



## John Markos

John Markos developed a love of skiing when he joined the University of NSW ski team while studying law in the 1970s. In 1990, he helped form the not-for-profit organisation Lawyers Ski Race Inc. and hosted the first annual weekend of ski and snowboard races in Thredbo, now known as Lawski. Now 61 and a partner for 30 years at Hicksons Lawyers in Sydney, Markos looks forward to strapping on his ski boots to join more than 200 skiing and snowboarding legal professionals at the annual Lawski events. He shares his passion with **KATE ALLMAN**.

**I STARTED SKIING WHEN I WAS AT UNIVERSITY. I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH OF MY FIRST SKI EXPERIENCE BUT I KNOW IT WAS ONE HELL OF A WEEK.**

I went to Perisher, it was 1973. Those were wild days for members of the university ski club. Apparently because I snored, they once picked me up in my sleeping bag and left me outside in the snow. I woke up with some animal making noises near me and I thought it was a person and then I realised it was getting a bit chilly.

The skiing back then was radically awful. You had T-bars and pomas and far fewer chairlifts. The standard of snow grooming wasn't very good. The snow cover was very touch and go. If you went overseas in those days it was an experience of chalk and cheese.

The race was originally run by a bunch of privateers in Perisher, but I knew there were so many lawyers and skiers who could organise the races themselves as a not-for-profit. So together with another skiing lawyer who is now a barrister in Sydney, my friend David O'Dowd, we moved the races to Thredbo and started with 60 people in the first year.

There was no snow and we had to hold the races up the very top of the hill at Thredbo, but it was a lot of fun.

The most pleasurable part is watching the fun and comradery among the Lawski community. Not only do a lot of lawyers ski but the Lawski crowd includes a lot of people who were once part of the Australian ski team. Zali Steggall, a Winter Olympic skiing medallist, is one of them. There are a lot of people who have been in elite squads and the races are actually really competitive. More than 200 racers regularly attend and more than 300 people participate in the social events. A lot of schnapps is drunk.

While skiing does not intrinsically help you with the practice of law, being a part of Lawski helps you connect with the community of lawyers. There are pressures in practice on everybody and by networking through Lawski, it's good to know we're experiencing the same forces and drivers for change. It's a bunch of fun and I think it's important that lawyers get a chance to go down to the snow and kick their heels up. Lawski provides the opportunity for that. ■