



Information release
July 31, 2017

Helmet usage continues to trend higher in snowsports

The Australian Ski Areas Association (ASAA), the peak body representing Australia's ski lifting and resort companies, is pleased to announce that helmet usage in snowsports continues to trend well above 70% in Australia.

In a comprehensive survey conducted in July 2017 across every Australian ski resort, with a sample size in excess of 24,000 snowsports participants, a helmet usage rate of 76.4% was recorded, up from 72.2% in 2016. This reflects the highest level of helmet usage recorded in Australia's resorts since survey data first began to be compiled. The 2017 result is a clear improvement over the same survey period in 2014, when helmet usage of 67.0% was recorded, and is consistent with the continuing trend since surveying was commenced in 2013, with 57.4% recorded in that year.

The ASAA Chief Executive Officer, Colin Hackworth said, "The increase in helmet usage is reflective of a concerted public education campaign by all Australian ski resorts, where helmet usage is encouraged and recommended. The Alpine Responsibility Code has been changed to specifically recommend the use of helmets in saying:

"Use appropriate protective equipment, especially helmets, to minimise the risk of injury".

"There is no doubt that, in certain circumstances, wearing a helmet can reduce the risk of injury. Clearly there is now a widespread understanding of the benefits of wearing a helmet, with the vast majority of snowsports participants choosing to wear one".

The ASAA cautions that overseas studies indicate that there is no causal link between the uptake in wearing of helmets and a reduction in head injuries in snowsports. Recent credible studies have found that, despite helmet-wearing being adopted by millions of recreational skiers and snowboarders (ski helmet use in the US has tripled in the past 10 years), the incidence of catastrophic head and upper spinal injuries in skiing has not declined.

The Chairman of ASAA, Peter Brulisauer reiterated, "While all Australian ski resorts encourage the wearing of helmets, the most important safety consideration one can make is to **stay in control and avoid other people and hazards**. If everyone abides by the ASAA's Alpine Responsibility Code, there will be far less safety incidents. The wearing of helmets will not, in many cases, mitigate against the consequences of extreme or excessive risk-taking behaviour".

The ASAA is a non-profit industry body representing Australia's ski lift operators. Amongst other things, the ASAA works to promote snowsports in Australia as a safe and enjoyable recreation.

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