



Stirling 2020

Draft

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

For 10 years from January 2010

**Prepared by the Mount Buller and Mount Stirling
Alpine Resort Management Board**

INDEX

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. RESORT PROFILE

1.1 History 3

1.2 Environment 4

1.3 Assets 6

2. PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 7

2.1 Shared Vision 7

2.2 Consultation 7

2.3 Planning Framework 7

3. THE MISSION FOR THE RESORT 8

4. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 9

5. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS 10

5.1 Climate Change 10

5.2 Resort Use and Visitation 12

5.3 Resort Development 12

5.4 Vibrant Resorts 13

5.5 Environmental Management 14

5.6 Land Stewardship 15

6. Conclusion 16

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

The Mount Stirling Strategy has been developed to give direction and guide the future management of the Mount Stirling Alpine Resort from 2010 to 2020. The development of this Strategy has been undertaken in the context of the decision to create a two wheel drive all season road link between Mount Buller, Mount Stirling and the High Country, subject to receiving additional Government funding and planning permit, in the near future. The Strategy is consistent with Government legislation and policy including the Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997, the Alpine 2020 Strategy, Victoria's Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2008 - 2012, the Mount Stirling Local Planning Policy, the Buller-Stirling Management Strategy and the Resorts Environmental Management Plan. Upon completion of the consultative process and final approval by the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, the Strategy will become the overarching document directing the future for the Resort to 2020.

Mission Statement

'Mount Stirling is Victoria's premier destination for all season nature based tourism, education and recreation with appropriate public facilities showcasing cutting edge environmental technologies where possible'

In 2020 visitors to Mount Stirling will enjoy a year-round, environmentally sustainable Resort. Cross-country skiing, snow camping, back country adventures and associated pursuits will remain the primary attraction for visitors to the Mount Stirling Alpine Resort during winter. A greater emphasis on promoting the Resort in spring, summer and autumn will attract a broader and more varied year-round market, including people seeking opportunities to hike, mountain bike, horse ride, 4WD, camp, attend special events and enjoy interpretive, heritage or cultural displays. Mount Stirling will offer facilities, activities, and tours which appeal to all socio-economic and demographic groups, including children. Facilities will be improved, where practicable, to enable events, tours and activities to be provided by an array of licensees. The road across the summit will be closed and rehabilitated and an alternate route provided with associated infrastructure facilitating summit access, car parking and other public amenities. The complementary nature of the two mountains - the built environment and infrastructure at Mount Buller and the nature-based adventure, educational and environmental product at Mount Stirling - will be highlighted via the sensitive integration of public roads, multi-use trail networks, and other amenities.

This Strategy describes actions that will best enable the ARMB and its stakeholders to meet the following priorities:

- 1. Managing the potential impacts of climate change**
- 2. Increasing visitation**
- 3. Ecologically sustainable development**
- 4. Resort vibrancy**
- 5. Environmental management**

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

The Strategy has identified a number of projects that help address these priorities. The Board is committed to considering economic, social and environmental impacts when making all decisions. The Strategy is closely aligned with the Corporate Plan, creating a link with annual business planning processes which allow for the development and implementation of costed and time referenced actions. The ARMB and Mount Buller and Mount Stirling stakeholder groups will pursue these through the delivery of our core functions, and through the energetic, efficient and successful completion of these initiatives:-

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Improve access to the snowline in low-snow conditions.
- Increase use of environmentally sustainable practices in facilities within the Resort.

VISITATION

- Improve roads, tracks and trails, including rationalization of the roads around and/or adjacent to the Resort.
- Broaden activity, product and service offer outside the snow season, particularly walking, mountain biking and educational visits.

RESORT DEVELOPMENT

- Construct Buller-Stirling Touring Link Road subject to availability of funding and endorsement of planning permit.
- Improve public facilities, including the provision of additional refuge shelters and maintenance of existing huts
- Develop interpretive sites and trails.

VIBRANCY

- Develop and market year round activities, events and attractions for the Resort.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

- Implement and monitor progress against the Environmental Management Strategy.
- Exclude cattle grazing.

LAND STEWARDSHIP

- Cooperatively manage and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders and other land management agencies.

Through the establishment of this ten-year strategic planning cycle (including implementation, monitoring and review), together with triple-bottom-line reporting of economic sustainability, environmental quality and social responsibility, the ARMB is well-prepared to fulfill its function as the Crown Land manager of the Resort.

1. RESORT PROFILE

1.1 HISTORY

Aboriginal Ethnohistory

The Resort lies in the traditional territory of the *Taungarung* language group, made up of nine clans which spread across much of the central region of Victoria. The land around Mount Stirling appears to have been occupied by the *Yowung-illam balung* clan of the *Taungarung*.

Nine pre-contact Aboriginal archaeological sites have been recorded in the Mount Stirling Alpine Resort, including four multiple feature sites and five stone artefact scatter sites.

A large scale cultural heritage assessment for Mount Stirling was completed as part of the 1997 Environmental Effects Statement evaluating a range of options for the development of winter recreation facilities at Mount Stirling. The report concluded that Aboriginal people had frequently visited a number of locations on Mount Stirling to undertake various activities, including the summer feasting on indigenous species such as Bogong Moths and a variety of plants, primarily tubers.

Post-Contact History

Mount Stirling was first observed and noted by Von Mueller during his 1853 botanical survey of the Victorian Alps region, and was later named after botanist and geologist James Stirling. Von Mueller's early account describes the alpine landscape as being similar to that found in Tasmania. He collected twenty-six flora species, one third of which were previously unknown.

The post-contact settlement of Mount Stirling commenced following early explorations by squatters and cattle graziers, however the steep slopes and thick Snow Gum Woodland would have deterred many early settlers. These high country graziers constructed a number of alpine huts for shelter and refuge during mustering. Mount Stirling still features the remains of two graziers' huts, the Howqua Gap Hut and Mansfield Cross Country Ski Hut.

In the 1890s European miners bored by winter inactivity are said to have crafted skis from fence palings and schussed down the mountains, cutting a trail for recreational skiing. In 1913, the Klingsporn family, who had improved the track leading to Mount Buller to make it more accessible, was granted funds for improved access by the Victorian Government. The ski industry proper began in 1924, when members of the Melbourne Walking Club transferred their activities from Mount Buffalo to Mount Buller. In 1929 the first Chalet was built at Horse Hill, Mount Buller, and ski touring to Mount Stirling began.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

While still used for cattle grazing and logging of its Alpine Ash forests, by the 1960's Mount Stirling was becoming increasingly popular as a ski touring destination, and was officially declared an Alpine Resort in 1984, and management transferred from the Forests Commission to the Alpine Resorts Commission. In 1994, after a controversial proposal to develop the mountain for downhill skiing, the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) was developed through extensive public consultation and tabled in 1996. The EES resulted in an announcement by the Victorian Government in 1997 that Mount Stirling was to be an all-season, nature based tourism, recreational and educational destination with a 15-year moratorium on downhill skiing development. The 2004 amendment to the Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997 legislated permanently against the installation of down hill skiing lift infrastructure at Mount Stirling.

In 1997 the Alpine Resorts Commission was replaced by individual Resort Management Boards, underpinned by the Alpine Resorts Coordinating Council. In 2004, the Minister for the Environment, John Thwaites, announced the abolition of the Mount Stirling Alpine Resort Management Board, a permanent ban on downhill skiing development at Mount Stirling and the creation of the Mount Buller and Mount Stirling Alpine Resort Management Board.

1.2 ENVIRONMENT

Mount Stirling

Mount Stirling is 230 kilometres from Melbourne and is the only Victorian alpine resort with a largely undeveloped and unspoiled true alpine summit, offering a readily accessible 'semi-wilderness' experience for visitors.

A majestic 485-year-old Snow Gum tree stands alone on the summit of Mount Stirling, at 1749 metres above sea level. The summit offers 360 degree panoramic views of high country landscape including sub-alpine Alpine Ash forests and Snow Gum woodlands.

Waterways

The Mount Stirling Resort encompasses the headwaters of the Delatite River (Falls Creek, Baldy Creek, Bluff Creek, Razor Creek, Brown Creek and Currajung Creek), the Howqua River (Dugout Creek, Stanley Creek and Bindaree Creek) and the King River (Gorge Creek and Stirling Creek). Water supply for the Mount Stirling area of the Resort is sourced from a small tributary known as Falls Creek.

Stormwater sub catchments from Mount Stirling drain to the Delatite River catchment. Receiving waterways and riparian environments of all five sub catchments are considered to be of high environmental, social and economic value. The most significant threat type is sedimentation followed by the input of pollutants, nutrients and litter, and increases in overland flows.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

Flora

Three hundred and nineteen species of indigenous plants have been recorded within the Resort, as well as mosses, liverworts, lichen and fungi. A total of 38 rare or threatened vascular plants and 2 threatened plant communities have been recorded within the Resort. Historically, many exotic (weed) plants have been introduced to the Resort through cattle grazing, horse riding and other recreational activities. The majority of these species do not extend far into native vegetation however Sword Rush, Soft Rush, Grey Willow, Yarrow and Blackberry are considered serious threats to the biological diversity of the Resort. Ornamental species planted in the vicinity such as Alstroemeria, Russell Lupin, Columbine and Mint also have the potential to threaten native vegetation within the Resort.

Fauna

Indigenous vertebrate fauna recorded within 10 kilometres of the Resort comprises 26 mammals (including the nationally endangered Mountain Pygmy-possum), 56 birds, eight reptiles and five frogs. One endangered native fish species, Barred Galaxias, has been recorded in nearby downstream reaches of both Bindaree and Stanley Creeks and is threatened by introduced Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout, which prey upon native species. Other indigenous fish species have been recorded from connected downstream reaches of the Delatite (5), Howqua (7) and King Rivers (9) including the endangered Trout Cod (King River), Macquarie Perch (Delatite, Howqua and King Rivers) and Murray Cod (Delatite, Howqua and King River) which are listed as vulnerable.

Whilst not present on Mt Stirling, Mt Buller is one of four isolated populations of the nationally endangered Mountain Pygmy-possum, identified in 1996. The boulder-field habitat on Mount Buller is one of the largest single connected areas of boulder-field habitat known, and extends to lower altitudes than at most other sites. In 1996 the population of Mountain Pygmy-possum at Mount Buller was estimated at 300 adult females. Recent surveys have seen this estimate fall. There are a range of potential factors that may have contributed to the decline of the Mountain Pygmy-possum on Mount Buller, but it is clear that a significant cause of the fall in population has been the loss, degradation and fragmentation of habitat on the southern slopes associated with the development of these areas for skiing, as well as the impact of feral animals. The population at Mount Buller is now at critically low levels and urgent management action is required. The ARMB has developed the Mountain Pygmy-possum Recovery Plan to address this situation.

The most well known of the invertebrate species within the Resorts is the Bogong Moth, which migrates to the Victorian Alps and Snowy Mountains in spring. It forms an important part of the Mountain Pygmy-possum diet and is heavily exploited, especially by females, during the breeding season. Other invertebrate species within the Resort are less well known. Nevertheless, three species considered vulnerable have been detected within the Resort including the stonefly, Alpine Stonefly and caddisfly. One crustacean species considered vulnerable, the Murray River Crayfish (King River), has been recorded at lower elevations within the catchment.

Eight introduced vertebrate fauna species have been recorded within the Resort including five mammals (European Red Fox, Feral Cat, Feral Dog, Rabbit and Sambar Deer), one bird (European Goldfinch) and two fish (Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout). The species posing the most significant threat to biodiversity within the Resort are the European Red Fox, Feral Cat, Wild Dog and European Rabbit.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

Fire

Although fire is an uncommon event in alpine and sub-alpine environments it is part of a natural cycle of disturbance, which also includes insect attack, wind, frost and extreme climatic events. As such, alpine and sub-alpine plants (and to a lesser degree animals) have the capacity to cope with fire due to vegetative reproduction, the presence of perennating buds close to the ground and seedling germination.

While the summer bush fire hazard in the Resort is low to medium, there is a likelihood of an increase in bush fire frequency and severity due to climate change. The forested areas at lower elevations tend to be a higher hazard due to the frequency of lightning strikes and the flammability of the vegetation found therein.

The 2006 – 2007 bushfires had a significant effect on vegetation and structural management. Regeneration is occurring, however some slopes were burnt so intensely that it will take many years until the area has fully recovered.

1.3 ASSETS

Mount Stirling

Mount Stirling is unique in the Australian Alps and highly valued for its undeveloped state and the opportunity provided for year-round rugged bush land experiences. With an average annual snow fall of 99cms, the mountain has more than 65 kilometers of maintained trails, 35 kilometers of which are groomed for cross country skiing. These trails run through sheltered forests of Alpine Ash on the lower slopes and rise through towering Snow Gum forests on the open areas of the summit.

Public facilities on Mount Stirling are located at Telephone Box Junction, just over nine kilometres from Mirimbah, offering bistro, ski hire and first aid available during winter. This site and building is partly leased to the Stirling Experience organisation. Its year-round facilities include car parking, public shelter and toilets at Telephone Box Junction and other locations across the mountain, including Cricket Pitch, King Saddle, Razorback Hut, Bluff Spur Hut and at Geelong Grammar School Hut near the summit.

Mount Stirling is a destination for cross-country and backcountry skiing, snowboarding, snow-camping and snowshoeing in the winter and camping, bush walking, four wheel driving, horse riding, mountain biking and outdoor education at other times of the year. It appears to have under-utilised its capacity as a venue for most of these activities. Mount Stirling also provides access to the Greater Alpine National Park and the iconic tourist destination, Craig's Hut which has both international and domestic appeal.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

2. PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2.1 SHARED VISION

Development of this Strategy provides a valuable opportunity for government, stakeholders and the ARMB to work together to establish a shared vision for the Resort. This Strategy seeks to build on the Resorts' natural and physical assets, capitalise on any investment into Mount Stirling, and explore future opportunities and challenges. It provides for long term planning and identifies strategic objectives and directions for the promotion, management, use and development of the Resort.

2.2 CONSULTATION

In developing this Strategy the Board has, and will continue to, consult with:

- Victorian Government;
- Relevant municipal councils and public authorities;
- Resort lease holders; and
- Any other persons, businesses or community groups/local organisations whose interests are likely to be affected by the Strategy.

In finalising this Strategy, stakeholder consultation will be conducted through a series of workshops and meetings, to advise broad agreement about the Resorts' strategic directions. In addition, the ARMB will seek community input into the development of the Strategy. It is intended that this Strategy will be reviewed in consultation with stakeholders every five years. In the interim, the ARMB and stakeholders will monitor performance and adjust strategies and actions when appropriate. The ARMB will report annually upon the implementation of the Strategy to stakeholders and the Minister.

2.3 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The ARMB is charged with the responsibility of managing the Mt Stirling Alpine Resort pursuant to the Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997. This Strategy has been prepared as the overarching planning document for the Mount Stirling Alpine Resort. The Strategy is informed by the Alpine Resorts Planning Scheme Mount Stirling Local Planning policy which is based on the findings of the Mount Stirling Alpine Resort Assessment and Panel Report on the Environmental Effects Statement (EES), February 1997. This Strategy responds to the Victorian Government's Alpine Resorts 2020 Strategy, which recognizes the ARMB has stewardship responsibility for significant public assets that must be managed in an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable manner.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

3. THE MISSION FOR THE RESORT

Mount Stirling is Victoria's premier destination for all season nature based tourism, education and recreation with appropriate public facilities showcasing new environmental technologies where possible.

BY 2020, MT STIRLING WILL:

- Be considered a year round holiday destination, providing a number of guided and self-guided activities and events for guests, including snow sports, bushwalking, horse riding, four wheel driving and mountain biking, as well as nature appreciation.
- Continue to exercise environmentally sustainable practices.
- Have a strong brand image and a successful marketing program aimed at increasing year-round visitation.
- Provide a safe and serviced access road between Mount Buller and Mount Stirling.
- Provide safe and secure camping facilities at the snowline.
- Offer easily accessible and improved shelter facilities.
- Have, in association with Mount Buller, achieved economic, social and environmental sustainability which will increase the Resorts' overall attractiveness and educational opportunities.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

4.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTONS

The following statements of strategic direction have been adapted from the 2020 Strategy and will guide the ARMB toward the achievement of its strategic objectives.

PRIORITY	STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Climate Change	To protect and enhance the natural environment whilst adaptively planning to improve winter experiences to mitigate the potential impacts of climate change.
Resort Use & Visitation	To promote and facilitate increased use year-round through improved amenities and access, increasing range of activities on offer and development of an events schedule.
Resort Development	To develop new and improve existing public infrastructure to improve and expand visitor experiences year-round.
Vibrancy	To encourage and reward stakeholders who share the vision and to facilitate a sustainable increase in visitor numbers across a suitable range of activities offering quality products, a variety of experiences and value for money.
Environmental Management	To improve and increase awareness of the natural environment via rehabilitation projects, exclusion of cattle grazing, rationalization of tracks and trails and development of interpretive programs.
Land Stewardship	To improve management via strengthening relationships with neighbouring public land management agencies including addressing potential capacity issues into the future.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

5. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

❖ Actions designated by this symbol are actions of an operational nature that have been included in the Strategy for completeness.

5.1 CLIMATE CHANGE			
2020 Strategy		<i>Resorts will remain committed to a snow tourism industry and proactively plan for the impacts of climate change.</i>	
Mount Stirling Strategy		<i>Protect the environment and plan for climate change.</i>	
2020 REFERENCE		ACTIONS	
5.1.1	GLOBAL WARMING	Protect the natural environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lead Mount Stirling stakeholders in efforts to mitigate the factors impacting upon the climate. ❖ Continue implementation of pest plant and animal control programs and rehabilitation programs to protect the natural environment and facilitate resilience to global warming.
5.1.2	SNOW MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	Improve management techniques to ensure best snow holding capacity on trails and access to the snowline in low snow conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Improve access to the snowline in low snow conditions by resurfacing the road from TBJ to King Saddle and King Saddle to the Machinery Shed. ❖ Continue to undertake drainage and strategic vegetation management tasks to increase snow holding capacity and longevity on tracks and trails.
5.1.3	COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES	Encourage stakeholders to provide an increased array of snow and non-snow season events, activities and attractions to mitigate the impact of poor snow seasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Support stakeholders who share the vision for the future and assist them in the provision of a wide array of activities available year-round that are adaptive to environmental conditions. • Refer Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

5.2 RESORT USE & VISITATION			
2020 Strategy		<i>Alpine Resorts will provide high quality experiences, facilitating safe access to Victoria's broader alpine environment for recreational use through both winter and non winter seasons.</i>	
Mount Stirling Strategy		<i>Improve access and enhance the quality of experience for visitors.</i>	
2020 REFERENCE		ACTIONS	
5.2.1	WINTER VISITATION	Explore opportunities to stimulate winter visitation by improving the quality of the winter experience for visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Improve access to the snowline in low snow conditions (Refer to Section 5.1.2). ❖ Continue to improve the Mount Stirling winter product offering by adding variety and investigating the viability of additional on snow activities and range of business opportunities. ❖ Continue to improve the quality of experience for cross-country skiing by sensitive trail management and further developing complementary aspects of the Mount Buller and Mount Stirling cross-country opportunities. ❖ Continue to advance the quality of experience for day and snow play visitors by improving access to and quality of public facilities.
5.2.2	NON-WINTER VISITATION	Develop opportunities to stimulate non-winter visitation and educational services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Continue to plan, develop and construct a first class multi-use trail system that is environmentally sustainable and is recognised as an attraction in its own right. ❖ Continue to encourage and foster the provision of educational and interpretive services. • Evaluate options for, and where feasible assist with the development of, additional recreational, educational and interpretive facilities. • Develop a number of summer events that concentrate on key holiday periods and provide commercial incentives for stakeholders and other business operators to generate income during the non-snow season.
5.2.3	MARKETING	Seek to increase visitation via improved marketing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Undertake market research and visitor monitoring (including analysis) to focus marketing efforts ❖ Develop a Marketing Strategy addressing target markets, improvements to winter experiences, including additional off-snow product and opportunities during the non-snow season.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

5.3 RESORT DEVELOPMENT			
2020 Strategy		<i>Resorts will enhance the visitor experience by providing attractive, ecologically sustainable mountain villages that have local character and a distinct sense of place in the landscape.</i>	
Mount Stirling Strategy		<i>Develop facilities at Mount Stirling that complement the natural alpine environment.</i>	
2020 REFERENCE		ACTIONS	
5.3.1	ALPINE RESORTS PLANNING SCHEME	All proposals will adequately address the Mount Stirling Local Planning Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Continue to ensure any development proposals adequately address the Mount Stirling Local Planning Policy taking into account the recommendations of the Mount Stirling EES 1997 and legislative provisions. • Develop, after consultation, recommendations for amendments to the Mount Stirling Local Planning Policy where appropriate.
5.3.2	PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	Improve existing and develop new public facilities using innovative environmental technologies where feasible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Continue to maintain existing public facilities and upgrade using leading environmental technologies where feasible. • Construct additional refuge shelters for public use consistent with principles of equity and access, including the provision of sustainable toileting facilities which blend with the natural environment. • Facilitate, where appropriate, alternate temporary camping facilities. • Develop interpretive sites and trails at key locations. • Plan, fund and invest in public infrastructure identified as being necessary for the future development and use of the Resort.
5.3.3	ACCESS	Improve access and the connection between Mount Stirling and Mount Buller for all users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Continue pursuing the development and construction of the Buller-Stirling Touring Link road, subject to Government funding and planning permit. • Work towards the closure of the road across the summit and the development of an alternate route in association with summit access, car parking and other public amenities. ❖ Liaise and negotiate with VicRoads to seal the Mount Stirling Access Road. ❖ Improve seasonal road closure and directional signage including, in partnership with Parks Victoria, classification of 4WD tracks. • Continue to enhance equity of access and further develop Mount Stirling as the people's mountain, offering value for money to all visitors.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

5.3 RESORT DEVELOPMENT continued

5.3.4	SAFETY	The relative isolation of Mount Stirling provides its own challenges for risk minimisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Maintain and continuously improve the Mount Buller and Mount Stirling Risk Management Strategy. ❖ Implement and exercise an Emergency Management Plan. ❖ Continue to operate the Mount Stirling Ski Patrol in accordance with best practice. ❖ Continue to manage geotechnical hazards to maintain and improve visitor safety in access. • Construct additional refuge shelters for public use.
5.3.5	ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGIES	Improve management of energy use to decrease significant energy demands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Sustainable Energy Strategy for Mount Stirling. • Investigate reinstatement of hydro system. • Where feasible, utilise alternative energy options when facility upgrades or new developments are required.

5.4 VIBRANCY

2020 Strategy		<i>Resorts will be vibrant economic entities making a strong contribution to Victoria and their local regions.</i>	
Mount Stirling Strategy		<i>Encourage year-round activity.</i>	
2020 REFERENCE		ACTIONS	
5.4.1	ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE	Mount Stirling will continue to provide opportunities for nature-based adventure tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instigate start up business support incentives to achieve growth in business activity (particularly all-season). • Facilitate the extension of private commercial activity on Mount Stirling during summer.
5.4.3	VISITOR YIELD – WINTER AND NON WINTER	Increase promotion of facilities attractions to improve visitor experience and encourage return visits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

5.5 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT			
2020 Strategy		<i>The future management and development of the Resorts will be undertaken within an ecologically sustainable framework.</i>	
Mount Stirling Strategy		<i>Proactively manage our environment to protect and enhance environmental sustainability.</i>	
2020 REFERENCE		ACTIONS	
5.5.1	THE ALPINE ENVIRONMENT	Raise visitor awareness and appreciation of environmental values.	❖ Increased provision of interpretative and educational experiences in a way complementary to that offered by DSE and Parks Victoria.
5.5.2	FLORA AND FAUNA MANAGEMENT	Maintain alpine flora and fauna in as healthy and robust condition as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Continue to implement the Environmental Management Strategy for the Resorts. ● Support further research into species ecology and monitoring of flora and fauna communities, including exotic species. ● Reduce environmental impacts by preventing the ingress of grazing cattle from neighbouring land. ● Improve understanding and increase interpretation of logging and reforestation activities in and around Mount Stirling.
5.5.3	ALPINE FIRES	Implement Wildfire management Strategy	❖ Continue to develop and implement the Wildfire Management Strategy for the Resorts, in consultation with neighbouring and relevant authorities.
5.5.4	WATER MANAGEMENT	Continue to meet Statutory Water Regulatory Authority requirements and maintain environmental flows and protection of catchments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Continue to ensure waste water is treated to the standard required to minimise impact on natural hydrology. ❖ Adhere to the Safe Drinking Water Act. ❖ Continue to independently monitor water courses in order to identify any negative impacts. ❖ Continue to manage roads, tracks and trails to minimise drainage, erosion and sedimentation.
5.5.5	LAND STABILITY	Continue to take responsibility for monitoring and assessing geotechnical hazards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Continue monitoring Mount Stirling in order to determine possible geotechnical failure. ● Develop mitigation programs and bid for funds from government to address areas of potential geotechnical instability. ● Liaise with VicRoads in regard to any land stability issue on the Mount Stirling Access Road.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mount Stirling Alpine Resort

5.6 LAND STEWARDSHIP			
2020 Strategy		<i>Resorts management will work cooperatively with other agencies and embrace their stewardship role.</i>	
Mount Stirling Strategy		<i>Strengthen and build stakeholder relationships.</i>	
2020 REFERENCE		ACTIONS	
5.6.1	PUBLIC LAND	Manage Mount Stirling for and on behalf of all Victorians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Continue to foster strong relationships with – the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Department of Planning and Community Development, Parks Victoria, Mansfield Shire Council, Vic Forests, Vic Roads and the Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority.
5.6.2	INDIGENOUS HERITAGE	Ensure that indigenous heritage places are identified, protected and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build stronger relationships with the Taungarung people to develop interpretative products and ensure that sites of indigenous significance are recorded, assessed and monitored for impact of potential development.
5.6.3	EUROPEAN HERITAGE	Promote opportunities to enhance public appreciation of the history and heritage of Victoria's alpine areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Maintain and enhance the Mirimbah Park area as a public open space. • Provide interpretive products relating to early logging and grazing histories • Identify, record and assess significant historic places and protect these from damaging human activity.
5.6.4	RESORT MANAGEMENT, STAKEHOLDERS AND ADJOINING PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS	Foster and maintain co-operative relationships with government, neighbouring land authorities and other stakeholders to achieve the complementary land management objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The ARMB will continue to remain consultative and responsive to stakeholders. ❖ The ARMB will continue to build and strengthen relationships with other relevant land management agencies to plan for and provide complementary infrastructure including road access, public amenities and facilities, signage and the provision of water.
5.6.5	LEASING POLICY	Administer leasing and sub-leasing arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Continue to build relationships with siteholders to ensure that negotiations for lease renewals are held prior to expiry of existing leases and that all lease applications are handled in a thorough, timely, and transparent manner.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 CONCLUSION

The preparation of a Management Strategy for the Mount Stirling Resort, consistent with the objectives of the Alpine Resorts Management Act 1997 and the Alpine Resorts 2020 Strategy is vital to providing direction for the future of the area. This Strategy will guide development, provide a framework for effective management and, in partnership with stakeholders, industry associations and government bodies, see the sustainable development of the Resorts as significant tourism asset for the State of Victoria.

Once adopted, the Strategy will be reviewed at the end of the 5 year period, or earlier as deemed appropriate by the ARMB to ensure it remains current and relevant. Any review will provide opportunity for extensive public consultation and a 4 week document inspection period.

Land managers and other authorities operating within the Resort must take all reasonable steps to give effect to the Strategic Management Strategy for the Mount Stirling Alpine Resort.