



Information release
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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 in the Australian skifields has now exceeded 80% for the first time. This follows several years of results continuing an upward trend well above 70% in Australia.

In a comprehensive survey conducted in July 2018 across every Australian ski resort, with a sample size in excess of 29,000 snowsports participants, a helmet usage rate of 80.8% was recorded, up from 76.4% in 2017. This reflects the highest level of helmet usage recorded in Australia's resorts since survey data first began to be compiled. The 2018 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 long-term, concerted public education campaign by all Australian ski resorts, where helmet usage is encouraged and recommended. The ASAA Alpine Responsibility Code now specifically recommends 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 commitment of resorts, parents, local medical groups, even the tremendous improvements by helmet manufacturers to enhance helmet design and comfort—all these factors have helped grow helmet usage".

Overseas studies have shown that increased helmet usage has proven to reduce all head injuries, especially potentially serious head injuries (PSHI). According to a recent scientific paper, researchers studied 17 seasons of ski helmet usage data from 1995 through 2012 and concluded that as helmet usage increased over that span, potentially serious head injuries dropped from 4.2 percent of all ski injuries to 3.0 percent of all injuries over the course of the study. The study concluded that while helmet usage increased in the last 10 years, there was a dramatic improvement in the decline of potentially serious head injuries, particularly in concussions. According to the study's authors, three-quarters of all PSHI from skiing or snowboarding are mild concussions, and 90 percent of PSHI are typically treated and released from hospitals or clinics within four hours. The study also concluded that ski and snowboard helmets are extremely effective at preventing skull fractures and have virtually eliminated scalp lacerations.

The Chairperson of ASAA, Belinda Trembath reiterated, "While all Australian ski resorts encourage the wearing of helmets, the most important safety consideration one can make is to **ride responsibly, stay in control and avoid other people and hazards**. If everyone abides

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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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