Captain’s Report - 2026 season wrap up

TSPA report winter 2026

The start of winter 2026 saw our patrollers attend another very successful Jindy ASPA course with positive feedback from our members with regard to the course and the trainers – ASPA should be congratulated on the program and especially Peter and Kirsten for the consistent high level the courses are run at. The feedback from the ASPA trainers’ team was really positive towards Thredbo students , Volley and Pro who were doing the course. There's a lot of time and effort by you folks in preparing and doing the course, so great effort team.
Today was also the ASPA AGM and I can let you all know that Amanda Davis and I have been re -elected back onto the ASPA committee. Big thanks to Amanda for her work. It’s important we have a seat on that committee and input into the planning etc.
TSPA started their winter with the May seminar weekend where we spent two days re-certing our patrollers, conducting hands-on gear refresher training, hearing from guest speakers and lots of practical scenario work to re-engage our patrol group, ready for winter. It was yet again a great success with the Pro patrol joining us for the two days of training. This helps establish a great inter-patrol relationship and sets us up for a solid winter of one team, one dream patrolling. Big thanks Davo , Tah and their team for really positive input across the entire weekend.
Our winter saw a slow start but luckily our snow making did allow some limited skiing. We then had a good fall mid-July and that allowed us to open large parts of our mountain. The grooming was next level and it was just amazing to leave the mountain each day and come back to the super groomed piste each morning even though the elements were working against the snow makers and the groomers. I always say Blessed be the snow makers as they will inherit the frozen earth , cold air and the water vapour !
Mid July to mid-August we had most of our mountain open, but conditions did vary. This saw our accident stats sit around the usual level for a winter.
Our training went well with eight candidates sitting the final tests; six were 100% successful and two successful in half the training.
We took on five new trainees for the winter 2027.
We had four probationary patrollers move to full registered status.
Nationals were scheduled to be run early Sept but due to deteriorating conditions was cancelled until next year. We had four candidates who had been training.
Once again, a huge thank you to the training team lead by Monika and GB – the amount of effort and time you guys put in is what allows us to have such great outcomes and keeps lifting the skill level. To the whole team of trainers, it was another great season from you folks – thanks on behalf of our trainees and patrollers.

The training team has seen our new trainers take on more responsibility as we start to bring through the new era.

We also need to congratulate Ross on his national program and the great news that he's taken on the role of national director for Australia nationals' program for our ski patrols. Fro will now be the Thredbo nationals rep and along with the team hopefully bring national back across the AUS resorts over time.

On hill we saw some solid patrolling from our team and unfortunately some nasty 1040 to deal with. Feedback was very positive as to our skill level across the board dealing with these 1040s.
Our stats were pretty much on par with past seasons -
Patroller days = 1,064
First responders 230
Second responders 286
Equipment Scott Harris is the guru – organising our new skidoo – Tommy 1 – which is on hill and looking mighty fine. Tommy was very chuffed we honoured him in this way. We still are having issues sourcing uniforms but hopefully after a lot of time spent by myself talking with Mamutt we have supply now guaranteed and I've also set up a Pro deal for any Mamutt gear starting next season.
The winter of 2026 in Thredbo was saved by snow making and without it we would have struggled to have the length of winter we had. It makes setting up training into Sept challenging as we have only skied deep into Sept once in the last four seasons. Sadly, it seems to be a sign of what's coming in the future, which resorts and patrols need to adapt to.
Off hill we saw the lodge work done to fix our eternal fridge issue and expand the bench area to deal with the volume of cooking we now see each night. I was given the job of up-dating and upgrading the honour boards. These have been completed and a new Patroller of the year board was added. We have now set the historical framed patrol jackets in the right order. I'm working with an old Thredbo family to access old photos of the resort and will frame some to be hung celebrating our resorts history.

Tommy – to conclude – It was beautiful to have been able for some of us to spend time with Tommy to celebrate his 100 birthday. I missed the day but managed to get into town to have a grappa breakfast and spend some one on one with him. He was in excellent spirits. It's really sad in many ways that we lost him, but I doubt he could have asked for a better ending to his time in Thredbo. Tommy along with Joe Di-falco have been two of the most positive influences in my time as a patroller and your Captain.
In conclusion – It's been a tough year on hill but my faith in this group has only increased as we adapt and just get on with it. Thanks to you all for your commitment on hill, in training and the smiles I see every morning in P1.
Lastly – committee members it's been another positive year working with you all and look forward to 2027 – in the great words of Jeff Fenech " I love youz's all"

Merry Christmas and Happy New year to all.

Capt Paul Black