

# Media release



## FROM THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING

**DATE: Thursday, October 19, 2006**

### **GREEN LIGHT FOR \$500 MILLION MT HOTHAM REDEVELOPMENT**

A \$500 million alpine village redevelopment at Mt Hotham ski resort has moved a step closer after the Minister for Planning, Rob Hulls, approved a planning scheme amendment and permit.

Mr Hulls adopted an independent planning panel's recommendations to support the Balé resort project, which includes creating a new village centre with retail, entertainment and speciality services designed to cater for year-round tourism.

The planning scheme amendment will allow the Great Alpine Road to be realigned to the western side of the existing resort to help kick-start the project, which also includes 42 luxury apartments and new accommodation with 1414 beds.

The road realignment allows for new accommodation and underground car parking facilities, a public transport interchange and the new village centre.

"A new village centre at Mt Hotham has been broadly supported for more than 30 years now and this road realignment is the first stage in a 10-year project that will eventually create more than 550 full-time jobs," Mr Hulls said.

Amendment C17 to the Alpine Resorts Planning Scheme creates a set of planning controls to support redeveloping the village area.

Planning approval has also been granted for a new entrance gateway, ski field operations facility, restaurant and snowmaking operations centre at the Heavenly Valley/Loch carpark.

The existing workshop facilities will be relocated to the Heavenly Valley site to free up land that is better suited to resort development, as well as improving facilities for visitors.

"This amendment will improve pedestrian and vehicle safety, facilitate new development and better design outcomes and improve the layout of the Hotham Village," Mr Hulls said.

“The road realignment, together with the village hub development, will separate cars, pedestrians and skiers and create a more user-friendly environment for workers and tourists.

Today’s announcement is in line with the recommendations outlined in an independent panel report, which followed public hearings in Bright, Mt Hotham and Melbourne. The panel thoroughly investigated the site and associated issues, and responded to public submissions, including concerns raised about the habitat of the mountain pygmy possum.

The panel report noted that the area affected by Amendment C17 was clear of known habitat for the endangered possum and indicated that impacts on flora and fauna would be minor.

“We have carefully considered the environmental impacts, and I am pleased to support a project that will provide many benefits to Victorians and our burgeoning tourism industry,” Mr Hulls said.