

21.05-2 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 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*. Significant communities of flora provide important habitat for rare species. The integrity of flora and fauna and bio-diversity values may be threatened by pressure for expansion of Village boundaries, redevelopment of existing sites and skifield development. Any development must be cognisant of potentially threatening processes and how to avoid and/or mitigate any impacts.

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 supply

The Resort has a restricted water resource for domestic consumption and snow making. 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. Water usage is regulated by Goulburn Murray Water 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 snowmaking opportunities are considered important to the long-term viability of 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, should not adversely affect the water quality of the catchments. There are Special Water Supply Areas downstream of the Resort and future resort planning and development needs to consider catchment management objectives.

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. The potential impacts of climatic change will continue to be monitored in the overall planning of the resort.

Boundary interfaces

The Mt Buller Alpine Resort immediately abuts the Alpine National Park. A sensitive transition between the Alpine National Park and the Resort is 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 1999 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 permanent population. In particular there is a need to provide suitable accommodation for permanent residents. The non-permanent population and number of visitors to the Resort will vary from season to season and this has implications in terms of servicing and environmental impact.

Summer activities

The Resort is increasing in popularity as a summer destination for recreation and education. All season use of the Resort represents a more efficient and effective use of infrastructure. LaTrobe University Campus has been a significant development that contributes to increased visitation of the Resort and the permanent and non-permanent population. Active or passive recreation developments which add value to the year round use of the Resort should be facilitated.

Containment of growth

There is limited area for growth and development within the Resort. It is important to consolidate the Village within its existing boundaries to limit intrusion on the skifields, ensure effective use of infrastructure, maximise accessibility to facilities, maintain a visually cohesive Village and limit environmental impact. The physical terrain also restricts areas suitable for development.

Built form

Architectural design is important to the character of the Village and the attraction of visitors to the Resort. High quality design, development of a unique, identifiable image and snowdumping are the main considerations for the design of built form in the Village. The use of local stone and colours from the natural alpine palette are essential in developing a design image for the Village that will be sympathetic to the alpine environment, provide cohesion in the built environment and be attractive to visitors and residents of Mt Buller Alpine Resort.

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 Access Road is the only vehicle access route to the Resort. There are peak travel times which cause significant congestion on the road. Helicopter access to the Resort is available. Ease of movement to and from the Resort is important for safety and visitor attraction. Location and design of visitor access and associated facilities must consider safety, environmental systems and scenic qualities. Capital works relation to access improvements should be facilitated.

Car parking

Conflict between vehicles, skiers and pedestrians is a safety issue for the Resort. Restricted vehicle access and movement within the Resort is managed through the permit process by the Mt Buller Alpine Resort Management Board. Increased pressure, resulting from changing demands of visitors, has led to requests for on site car parking spaces. Car parking and associated hardstand areas should not detrimentally affect the amenity of the site, adjoining sites, streetscape or the 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 satisfied.