



# Media release

The Hon Ryan Smith MP  
Minister for Environment and Climate Change  
Minister for Youth Affairs

Thursday 13 December 2012

## **New heights planned for Victoria's alpine resorts**

The long-term viability of Victoria's alpine resorts will be strengthened following the tabling in Parliament today of a new strategic plan by Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith.

The *Alpine Resorts Strategic Plan 2012* will shape the long-term direction of Victoria's six alpine resorts of Mt Hotham, Falls Creek, Mt Buller, Mt Stirling, Mt Baw Baw and Lake Mountain, ensuring they remain attractive tourist destinations, financially viable and capable of attracting new investment.

Mr Smith said the strategic plan recognised the fact that the winter season was the economic engine of the resorts, however opportunities existed to expand their array of iconic non-winter events and investment opportunities.

Under the strategic plan, each of the resorts will prepare an alpine resort master plan ensuring their environmental values are protected and providing the commercial sector greater certainty about the resorts' long-term directions.

"The *Alpine Resorts Strategic Plan 2012* outlines a vision for the resorts and a plan of actions to ensure they are vibrant, growing and financially sustainable places well into the future and their environmental values are preserved," Mr Smith said.

"The strategic plan sets out a more co-operative and integrated approach to investment, promotion, management and use across the resorts.

"The plan focuses on paying more attention to the long-term financial viability of the alpine resorts, focusing on the winter economic 'engine' and building on the year-round competitive strengths of individual resorts.

"Victoria's alpine resorts make a significant contribution to the State economy, especially in regional Victoria and the Coalition Government is committed to ensuring they remain viable into the future."

In 2011 the resorts were visited by more than 1.2 million people, contributed \$570 million to Gross State Product and generated around 5,800 full-time equivalent jobs for winter alone.

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Mr Smith said the alpine resort master plans would simplify planning and leasing decisions and allow high priority development opportunities to be identified through the *Victorian Alpine Resorts Development Program*.

“We need to make sure that resort services and infrastructure are delivered efficiently and with appropriate levels of accountability. Investment opportunities need to be more co-ordinated and non-commercial activities will need to be reviewed,” Mr Smith said.

The strategic plan proposes a new financial management framework for the alpine resorts to sustain their significant economic contribution to the State’s economy and to their surrounding regions.

The strategic plan also outlines actions to build partnerships across sectors and increase access for Victorians of all backgrounds.

“Victorian alpine resorts are on public land and are managed on behalf of all Victorians, so it is important we ensure alpine experiences are accessible to people of differing cultural backgrounds, ability levels and economic circumstances,” Mr Smith said.

“Major initiatives include a focus on growing visitation by enhancing the visitor experience and further development of the resorts. This means maximising benefits from winter visitation, non-winter or “green season” visitation and more integrated marketing,” Mr Smith said.

Activities such as horse riding, bush walking, road and mountain bike riding, fishing, festivals and events and even high-altitude training are set to become a non-winter feature under the new strategic plan.

The *Alpine Resorts Strategic Plan 2102* includes opportunities to improve the regulatory environment and initiatives to address impediments to economic opportunities in the resorts, including:

- planning and leasing arrangements;
- native vegetation offsets; and
- bushfire and emergency management.

The *Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997* requires the Alpine Resorts Coordinating Council to conduct a five-yearly review of its strategic plan.

Extensive public consultation was conducted as part of the development of the *Alpine Resorts Strategic Plan*. A total of 250 people participated in workshops in Melbourne and at the resorts, and 66 submissions were received which were considered during development of the strategy.

More information about the *Alpine Resorts Strategic Plan 2012* is at [www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)

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