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## Australian Athletes Shine at Thredbo's Triple Crown Opener

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The 2025 Australia–New Zealand Cup season launched this past weekend in Thredbo, New South Wales, delivering a showcase of skill and competition across four snow sports divisions in the Triple Crown: Slopestyle event. Sanctioned by the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) and part of the Australian New Zealand Cup (ANC) series, the event drew 68 athletes and offered both international ranking points and an appealing prize pool.

The competition attracted a blend of established national names and promising newcomers eager to test themselves on one of the Southern Hemisphere's most respected stages.

In the women's snowboard category, Australia's Meila Stalker delivered a standout performance, securing her position as one of the sport's rising stars. Her second run, scoring an impressive 91.67, sealed the gold medal and led an all-Australian podium. Ally Hickman rebounded from a slower start to claim second place with 84.67 in her final run, while Jess McGregor improved on her first attempt to post 69.67 and take third.

The men's snowboard event saw New Zealand dominate, with 2021/22 World Cup slopestyle Crystal Globe winner Tiarn Collins living up to his reputation. Collins' commanding score of 92.17 earned him the top spot, followed by 15-year-old Joshua Li, who impressed with 89.33 to achieve his first Continental Cup podium finish. Zephyr Lovelock completed the Kiwi sweep with 85.33.

Australia regained the upper hand in the women's freeski competition, where World Cup regular Daisy Thomas began her 2025/26 season with victory, scoring 87.00. New Zealand's Madeline Disbrowe secured second with 82.00, while 15-year-old Indra Brown took third with 75.67.

The men's freeski final was another strong showing for New Zealand. Fergus McArthur delivered a near-flawless second run to earn a unanimous score of 90.00 from all three judges. Lucas Ball, also representing New Zealand, opened with an 85.00 for the silver medal. Australia's Aidan Laing recovered from a challenging first run to claim bronze with a solid 83.00.

The event not only highlighted the depth of talent in both Australia and New Zealand but also underscored the ANC's role in providing a competitive platform for Southern Hemisphere athletes to gain valuable international ranking points. With strong early-season performances, both nations' athletes have set the tone for an exciting season ahead.