location	IV	RV	Demolition	RVI	Building Total	Contents	TSI
Ruapehu Hut	Ruapehu		\$160,000	\$20,000	\$4,800	\$184,800	\$10,000	\$194,800
Whangaehu, NE Slope	Ruapehu	\$13,500		\$5,000		\$18,500	\$525	\$19,025
Arthurs Pass	Arthurs Pass Township		\$112,000	\$5,500	\$3,400	\$120,900	\$5,000	\$125,900
H E L Porter	Fox Glacier Township		\$100,000	\$5,000	\$3,000	\$108,000	\$7,500	\$115,500
Elcho Hut	Hopkins Valley	\$4,800		\$7,600		\$12,400	\$300	\$12,700
Godley Hut	Godley Valley	\$4,700		\$6,400		\$11,100	\$500	\$11,600
De La Beche Hut	Tasman Valley	\$24,500		\$8,000		\$32,500	\$1,400	\$33,900
Murchison Hut	Murchison Glacier	\$25,500		\$8,500		\$34,000	\$1,400	\$35,400
Unwin Hut	Tasman Valley DDB							
(inc. all huts & buildings)	A) Main Bldg		\$330,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$360,000		\$360,000
	B) Warders		\$106,000	\$6,000	\$3,000	\$115,000		\$115,000
	C) Bunkroom		\$31,000	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$34,000	\$21,550	\$55,550
	D) Drying/Workshop		\$18,000	\$1,500	\$600	\$20,100		\$20,100
	E) Shed		\$3,000	\$200	\$100	\$3,300		\$3,300
French Ridge Hut	Mt Aspiring		\$110,000	\$10,000		\$120,000	\$800	\$120,800
Colin Todd Hut	Mt Aspiring		\$90,000	\$10,000	\$2,500	\$102,500		\$102,500
Cascade Hut	West Matukituki Valley	\$4,000		\$6,500		\$10,500		\$10,500
Aspiring Hut	West Matukituki Valley	\$197,000		\$30,000		\$227,000	\$1,000	\$228,000
Esquilant Hut	Wrights Col. Rees Valley	\$20,800		\$6,000		\$26,800	\$800	\$27,600
Homer Hut	Upper Hollyford Valley	50,000		\$5,000		\$ 55,000		\$55,000
Centennial Hut	Franz Josef Glacier		\$81,500	\$16,000	\$2,500	\$100,000	\$5,000	\$105,000
Pioneer Hut			\$90,000	\$10,000		\$100,000		\$100,000
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$294,800</b>	<b>\$1,231,500</b>	<b>\$189,200</b>	<b>\$30,900</b>	<b>\$1,796,400</b>	<b>\$55,775</b>	<b>\$1,852,175</b>



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Note:

IV =	Indemnity Value
RV =	Replacement value
Demolition =	Cost of demolition
RVI =	Replacement value inflation (at a rate nominated by insurer)
Building total =	IV or RV + Demolition
TSI =	Total sum insured (Building Total + Contents)



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## Appendix E—Risks

The Review Group identified and prioritised risks under the risk source categories of Social Risks, Financial Risks, Organisational Risks and Physical and Legal Risks. The priority rating given to each risk is shown in brackets.

<b>Social Risks</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Overly competitive in huts market	(7)
New competition	(3)
Perception of too many huts	(5)
Perception of too few huts	(5)
Becoming too commercial	(4)
Poor management	(8)
Employment issues becoming public	(1)
Miss matched marketing	(6)
Perception the huts are DoC	(2)

<b>Financial Risks</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Loss of membership base	(3)
Investment loss due to poor management	(3)
Employee injury	(2)
Club 'system' failure	(4)
Inadequate Insurance	(1)
Hut fees too low	(1)
Non-payment of fees	(1)
Poor capital investment	(4)
Landlord alienation	(4)
Fraud	(4)
National economic frailty	(5)
Hut damage	(4)
Non-insurable assets	(1)



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<b>Physical / Legal</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Legal requirements	(2)
Damage to hut	(2)
Damage to people	(5)
Damage to property	(8)
Misleading advice	(7)
Loss of access	(6)
Lack of maintenance	(3)
Inadequate level of service	(4)
Loss of interest	(5)
Preferred alternate	(1)
Failure to comply	(7)
Loss of license	(8)
Opening of access	(7)
<b>Organisational</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Membership loss	(5)
Loss of section volunteers	(7)
Lack of definition of roles / responsibilities	(1)
Lack of skills / knowledge	(3)
Lack of policy	(3)
Lack of records	(4)
Limited finds	(6)
Risk of wrong decision	(5)
Staff error	(7)
Partnership breakdown	(2)
Lack of promotion	(5)
Failure to take opportunity	(5)
Failure to prioritise	(5)