

**21.05-2**24/08/2006  
C15**KEY INFLUENCES**

Key Influences on the use and development of land at Mt Buller Alpine Resort are based on an understanding of the existing conditions and opportunities for change over the next ten to fifteen years.

**Significant flora and fauna communities**

Significant flora and fauna and communities need to be protected, preserved and retained under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999*. Significant communities of flora provide important habitat for rare and threatened fauna species. The integrity of flora and fauna and bio-diversity values may be threatened by pressure for expansion of Village boundaries, and inappropriate development both within the Village and ski fields. Development must be cognisant of potentially threatening processes and how to avoid and/or mitigate any impacts. The habitat of the Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvys*) and other listed species of flora and fauna are key influences for the siting and construction of development within the resort. An Action Statement and a Management Plan have been prepared to assist in protection and conservation of Mountain Pygmy-possum habitat.

**Ground cover and vegetation**

The protection of ground cover and vegetation is integral to the landscape values of the Resort, the habitat values for fauna, and the bio-diversity. Threats to existing ground cover and vegetation will come from inappropriate siting of new development, poor drainage and erosion management and a general increase in human activity in the Resort.

**Water catchment**

The location of the Resort in the upper catchments of the Delatite and Howqua Rivers creates a number of constraints on the use and development of the land. The siting of buildings and works needs to take into account adequate set backs from waterways and sediment control principles in construction to protect water quality. The provision of service infrastructure, including the sewage treatment plant, must continue to ensure protection of the water quality of the catchments. There are Special Water Supply Areas downstream of the Resort and future planning and development in the Resort needs to consider catchment management objectives.

**Water supply**

The Resort has a restricted water resource for domestic consumption, snow making and fire protection. Responsible management of water is required to satisfy the needs and expectations of residents and visitors to Mt Buller as well as protecting water resources within the Delatite and Howqua catchments. Goulburn Murray Water regulates water usage through licencing and in the broader region by the Murray Darling Basin Commission, which has set a cap on further stream diversions. The location and design of unobtrusive water storage areas is required. Identification of safe and environmentally sensitive snow making opportunities is considered important to the long-term viability of the Resort.

**Management of geotechnical hazard**

The geotechnical stability of the Resort is an important environmental and safety issue. The location and siting of buildings needs to have regard to drainage lines, subterranean

water levels and movement, and ensure no increased threat to ground stability within the Resort. The alpine environment is susceptible to geological change and will need to be constantly monitored.

### **Climate**

Mt Buller, with its high altitude, presents a very exposed environment. The mountain is vulnerable to extreme weather conditions and dramatic climatic changes placing an emphasis on the need for adequate facilities, land uses and building, and infrastructure design for the safety and protection of residents and visitors in all climatic conditions. There is potential for climatic change to influence snow depth levels in Victoria over the next 50 years. CSIRO projections indicate that by 2020, climate change is likely to have a small impact upon snow cover at Mt Buller. Any reductions in natural snow cover can be managed by increased snow making capacity, but will require augmentation of the water supply. This will continue to be monitored in the overall planning of the resort and provision of infrastructure.

### **Boundary interfaces**

The Mt Buller Alpine Resort immediately abuts the Alpine National Park. A sensitive transition between the Alpine National Park and the Resort needs to be maintained and preserved. Land use, recreational activities and any form of buildings or works in close proximity to the boundaries of the Alpine National Park need to be very carefully considered having regard to compatibility and level of impact on scenic and environmental values.

### **Population**

Mt Buller's permanent population is increasing and the Village is growing as a year round settlement. In 2004 it was estimated that the permanent summer population was 200 persons rising in winter to a permanent population of 2000 persons. Consideration needs to be given to the appropriate level of facilities and services to meet the needs of the existing and future permanent and visitor population. In particular there is a need to ensure that there is a suitable range of accommodation for permanent residents and visitors, along with commercial, community and recreational facilities and services to cater for their diverse requirements. The non-permanent population and number of visitors to the Resort will vary from season to season and this will continue to have implications for servicing and managing impacts on the environment.

### **All seasons resort**

As highlighted in the Alpine Resorts 2020 Strategy, Mt Buller Alpine Resort is one of the key gateways to the alpine country, providing recreational opportunities all year round. Snow related activities include downhill skiing, snowboarding, cross country skiing and snow play. The Resort is increasing in popularity as a summer destination for tourism, recreation and education. All season use of the Resort represents a more efficient and effective use of infrastructure.

La Trobe University Campus, including the Village Cinema and the Alpine Museum, provision of walking trails throughout the Resort, tennis courts on Bourke Street, the upgrade of public spaces such as Athletes Walk and the Village Square have been significant developments contributing to attracting increased visitation to the Resort. These developments have also helped to strengthen its appeal for the permanent and non-permanent population. The upgrading of the Village Square has been a major initiative of the Resort Management Board that has enhanced the amenity and usability of the square, as well as creating an identifiable "heart" and community meeting place for the Village. Active or passive recreation developments, including private sector initiatives, which add

value to the year round use of the Resort and are appropriate in the alpine environment, will continue to be facilitated to achieve the strategic objectives for the Resort.

### **Containment of growth**

There is limited area for outward expansion within the Village, and the physical terrain restricts areas suitable for development. Potential for further growth is available within the Village through redevelopment opportunities and release of new land. Since the early 1990's the Resort has experienced an increased level of building development, with many of the older accommodation lodges undergoing major redevelopment and expansion. The range and style of accommodation has changed, with increased demand for privately owned apartments.

It is important to consolidate the Village within its existing boundaries to maintain a cohesive Village, limit intrusion into the skifields, ensure effective use of infrastructure, maximise accessibility to facilities, and limit potential impacts on the sensitive alpine environment. Future development outside of the Village will require significant justification to demonstrate an overriding need for remote settlement. Environmental and infrastructure implications will also need to be considered.

### **Built form**

Building design has a significant influence on the identifiable individual resort character of the Resort and its attractiveness to visitors. Over the last two decades, there has been a significant change in building stock in the Village, from smaller private lodges to larger commercial lodges and apartment buildings. There is a need to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to the creation of a recognisable or identifiable individual resort character and built form character for the Mt Buller Resort, in particular the Village. This will be achieved by defining acceptable urban design, architecture and landscape components which assist in creating the identifiable individual resort character and strengthens the basis for its appeal for visitors year round. Of particular concern will be the need to ensure that future development within the Village is generally at or below the level of the tree canopy to minimise the intrusion of the constructed built form into the natural environment. The use of appropriate building materials and colours that reflect the natural alpine palette, are essential in developing a design image for the Village that will be sympathetic to the alpine environment and provide cohesion in the appearance of its built form.

The design objectives set out in clause 1.0 of Schedule 1 to the Design and Development Overlay apply to built form within the Village. The Mt Buller Alpine Resort - Village Design Guidelines should be applied.

### **Aboriginal heritage**

Aboriginal heritage material of the Taungurong people has been disturbed and destroyed by successive vegetation clearing, fire and development. Management of potential finds of heritage material is required under State and Commonwealth legislation. Future location, siting and design of development should ensure that historic places are preserved through appropriate management techniques.

### **Native Title**

The Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993* is a legislative consideration for leasing matters and the use and development of land. Due consideration is required for the notification requirements of the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993* in association with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

## **Access**

Mt Buller Tourist Road is the only vehicle access route to the Resort. There are peak travel times that cause congestion on the road, and effective management of vehicles is critical to the visitor experience. Siting and location of appropriate transport terminals and infrastructure, including bus and helicopter facilities, are important considerations for visitor attraction, ease of movement, safety and emergency response. Capital works that improve the safety of the Mt Buller Tourist Road and its interface with roads within the Resort should be encouraged.

The shared use of roads within the Village by skiers, pedestrians and vehicles has the potential to create conflict and reduce the efficiency and safety of the road network. Minimising conflicts and improving pedestrian and skier movement paths and linkages, particularly during the winter season, are essential considerations for future operations and development within the Village and Resort.

## **Car parking**

Ensuring appropriate provisions are made at the Resort for both short-term and long-term parking for visitors, residents and commercial operators is a major consideration for future development. The provision of car parking needs to be carefully linked with the transport system within the Resort to ensure ease of access, minimise congestion and conflicts within the Village.

The Resort Management Board manages vehicle access and movement within the Resort through the permit process. Permanent residents and visitors seeking serviced accommodation are increasingly requesting either on-site car parking or parking in proximity to their accommodation. This parking needs to be accessible and requires all weather access. On site parking has resulted in a greater area of leasehold sites being covered by non-permeable surfaces and additional loss of native vegetation. The provision of such parking where appropriate in the Village represents a significant challenge in ensuring that it does not detrimentally affect the amenity or environmental values of individual sites, the streetscape and character of the Resort.

## **Infrastructure**

Servicing the Resort for sewerage, refuse, water, electricity, gas and telecommunication is essential to the Resort's ability to operate and dictates the level of visitation and population threshold. Infrastructure requirements need to be clearly identified for future growth to ensure infrastructure is not a constraint to further development. The location, design and siting of infrastructure are important to ensure that environmental protection requirements are met and sound management practices are implemented.