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VC37**STRATEGIC STATEMENTS****21.01**19/01/2006
VC37**Alpine Resorts Strategic Statement****Introduction**

The Alpine Resorts Strategic Statement is a local policy to give strategic direction to the Alpine Resorts and it applies across all of the designated Victorian Alpine Resorts. For the purposes of the Victorian Planning Provisions this policy is similar to a Municipal Strategic Statement, however the resorts are not part of any municipal district and as such a Municipal Strategic Statement is not required.

The Alpine Resorts Strategic Statement should be read in conjunction with the State Planning Policy Framework and the other local planning policies. This document establishes objectives for the resorts, by which applications for development must meet and further.

Policy Context

The State Government of Victoria instituted a policy to reform the Alpine Resorts.

In September 1996 an agreement between the Minister for Conservation and Land Management and the Minister for Planning and Local Government initiated a reform program that resulted the transfer of planning and responsible authority status from the Alpine Resorts Commission to the Minister for Planning and Local Government.

The reform agenda included the development of new alpine planning controls, in the format of the Victorian Planning Provisions, to provide certainty, facilitate appropriate development, ensure appropriate environmental management and to reduce the need for planning approvals. Consultants were engaged to prepare for the mountain communities Comprehensive Development Plans and Alpine Resort Environmental Management Plans.

This Alpine Resorts Planning Scheme is the product of the first stage of the reform program.

The reform agenda is consistent with the National Competition Policy. The implication of the National Competition Policy will facilitate each resort acting in independent competition to reach their best potential.

Social Context

There is diversity of social considerations within the alpine resorts. These include access levels, employment opportunities and residency.

Access to the resorts can be interpreted in numerous ways: their geographic distance from the main skier market of Melbourne, the quality of physical access and the economic access to the resorts. Those three interpretations of access interplay to make the provide recreation opportunities to different groups.

The resorts provide significant seasonal employment opportunities specifically in the construction, hospitality and tourism industries. The hospitality and tourism industry is recognised as one of the fastest growing industries in Victoria and Australia.

The sizes of the permanent residential populations on the resorts vary across each resorts. Falls Creek has an established population of approximately 121 people. Mt Buller and Mt Hotham have a small permanent residential base of 50 and 20 persons respectively. At Mt Hotham the proportion resides Alpine community at Dinner Plain, outside of the resort. Mt

Baw Baw has a residential population, whilst there is no residential population at Lake Mountain.

The ‘off mountain’ communities for all of the resorts play an important role. Whilst outside of the resorts, these communities impact on the social fabric of the resorts and vice versa, by providing employment, economic, accommodation and residential opportunities.

The resorts also have different cultural histories that include Aboriginal habitation and spirituality, logging, grazing and mining.

Economic Context

The Victorian Alpine Resorts make a significant contribution to the Victorian economy. The snow market is an increasingly high yield sector and enjoys average daily spending above any other sector of Victoria’s regional tourist industry. Significantly, the investment in the Victorian Alpine Resorts represents one of the highest investments in tourism in Victoria.

The contribution to the Victorian economy is achieved through investment and employment in infrastructure, property, construction and hospitality. The Alpine Resorts also contribute to raising and leading skill and education levels in environmental protection, construction techniques and hospitality services.

Environmental Context

The Alpine Resorts are nestled in significant and fragile natural environments. Within the resorts, and surrounding parks, are communities of special and endangered flora and fauna species. These are either important in a regional, state or national context.

Falls Creek Alpine Resort

Mountain Daisy (*Brachyscome tenuiscapa*)

Wire-head Sedge (*Carex cephalotes*);

Dwarf Sedge (*Carex paupera*);

Rough Eyebright (*Euphrasia scabra*);

Alpine Bog Community;

Alpine Snowpatch Community;

Caltha introloba Herbland Community; and

Fen (Bog Pool) Community.

Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*);

Stonefly (*Riekoperla intermedia*); and

Stonefly (*Thaumatoperla alpina*)

Lake Mountain Alpine Resort

Leadbeater’s Possum (*Gymnobelideus leadbeateri*);

Smoky Mouse (*Pseudomys fumeus*); and

Barred (or Brown) Galaxias (*Galaxias olius* var. *fuscus*).

Mt Baw Baw Alpine Resort

Alpine Bog Community
 Caltha introloba Herbland Community
 Baw Baw Frog (*Philoria frosti*);
 Leadbeater's Possum (*Gymnobelideus leadbeateri*) and
 Broad-toothed Rat (*Mastacomys fuscus*).

Mt Buller Alpine Resort

Caddisfly (*Archaeophylax canarus*);
 Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*);
 Alpine Bog Stink (*Pseudemoia cryodroma*);
 Stonefly (*Riekoperla isosceles*); and
 Alpine Stonefly (*Thaumatoperla flaveola*).

Mt Hotham Alpine Resort

Mountain Daisy (*Brachyscome tenuiscapa*);
 Wire-head Sedge (*Carex cephalotes*);
 Dwarf Sedge (*Carex paupera*);
 Silky Daisy (*Celmisia sericophylla*);
 Rock Tussock-grass (*Poa saxicola*);
 Fairy Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia densifolia*);
 Eicher's Buttercup (*Ranunculus eichleranus*);
 Alpine Bog Community;
 Alpine Snowpatch Community;
 Caltha introloba Herbland Community; and
 Fen (Bog Pool) Community
 Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*);
 Alpine She-oak Skink (*Cyclodomorphus praealtus*); and
 Broad-toothed Rat (*Mastacomys fuscus*).

Other environmental considerations include water courses, catchment and quality issues; salinity and land degradation.

Geotechnical Context

The geotechnical stability of land in Victoria's Alpine Resorts is an important environmental and safety issue. Natural features within the Resorts, including geology, vegetation cover, overland drainage flow, drainage lines and subterranean water levels are key influences on stability.

Given the potential for damage to property, natural assets, human injury or death, the siting and design of new development needs to carefully consider the landform and its potential exposure to geotechnical hazards.

Extensive geotechnical investigations have taken place across the six Alpine Resorts. Such work includes hazard mapping, individual site investigations and mitigation works.

The Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (SMEC) has developed a system for land stability classification and mapping for all land in Alpine Resorts. This classification system has been used to assess the stability of all developed areas, proposed development areas and access roads within the Resorts. The study concentrates on natural landslides, natural rock falls, failure of cut slopes and failure of fill slopes. The SMEC Alpine Resorts Geotechnical Stability Review and other relevant geotechnical studies are available from the relevant Alpine Resort Management Board.

Existing Land Uses

A variety of land uses take place in the Alpine Resorts.

Falls Creek, Mt Buller and Mt Hotham are the three major resorts that have intensive alpine village and alpine recreation development. Mt Baw Baw has a small village with an appropriately matched intensive recreation development. Lake Mountain is a departure and arrival point for nordic skiing and a destination point for snow play.

The uses within the resorts consist of:

- Commercial Operations: hotels, shops, cafes and food premises, hire places and retail shops.
- Accommodation: flats, apartments, hotels and lodges and other special uses.
- Recreations: used for nordic and alpine skiing and appropriate related infrastructure, such as trailheads, skifield facilities, lifting systems, and groomed trails and runs.

Policy Statement

The Alpine Resorts can be developed to provide a quality tourist and recreation destination in all seasons. There should be consistency and certainty for development, the use of best practice whilst ensuring environmental management of the natural resources.

Alpine Strategic Objectives

All planning applications should attempt to satisfy the following objectives:

- To provide for the proper establishment, development and use of the resort for intensive, year-round recreation including the development of alpine and nordic skifields, having regard to environmental, ecological, economic, aesthetic and safety considerations.
- To reinforce the alpine resorts as a destination by providing a range of recreation and tourist facilities, residential accommodation, commercial activities and support services.
- To ensure that use and development within the alpine resorts is carried out to benefit the present and future resort users whilst maintaining a high quality environment.
- To conserve and protect the natural environmental systems within and adjacent to the alpine resort areas so as to minimise disturbance to flora and fauna communities and to areas of high scenic quality or visual sensitivity.
- Encourage best practice, low impact and environmentally-sensitive management practices for the resorts.
- Encourage best practice in urban design that reflects the alpine character of the resorts.
- To provide for the necessary management of snow deposition, in particular related to public safety and snow removal requirements.

- Enhance skier, pedestrian and vehicle activity at desirable levels related to the accessibility and capacity of ski fields, services, commercial activity and development of trailheads and appropriate transportation for nordic skiing.
- To minimise conflicts arising from development on sites near and adjacent to habitat or communities of flora and fauna which may be adversely affected by development.
- To take account of the requirements of the Victorian Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972, the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 and the views of local Aboriginal communities in providing for the conservation and enhancement of places, sites and objects of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.
- To ensure that development is supported by appropriate investigation, documentation and resolution of geotechnical hazards.

Management of Geotechnical Hazard

Geotechnical hazard needs to be managed in order to ensure that appropriate development takes place in Victoria's Alpine Resorts.

Objectives

To ensure that geotechnical hazard is managed throughout the Resorts so as to minimise risk to property and persons.

To ensure that management of geotechnical hazard forms an integral part of the development approvals process in the Alpine Resorts.

Strategies

Ensure that applications for development are supported by adequate investigation and documentation of geotechnical and related structural matters.

Ensure that proposed development is appropriate to be carried out either conditionally or unconditionally, having regard to the results of those geotechnical and related structural investigations.

Ensure that development is only carried out if identified geotechnical and related structural engineering risks are effectively addressed.

Implementation

- Apply an Environmental Management Overlay (EMO) to all land in the Alpine Resorts.
- Apply a Local Planning Policy to provide guidance on determining applications.
- Ensure that Strategic Statements for the relevant Resorts identify local specific issues for the management of geotechnical hazard.
- Require preparation of a Preliminary Geotechnical Assessment as part of an application for planning permit or Site Development Plan as required under the EMO.
- Require preparation of a quantitative risk assessment where a Preliminary Geotechnical Report shows risk greater than low.
- Ensure that development is not supported, on geotechnical grounds, if a Quantitative Risk Assessment or independent review of a Quantitative Risk Assessment accompanying an application, identifies the risk posed by a geotechnical hazard as high or very high (as defined by the AGS Guidelines) after all feasible measures to reduce the risk have been considered.

References

Australian Geomechanics (May 2002) Landslide Risk Management Concepts and Guidelines, Journal and News of the Australian Geomechanics Society, Volume 37 Number 2 (as updated)

Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (April 2000) Alpine Resorts – Geotechnical Stability Review – Final Report, Department of Natural Resources and Environment (as updated).