

FOREWORD – ASHLEY BLONDEL

For a quarter of a century since 1988, the NSW Interschools Committee has literally brought many thousands of primary and secondary school age students to the ski resorts of Perisher and Thredbo, as well as thousands of family members and friends also.

It is an achievement that cannot be underestimated. From its early gestation to its prominent position on the annual events calendars today, this achievement has been underwritten by dedicated, committed and passionate volunteers.

The increase in the efficiency and professionalism of the organisation and conduct of such a massive event across so many areas and disciplines is also evident to all, and is testament to the abilities and standards of its leaders and supporters over many years.

In a small snow sports country such as Australia that is so lucky to have not only some of the finest beaches in the world, but also an alpine area and snow sports industry in relatively close proximity to major cities, the significance of a highly structured and popular snow sports program such as the Interschools competition, cannot be underestimated nor undervalued.

One of its great strengths and attributes is introducing and encouraging school aged children, together with their families and friends, to visit the Snowy Mountains region. It encourages all abilities and all levels across all disciplines. Importantly, it focuses on fun in skiing and snowboarding at the entry and regional levels; all set in a framework of friendly competition. As the competition steps up to the State and National levels, the level of competition and the difficulty of the courses also steps up; but always with a sense of fair and enjoyable competition. The Interschools competition has very many beneficial effects for others also ranging from accommodation, hospitality and service providers to the host resorts as well.

Everyone that has been and is now associated with the NSW Interschool Snowsports organisation can be very proud of their achievements. Those that will follow in their footsteps have a solid foundation to continue to build upon. There can be no doubt that NSW Interschools Snowsports has a rich heritage and a promising and bright future.

Congratulations on achieving this important milestone.

With best regards,

Ashley Blondel

CEO Australian Ski Areas Association
CEO Perisher Resort 1997 - 2006

In the early 80's local schools in the Snowy Mountains – Monaro High School, Bombala High and Public School, Adaminaby Public School, Dalgety Public School, Berridale Public School, Jindabyne Public School and Tumut High and Public School - got together and held an alpine race under the car park chairlift at Guthega. Around 40 alpine competitors raced the course 3 times with a presentation in the Guthega Hotel where individual awards for secondary and primary were announced. These races were the origin of the local PSSA (Primary Schools Sports Association) ski race, held in Smiggins Holes, which continued until 2000.

Lois Spencer and Donna Baker formalised school snowsports competition in 1988 by forming NSW Interschools Snowsports, a committee of the NSW Snowsports Association. NSW Interschools introduced the format so that the races were team based and not just on individual performances.

Initially Sydney schools competed in the 'Northern Division' of Interschools in the school holidays. The first Northern Interschools Championships were contested in Blue Cow in 1988. 200 competitors competed in this first race.

The ACT-Southern Division Primary races were held at Selwyn Snowfields with the Secondary races at Guthega during school term 3.

By 1991, 54 NSW schools competed in the Interschools Championships. School students could now also enter the Snowboard, Moguls and Cross Country events.

By 1999, with 102 NSW schools competing, a new division was created; the 'Sydney Championships'. A boundary was drawn up to determine which schools competed in the new division.

Thredbo hosted its first Interschools events in 1999 – both the Northern and Sydney Regional Championships.

Skier Cross and Snowboard Cross were introduced in 2002, after test events at the Australian Championships.

Today, Interschools is by far the largest snowsports events in Australia based on participant numbers. In 2012, the three Regional Championships attracted 4,565 entries from 212 NSW schools.

Thousands of students have been introduced to ski and snowboard competitions through the Interschools Championships. Many athletes have gone from competing for their school, to competing for Australia, and we have seen at least 20 Olympians begin their competition days in NSW/ACT Interschools Snowsports Championships.