



1994: Bob Balk (USA) finishes his first full ski marathon and becomes the first sit skier to complete the Hoppet

ing ski jump' (or so some local linguistic expert claimed). Loppet is a Swedish word meaning long ski race. 'Let us open another bottle of this excellent north east Victorian red wine'. Kangaroo loppet... Kangaroo hop ... 'Aargh! Someone go out and get another bottle... Kangaroo Hoppet! And the race had a new name.

The process of gaining Worldloppet accreditation took 18 months of hard work not only by members of the Birkebeiner Club, but with the support of many people and agencies that could see the potential of having a world class ski race at Falls Creek. Movers and shakers in this process included the following: Paul L'Huillier (National Cross Country Skiing Development Officer and Coaching Director and Club member), Allan Marsland (Executive Officer and Club member), Bob Lawton (Chairman-Australian Ski Federation), Peter Keage (Alpine Resorts Commission), Phil Bentley (CEO Alpine Resorts Commission) and Richard Green (Chairman-Falls Creek Resort Management). Government departments and agencies that supported the event were: Alpine Resorts Commission, Falls Creek Resort Management, Tourism Victoria, Sport and Recreation Victoria, State Electricity Commission, Parks Victoria and the Shire of Bright.

### The first Hoppet

The winter of 1991 was a year that all participants will never forget. It was the year the first Kangaroo Hoppet (42km) was conducted and we had not seen such heavy snow falls in over a decade. When a further metre of snow fell in 24 hours the event had to be postponed for one day as the trail groomers could not keep the course open.

The following day dawned with a cloudless sky and gentle breeze. The USA National Team were down-under for training and racing and the biggest field ever assembled for an Australian cross country ski race lined up in the

### WINNERS

1991	John Aalberg	Betsy Youngman
1992	Gudmund Skjeldal	Beatrice Grunenfelder
1993	Anders Aukland	Elena Peratyagina
1994	Peter Schlickenreider	Antonina Ordina
1995	Andre Jungen	Maria Theurl
1996	Johann Muelegg	Hanne Lahtinen
1997	Paul Gray	Camille Melvey
1998	Alec Vanek	Nadia Simak
1999	Vitaly Tchernov	Jannike Oeyen
2000	Ben Derrick	Camille Melvey
2001	Ben Derrick	Belinda Phillips
2002	Stanislav Rezac	Belinda Phillips
2003	Ben Derrick	Belinda Phillips
2004	Ben Derrick	Clare-Louise Brumley
2005	Ben Sim	Clare-Louise Brumley
2006	Ben Sim	Nataschia Leonardi-Cortesi
2007	Thomas Freimuth	Katherine Calder

▼ 1997: Paul Gray becomes the first Australian Hoppet winner

