**Chair Report – annual report for 2018/19**

**Australian Section New Zealand Alpine Club Inc.**

**To AGM - 20 July 2019**

1. **Membership:**

Membership has remained static over the last few years at around 550 members in Australia Section. The Section has now dropped to being the third largest Section in terms of membership. Perhaps this is an area for some future work for the Section.

**2 Orbituaries:**

It is with great sadness that we remember two members:

1. Ruth McCance, a Sydney based member, who was involved in a mountaineering accident whilst climbing in the vicinity of Nanda Devi in the Indian Garhwal Himalayas in early 2019.
2. Steve Turner, a Queensland based member who was involved in a rock climbing accident whilst climbing Mt Barney in late 2018.

On behalf of all members of Australia Section, I wish to express our deepest heartfelt condolences to their family, friends and colleagues.

**3 Section governance**:

The 2018 AGM set the scene for some important changes to the governance of the section and these were implemented throughout the year. Three resolutions were put to the 2018 meeting and were all passed unanimously:

1. **Name change of the association:**  to change the registered name of the Section

From: **Australian Section New Zealand Alpine Club Incorporated**

To: **New Zealand Alpine Club – Australia Section Incorporated**

This change did not go ahead as the regulator, Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) didn’t support this request as the proposed name was deemed to be too similar to the old one. The original name remains in force.

1. **Changes to our Rules** – these changes were successfully implemented during the year and duly registered with CAV. A further rule change became necessary due to one small omission in the initial change – that of setting a realistic quorum for general meetings. The rules prescribed 10% of current membership, which equates to 55. This is unachievable as AGM normally attract less than 10 members. The rule has subsequently been changed, via a special resolution to a quorum of 10 members and has been accepted and registered with CAV.
2. **Memorandum of Understanding** **between the Section and NZAC Inc.** - to formally document the relationship and unique operating environment that exists between the two separate legal entities. This was formally established and signed n March 2019.

**4 NZ Governance**

Following a complete review of governance at NZAC in NZ a new structure was implemented. This involved setting up:

1. Board with eight members
2. Section Council – representing all Sections of NZAC

Australia Section played an active role in this process and its current involvement in NZAC affairs is now at an unpreceded high level. Australia holds the following positions:

1. Member of the Section Council (Mike Pryjma)
2. Chair of the Section Council (Mike Pryjma)
3. Section rep on the Interim Board (Mike Pryjma)

**5 Trips Program – t**he 2018/19 trip program boasted a variety of trips, better than it has for some years with many members rising to the challenge of either joining trips as participants or nominating to convene trips. This has created a new wave of enthusiasm and interaction between members with the end result of getting more members out on more section trips. The 2019 winter program, however has seen a decline in member interest, reasons for which are not clearly understood.

Greater use of Google forms and sheets is currently being trialed as a means of minimising member effort and maximising the efficiency of the trip planning/registration processes. So far this is performing well.

Quite a few trips were placed on the annual program, mostly mountaineering, including one to NZ. It has been difficult to find support for trips other than mountaineering.

Indoor climbing meets have also seen a decline in interest in some areas.

A successful collaborative approach in organising joint trips with other outdoor adventure clubs in VIC and NSW was trialed during the year. This approach is seen as one means of getting more members out on trips and as such should be further explored.

The underlying fundamental factor in the waning trip/events program seems to be a lack of enthusiastic members driving these programs.

**Changes to the annual Blue Lake trip** – a fundamental change to how this trip is organised was implemented in 2019. This involved the reclassification of these from an ice climbing **Trip** to a mountaineering **Meet** with the main rationale being to encourage a greater level of participation by a wider range of members by catergorising it as a general mountaineering meet rather than what was historically a dedicated and elitist ice climbing trip.

**6 Management committee** – for the first time (in recent years at least) the Section has a full compliment of committee members on board (9). A lot of great work has been achieved throughout the year & I personally thank the committee for their hard work and dedication in our quest to continue to deliver tangible benefits to members.

**7 Member Incentive Program** – Following a strong endorsement from members (2018 member survey) to introduce some form of incentive program to encourage members to contribute in an administrative or management role or be a trip convenor, the committee implemented the program during 2018. We have seen an increase in the number of approved convenors as well as a full compliment of committee members and this may be a function of this program.

**8 Technical Advisory Panel (TAP)** – TAP has been very active during the year and has achieved the following:

* 12 approved Activity Convenors on the books
* 6 quality trips endorsed & undertaken during the 12 months period – all alpine
* Undertook the review of the format of the annual Blue Lake trip.
* Trialled the online Google form as a trip registration tool

**9 Newsletter** – this continues to go from strength to strength with high editorial quality despite a disruption to the editorial staff during the year. This is a credit to all members who collaborated to get the issues out in a timely manner. A big thank you to all involved.

**10 Member survey** – another member survey was undertaken during the year and again, brought strategic insight into better understanding member needs and expectations. Changes implemented as a result of this feedback have been:

1. Introduction of an Member Incentive program
2. Introduction of Mentor Program
3. Expansion of the annual trip program with an emphasis on alpine trips both in Aust & NZ
4. Additional Activity Convenors were sourced
5. PLB was purchased for Section trips
6. Monthly mailout of updated annual trip program

**11 Training program** – introductory mountaineering training provided by Snowy Mountains Climbing School was again offered to members on the training program. A demand for these remains.

Rock climbing courses were offered in the previous year, but with no subsequent interest from members, this has now been dropped from the program.

**12 Advocacy for adventure activities** – the Section monitored the situation of closure of many climbing areas in the Grampians, Victoria. Whilst no formal submission was made, the issue of climbing area advocacy is likely to be an area where more focus and attention will be required in the future.

**13 NZAC Merchandise** – the Section introduced a range of NZAC branded clothing merchandise in 2019, designed to compliment the limited range available in NZ. This was coordinated by the Member Services Coordinator and was a great achievement.

**14 Mentor Program –** a program designed to provide coaching and guidance to our more inexperienced members was introduced in 2019. This has proven difficult to get off the ground due to the geographic distribution of members and hence the logistical problems of pairing up suitable mentors/mentees. It is proving effective in the Hunter Valley, NSW with 1 mentor/2 mentees currently working together.

**15 Photographic competition –** the committee approved the running of a photographic competition within the membership. It would attract a monetary reward and details to be sent out soon.

On a final note, a very special thanks to all current & past members of the management committee and all other members who have helped behind the scenes at various Section activities and contributed so much to the management of the Section over the past 12 months. Without this support very little of the above could have been achieved.

I have full confidence that the Section can build on the good work achieved in 2018/19 and achieve many more milestones as well as a greater level of member participation during the next 12 months..

**Mike Pryjma**

**Chair, Australia Section**

**July 2019**