

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

to the members, Ski Racing New Zealand Inc.

for the Annual General Meeting 22 November 2009

This is my last report as Chairman of SRNZ as I am retiring at the conclusion of this AGM on the expiration of my two, three year terms on your board. I am the last of the board members appointed by an appointments committee selected at the SRNZ Strategic Planning Meeting in October 2003.

My report which follows is longer than normal and covers more than just the 31 May 2009 financial year. This is because with the SSNZ/SRNZ integration discussions, we have a much later AGM date and I feel it is important to cover some extra things, so you are fully up to date.

GENERAL MANAGER

In May of this year, James Lazor was appointed General Manager of Alpine by Snow Sports New Zealand to replace Simon Mills after he left SRNZ employment in March to return to the UK and take up a position with British Triathlon.

In an effort to better coordinate our operations with SSNZ, James is employed by SSNZ and based in the SSNZ office in Wanaka. SSNZ pays for James through our allocation of sport development money from SPARC. Originally SSNZ were going to employ someone for 6 months because of the limited funding. However, James is taking a long term view and generously offered to do 12 months work for 6 months salary. Although we are not privy to James' employment contract, we understand SSNZ has employed him on this basis. Having our sector manager (James) employed by and based in the SSNZ office has helped the day to day communications and coordination between SRNZ and SSNZ and the SSNZ staff who provide us with communication, finance and administrative functions which I will refer to again later.

James, was "thrown in at the deep end" at the start of the winter and has enthusiastically applied himself to the role. He has shown passion and energy in what has been a very busy first home season for him. I thank him very much for his commitment and dedication.

Although our advertisement and job description for Simon's replacement were for a General Manager, James' position has been named "Alpine Director" by SSNZ. Regrettably, this has caused confusion to some within SRNZ and the wider alpine circle. The position of Alpine Director is specifically defined under our constitution and in Alpine circles is regarded as a technical role: such as that previously filled for SRNZ by Scott Zahn and Jim Davis. James however was employed for his business qualifications and experience to manage our sector of SSNZ just as Simon was. I therefore want to clarify for the benefit of our members that notwithstanding the SSNZ job title, James' job description clearly defines his role as being General Manager for our sector - Alpine.

INTEGRATION WITH SNOWSPORTS NEW ZEALAND

In the past 12 months, a great deal of your Board's time has been consumed interacting with SSNZ. The benefits of the proposed integration between SRNZ and

SSNZ are to eliminate duplication, save costs and better utilise available resources. There is also the benefit for all sectors of snow sports to have a co-ordinated and efficient approach to management, communications, accounting, finance, sponsorship etc.

In February of this year we handed over the following administrative functions to SSNZ:

- management
- finance and accounting
- media and communications
- trust fund applications
- coach/sport development

As for many other National Sporting Organisations which have undergone a similar evolution from the old Federation structures, the next step is full legal integration. To make this happen, we identified in April of this year that a fully redrafted SSNZ constitution is required to accommodate all of the winter snow codes in the same legal entity. SPARC has therefore engaged Maria Clarke, a well known Sports Lawyer, to draft a proposed new constitution and for SSNZ and Jane Huria, an expert in Corporate Governance, to facilitate the process.

Following an initial meeting with SSNZ, Jane Huria and Maria Clarke, a discussion paper has been prepared outlining suggested provisions for a new constitution and we have responded to that. Both documents have been posted to our web site at http://www.skiracing.org.nz/content/library/Discussion_Paper_New_Structure_Sept_09_Updated.doc

At the SSNZ workshop to be held in Wanaka in November before our AGM, these matters will be discussed further before a first draft of the new SSNZ constitution is prepared. Once a new constitution and any other necessary bylaws are agreed and formally adopted by a SSNZ General Meeting the SSNZ member sports organisations including SRNZ will call their own general meetings to vote on whether they should wind up and become fully integrated within the newly constituted SSNZ.

Your Board is engaging in the discussions regarding the new SSNZ constitution so that we can get to a point where we are comfortable to recommend to our members the full integration of SRNZ into SSNZ. We are eager for SSNZ to distribute to our members as much information as possible for the November meeting so everyone can have a good idea on how the transition to integration will happen and what it will mean for New Zealand Alpine ski racing in the future.

FINANCE

Our audited accounts show a deficit in the order of \$32,000 for the year ended 31 May 2009. This has been of great concern to the Board and a lot of time has been spent taking steps to deal with it. I am pleased to report the position has improved slightly and has been stable since balance date (and nothing like the \$100,000 plus shortfall of two years ago).

The income side

Cash grants and commercial sponsorship are very hard to find but I have a lot of people to thank for their generous contributions.

First, I thank **Coronet Peak and Mt Hutt** who have made a big contribution in providing first class facilities, personnel and training space for our National teams over the past three years. I also thank them very much for the way they stepped up to run the 2009 New Zealand National championship at no charge to SRNZ. This effectively saved the event which we otherwise could not have afforded to run. Most importantly, it provided our athletes with another opportunity to get their points down in the pre-Olympic year. Thanks must also go to James Lazor for his initiative and work to arrange this.

During the 2008 winter, our teams enjoyed vehicle sponsorship from **Ace Rental Cars**. This was hugely helpful to SRNZ and saved us something in the region of \$10,000. We sincerely thank the Directors and team at Ace Rental Cars for that support.

Snowvision, Fiona Stevens and her Board of Trustees have provided SRNZ and our athletes with substantial financial support and assistance in so many ways. I try to cover them briefly below:

Fiona and Snowvision established the inaugural **Black on Track** party at “**The Hills**” Club House, Arrowtown, in conjunction with the 2008 Nationals. Given the exclusive location, this was a first class event, a major fundraiser for our representative teams and put the sport of Alpine in a very positive light. Special thanks go to **Michael Hill** for graciously allowing us to use his Club House and to the many donors of auction items for this fundraiser. The evening raised funds of around \$28,000 to assist our National Team athletes. This year Fiona held a second Black on Track party at the Queenstown home of **Lady Tait** which raised another \$40,000 from which our athletes will also benefit in the future. I sincerely thank Lady Tait, Fiona Stevens, Snowvision, it's Board of Trustees and the many donors of various auction items for such a great outcome.

In addition to the events above, we have also received cash grants of \$30,000 from **Snowvision** during the 2008 and 2009 years for our National and National Development teams' programmes.

As you know, Fiona Stevens and Snowvision also organise for the benefit of our ski racers, the **Snowvision McKenzie Scholarships** providing up to \$8,000 a year for promising junior racers and last year **Mapei** also contributed to this with a further \$7,500. This year Fiona Stevens also announced the **Formthotics Scholarships** providing a further \$6,000 per annum for our top racers. Our sincere thanks go to **Sir Roy McKenzie Trust, Mapei and Formthotics - Foot Science International Ltd** for their support of our ski racers.

On top of all of this, Snowvision is providing direct financial support to Ben Griffin of \$4,500 per annum for two years.

On the sponsorship targeting front over the past year we have also had great help again from Fiona Stevens to identify and pitch to potential sponsors. As an organisation, we have two marketing properties: Teams and Events. The focus has therefore been on using our teams, under Snowvision's **Black on White** licence as our offering to commercial sponsors.

Resulting from this work, we have **Jucy Rentals** as a new sponsor from the 2009 New Zealand Winter for our National Team and National Development Team. The value of this contribution in saved expenditure for our teams was around \$20,000 in the past New Zealand winter.

Jucy is also providing a Jucy Rentals car each as a prize to our National Champions, Angus Howden and Sarah Jarvis, These cars are for their use from 1 May to 30 October 2010 and will have personalised sign writing – so in addition to transport, Sarah and Angus can attract and promote personal sponsors.

In addition, Jucy Rentals supplied jackets for our 2009 Junior Team members for Topolino and the Whistler Cup.

For the purposes of my report, I have not put a total value on all of the support that we and our athletes have received from Fiona Stevens, Snowvision, Coronet Peak, Mount Hutt and Ace Rentals and Jucy but it is a substantial amount of saved expenditure, cash and direct athlete support.

I am also very pleased to report that **Naturezone** and **Browns Ski Shop** have joined as new sponsors. We welcome our new sponsors and hope to develop a long term and mutually beneficial relationship with them. We are also pleased to continue a commissions sharing agreement with **Marsh Insurance Brokers** and **ACE Travel Insurance** where our members receive discounted travel insurance suited for their ski programme needs while SRNZ also receives a percentage of the brokers commission.

Unfortunately, we were unable to secure cash sponsorship sufficient to replace our **Volkswagen** sponsorship which ended in December 2008. As you know, Volkswagen has been our major sponsor and a fantastic supporter of ski racing for a number of years. To give an idea of the scale of their contribution to us, in cash terms their support was in the order of \$70,000 p.a. plus a car for our General Manager. The Board has thanked Volkswagen for their wonderful support and do so again now in this report.

Caversham Foundation

During the year ended 31 May 2009, we once again had great support for our National Team and National Development Team from the **Caversham Foundation**. In the 31 May 2009 year, this amounts to approximately \$135,000 for the direct benefit of our elite athletes. I sincerely thank the Caversham Foundation for supporting our elite athletes in such a material way. Without that support, we would have not been able to develop these athletes to the extent we have.

For completeness, I note that during the year, Ben Griffin was engaged by SRNZ on a contract basis to act as Team Captain at the World Championships, as he was recovering from injury and could not compete. The amount of \$10,000 was paid to Ben to attend and fulfil this role, which ordinarily would have been done by our National Coach who did not attend the event. The amount took account of the work required by Ben both before and during the event and the fact he had to pay for his own travel and accommodation.

The application was agreed in advance, processed by the Academy of Sport which administers the Caversham funds and paid to SRNZ by NZOC from the Caversham

Foundation funding. Unfortunately, subsequent (and in our view, completely unnecessary) enquiry to NZOC, by SSNZ debating terminology describing Ben's position, resulted in a reversal of this application after the event. As a result repayment of the \$10,000 to Caversham Foundation by SRNZ was required. This has been done and is an expense in the representative teams cost centre of the 31 May 2009 accounts.

Our current funding grant from Caversham Foundation came to an end on 30 September 2009. In respect of future Caversham Foundation funding, all winter sports NSO's have been informed that Caversham have a severe restriction on their gaming site numbers and their income from those gaming sites. While they are in a rebuilding phase, and are positive of a long term future, Caversham presently have very little funding available. For 2010, they may be able to assist NZOC for the Vancouver Winter Games only. Words can barely describe our appreciation to Caversham Foundation for its support of SRNZ over the past several years but, I do record here a very big "thank you" to Caversham Foundation and wish them all the very best for the future.

Other Community Trust Applications

SSNZ, as part of the integration process, assumed responsibility from early 2009 for making Community Trust applications on our behalf to ensure a coordinated winter sports approach and also as some Community Trusts will only deal with SSNZ (an umbrella organisation) rather than SRNZ directly.

In the 2009 calendar year to date, 8 applications have been made by SSNZ on behalf of SRNZ. An application to the **Community Trust of Southland** was successful (\$5,500 for the 2009 Nationals) and another to **Skeggs Foundation** was partly successful in obtaining grants for direct athlete support. We are very grateful for the support given to us by both organisations. The other 6 applications were declined.

To give an idea on the "hit rate", across all snow sports in the 2009 calendar year to date, 31 applications have been made by SSNZ and only 7 have been wholly or partly successful. This rate is a sign of tough economic times, reduced income from Community Trusts and increased competition for funding from many other sporting and voluntary organisations.

Income from SPARC and FIS

Apart from sponsorship and grants, SSNZ receives two main sources of income: an annual grant of Sport Development money from SPARC and an annual funding grant from FIS. Prior to the restructuring of SSNZ in 2007 the organisation served effectively as a post office box for its constituent members. When these two amounts came into the SSNZ account the member sport organisations convened and promptly distributed the funds to the accounts of the member sport organisations.

Since 2007 the income from SPARC and FIS has been received by SSNZ but has not been automatically distributed as before. Effectively, each sport is now required to apply to SSNZ for funds and the SSNZ board then decide, in their discretion, what assistance is to be provided to each.

Under this system, SRNZ has received \$35,000 SPARC sport development money in each of the 2008 and 2009 years. Since 1 May this year the SPARC funding has been applied by SSNZ to the salary of James Lazor, our sector manager from SSNZ.

The annual FIS funding grant received by SSNZ each year is made up of two amounts, a basic amount plus a special distribution based on the number of athletes starting in the World Championships for Alpine and Cross Country. The SSNZ Board now decides on the discretionary allocation of the FIS grant money between member sports.

To give some indication, approximately \$104,000 was received by SSNZ from FIS in August 2008 and the main items this money has been applied to, by SSNZ, are as follows:

Payments to Cross Country athletes at World Champs	\$19,500
Sending delegates to the 2009 FIS conference (two NZ delegates, Messrs Palmer and Howden plus half the costs of two Australian delegates Messrs Henry and Bell)	\$14,138
Funding the deficit in a 2009 Freeski camp at Keystone, Colorado	\$12,831
Payments to Alpine Athletes at World Champs	\$10,972

At the time of this report, available FIS grant monies still unallocated and held by SSNZ from the September 2008 funding round are approximately \$41,000. In the past, this money would already have been distributed to the respective sports on receipt from FIS. We understand a further \$100,000 has also been received by SSNZ in respect of the September 2009 FIS funding round. This amounts to a total of about \$141,000 of unallocated FIS funding currently being held by SSNZ.

Your Board feels Alpine should receive a greater allocation of the FIS money than has occurred in the 31 May 2009 year. We are a major contributor to their receipt by SSNZ in the first place because Alpine provides the greatest number of constituents and entrants to qualifying World Championship events. While we agree the funds should be shared among the winter codes, we would like to see a greater level of consultation about their allocation. In this regard, we have asked SSNZ to agree a financial integration plan which includes the payment of SRNZ creditors. In our view, an amount of FIS cash can and should be used to fund it.

We believe an integrated structure with a new constitution, well functioning sports committees and good governance will allow for greater transparency and the fair application of SPARC and FIS grants between member sports.

Managing our cost structure

We have been most grateful to have the wise guidance of Greg Knowles, one of our Board (who in his “day job” is a Tax Partner at KPMG) to manage our way through a very difficult financial period for SRNZ. Through cutting costs, reassessing and restructuring budgets and ensuring team programmes are run to actual costs, Greg has done much to help reduce our cost structure as an organization.

Benefits flowing from passing functions to SSNZ

As mentioned above, from earlier this calendar year a number of our administrative functions have been undertaken by SSNZ, including finance, media/communications and grant applications. SSNZ also provides us with management by employing James Lazor to act as General Manager of Alpine for SSNZ.

The financial benefit of moving these functions out of SRNZ has been to reduce our administrative running costs, from about \$156,000 in the 31 May 2008 year to about \$124,000 in the 31 May 2009 year. The real cost savings of this “virtual” integration are flowing in the current year (the 31 May 2010 year). The most significant saving is in respect of salary for our General Manager and related employment costs. Our comparative costs for this in the 07/08 year were in excess of \$80,000.

The financial benefits of full legal integration

SPARC wishes to deal with only one snow sports organisation and all sports development money for snow sports goes through SSNZ. In order to maximise efficiencies SSNZ would like all snow sports to become totally integrated within SSNZ. To this end SPARC is assisting the current restructuring process for SSNZ to provide an effective fully integrated snow sports organisation. Accordingly, if we do not vote to integrate SRNZ within the newly constituted SSNZ it is most unlikely that SPARC will fund SRNZ directly and the benefit of about \$35,000 in sport development money would be lost. There are further savings to be achieved by full legal integration into one organisation.

SRNZ as a going concern

To put things in context, we started the 07/08 year with a deficit of about \$100,000 and through a lot of hard work, cost control, our income from Volkswagen and good management reduced that to a deficit of fractionally over \$1,000. This year, unfortunately, with the loss of the Volkswagen sponsorship in particular, we have really struggled financially. As indicated above, we have actively worked to control the deficit and although we haven't been entirely successful, it is manageable, and should be dealt with through integration with SSNZ.

At the end of the last financial year (31 May 2009) our deficit was about \$32,000.

In summary, as I have indicated above, during the 2009 year, in response to the reduction in sponsorship income, the Board took steps to reduce SRNZ expenditure. In particular, the General Manager position, which was vacated during the year, was not refilled. This dramatically reduces the level of fixed costs faced by the organisation going forward. SRNZ has agreed an arrangement with Snow Sports New Zealand whereby they have employed a General Manager, at no cost to SRNZ, which enables the functional aspects of the organisation to continue being

performed. SRNZ is seeking to agree a plan for full financial integration with SSNZ, subject to the approval of you, our members. This will ensure all of the financial obligations of SRNZ are met. For this reason the Board considers the organisation is a going concern.

COMMUNICATION

The need for us to improve our communication has been taken very much to heart by your Board. Shortly after the appointment of Simon Mills as General Manager of SRNZ in September 2007, we developed a communications strategy which has the following as its objective; *Create a plan to ensure regular, reliable, clear communications with all SRNZ stakeholders.* The plan then goes on to identify all stakeholders, the various ways we should communicate with them and the frequency of various types of communication. We have made strenuous efforts to meet the objective of this plan and to develop a culture of communication, consultation and cooperation not only with our direct stakeholders but over 20 other groups of people that we felt might need to know what was happening around SRNZ.

The first few months of this past financial year (2008 winter) were very busy in terms of holding meetings with members in all our regions. We held Board meetings at Auckland, Ruapehu, Wanaka and Queenstown. Unfortunately, we were unable to coordinate one in Canterbury during that winter. Our General Manager attended many races some of which were also attended by Board members as part of the process of communicating with members. Our General Manager attended several club meetings during that time.

In the 2009 winter we held member **forums** to discuss, in particular, integration between SRNZ and SSNZ at Christchurch, Wanaka, Ruapehu and Auckland. Unfortunately our intention to hold a Queenstown forum in conjunction with our Queenstown board meeting fell through.

During the past year our respective GM's (at times accompanied by one or more Board members), have had meetings and/or conversations with sponsors (both existing and potential), funders (both existing and potential), ski area management, equipment suppliers, importers and distributors, media and a range of kindred organisations such as SPARC, NZOC, SSNZ, WPP, ANC committee, FIS, ASI, Ski and Snowboard Australia and Alpine Canada Alpin.

Until March 2009 when this was taken over for us by SSNZ, our race results, media communications and general PR were handled admirably for us by **Jenny McLeod**. We are immensely grateful to Jenny for the service she provided to SRNZ for some 15 years. At all times, Jenny looked after this for us very efficiently, accurately and at a very low cost. We are most fortunate to have a media specialist passionate about our sport.

During the 2008 winter, twice weekly **e-newsletters** were sent to members, sponsors, supporters, as well as specialised and general media. Following the New Zealand winter, the E-newsletters continued monthly until early this year.

We arranged a meeting after the 2008 Nationals with the Directors of all the regional training programmes and our coaches to act as a **Technical Advisory Committee**. This was a very successful meeting in terms of having these people together to discuss and agree on a number of issues that affected our sport including among other things modifications to our Youth Cup Series and the reintroduction of National

Points which we hope will in part encourage more athletes to stay in the sport even if they are not active at FIS level competition. John Sandford and I attended that meeting to listen to the proceedings and ensure that the programme Directors in particular understood how much we valued their attendance and input. This group has a very important role in ensuring all our member organisations work together in addressing matters of concern for the common benefit of our sport and James has been working to foster greater involvement of this group.

Despite what we felt was a solid effort to get out and communicate, we do hear grumblings that we are still not doing enough. We accept there are always ways to improve and encourage our members to tell us how we can do better.

Revamped Web-site

In response to member feedback during the 2008 winter, we supported a recommendation from our General Manager to accept an offer from Cabbage Tree Creative to develop a new web site. This was carried out at a cost of around \$6,000 and the new site was launched early this calendar year.

Apart from the look of the website being more appealing, it is now easier to maintain and there have been some good new additions including an improved calendar for checking forthcoming events, a multimedia tab and a greatly improved resources tab especially to help race organisers.

In time we wish to add a lot of additional resources to function as a toolbox to help our member organisations. We all recognise the annual problem where valuable experienced members move on and new volunteers move into roles they are unfamiliar with and hopefully the resources in the new club toolbox will assist our volunteers in their roles and save them from reinventing the wheel.

We recognise that an amount of previous material has still to be reloaded. We expect this will be attended to progressively by James and the team at SSNZ.

STATE OF THE SPORT OF ALPINE SKI RACING

Despite the continuing struggle for funding, it is encouraging to see some excellent performances over this last year not only from our national team athletes making good reductions in their world rankings but also great improvements from athletes in our development team and also a number of those outside the development team.

Entry and K level athletes

Particularly encouraging are the healthy numbers of younger athletes in the regional programmes. To see them ski so well for their age is a real tribute to what the regional programmes are achieving in both Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

Taking Whistler Cup results as a benchmark, we have a growing number of K level athletes who are internationally competitive. In 2008 we had Jamie Green of Ruapehu Sport with a top10 finish in GS at Whistler Cup and in 2009, we sent our largest team ever (14 athletes) and had both Piera Hudson of Cardrona HPC and Fraser Hannon of Treble Cone Race Academy, each with multiple top 10 finishes.

For 2010 Whistler Cup, we have received 19 athlete nominations from our Regional Programs and our selectors have the difficult task of trimming this number down for the available team quota.

A barometer of ski racing participation, at grass roots level, is the school ski championships that occur throughout the country. Beginning in Simon's time, SRNZ has engaged, advised and encouraged a number of school ski competitions. We want to continue to develop these relationships and ultimately seek to appoint TD's to as many as possible of these events. This will help to raise standards, provide consistency and help with safety.

In the North Island there has been growing participation in 2009 with 391 entries in the North Island Primary Schools Championship and 471 entries in the North Island Secondary Schools Championship. Many of the North Island athletes, although not SRNZ registered, participate in North Island based ski racing and development programs at Snow Planet and at Mt Ruapehu. In the South Island they also continue to have very good numbers in both the South Island Secondary and Primary School competitions. Some of our regional programs use schools competitions to recruit new talent and SRNZ would like to find ways to support them in this – starting with TD appointments.

This year the Otago Daily Times Interfield Race series was expanded to 6 races adding Round Hill and Mt Dobson to the existing four Southern Lakes ski areas. In 2009 approximately 165 different athletes competed in this race series. At Mt Hutt they have continued to hold the popular Head Sunday Race Series.

In addition, initiatives such as the Mapei Race series, Turoa "have a go" self-timed course day and the Ruapehu Sport Junior Race are important to continue to attract the interest of entry level athletes to take up ski racing as a sport. In this regard, SRNZ is involved in ongoing discussions to expand the use of self timer courses, Nastar type races and junior races at different ski areas.

Southern Cross Cup Limited is conducting a feasibility study for a "double header" international children's race to be hosted between Australia and New Zealand. If it proceeds, the inaugural year for this event would likely be 2011. It would be structured in a way which does not give financial exposure to SRNZ/SSNZ or Ski and Snow Board Australia. I thank Tony Gavigan of Ruapehu Snow Sports for his initiative and the considerable work he has already put into this project on his own account.

In 2008 the International Ski Federation (FIS) committed large funds to an international campaign "Bring Kids back to the Snow" to encourage young people to take up Snowsports and is working with SSNZ to implement that campaign here in New Zealand.

FIS level athletes

Looking at the elite end of the spectrum, the number of sub-100 point FIS registered athletes has remained steady over the past 7 or 8 years or more. I have included graphs at the end of this report which give an indication of FIS male and female athlete numbers,

Currently, our top three female athletes: Sarah Jarvis, Lucie Tait-Jamieson and Allie McGlenn are all sub-40 FIS points. In total we have 12 female athletes under 100

points. Our top 4 male athletes: Ben Griffin, Tim Cafe, Angus Howden and Leighton Winsloe are all sub-40 FIS points. In total we have 14 male athletes under 100 points. From our National Development Team and Regional Programs we have a number of up and coming Junior FIS athletes who have improved dramatically in the past 12 months. This bodes well for the future.

The relatively low overall number of FIS athletes is indicative of the enormous level of financial commitment and time needed to stay in the sport at this level. It is a big concern that some of our top athletes are leaving the sport at a relatively early age either because of the difficulty to find funds to continue to train and compete or the lure of gaining more recognition and easier Winter Olympic selection in sports like Skier Cross because their world rankings will be better than they would be in the bigger competition pool of Alpine. It is unfortunate that NZOC selection policy and SPARC funding policy do not currently take these differences into account.

Fortunately, not all retiring athletes are lost to the sport with some taking on ski industry related occupations such as coaching and instructing which utilize the skills they have gained through ski racing. Overall, our sport makes a valuable contribution to the other winter codes and the ski industry in general.

Training Programmes

At the time of the SRNZ restructuring in 2003 there were no formal SRNZ training programmes. The sport was most fortunate however to have Claudia Reigler set up an excellent training programme for the country's top women skiers.

National Team

After the restructuring SRNZ promptly established training programmes for both the men's and women's national ski teams and over the years as numbers justified and finances allowed an assistant coach and a ski technician have been employed.

However, the viability of any programme will be governed by the numbers of athletes and the finance available and unfortunately in recent years there have been insufficient top women to form a women's national team training programme.

We are fortunate though to continue to employ Nils Coberger as our Men's National Team coach who has over the years done a great job in improving the world rankings of our top men athletes. Contributions from Snowvision and the athletes themselves are ensuring that our National Team programme is receiving ongoing support in terms of coaching, leadership and focus in this important build up to the Vancouver Olympics next year

National Development Team

In 2007 the New Zealand Development Team training programme was established. The rationale for this was to bridge the gap between the regional programmes and the National Ski Team in accordance with best practice programmes overseas. In doing so we were also able to access funding available at the time to help cover the costs of coaching and subsidise the training costs for those athletes.

The benefits of uniting a group of the top young committed athletes in one core group from a coaching viewpoint is very significant, as it allows the athletes to feed off each

other in a centre of excellence, rather than have them dispersed in regional programmes around the country.

By also having a comprehensive structured year round programme it overcame problems many athletes were experiencing in some of the regional programmes at the time where there was not consistency in coaching between northern and southern hemisphere programmes, there was not consistent monitoring of year round dryland programmes, assessments and other support programmes.

While we recognise the NDT programme relies on having a sufficient pool of feeder talent and has met criticism from some quarters, the proof of the success of the NDT programme is seen in the results of the athletes.

NDT Northern Hemisphere training and competition has been based in Canada, so a meaningful comparison can be made with Canadian athletes of the same age. Although Canada is a much larger Alpine nation in terms of numbers (Canada has 143 men and 111 women registered FIS juniors while NZ has 23 men and 18 women FIS registered juniors) a comparison of FIS rankings show NZ is performing well above its weight.

Mike Gould reports that Ali McGlenn ranks no.1 among Canadian athletes of her same age and younger in both GS and SG and 10th in slalom, Nick Prebble ranks no.1 among Canadian athletes of his age and younger in both GS and SG and 4th in Slalom, Adam Barwood no.1 in GS, 6 in slalom and 4 in SG, Finlay Neeson 8 in GS, 6 in SL and 1 in SG, Harrison Steedman 8 in GS, 19 in Slalom and 3 in SG Jamie Prebble 6 in GS, 35 in Slalom and 11 in SG, Taylor Rapley 15 in GS ,34 in Slalom and 13 in SG and Harriet Miller–Brown 20 in GS , 34 in Slalom and 16 in SG. Other notable world rankings for same year of birth and younger are Ali McGlenn ranked 52 in GS and 67 in SG and Nick Prebble ranked 10 in GS and 18 in SG. Mike and Pete have both furnished reports which are available to our members.

While we have a proud history of some talented ski racers it would be difficult to know of a time in NZ ski racing where we have had a group of development age athletes as competitive as these and it is a tribute to the excellent work Mike Gould and Pete Sanford have done in building an excellent development team programme which receives compliments and respect from people abroad.

It is a bitter disappointment to me that we could not find funding to retain Mike Gould and Pete Sanford as our National Development Team coaches after the enormously helpful Caversham funding expired on 30 September 2009. Our NDT athletes are presently enrolling in other various Northern Hemisphere programmes. We are anxious though that the momentum of what Mike and Pete have achieved is not lost and James Lazor is working on the NDT program for next New Zealand Winter.

Events

This past winter, we have seen our Calendar full of a record number of events, including Winter Games NZ, FIS races, ANC's, Nationals, National Youth series races, regional races, interfields and so forth.

Special mention should be made of **Winter Games NZ** which did much to raise the profile of Alpine among other winter sports with the amount of publicity it generated and the TV time it received. Alpine however also benefited greatly from the considerable investment made in Alpine infrastructure and equipment for the event,

including timing cables and equipment, safety netting and the like. For this we are most grateful for the vision and support of **Sir Eion Edgar** and the great operational skills of the Chief Executive **Arthur Klap** and his team. Fortunately it is planned to have this event every two or 4 years and it is hoped that it will only gather momentum in the future.

The quality international fields attracted to New Zealand by the training and racing options available here are testament to the quality of our ski areas and regional training providers across the country. The initiatives of you, our member clubs and your respective ski areas, in structuring and developing programmes and regional races are what make our sport successful. This is all critical to our continued success in the future. It is also important to recognise that the successes of all races on the SRNZ calendar could not have been achieved without the skills and experience of your Race Organising Committees, Technical Directors and the many, many other volunteers that man the races. To these people we are enormously grateful.

Overall, I see the state of ski racing in New Zealand as being very positive. I challenge the small number of detractors who claim our sport is in decline, to “put their money where their mouth is”, and make a positive contribution.

Online Registrations

Online registrations have allowed individuals to complete their own registration and pay for it on line, thus alleviating our member organisations of some administrative work associated with this. The other advantages are that up to date registration lists are available online daily and ROC's are able to access an up to date membership database. Online registrations are also available for SRNZ members, race officials and supporters.

While the on-line system has generally done the job we have identified some issues which are to be improved for next year.

Model Athlete Pathway (MAP) Document

One of my few regrets on leaving SRNZ is that we still have not published the SRNZ MAP document which illustrates the pathway that a young ski racer should take from entry level right the way through to Elite level.

Many will be aware of the highly regarded Canadian AIM document and the revised AIM2 document but we, like other countries, need to have a similar document relevant to the New Zealand conditions and circumstances. This document is a very important guide for athletes, parents and to some extent coaches to help them understand the stages of development, training and competition guidelines, race start/ training ratios, competition structure, training programme considerations and athlete needs and performance benchmarks at the various stages of an athlete's development.

Our New Zealand MAP document has been a long time coming but unfortunately with each change of personnel over the years the project has lost some momentum. The project started with Scott Zahn and Simon Mills put a lot of work into completing a first draft before he left at the beginning of this year. Our Strategic Plan was to complete the revision of the MAP document and to have it distributed to members by August this year. I regret this has not happened but I would hope it will be distributed to members shortly.

Nationals Championships Hosting

Prior to 2006 our Nationals Championships (the Nationals) were held at major ski areas on a rotation basis. Each major ski area accordingly hosted the Nationals as of right every 5 or 6 years and no benefit flowed to SRNZ for awarding the right to host the Nationals and every year there was some uncertainty with calendaring dates and costs with the next ski area.

In 2006, the SRNZ Board reached an agreement with NZ Ski, the owners of Coronet Peak and Mt Hutt which enabled our National Teams to obtain training lanes and facilities free of charge at both ski areas in exchange for the right to host the Nationals for a three year term. This was the first time that SRNZ was able to obtain value for awarding the Nationals. Over the last three years Coronet Peak has held the SL and GS National events and the SG has been held at Mt Hutt with the exception of last year when the National SG was held at Coronet Peak as a test race for the newly homologated SG course at Coronet Peak which was used at this year's Winter Games.

The three year term came to an end at the completion of the 2009 Nationals. Accordingly this year we have invited all New Zealand ski areas for expressions of interest in hosting the Nationals. Those expressing an interest have been forwarded a Request for Proposal (RFP) document outlining SRNZ requirements for hosting the Nationals and requesting them to submit their proposal.

In doing so we have been mindful that QAST has expressed concern at the strain this places on their volunteer base especially this year when Coronet Peak also hosted Winter Games NZ as well as the annual Japanese FIS series. Accordingly in the RFP document we sought particulars of the level of support the host area would provide to a Race Organising Committee (ROC).

We are concerned though that we have not consulted adequately with QAST regarding their concerns and we understand this will be one of the subjects for discussion at our Annual Forum on Friday 21 November. We understand that before entering into a Nationals Hosting Agreement we will consult with the local Member Organisation who ever that may be.

It is important to recognise the benefits and value that can be attained by effectively tendering for the rights to host the Nationals. I believe all will also recognise the significant improvements to the standards of the Nationals over the last three years when organisational skills are allowed to gather some momentum from having consistency in the host venue and personnel. Further we know from discussions with ski areas that they would like to see more consistency in the dates for events on our Race calendar and certainly the calendaring of events has proved less difficult than before when the venues for the Nationals changed from year to year.

National TD System

In 2004 SRNZ established a National TD (Technical Delegate) system. The purpose of this was to improve the standards of our larger regional and inter regional events, in a similar way that FIS TD's control FIS events.

This has been an important initiative to ensure our races are conducted safely and assist in maintaining standards in course setting, the running of races and timing. They also work with the jury in ensuring races are run fairly and in accordance with applicable rules. They are a valuable benefit and can do much to assist with the smooth running of events. We would encourage more race organisers including school race organisers to take advantage of their services as a sound event risk management investment.

We are very grateful to **Ian Smith** who coordinates the system as the National TD Commissioner and to the National TDs **Robin Armstrong, Derek Brown, Peter Duff, David Howden, Jesse Teat, Euan Howden** and **Peter Manning**. Ian Smith has also been instrumental in making improvements to the Youth Cup competition and the reintroduction of National Points for which we also owe him thanks.

Our thanks also go to the FIS TD Commissioner for Australia and NZ, **Eric Henry** who has assisted in establishing the system. He also of course co-ordinates the assignment of FIS TD's for our FIS races and assigns our NZ TDs **Nigel Brown, Euan Patterson, Ian McLean** and **Simon Wi Rutne** to FIS races overseas. While normally NZ TD's are unable to be assigned to FIS events in NZ we are nonetheless fortunate to have the benefit of their expertise.

I thank all of our TD's for their contribution and dedication to our athletes.

Selections

Selections to National teams, training squads, and to represent NZ at various international events, as in most sports, can be contentious and we are fortunate to now have clear, objective rules in our Constitution outlining the selection process.

It is important to have robust published selection criteria and I would like to thank the diligence of our selectors in firstly setting the selection criteria and then strictly applying the selection criteria in recommending their selections. I also thank those members of the High Performance Alpine Committee who are then called upon to review those selections before being ratified by the board.

Selection Criteria are reviewed annually except for Olympic Winter Games criteria which are set in conjunction with the NZOC every four years. This year no changes were made to the standards on the existing criteria. We recognise however with the current National Team criteria few athletes are able to meet the criteria although there are a number of athletes that are performing well and are able to win National titles but are not given National Team recognition.

Accordingly, our selectors are currently reviewing the structure of the National team with a view to providing more flexibility by introducing criteria for different levels within the National Team such as having A teams, B teams and so forth. We believe this should also assist athletes in gaining personal sponsorship if they have a National Team status albeit not necessarily at the top level.

In order to be eligible for selection all athletes seeking selection are required to sign an athlete agreement relevant to the team, training programme or event they are nominated for. The agreement comes into force upon the athlete being selected and SRNZ signs the athlete agreement.

Judicial Committee

Generally I think members can feel confident in the selection process. However in 2005 your board also established a detailed set of Judicial Committee Rules which appear on our website. The Judicial Committee can determine appeals against selection decisions on the grounds of bias or incorrect application of selection criteria. To date we have had three appeals against selection decisions, two of which have been upheld and one which has been successful.

The judicial committee also has jurisdiction to determine disputes between members and allegations of misconduct but to date we are pleased this has been unnecessary.

Closing Comments

I have been most fortunate to work with a very supportive Board.

As I have mentioned **Greg Knowles** has been outstanding, attending to finance and accounting matters and his work and common sense approach on a wide range of other issues has been most helpful. We are very fortunate to have the business experience of **John Sandford**. He is a Director of several companies and organisations and the understanding and experience he brings to the board and his hard work on many projects is invaluable.

Richard McLeod was co-opted to the Board following last year's AGM principally for his comparatively recent experience as a ski racer and his knowledge of the sport. Richard's business experience through owning and operating, with a couple of former ski racing buddies, several hospitality businesses in Dunedin and Queenstown has been an added bonus for our Board. Richard has proved a most useful co-opted Board member, not only for his understanding of the sport but his fresh ideas on a range of sponsorship and business matters. He stands for election to the Board this year and has demonstrated he would be a good choice.

Lastly, special thanks are made to **Marty Johanson** who retires this year after 4 years on the Board. A long term importer of ski industry apparel and equipment, most notably Rossignol, Marty and his incredibly supportive wife Sue, are enthusiastic skiers and both their two sons actively participated in ski racing and associated training programmes over many years, Marty's knowledge and experience within the ski industry provided us with enormously helpful insight. His work in the role of sponsorship support and his help on many more scores is most appreciated. I would ask that you show your appreciation for his four years of dedicated hard work on your board.

Also on behalf of the Board, I extend our appreciation to James Lazor for his hard work over the first 6 months in the role.

Your Board has met regularly over the course of the year but daily there are matters they attend to and your board members spend tens of hours each week in attending to SRNZ related matters.

As a closing remark, I understand that this is sport which people are passionate about and people hold strong views. It is important to recognise there are many diverse views out there as to what is considered best for the sport. Your Board works hard to evaluate various options and they make decisions which they think are in the best interests of the sport, as is their role. Although those decisions may not

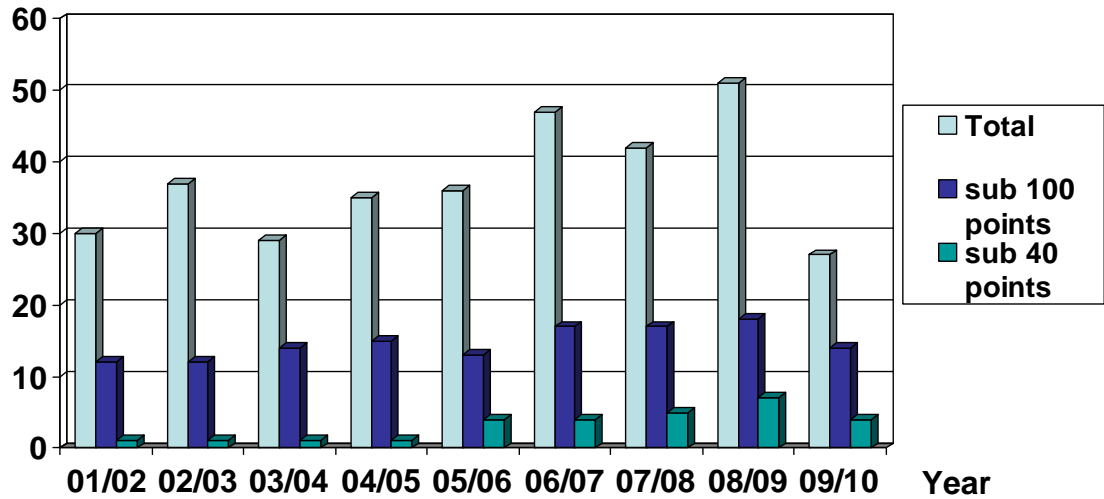
always line up with your view of things I would ask that you treat each other with respect and work positively together for our common goal - to improve ski racing in New Zealand.

It has been an honour to have served you over the past 6 or so years and I wish you well in what I hope will be successful times for the sport ahead.

Tony Oxnevad
Chairman
Ski Racing New Zealand Inc
November 2009

New Zealand Male FIS athletes

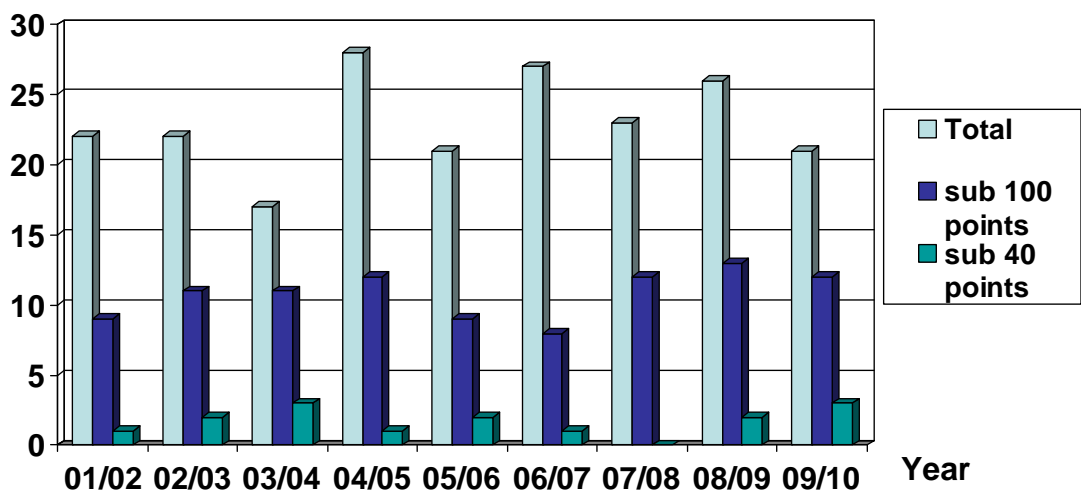
Number of
athletes



Source: FIS points lists. Subject to reconciliation with register.

New Zealand Women FIS athletes

Number of
athletes



Source: FIS points lists. Subject to reconciliation with register.