

Photo by Kate Trifo

SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER



Elouera Ski Club Ltd

Pygmy Possum Lodge,
Charlotte Pass
Kosciuszko National Park
and
Castaways Unit, Shoal Bay
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President’s Message

Dear Members,

This newsletter has a lot of new information and I encourage you to read the full text. Changes continue at the lodge thanks to an active and energetic board. You should all be aware of the lodge fire safety improvements, sprinklers, balustrades & fire doors, completed in late 2025. Our winter guests saw those improvements and have commented favourably.

Two additional projects preceded the 2026 winter season. Firstly, all fourteen hot water tanks, located in the drying room areas have been replaced. We have had ongoing issues with unreliable hot water and the decision was taken to replace all tanks. Some tanks were over 25 years old. Our previous operating model of replacement on failure resulted in repair delays and some unhappy guests. Biting the bullet cost us $50,000 but has solved the hot water problem.

The second change was replacing all the domestic fridges and freezers with fewer, but larger, commercial units. This wasn't a trivial job. A team of trades people manhandled these units to the rear door of the two kitchens, over some pretty rough terrain. This project cost $45,000. Again these units have been well appreciated by the winter guests.

Moving into 2027, the board will plan Stage 2 of the refurbishment. This stage is essentially the external cladding and window replacement. The Stage 2 Construction Certificate was issued in June 2026 and work can proceed when funds are available. The board would also like to repaint the lodge internally, replace all the 40-year old carpet, upgrade the kitchens and install a BMS (Building Management System). The BMS is discussed in this newsletter. This is a long and expensive list of wants, but a reasonable list in a 40-year old building. Our current lease runs to 2058 or 30-years. So over that time horizon, all these items warrant attention.

To fund these projects the club needs to build our cash reserves. Our accommodation rates are the major source of funds and the 2027 rates are discussed later in this newsletter.

Castaways is the club’s only tangible asset. Castaways is valued at $900,000 but it made a $4,754 loss in 2025 and a $15,512 loss in 2024. Club membership use is minimal. The low profits result from: high strata fees, 2-to-3-day rentals, high and frequent cleaning and linen fees, and general maintenance of a furnished holiday apartment. From early 2027, Castaways will move to a 12–24-month permanent unfurnished lease arrangement. Budgeting shows the annual returns will increase to $10k - 15k.

I will be standing down as President at the November AGM. I have held a board position for 9 years and the President’s position for 6 years. A lot has happened in that period. Two years were COVID impacted. Unlike other Charlotte Pass clubs, Elouera survived COVID reasonably. We didn't waste freezers of food and didn't have expensive staff contracts. Hard work from the board and many members augmented with the club's low cost model saw us through. Our strong cash reserves were essential in that period.

From August 2021 to September 2025, we sought, or fought, for approval of the cladding project. Once approved we completed Stage 1 in 10 weeks; what a frustrating contrast; 52-weeks for approval versus 10-weeks for construction. The Club now has an Occupancy Certificate for Stage 1 and an approved Construction Certificate for Stage 2. A major task for the next president and board will be to build the cash reserves, pare the budget where possible and in a timely manner undertake the above projects.

Thanks to the board’s and the membership’s support a lot has already been achieved.

Regards, Jon Barber, President

A Great Week on the Slopes

By Murat Aydemir

The week of 9 August was a fantastic one for our lodge at Charlotte Pass, with our members turning out in force for the weekly time-based races. With 12 entrants — the highest participation of any lodge that week — it was great to see so many of our members getting involved and representing the club. These races are all about having a go, improving your skiing or snowboarding, and enjoying some friendly competition with fellow lodge members.

And our results were impressive too!

Fastest Male Child – Ski: Eli Redpath
Fastest Adult Female – Ski: Leyla Aydemir
Fastest Adult Male – Snowboard: Mark Ritchie
Fastest Adult Female – Snowboard: Kate Ritchie

With medals awarded based on how close competitors get to the instructor's set time, our members also picked up plenty of Gold, Silver and Bronze medals across the week. A huge congratulations to everyone who took part. Having 12 competitors on the start line is a win for the club in itself — and it shows the great spirit, enthusiasm and participation within our lodge.

Well done everyone, and let's keep the numbers growing!



Photo: Our race participants from the week of 9 August. L-R, Eli Redpath, Ela Aydemir, Kate Ritchie, Mark Ritchie, Bree Ritchie, Torah Ritchie, Mel Redpath, Amanda Ritchie, Jonah Redpath and Leyla Aydemir, *Missing Ava Smith

Accommodation rates 2027

Each October the Board reviews and sets accommodation rates for the next Winter season and the spring and summer that follows. This year we have set the rates for June 2027 to May 2028. Deciding in October means you know the rates before the November priority booking round, and it lines up with the CPSR package offers (over-snow, lifts and lessons), which assume your accommodation is already booked.

What has been approved:

- Accommodation rates increase by 20%. The August 2027 members' weekly peak rate will be $860 including GST. All other rates are based on this rate. See the club's Website for a full table of rates.
- The building levy increases from $69 to $124 a year from March 2027. The membership fee stays at $126, so the combined annual fee moves from $195 to $250.

Why the increase is needed.

Our recent fee increases have generally followed CPI, apart from 15% in 2023 to start building reserves for refurbishment. Profit was strong in 2023 and 2024 ($222,000 and $200,000) with high post-Covid occupancy. 2025 profit fell to $70,000 & 2026 profit will be reported as $51,000. Unfortunately our costs have risen and our occupancy has dropped.

The lodge is 40 years old and our lease runs to 2058. Over the past 12 months we spent $513,000 on fire sprinklers, fire doors, external balustrades, new fridges, freezers and hot water heaters. That came from prior profits and the 2018 sale of some Castaways units. Our cash and term deposits were $488,000 in June 2026. Following the Covid seasons and the STP failure the Board will always act prudently and keep a strong cash reserve.

The work ahead is substantial. Re-cladding the building is estimated at $1.2 million. The existing switchboards run on second-hand or unobtainable parts and must be replaced. Kitchens, painting, carpets and the lounges are also on the want list. Allowing for contingency, the full list is roughly $2.1 million at 2026 prices.

To fund this progressively, the lodge needs to make an annual profit of about $200,000. That figure assumes three things: the 20% rate rise, better summer occupancy and the higher building levy. The Board's view is that the people who use the lodge should carry most of the cost. The club also holds a $700,000 loan facility secured against Castaways. Any decision to draw on that loan depends on our ability to service the loan.

The board knows a rise of this size is significant, and we appreciate your understanding. Please get in touch with the Board if you have questions.

Bookings, Passes and Packages

Every year CPSR offers special early-bird pricing on season passes and lodge packages. The season passes give you unlimited oversnow and lifts throughout the whole season. For the month of **November only**, CPSR are offering 2027 Escape passes at $1153 - a discount of $800 from the usual price that will kick-in from December 1st. As the passes are good for the whole season, you can buy one now, before you know the results of the priority booking round. Whatever booking weeks you get, your season pass will still work. If you are planning on staying for more than one week during the season, you may find the Escape Pass is good value.

Later in the year, CPSR will give early-bird access to lodge packages. These packages include one oversnow in and out, lifts for a week, and optionally ski hire and lessons. CPSR usually offers a 20% discount on packages purchased in January. These packages are tied to specific dates and are not refundable or transferable. The timing of our priority round bookings is designed to let members take advantage of these discounts.

Our **priority bookings for Winter 2027 are now open** and you will find out the dates of your successful booking requests in time to claim the full discount on lodge packages.

Electrical upgrade plan

By Karl Conning

When our lodge first opened it was one of the most energy efficient buildings in the Snowy Mountains. The lodge was designed to be largely autonomous, shutting down non-essential circuits when the lodge was unoccupied to save power. The lodge founders used cheap off-peak power for space heating and hot water pre-heating. The control systems were a very clever use of the technology available at the time. In recent years, lodge users may have noticed that these control systems are no longer reliable or functioning as originally designed. The 40+ year old electrical switchboards are also getting difficult to maintain and need to be upgraded to conform with current standards.

The board has decided to replace the current lodge control system with a modern Building Management System (BMS), one based on computers and networking, rather than relays and timers. A modern BMS will let us provide a more comfortable (and maintainable) lodge with lower operating costs and fewer problems. The basic operating model will be unchanged, especially the idea of making best use of the cheapest electricity.

One big benefit will be that the lodge BMS will be controlled and monitored remotely. Just now, members coming into a switched-off lodge have to tell the lodge that they've arrived and wait at least 24 hours for the heating and hot water to become fully operational. Those first few days at the start of a visit can be a bit cold and spartan. With the new system, the booking officer can tell the BMS that guests are coming a few days ahead and they will arrive at a warm lodge with hot water in the showers.

During the planning for this work, we found that the original plumbing design for the lodge supported recirculating hot water. The BMS project is planning to finish this work, with help from the BMS for monitoring and control. The benefit for members will be an end to the long waits for the showers to get warm as the hot water will be constantly circulating, just waiting for someone to want to have a shower.

The electrical upgrades are a big, expensive and unavoidable project, driven by regulatory requirements, replacing obsolete equipment and making the lodge easier to manage. The first step was to replace all the old hot water tanks. Some of these were 40+ years old and were starting to fail. Replacing these tanks and some associated plumbing works have already improved hot water to bedrooms, and reduced the risk of a major hot water failure in the middle of the winter season.

The second step is to replace the major electrical boards just inside the front door. Our energy supplier has been wanting to replace their meters for a couple of years but our main supply board doesn't meet current safety standards and needed to be replaced. We are replacing the main distribution/breaker panel as part of the same job, as the first part of the BMS upgrade project. A quote for this work has been accepted and the design and panel construction is underway, with installation scheduled for early 2027.

The final stage will be the BMS, and the replacement of all of the current control systems and distribution panels. We have initial quotes for this work and are getting further quotes and refining the design. At the end of all this work, we will have a lodge that is more reliable, more comfortable and much easier to manage and maintain. The goal is for a modern implementation of the original ideas, much as the lodge founders would have done if they had access to today's technologies.

Pygmy Possums on skis







Great news, Possums! Pygmy Possum Ski Lodge merchandise is happening! Following ideas and feedback from members we will be bringing some lodge branded gear to life. We will share the prices and order process in a Mailout coming soon.

Lets see the Pygmy Possum gear on the 2027 slopes & around the village.

Refunds

The online cancellation page on the club website has been updated to make the refund request rules clearer. If you need to cancel a booking, check the page before submitting your request.

Memberships

Memberships available

Memberships can currently be purchased for an unusually low price of $3,000. Encourage your friends and family to join the club by directing them to our website to make their application. For any family visiting for only a few winter seasons, the benefits are significant.

Credit Points available

There are still a few discounted credit points available for purchase from past members on our credit point exchange. You can find the exchange via the Information for Members page on our website.

The opportunity to receive accommodation credit points through this process is open to members only.

Storage

Ski Bays in the Service Tunnel

There are plenty of empty bays available to hire for $50/year - if you're interested, get in touch at storage@eloueraskiclub.asn.au.

Lockers aren't tied to a membership

Nobody likes to give up their locker, but under the by-laws, storage needs to be handed back if you haven't stayed at the lodge for five winters or if you pass your membership on.

Some long-time members have been hesitant about this, especially as they would like to pass their lockers to their family. To make it easier for the next generation to secure storage, we suggest starting the transfer process early. That way the kids or grandkids can get on the waiting list and secure their own locker or cabinet. This has worked for some families already and the waiting list is currently not very long

Help Needed

Treasurer - Our Treasurer, Richard, has given a year's notice that he will step down at the 2027 AGM. We're looking for someone to learn the system over the coming year and take over the role from that AGM. If you're comfortable with accounts, or know someone who is and just needs a little nudge, please get in touch with Richard at treasurer@eloueraskiclub.asn.au

Administration – Help keep the club running! Working bees are always oversubscribed, but if you still want to contribute, administration is the hidden magic we can't do without. More hands make light work – if you can spare a few hours here and there, please get in touch at secretary@eloueraskiclub.asn.au

Web Development – We're looking for volunteers with professional web development experience, particularly in Python and/or JavaScript. If that's you, we'd love to hear from you at webmaster@eloueraskiclub.asn.au

Big thank you to all who provided input into this newsletter; Jon, Karl, Murat, Paul, Ian and Stafford

Club Calendar

Call for Nominations for Board Positions, Notice of AGM	October 2026
Annual General Meeting	24/11/2026
Post Season Work Party	November 2026
Priority Bookings Open for the 2026 winter season	01/11/2026
Priority Bookings Close & payments must be received	01/12/2026
General Bookings Open for the 2026 winter season	01/01/2027 or when priority bookings are determined.
Pre Season Work Party	04/04/2027 - 11/04/2027
Members Annual Subscription and Building Levy Fee Due	31/03/2027
Storage Hire Fees Due	31/03/2027
Start of the Winter Season	20/06/2027
End of the Winter Season	12/09/2027