



KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK

# Frequently Asked Questions - 2020 Snow Season



## Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ will provide local communities and Ski Industry stakeholders with the information to answer general inquiries from the public about opening of Kosciuszko National Park for the 2020 snow season.

Visitors can be directed to the National Parks website at <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/kosciuszko-national-park/local-alerts> for more information.

**In summary, the following changes are in place for the 2020 ski season because of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Due to COVID-19 guidelines there are some changes this snow season to manage numbers and ensure the safety of communities and visitors, in line with the COVID Safe Operating Plan developed by the ski resorts and supported by National Parks and Wildlife Service.

**As COVID-19 restrictions change, the following information is also subject to change. This information will be updated and provided to community and Ski Industry stakeholders ASAP.**

### When are the ski resorts opening?

The NSW ski season officially opens on 22 June 2020.

The ski resort's lift operations are closed until the opening of the ski season. The NSW resorts will open on the following dates:

Thredbo: Monday 22 June 2020

Perisher: Wednesday 24 June 2020

Charlotte Pass: Friday 26 June 2020

Selwyn Snow Resort: Closed for 2020 due to bush fire damage

### Why are the ski resorts opening so late in the season?

Resorts have prepared COVID safe operating plans and submitted them to the NSW Government. In order to prepare for the season and ensure measures are in place to protect communities and visitors the ski resorts will not operate until 22 June. To reduce crowding and enhance safety their plans will include reduction in skier / snowboard numbers by limiting ticket sales. Additionally, to manage numbers and thus physical distancing in the resorts the COVID safe plan also prohibits tobogganing and snowtubing.

### What do visitors need before coming to the ski fields this year?

Due to the restriction on numbers required to keep people safe, if visitors are planning to travel to the ski fields this year they should have in place, before leaving home:

- pre-booked accommodation (including camping) if staying overnight
- a pre-purchased lift pass if using the ski lifts

- have lodged a Trip Intention Form with NPWS if doing on-snow sporting activities that occurs outside of the resort ski / snowboard runs

Some accommodation / resort hospitality areas may open prior to 22 June, visitors should check accommodation or resort websites.

Visitors should plan ahead and check the following prior to travel for the latest access and restrictions:

- Alerts on Kosciuszko National Park website - <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/kosciuszko-national-park>
- Traffic for NSW Live traffic updates - <https://www.livetraffic.com/>
- Resort websites

### Park access and parking

The only requirement to enter Kosciuszko National Park is a valid NSW Parks Pass displayed on the vehicle, if you are visiting a location where park use fees apply. Trip Intention Forms or a resort lift pass are required if you are planning on-snow sporting activities but are not a condition of entry to Kosciuszko National Park.

All public car parks which are open throughout Kosciuszko National Park will operate as per previous snow-seasons. Parking spaces cannot be reserved and a pre-purchased resort lift pass or a pre-registered NPWS Trip Intention Form does not assure that a parking spot will be available when you arrive.

To cater for an increase in backcountry activities this snow season, Cascades Trailhead and Dead Horse Gap car parks are available, for day parking only at this stage.

As always temporary road closures or traffic restrictions may be implemented to manage safety on roads. Please ensure that you have planned ahead and keep abreast of relevant alerts on <https://www.livetraffic.com>

### Is tobogganing allowed?

Tobogganing, sledding and snow-tubing is **not permitted** throughout Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) in 2020. The resorts developed a COVID Safe Operating Plan for the 2020 season which was supported by NPWS and the emergency services. While this plan has allowed the season to proceed, it has also resulted in the need to manage visitor numbers across all activities in KNP and the temporary closure of Tube Town in Perisher resort. Selwyn resort is also closed due to bushfire damage

Due to the temporary closure of the only designated facilities, there are no allocated areas in KNP for tobogganing. Because of the traditional popularity of tobogganing and the temporary closure of allocated areas, it is not possible to ensure safety along roadsides or physical distancing with tobogganing in other areas of KNP.

All restrictions relating to COVID-19 are subject to review as advice from the Department of Health changes. This would include reviewing the current restriction on tobogganing.

### Can visitors undertake snow play activities?

NPWS and the resorts are asking visitors not to visit the ski resorts in 2020 **specifically for snow play activities**. This is because there are no areas allocated for snow play or tobogganing in 2020 due to the resorts COVID Safe Operating Plan.

Additionally, all buildings and facilities in the resorts will have capacity issues due to COVID-19 requirements. This may make it difficult to take shelter for breaks or to avoid cold / harsh weather. If the weather is bad, you may have nowhere to shelter and stay warm.

Visitors can still undertake snow play activities (excluding tobogganing) in other areas of the park, if they undertake these activities in a safe and suitable location.

- Examples of snow play activities include sightseeing, building a snowman, throwing a snowball, going for a short walk or other similar experiences.
- NPWS are concerned about safety management of snow play user groups, as unsafe areas along road corridors may become crowded. Visitors should ensure their activities are undertaken in a safe location and physical distancing measures are undertaken.
- Visitors must take responsibility for their own personal safety including, staying well clear of roads, maintaining physical distancing, parking safely and in accordance with road safety signage.
- Sliding on garbage bags or other similar products is very dangerous and strictly prohibited as per the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management (2006).

### Do visitors doing snow play need to complete a Trip Intention Form?

No. Trip Intention Forms (TIF) are only needed for visitors doing sporting activities on-snow outside of resort operational areas.

### Can visitors participate in backcountry activities?

Yes, visitors can participate in on-snow activities such as snow shoeing, cross country skiing and snowboarding in the backcountry that are open, but a Trip Intention Form must be completed prior to the trip. This includes skiing on the cross country Ski Trails at Perisher. Note - many areas in the north of the park are still closed to backcountry activities due to fire damage, please check the National Parks website before visiting. Due to fire closures in the northern end of KNP the cross country ski trails near Dry Dam will not be available.

Backcountry activities should only be undertaken by those who have the appropriate equipment and skills for harsh environments. NPWS recommends visitors book with a licenced tour operator and carry a PLB (Personal Locator Beacon). Refer to the NPWS website for Alpine Safety Information: <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/safety/alpine-safety>

Visitors to Kosciuszko National Park who are not visiting the snow are welcome to undertake activities such as hiking.

### Can visitors camp during the ski season?

Camping is available at several campgrounds however visitors must make a booking prior to arriving as numbers are restricted. Visitors should check the website for available campsites and can make a booking online. There is a \$6 booking fee. If they do not have a booking they cannot stay and may be turned away. Visitors should plan ahead and book their camping trip online or via 1300 072 757 to avoid disappointment

### **What about backcountry camping?**

Backcountry camping is available without a booking; however, campers must register with NPWS via a [Trip Intention Form](#). This is mandatory and there is no cost for lodging this form.

Huts in Kosciuszko National Park are for emergency purposes only and should not be relied upon for sleeping. When using huts people must adhere to physical distancing regulations.

### **How do visitors lodge a Trip Intention Form?**

Trip Intention Forms can be submitted online on the national parks website and should be lodged prior to their visit or heading off on their trip.

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/safety/bushwalking-safety/think-before-you-trek/trip-intention-form>

Visitors with no internet access can lodge a form at NPWS Visitor Centres or preferable do it before leaving home.

### **Will visitors be requested to show evidence that they have a pre-purchased lift pass or have completed a Trip Intention Form before they can go beyond the entry stations?**

No. This would cause traffic delays and people that are not undertaking resort or backcountry snow-sports are still allowed access into Kosciuszko National Park. A valid NSW Parks Pass is required and must be displayed on the vehicle. NPWS personnel or the police may ask visitors in backcountry areas or track-head locations to show evidence that they have completed a Trip Intention Form.

### **Why is it mandatory to lodge a Trip Intention Form for all on-snow sporting activities which do not involve the use of the resort lifts?**

It's for visitor safety. The changes and limitations with resort lift passes may increase the quantity of people going backcountry. This may also increase the frequency of alpine search and rescues occurring. Trip Intention Forms provide emergency services with valuable information which can help people to be rescued if they get injured or lost.

In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak around the snow areas, the Trip Intention Form data may be useful for authorities to complete contact tracing. Contact tracing for people using the resort lifts will be possible through the resort companies if that becomes necessary.

As with all organisations and companies, NPWS has a responsibility to have COVID safe operating procedures, which requires information on visitation. As restrictions change NPWS will review its COVID procedures, including the use of the Trip Intention Form.

### **Can people drive into Kosciuszko National Park and to resort areas for sightseeing, to go to a café / restaurant, accommodation outlet etc. and not participate in any snow sports / activities**

Yes, NPWS welcome visitors to Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) however they need to be aware that carparking is limited and sometimes police or Transport for NSW may need to close or restrict access for safety.

Visitors should be aware that all buildings and facilities in the resorts will have capacity issues due to COVID-19 requirements. This may make it difficult to have a seated meal at a café/restaurant or find a sheltered location to eat. It may also make it difficult to take shelter

for breaks or to avoid cold / harsh weather. If the weather is bad, you may have nowhere to shelter and stay warm.

NPWS and the resorts are asking visitors not to visit the ski resorts in 2020 specifically for snow play activities because there are no areas allocated for this in 2020 due to the resorts COVID Safe Operating Plan.

### **What about Coach/Bus Groups travelling to resorts for snow play activities?**

Coach group operators have been contacted and advised that parking for snow play groups will not be possible this year unless their group has a confirmed booking with the resorts.

Groups wishing to visit the resorts this year should contact resort operators to make a booking.

### **Will the cross country ski trails be open at Perisher this year?**

Yes, the trails will be open and groomed most days if there is suitable snow conditions. The cross country trails are a good option for people wishing to cross country ski on gentle terrain and it is safer than going to other backcountry areas.

Snowshoeing or hiking is not allowed on the cross country ski trails as the foot depressions create hazards for skiers. There is a pole-marked snowshoe trail that goes from Perisher to Mt Porcupine.

All people using the cross country ski and snow shoe trails need to lodge a Trip Intention Form prior.

### **Does a pre-purchased lift pass or a Trip Intention Form guarantee that a carparking place will be available for the visitor?**

No. All public carparks which are open throughout Kosciuszko National Park will operate as per previous snow seasons. Parking spaces cannot be reserved, and a pre-purchased resort lift pass or a pre-registered NPWS Trip Intention Form does not assure that a parking spot will be available when you arrive.

As always, temporary road closures or traffic restrictions may be implemented to manage safety on roads. Please ensure that you have planned ahead and keep abreast of relevant alerts on ski resort website pages and <https://www.livetraffic.com>

### **Other visitor advice**

- Payment at vehicle entry stations and the NPWS Perisher Office will be by card only. Cash will not be accepted. Card payments are preferred in visitor centres.
- All Department of Health COVID-19 requirements, including physical distancing and limitations on indoor spaces remain in place.