

Kangaroo Hoppet 2020 – Do It Your Way

The Australian and international skiing community rallied around the 2020 Kangaroo Hoppet, Australia's international ski marathon, with 1901 participants from 37 nations taking part in the virtual "Do It Your Way" version of the event.

The Kangaroo Hoppet was scheduled for 22 August 2020. With Covid-19 restrictions on social gathering and international travel, the decision was made in April to replace the normal 42km, 21km and 7km cross country skiing events with a virtual version in which participants could take part in the event using an activity of their choice at any location over a three week period.

The main aims of the virtual race were to maintain skiers interest in the event and to offer an exercise goal for people restricted by Covid-19 quarantine rules.

Key strategies were to keep the entry fee as low as possible, to offer a gift, to establish a dedicated social media page, and to promote the event through email, Worldloppet social media and cross country skiing websites.

The response from both the international and domestic cross country skiing communities exceeded our expectations with the 1901 entries including 475 internationals and, with two enthusiasts completing their activity at research bases in Antarctica, the event reached all seven continents, which we believe is a world first.

Past event winners from Norway, Germany and the USA took part as well as local world champions in mogul skiing and mountain biking. Activities included running, walking, cycling, swimming, roller skiing, inline skating, paddling, canoeing, mountain biking, swimming, exercise machines, and, for the limited number of Australians with the opportunity to ski at Perisher and Falls Creek, (not to overlook ski tunnels in Finland and Norway), cross country skiing.

Feedback from participants to the organisers has been overwhelmingly supportive of the virtual edition of the event, with many Victorians in stage 3 and 4 lock-down saying how great it was to have something positive to work towards while living with coronavirus restrictions, while for international skiers it provided a unique opportunity to be part of the Kangaroo Hoppet. For the AUD\$10 entry fee participants received a digital race number to print and display during their activity and a commemorative 'buff' neck tube, as well as the opportunity to upload their times, event details and photos onto the event results page. (AUD\$10 is about €6). Entry of times and completion of distance was an honesty system. i.e. no proof was required.

Finally. A special thank you to AGL and the Mount Beauty & District Community Bank Branch for their ongoing support and sponsorship of the Hoppet.

Photos, comments and video can be seen on Facebook page 'Kangaroo Hoppet 2020 – Do It Your Way' at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/KangarooHoppet>

Results and participant photos are at <https://www.alpinetiming.com.au/results/r135/>

*Allan Marsland
9 May 2021*