

END OF SNOW

How much time do you have before the ski fields in Australia and New Zealand start to run out of snow? **Toni Krasicki** reports.

No matter how good the recent snowfalls have been, the Australian ski season is relatively short, finishing up in late September/early October. Snow tends to hang around a bit longer in New Zealand, a few weeks on either end of the Aussie season.

But the ski season can also vary depending on the resort you go to, influenced by snowmaking machines and which way the pistes face. Here, we've assessed how long you can expect to find snow at the most popular resorts.

AUSTRALIA

Perisher

Season Ends: 6 October
Improving and expanding their snowmaking system has paid off for Australia's biggest resort. With 240 snow-guns in their inventory and a higher base than most, Perisher holds snow better in the later, more marginal part of the season.
perisher.com.au

Thredbo

Season Ends: 6 October
Thredbo's snowmaking system is the largest in Australia, covering an area the size of 60 football fields in one metre of snow. You can expect those long vertical drops that the resort is renowned for to stay open for business.
thredbo.com.au

Mt Hotham

Season Ends: 28 September
Mt Hotham holds the record for the highest natural snowfall in the last 10 years, and is touted as the "Powder Capital of Australia". Although some

terrain has a northerly aspect (think sunshine and slush), the snowmaking gear has enabled key access trails to remain open longer.
mthotham.com.au

Falls Creek

Season Ends: 28 September
Falls Creek offers some of the most reliable snowfalls in Victoria and, teamed with an excellent snowmaking system, keeps snow where it needs to be. Unfortunately the longer runs face north and have less consistent snow.
skifalls.com.au

Mt Buller

Season Ends: 21 September
Mt Buller's snowmaking facilities have done wonders for snow reliability. Having north, east and south facing slopes guarantees that you're more likely to find a sheltered area. The south side also receives very little direct sun in winter, preserving the snow quality.
mtbuller.com.au/Winter

NEW ZEALAND

North Island

Whakapapa – Mt Ruapehu

Season Ends: 26 October
This resort claims to have the longest season in New Zealand once the snow packs. A high altitude coupled with a high base elevation means you can expect good snow coverage.
mtruapehu.com/winter/whakapapa

Turoa – Mt Ruapehu

Season Ends: 26 October
The high altitude and south-west facing slopes means lots of dry snow from July until September. Spring snow is close to

perfect during October.
mtruapehu.com/winter/Turoa/

South Island

Mt Hutt

Season Ends: 21 October
Having the country's most reliable snow cover, Mt Hutt also consistently has one of the longest snow seasons on the South Island.
nzski.com/mthutt

Treble Cone

Season Ends: 28 September
Renowned for stacks of dry powder, its proximity to the Southern Alps means reliable snow conditions and weather, with the added advantage of being protected from the bitter southerly.
treblecone.com

Coronet Peak

Season Ends: 28 September
Coronet Peak has New Zealand's most extensive automated snowmaking system, so expect top to bottom coverage on multiple trails.
nzski.com/coronetpeak

Cardrona

Season Ends: 5 October
The consistently good weather and reliable snow conditions produce dry and plentiful snowfall thanks to its high elevation and south facing location.
cardrona.com

The Remarkables

Season Ends: 5 October
This season the resort has doubled their snowmaking capacity to ensure that the main trails remain skiable.
nzski.com/theremarkables **F**