

1. Commitment to education, training and accreditation

During the course of my career I have always valued the training opportunities available to Snowsports instructors. I have completed the pre-courses and exams, including resits for the level 1, 2 and 3 certifications in Alpine. In 2022 in order to expand my skillset and broaden my understanding of the industry, I completed the Snowboard Level one course and taught snowboarding at Hotham to consolidate my understanding and my professional practice. During 2023 I completed the APSI Race and Freeski course at Falls Creek to continue my professional growth and develop my skills.

During my time training at Hotham I frequently attend in-house trainings in order to further expand my skillset. I have always valued movement analysis training and am diligent in attending the sessions to ensure I keep my practice sharp and continue to train my eye to deliver outstanding lessons to guests.

In 2021 after applying for and receiving a coaching position I diligently applied myself to learning coaching Alpine Skiing as a discipline and the differences between delivering lessons and coaching athletes for the course of a winter. I have consistently sought out challenges at the edge of my ability in order to push my skills to the highest level I can attain, both on snow and intellectually. I have completed a teaching degree to further my understanding of pedagogy, teaching and learning for students.

I have completed the Snow Australia Coaching certification and have become certified as a freestyle coach, demonstrating my continued attitude towards growth and improvement. I wish to continue to learn to attain the highest level of competency I can have to deliver great products over a lifetime in the sport.

2. Professionalism

I am punctual and ensure that I arrive at work with the requisite attitude to deliver outstanding lessons to all clients. I have continued my professional development and aim to continue to learn during my time in the sport.

I have made a significant commitment to the industry and applied my best effort to becoming a fully certified instructor. I have maintained ongoing relationships with clients and ensured return business to the resorts I have worked at for 7 years.

I maintain positive working relationships with colleagues and clients and am committed to a lifetime in the industry. I have made sacrifices in other areas of my life in order to ensure my continued engagement in the snowsports.

I take the work seriously and I make myself available as often as possible during the winter to work across disciplines and departments to be of service to the ski school and a valuable asset to the team.

I have worked in Alpine race coaching with International Racer in the past coaching young Australian races at FIS races across Europe including Italy, Slovenia and Croatia, providing a high level of care and coaching in a high intensity environment away from their families.

3. Contribution and service provided to the industry

I take seriously the role of sharing my knowledge and skills I have developed with instructors who are newer to the industry to me. I have helped younger instructors practice teaches, prepare for theory exams and helped them on their training journey.

As a coach I have ongoing relationships with young athletes who are new to the sport and are the future of the industry. I ensure that I inspire the love of the sport, the joy of skiing along with the technical progressions.

I have taught 7 years at Hotham showing a long commitment to the industry while I continue to develop as an instructor. I have taught in Japan and Europe and worked towards furthering the sport across 3 continents.

In 2023 I co-founded a freeride program Higher Freeride designed to take young athletes from Australian environment to Europe to compete in Europe and showcase their skills on the world stage. In the coaching context there I lean heavily on my experience as an instructor and the skills developed in that arena. Our goal is to continue to build and grow Australian talent and allow them the opportunity to take their own skiing career as far as possible from their humble Australian beginnings.

4. Future direction and commitment to the industry

In the future I intend to continue working in the Australian ski industry and continue to grow our Higher Freeride program in Europe. I would like to pass my Level 4 and continue to grow my skillset in other disciplines, perhaps completing the Snowboard 2 or the Telemark and adaptive certifications.

I want to play a role through Snow Australia in developing both Alpine and Freeride as disciplines on the world stage. I have participated in the the Snow Australia Coach Academy since 2022 as a pathway to hopefully move one day to coaching on a national level.

My passion for the sport I would like to communicate to young people, and I believe my commitment to this is demonstrated by taking the step of creating a program where athletes can reach their highest potential in the sport through Higher Freeride.

One day if I am able to complete my level 4 training and exam, I would like to be considered for the position of an APSI examiner and to help train the next generation of instructors and give back to the industry which has given me so much. This sport has given me the first and clearest true direction in my life and your ongoing support in making the most of this opportunity is greatly appreciated.

I thank you for your consideration of the Sodegren Scholarship, I appreciate your time and the time of the APSI to develop my skills over many years and look forward to many to come.

Best Regards,

Nick Higginson.