



starting area. The event was a huge success and the Kangaroo Hoppet, held at Falls Creek on the last Saturday in August became a regular fixture on the international ski calendar. 1141 skiers from nineteen nations took part in the events of Kangaroo Hoppet 1.

Race facts

- 1993 was the first Hoppet held on the alternative 'high altitude course' above Falls Creek village, planned for use in low snow years.
- 1996 was the the first bad weather Hoppet. With winds on the exposed upper ridges gusting to over 100 km per hour, organisers held the event on four loops of a sheltered course in the Sun Valley area of Falls Creek. The Australia/New Zealand Continental Cup was held for the first time, with the Kangaroo Hoppet being the final race of the series. Australian Anthony Evans took out the series title for men, with Finland's Hanne Lahtinen winning the women's event.
- In 1997 Paul Gray take his place in the history book as the first Australian to win the Kangaroo Hoppet, followed shortly later by Camille Melvey as she crossed the line to become the first Australian woman to win the event.
- In 2004 the crowd were treated to a 1 hour 35 minute 10 seconds course record by Ben Derrick, followed not too long later by a thrilling duel in the finish straight between Clare-Louise Brumley and Katie Calder for the women's event.
- Aged only 19, Ben Sim stamped his authority on this race to become the youngest Hoppet winner in 2005.
- In one of the worst winters in Australian ski memory, in 2006, Falls Creek lived up to its reputation as the nation's premier cross country ski destination when the Kangaroo Hoppet was held successfully once again on the high altitude course option on the summit plateau above the ski village.

FEATURES

In a country better known internationally for its natural environment - Uluru (Ayers Rock) and deserts, coral reefs, tropical rain forests, together with the wildlife - kangaroos, koalas, penguins and the incredible egg laying mam-



mals the platypus and echidna; the idea of snowfields and ski racing in Australia seems quite surreal.

That Australia is a land of contrasts is quickly made apparent to northern hemisphere skiers who arrive in Melbourne. After leaving the vibrant state capital of Melbourne with its combination of magnificent gardens, big city shopping restaurants and theatres, the would-be Hoppet skier travels through open farmlands and the world famous vineyards and wineries of the Milawa and Alpine Valleys wine regions to the town of Mount Beauty, nestled at the foot of the mountains. While in Mount Beauty there is blossom on the plum trees, oranges and lemons on the tree and daffodils in the gardens, just a short 30km drive through tall eucalypt forest and an increase in altitude of 1200 metres brings them to the alpine village of Falls Creek, nestled in a sheltered valley on the edge of the snow covered plateau of the Alpine National Park.

Last, but by no means least, of the features of the Hoppet is the friendly and relaxed approach to life of the Australian. Australians also love to participate in sport, and the Kangaroo Hoppet caters for this passion by offering not only the main 42km and the 21km event, but also a 7km event that attracts