

21.06-4 OBJECTIVES – STRATEGIES – IMPLEMENTATION**Natural Environment**

Mt Hotham Alpine Resort is part of a delicate and rare environmental system. Its tourism value results not just from its elevated position, which provides good recreational opportunities, but from its nature conservation and scenic values. The potential for adverse environmental impacts is of particular concern during construction phase, be it of buildings, roads or service infrastructure. Sensitive management of all new development is required to minimise and where possible prevent such impacts. The siting of all new development must also have regard to the location of sensitive habitats, particularly those associated with the Mountain Pygmy-possum.

Objectives

- To maintain, preserve and improve the natural environmental features of the Resort.
- To ensure the present diversity of species and ecological communities and their viability is maintained or improved within the Resort.
- To maintain, preserve and enhance the habitat of threatened species and communities within the Resort.
- To ensure development minimises environmental impact through sensitive siting and environmentally sound construction and management techniques.
- To protect the quality and integrity of natural water systems and aquatic ecosystems.
- To monitor environmental impacts associated with resort development and encourage research into best practice environmental management techniques.
- To ensure development is respectful of areas of high scenic quality and visual sensitivity and complements the natural features of the Resort.
- To protect and improve identified places, sites and objects of Aboriginal and European cultural, historical, and architectural significance.

Strategies

The strategies for achieving these objectives are:

- Establish the environmental /resources values existing within the Resort, including the identification of species and communities of environmental significance and definition of habitat types and locations in consultation with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.
- Identify suitable locations within the Resort to provide for commercial, residential, tourism development and support infrastructure, having regard to environmental constraints such as flora and fauna and slope.
- Promote the principle of no net loss of native vegetation through the preparation of a Resort wide revegetation/management plan which addresses the development of land within the Resort and appropriate native vegetation protection and replacement strategies.
- Target predator control to specific populations of threatened species, particularly the Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*).
- Establish the extent of weed invasion within the Resort, particularly within the high altitude treeless area and implement appropriate weed control programs.
- Ensure that all development and use of land is undertaken in a manner that minimises impacts on significant native vegetation or fauna, through appropriate planning

mechanisms including the use of Site Environmental Management Plans and building envelopes.

- Encourage the scale and height of new development to be appropriate to its surrounds and sympathetic to the predominant snow gum height and existing view lines.
- Ensure the guiding principles of environmental management within the Resort are documented for all Resort stakeholders. Educate all construction personnel regarding the environmental values of the Resort and gain commitment to best practice environmental management techniques.
- Identify and monitor sites in the Resort that may be susceptible to landslide/subsidence and ensure modifications to natural site conditions do not create risk of land slides/subsidence.
- Identify and document the Resort's heritage elements both pre and post-settlement.
- Require the appraisal of impacts on heritage elements when determining planning applications for use or development in places of cultural or historical significance.
- Ensure that design, construction and maintenance of development takes proper account of geotechnical stability considerations.
- Encourage applicants to consult with the Mt Hotham Alpine Resort Management Board regarding existing geotechnical information prior to lodging an application for planning permit or a site development plan.

Implementation

These strategies will be implemented through the following actions:

- Map floristic communities within the Resort and develop a Vegetation Protection or Environmental Significance Overlay to protect species/communities of significance.
- Assess the need for, and develop appropriate additional policy/overlay controls resulting from the outcomes of the environmental resource evaluation.
- Apply an Environmental Significance Overlay to known areas of habitat of the Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*) within the Resort.
- Include areas considered appropriate for Resort development (ie. commercial, residential, tourism development and resort services/support infrastructure) in Schedule 1 of the Comprehensive Development Zone.
- Include land considered suitable for passive and active recreation in Schedule 2 of the Comprehensive Development Zone.
- Include all public land surrounding residential, commercial, resort services and ski field development in the Public Park and Recreation Zone. Development in this zone will only be permitted if it is consistent with the purpose of the zone and maintains the environmental integrity of the area.
- Investigate means of implementing the revegetation/management plan for 'no net loss' of native vegetation through a Local Policy or a Development Contributions Overlay.
- Investigate co-operative weed and predator control programs with Parks Victoria.
- Prepare an Environmental Management Plan documenting environmental principles for all Resort stakeholders and environmentally sound procedures and work practices to be utilised by the Resort Management. The Environmental Management Plan should be regularly reviewed and updated through a public process and provide for measures that allow for follow up monitoring of environmental impacts associated with resort development.
- Ensure all site development plans and planning applications include a Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMS).

- Ensure all proposals that may impact upon the habitat of the Mountain Pygmy-possum comply with the guidelines outlined in *Management Strategy and Guidelines for the Conservation of the Mountain Pygmy-possum (Burrhamys parvus) in Victoria*.
- Apply an Erosion Management Overlay to all land in the Mt Hotham Alpine Resort.
- Apply a Local Planning Policy to provide guidance in determining an application for planning permit or site development plan.
- Develop a Local Policy for areas identified as being of confirmed or potential heritage and/or archaeological significance. In such instances the policy will apply to any redevelopment of a site.

Commerce, Tourism and Recreation

Currently the main commerce, tourism and recreation opportunities within the Resort are directly related to the ski industry. Given the trend at Mt Hotham toward increased skier numbers and the need for a ski field that caters to all skill levels there is need for the further development of skier terrain within the Resort. The range of winter experiences can also be significantly enhanced. Visitor duration and expenditure must also be recognised as economic drivers for the Resort.

The Resort's natural environmental qualities, together with the existing investment in facilities and infrastructure, provide an ideal foundation for development of all year round use of the Resort. The potential for creating a successful year round Resort is currently constrained by the limited range of commercial and recreational facilities. A greater variety of commercial facilities, a wider range of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities/activities and greater promotion/use of the airport will enhance the visitor experience and ensure the Resort is an attractive destination for business conferences and conventions. The Resort is also uniquely placed to provide an attractive venue for high altitude athlete training, due to its elevation.

Objectives

- To encourage the use of Mt Hotham as a year round destination, drawing on the natural beauty, environmental qualities and recreational infrastructure existing within the Resort.
- To promote a broad range of commercial activities and recreational facilities at multi-purpose venues that will attract visitors both within and outside of the designated snow season.
- To acknowledge and promote the importance of the surrounding towns and settlements of Dinner Plain, Myrtleford, Harrietville, Bright and Omeo in enhancing the visitor experience.
- To provide a clear, identifiable and integrated Village Centre at Hotham Village as the major focus for commercial activity, community facilities, skier congregation and transport hub.
- To create a secondary activity area for commercial and recreational facilities within the Davenport area.
- To encourage the redevelopment of existing commercial facilities such as ski school, food services and ski patrol facilities within the Resort.
- To ensure sufficient ski field terrain, cross-country trails, snow-play areas and associated infrastructure are available to match the needs of visitors.
- To ensure the Resort provides a range of winter activities for a range of skill levels particularly during low snow conditions.
- To increase the capacity of the ski fields to allow for up to 10,000 skiers on the slopes at any one time.

- To minimise the visual impact of the lift infrastructure upon the landscape values of the Resort.

Strategies

The strategies for achieving these objectives are:

- Promote the Great Alpine Road as a tourist route, during the summer months, in a co-operative manner with Tourism Victorian, VicRoads and the Alpine Shire.
- Investigate the potential of increasing the 'day-tripper' summer market in the growth area of Albury/Wodonga in conjunction with Parks Victoria.
- Investigate the co-location of a range of commercial, recreational and accommodation facilities adjoining the Davenport area through the re-alignment of the Great Alpine Road and the creation of additional development sites.
- Establish Mt Hotham as an attractive location for conferences and high altitude training venue and/or 'country club' through the effective marketing and use of existing accommodation/infrastructure and investigate potential additional sites and facilities at Whisky Flat and Wire Plain. Any proposals must be assessed taking into account environmental, ecological, economic, aesthetic, servicing and safety considerations.
- Work co-operatively with the Alpine Shire and stakeholders in Dinner Plain, Harrietville, Bright, and Omeo to improve the visitor experience to Mt Hotham and seek involvement in strategic planning exercises in these towns.
- Reinforce Hotham Village (west and south of Hotham Central/White Crystal) as the primary focus for commercial activity, community facilities, ski lesson congregation and transport hub in the Resort. Investigate the potential realignment of the Great Alpine Road (behind the Snowbird Inn and the Resort Management Board building) to provide for a vehicle free village centre.
- Prepare an Urban Design Framework for the Hotham village centre and Davenport commercial precinct to identify potential urban design improvements.
- Support the following commercial and retail activities at Hotham Village provided the proposed use does not adversely impact the amenity of the residential area:
 - Nightclub, Cabaret, Restricted Place of Assembly, Retail Premises provided the use is in association with a residential accommodation.
 - Nightclub and Cabaret uses shall operate under strictly limited hours of operation.
- Support mixed use residential and small scale commercial opportunities within Davenport provided the commercial and retail activities do not adversely impact the amenity of the residential area or environmental values.
- Support small scale commercial and retail development in the ski field areas if it provides a desirable service for snow users, is integral to a development proposal for passive alpine recreation and/or does not impede ski runs or major skier routes.
- Further develop a walking/cycling trail system (utilising existing cross-country trails) within the Resort, particularly the three huts walk around Golden Point, and enhance connection to trails within the Alpine National Park.
- Support developments that utilise the existing lift system to foster an improved range of summer time activities, particularly those focused around the Village and Blue Ribbon lifts.
- Investigate additional lift infrastructure at Golden Point, a new lift from the bottom of the Village Quad Chair to Mt Higginbotham and additional ski field terrain and facilities in 'P' Gully and 'H' Gully pending further environmental assessment and demand analysis.

It is acknowledged that there are limitations upon the provision of such lift infrastructure including:

- potential impacts upon Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*) habitat
 - strain placed on the skier egress lift system
 - difficulty in connecting the system with other components of the lift system
 - changes in terrain type
 - construction impacts upon significant flora and fauna
 - impacts of entering into new catchments.
- Improve the existing Village lift system through investigation of an extension to the Blue Ribbon Triple Chair and Big D Quad Chair and a new lift from Mt Higginbotham to Hotham Village.
 - Prepare a skifield design and management procedure to provide guidance for the ongoing maintenance of the skifield and any potential expansion of the skifield area. The development of this procedure would be inclusive of the ski lift company.
 - Encourage the extension of the snowmaking system throughout the ski field to enhance the length and quality of the snow season.
 - Identify locations for the ski school, an ice skating rink and informal play/ tobogganing area adjoining the new Village Centre.
 - Promote the Wire Plain/Whiskey Flat/Christmas Hills area as the primary focus for trail based cross-country skiing at the Resort and develop amenities including facilities such as a kiosk, toilets and athlete training facilities.
 - Ensure the impact of potential future lift stations and associated infrastructure on the skyline is minimised through careful siting and design. Alternatively lift stations/infrastructure of high architectural merit may be considered.

Implementation

These strategies will be implemented through the following actions:

- Ongoing co-operation and participation in the 'Great Alpine Road' marketing committee with Tourism Victoria, VicRoads and the Alpine Shire.
- Develop a Comprehensive Development Plan for Hotham Village demonstrating the proposed road realignment and identifying new development sites, uses and development parameters to be encouraged subject to environmental assessment.
- Develop a Comprehensive Development Plan for the area adjoining Davenport outlining the proposed road realignment, identifying new development sites, uses to be encouraged and development parameters for this mixed use node.
- Undertake further investigation of the environmental, ecological, economic, aesthetic, servicing and safety considerations for the summer recreation area at Wire Plain/Whiskey Flat. Develop a Comprehensive Development Plan outlining the proposed uses and development parameters for this area subject to environmental assessment.
- Provide guidance regarding suitable locations for commercial land uses through the preparation of Comprehensive Development Plans.
- Identify and provide appropriate signage to trails for walking, mountain biking and horse riding in conjunction with Parks Victoria.
- Establish operational controls upon uses such as Nightclub, Cabaret, Restricted Place of Assembly, Retail Premises through the lease process.
- Locate ski field and specific recreational areas within the area identified for alpine recreation (Schedule 2 of the Comprehensive Development Zone).

- Extend the boundaries of Schedule 2 to the Comprehensive Development Zone to the area near Jack Frost and the Big D lift.
- Undertake further investigation of the ecological, geological, visual and economic impacts of additional lift infrastructure at Golden Point, Avalanche Gully and Mt Higginbotham.
- Undertake further investigation of the ecological, geological, visual and economic impacts of additional ski field terrain and lift infrastructure in 'P' Gully and 'H' Gully.

Settlement

The Mt Hotham Alpine Resort is reserved for active recreation but also the promotion of the Resort for intensive residential and commercial development.

The existing developed area of the Resort provides accommodation for approximately 4600 people. The optimal number of beds for Mt Hotham is considered to be approximately 7,000. Accommodation is currently provided in two distinct areas: Hotham Village and Davenport. The majority of additional accommodation is proposed to be developed in and around these established areas. This can be achieved by extending some lease sites, establishing new lease sites and re-developing existing facilities. A new 'alpine retreat housing' node is proposed in the Wire Plain and Whisky Flat area to provide for an emerging 'year round' accommodation market, subject to further environmental and economic investigation.

Objectives

- To ensure that development at Mt Hotham recognises the landscape, amenity and environmental values of the Resort.
- To ensure new development and redevelopment achieves high quality design standards in both private development and the public domain and is respectful of the alpine character.
- To provide a clear direction with regard to design elements for future development within the Resort.
- To consolidate development within the existing nodes of Hotham Village and Davenport and reinforce the differences between the Hotham Village and Davenport accommodation areas as a priority
- To assess the potential for development of alternative accommodation at Whisky Flat and Wire Plain .
- To provide for a variety of accommodation types within the Resort.
- To recognise and build upon the accommodation and facility synergies that exist between the Resort and Dinner Plain.
- To promote environmentally sustainable development within the Resort.
- To ensure the location and scale of development is respectful of views to the ski fields and mountain ranges.
- To ensure new development enhances pedestrian and skier safety and access.

Strategies

The strategies for achieving these objectives are:

- Promote Hotham Village as the commercial 'heart' of the Resort and the location for higher density development with significant site coverage and height potential.

- Encourage the retention of the oversnow character of the Davenport area, the characteristics being the predominately well vegetated surrounds, significant views, lack of vehicle access, considerable setbacks from the road and separation between buildings.
- Discourage development in the ‘inter-urban break’ between Hotham Village and Davenport to protect the *Burramys parvus* (Mountain Pygmy-possum) management area.
- Provide for a new low density ‘year round’ accommodation node in the Wire Plain and Whisky Flat area surrounding the proposed summer recreation area pending further environmental assessment.
- Encourage the redevelopment of existing under-utilised sites within Hotham Village and Davenport to optimise the existing development potential within the accommodation areas.
- Ensure new development has considered the following matters and will:
 - Not adversely impact on the amenity of adjoining building and public spaces.
 - Be sited to ensure snow shedding is contained within site boundaries and directed away from entry/exit points and major skier routes.
 - Retain, as far as possible, native vegetation on the site.
 - Minimise visual intrusion and nestle within the snowgum canopy, where possible.
 - Demonstrate energy efficient design principles.
 - Not adversely affect the geo-technical conditions on the site.
 - Provide for the free movement of skiers and pedestrians.
 - Be respectful of existing view lines.
- Ensure the design of public amenities, including street lighting, shelters and signage meets a consistent design theme.
- Ensure appropriate pedestrian and skier access is provided to the Hotham Village Centre through the provision of a skier and pedestrian spine from the Davenport precinct along the Great Alpine Road.

Implementation

These strategies will be implemented through the following actions:

- Prepare Comprehensive Development Plans with specific design guidelines for the re-development/extension of existing buildings in the following areas: Hotham Village, the Inter Urban Break, Davenport Great Alpine Road Frontage and Davenport Oversnow.
- Include areas assessed as appropriate for Resort development (ie. commercial, residential, tourism development and resort services/support infrastructure) in Schedule 1 of the Comprehensive Development Zone.
- Locate areas assessed as suitable for service development within Schedule 1 of the Comprehensive Development Zone (Alpine Village).
- Undertake further investigation of the ecological, geological, visual and economic impacts of the proposed ‘alpine retreat housing’ at Wire Plain/Whisky Flat.
- Prepare Design Guidelines to facilitate consistent landscaping, urban design treatment and signage in the public domain.
- Participate in strategic planning exercises for Dinner Plain to ensure the Resort and Dinner Plain build upon the strengths of each precinct.

Movement

Access to and within the Resort is a critical issue during the winter snow season. The current shared use of the Great Alpine Road by skiers, pedestrians and vehicles creates conflict and reduces the efficiency of traffic flow. The movement of skiers between the Hotham Village and Davenport precincts is also difficult.

The proposed relocation of the Great Alpine Road at Hotham Village and Davenport is designed to improve vehicle access and circulation through the Resort, as well as improving pedestrian/skier safety. The provision of new skier bridges and cross country trail underpasses at various points along the Road will also reduce the potential for conflict between vehicles and pedestrians/skiers. The movement of skiers from the Village to Davenport will be improved by a new off-road skier access trail/path.

Access to the Resort has been fundamentally altered by the construction of the Mt Hotham airport. Travel times from major interstate cities and overseas destinations are greatly reduced, which opens up new markets for Mt Hotham and Dinner Plain and provides a competitive edge over other resorts. A helicopter link to Falls Creek during winter also enhances visitor access.

Objectives

- To ensure a high level of accessibility to the Resort.
- To ensure that parking provision and public transport to and within the Resort meets visitor needs.
- To ensure vehicles, pedestrians and skiers can safely and efficiently move within and throughout the Resort.
- To provide convenient access to, egress from and movement within the developed areas and ski fields, thus facilitating integration between residential areas and the ski field system.
- To discourage vehicular access on subdivisional roads within the Davenport precinct during declared snow season.
- To provide car parking on sites where direct access is available from sealed roads.
- To develop improved pedestrian and skier links between the Davenport and Hotham Central areas.
- To provide safe access for fire brigade vehicles at all times.

Strategies

The strategies for achieving these objectives are:

- Continued co-ordination and co-operation with VicRoads regarding the management and maintenance of the Great Alpine Road.
- Co-operatively market the Resort with the Mt Hotham Airport Management through package promotions and encourage airlines/aircraft to service the Resort during non-peak periods.
- Assess the realignment of the Great Alpine Road at Hotham Village (behind the Snowbird Inn and the Resort Management Board building) and Davenport (adjacent the Davenport subdivision) to facilitate safe pedestrian and skier movement within the Village Centre and Davenport mixed-use precinct.
- Improve crossing of the Great Alpine Road to the ski field through provision of a skier overpass adjacent to Spiral Stairs and skier underpasses at Wire Plan and to the west of Slatey Cutting.
- Create a skier and pedestrian spine along the existing alignment of the Great Alpine Road at Hotham Village and Davenport and ensure adequate lift infrastructure is available to facilitate skier movement within the Resort.

- Limit private vehicle movements in the Resort (other than through traffic) to drop-offs and pick-ups at the designated loading points and prohibit vehicle movement within Davenport during the designated ski season.
- Manage parking on the basis of length of stay. Short term/day car parking areas are to be located as close as possible to the Resort with day parking to be provided at Loch car park and at the former helicopter landing site opposite Spiral Stairs.
- Encourage persons residing at the Resort for long periods of time (e.g. throughout the ski season) to park their vehicles off the mountain at locations such as Harrierville.
- Assess the need for additional visitor parking in undercover, multi-level parking facilities at the Corral car park within Hotham Village, at Whitey's car park and Lawlers car park. Any proposals must be assessed taking into account environmental, ecological, economic, aesthetic, servicing and safety considerations.
- Encourage buses as the preferred form of transport between Mt Hotham, the parking areas beyond the developed area and Dinner Plain. Provide undercover bus transit facilities at the Corral car park within Hotham Village and well-located pick up and drop off points throughout the Resort.
- Encourage sites with all weather road access to provide on-site car parking, preferably with shared access. Ensure new developments do not lead to a reduction in the existing provision of public car parking.
- Maximise the capacity of existing car parking areas by facilitating their expansion and consolidation after appropriate environmental assessment.
- Maintain an operational oversnow link between and through the Village and Davenport precincts.

Implementation

These strategies will be implemented through the following actions:

- Investigate the feasibility of, and potential funding options for, the proposed realignment of the Great Alpine Road at Hotham Village and Davenport in partnership with VicRoads.
- Undertake a feasibility study of the potential for an undercover bus transit interchange and car park under the Corral car park at Hotham Village.
- Undertake a feasibility study of the potential for a multi level undercover car parking facility at Whitey's car park and Lawlers car park.
- Apply a Local Policy for car parking as an interim management measure until the car parking management arrangements and level of provision is resolved through the preparation of a Parking Precinct Plan.
- Prepare a Parking Precinct Plan for the Resort, which clearly sets out the infrastructure and management arrangements necessary for the operation of the existing and planned transport, as well as the access system within the Resort.

Infrastructure

The existing developed areas at Mt Hotham are well provided for in relation to service infrastructure. The infrastructure has adequate capacity, subject to minor modification, to meet the additional demands resulting from expansion of the Resort to its planned peak capacity. However, significant upgrading of the sewerage treatment plant will be required to meet new environmental standards. An expansion of snow making activities will require additional infrastructure provision, particularly in terms of water supply.

Objectives

- To ensure services are consistently able to meet the requirements of the Resort at peak times.
- To ensure that services are provided in a cost-effective manner using innovative technology to support best practice management of resources.
- To provide appropriate sites for infrastructure upgrades within existing service nodes.
- To minimise the impact of stormwater and other discharges on the water quality of the Dargo River.
- To ensure sufficient quantities of water are available to landowners or emergency services to enable them to suppress a fire and defend property.

Strategies

The strategies for achieving these objectives are:

- Design and locate physical infrastructure and services to minimise their environmental and visual impact through consolidation of service facilities within the existing Resort Management workshop area.
- Relocate the gas tanks to a safer and less visible location and provide for an expanded bulk gas storage capacity within the footprint of the existing workshop node.
- Upgrade sewerage treatment facilities to tertiary treatment level, redirect to the Swindlers Creek catchment and augment to meet future requirements within the Resort.
- Upgrade the functional capacity of the existing potable water weir to provide adequate supply for peak time pumping purposes and augment the bulk water supply to provide for the Resort growth over time.
- Establish a new weir on Swindlers Creek to be used for backup water supply purposes.
- Facilitate the reuse of wastewater for snow making in co-operation with the Environment Protection Authority, Department of Human Services and the ski lift company.
- Avoid future discharge of wastewater to the Dargo River.
- Investigate storm water management within the Resort to identify issues such as water quality and geo-technical stability and potential solutions such as drainage improvements along the Great Alpine Road.

Implementation

- New development, and the three existing unconnected sites in the Resort Village, will be required to be connected to reticulated services.
- Prepare a Comprehensive Development Plan for the existing workshop area for the provision of any new service infrastructure or upgrades to existing infrastructure.
- Undertake a pilot study for the reuse of waste water in snowmaking and irrigation in conjunction with the Environment Protection Authority and the Department of Human Services.
- Prepare a Stormwater Management Plan for inclusion within the Environmental Management Plan (EMP).