

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

to

**PLANNING PANELS VICTORIA**

about parking aspects of the

**Amendment C17 to the Alpine Resorts Planning Scheme**

and

**Heavenly Valley Planning Application 2005/0337,  
Mt Hotham Alpine Resort**

by Peter Nichols

12 Waterview Avenue,  
Wynnum, Queensland 4178  
tel: 07.3396.1324  
fax: 07.3396.1324  
email: [petenichols@mthotham.com.au](mailto:petenichols@mthotham.com.au)

# 1. Introduction

My name is Peter Charles Nichols, environmental planner, of 12 Waterview Ave, Wynnum, Queensland 4178. I have experience in this field since 1965, in UK, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland and in Victoria; in public sector and consultant capacities (cv at Appendix 1).

I was instructed in July 2006 by The Planning Group, Melbourne, to assess and report on parking aspects of two proposals at the Mt Hotham Alpine Resort, for the:

- Amendment C17 to the Alpine Resorts Planning Scheme to enable the proposed New Hotham Village Redevelopment Project (NHVRP) for a redevelopment of Village Centre for Hotham Village; and
- Heavenly Valley planning application no. 2005 / 0337.

I have been involved in what became the NHVRP since the Board's call for expressions of interest in January 2005, and in other Hotham projects including the Resort's Access and Parking Strategy and Parking Precinct Plan. For those purposes, I have resided at Mt Hotham over the last two summers.

During these stays, I have observed the Hotham Village Centre, and the Heavenly Valley area before and during the Reservoir's construction at the Loch area and have also spent time as a walker on the Australian Alps Walking Track.

## 2. Summary of conclusions about parking

A summary of my conclusions is that, for the reasons set out including parking requirements and related discretionary provisions of the Scheme and the Mt Hotham situation, I consider that:

Amendment C17 and New Hotham Village Redevelopment Project (NHVRP) -

- the 501 car spaces proposed will, given the various efficiencies and co-use considerations, fulfil the requirements for that development and will improve the quantity, location, safety, environmental and sustainability aspects of parking at the Resort. I do not consider that there is a shortfall that needs to be met by a contribution in lieu;
- the Ashton Traffic Services conclusion to this effect is supported;
- peak public parking at Hotham is quite different from most public parking in that it is managed in a pro active way on a Resort-wide basis by the designated parking officers through radio contact;
- the NHVRP once implemented would defer new carpark provision by the Board by several years, and creates a short and medium term bonus of significant surplus centrally located parking. During this period, the Board's annual parking surveys and operational experience can make a better judgement on the efficiencies actually gained through the new proposed managed parking sites and the other benefits mentioned. There are adequate opportunities for additional public parking areas at Mt Hotham to meet the need.

Heavenly Valley planning application -

- the amended Heavenly Valley planning application and the needs of walkers and other visitors, should be reasonably met by the 24 public car spaces proposed on site and other parking opportunities at Mt Hotham. I note that all parking needs generated by the skifield workshop are to be designated to within its fenced compound.

### 3. Alpine Resorts Planning Scheme - parking

Parking provision has been recognised for some time as a significant issue at Mt Hotham, with its high ecological values and steep topography falling each way from the ridge access road, the Great Alpine Road (GAR).

The Alpine Resorts Planning Scheme was created under the new format Planning Scheme provisions in November 1997. A review of the Mt Hotham section of the Scheme under Amendment C6 resulted in gazettal of this major review in July 2002. This provides a comprehensive Strategic framework for planning in the Resort and is reviewed regularly.

Relevant objectives in its **State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF)** include:

#### 15.09-1 Objective

To assist the protection and conservation of biodiversity, including native vegetation retention and provision of habitats for native plants and animals and control of pest plants and animals.

#### 15.12-1 Objective

To encourage land use and development that is consistent with the efficient use of energy and the minimisation of greenhouse gas emissions.

#### 15.13-1 Objective

To protect and manage significant environmental features and ecosystems and facilitate sustainable use and development of Alpine Resorts for year round use and activity, and to provide a framework for the planning of the alpine areas.

#### 17.04-1 Objective

To encourage tourism development to maximise the employment and long-term economic, social and cultural benefits of developing the State as a competitive domestic and international tourist destination.

#### 18.01-1 Objective

To integrate land use and transport planning around existing and planned declared highways, railways, principal bus routes and tram lines.

#### 18.02-1 Objective

To ensure access is provided to developments in accordance with forecast demand taking advantage of all available modes of transport and to minimise impact on existing transport networks and the amenity of surrounding areas.

#### 19.03-1 Objective

To achieve high quality urban design and architecture that:

- Reflects the particular characteristics, aspirations and cultural identity of the community.
- Enhances livability, diversity, amenity and safety of the public realm.

- Promotes attractiveness of towns and cities within broader strategic contexts.

Relevant SPPF geographic strategies include:

### **15.13-3 Geographic Strategies**

In planning for Alpine areas planning authorities and responsible authorities should:

- Promote development for active recreation solely at Falls Creek, Lake Mountain, Mt Buffalo, Mt Baw Baw, Mt Buller and Mt Hotham.
- Promote intensive residential and commercial development at Falls Creek, Mt Baw Baw, Mt Buller and Mt Hotham.

The Scheme's **Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF)** includes the following relevant provisions:

In the **Mt Hotham Strategic Statement**, Clause 21.06-1 Profile – movement identified the parking situation as:

Car parking is at a premium on peak days, when the number of visitors may exceed 6,500. Bus services are provided from Melbourne to the Resort during the ski season. The Resort currently provides approximately 1550 car spaces and parking for 30 buses.

The majority of car spaces are provided in four car parks located at the eastern end of the Resort: Whitey's Car Park, Slatey Car Park, Corner Car Park and Wire Plain Car Park. Further car parking is available directly adjoining the Great Alpine Road, particularly between Hotham Village and Davenport. A shuttle bus service provides a connection between the car parks, Hotham Village, Davenport, the ski fields, the cross-country trailheads and the Biathlon Range located at Whisky Flat.

Clause 21.06-2 Key influences noted:

#### **Access within the Resort**

Pedestrian and skier access within the Resort is currently constrained due to a number of factors. These include the bi-nodal nature of the Resort, the location of the Great Alpine Road through the centre of the village and the separation of the main snowfield from the beginners slopes at Davenport. The shared use of the Great Alpine Road by skiers, pedestrians and vehicles creates conflict and reduces the efficiency and safety of traffic flow. This potential for conflict is exacerbated by the lack of skier bridges/underpasses at well used crossing points along the Road. Minimising conflict and improving links, particularly during the winter season, are essential considerations for future operations and development within the Resort. The design and location of access roads and car parking areas within the Resort must consider safety, environmental systems and scenic qualities.

### **Car parking**

Ensuring adequate provision is made at the Resort for both short-term and long-term parking is a major consideration for future development. The provision of parking at the Resort needs to be carefully linked with intra-village transport to ensure ease of access and reduce congestion on the Great Alpine Road, particularly within the accommodation areas. The provision of on-site car parking in association with accommodation is currently limited due to shortage of flat land, which has resulted from the historic construction of the Resort along the ridgeline. Visitors seeking serviced accommodation increasingly request either on-site car parking or parking in proximity to their accommodation. This parking needs to be accessible and therefore requires all weather access. The provision of on-site parking will increase pedestrian and skier safety as it reduces vehicle movements within the Resort. It will also reduce the demand for converting undeveloped land into broad acre open car parking areas

### **Clause 21.06-3 Vision – Strategic framework includes:**

#### **Land Use Planning Objectives**

To achieve the Mt Hotham Alpine Resort goal, planning applications for the use and development of land shall satisfy the following strategic objectives:

- To ensure that appropriate and well located car parking facilities and appropriate public transport are provided to meet visitor needs.

#### **Strategic Land Use Framework Plans**

The purpose of the Framework Plans is to highlight where opportunities and constraints exist within the Resort and identify locations where specific land use outcomes may be investigated. The major strategic directions identified in the Land Use Framework Plans include:

- Designation of four (4) accommodation areas within the Resort, where different land uses and types of development will be encouraged, through the preparation of Comprehensive Development Plans;
- Identification of sections of the Great Alpine Road that should be re-aligned to improve vehicle, pedestrian and skier safety;
- Identification of locations where skier bridges/underpasses are recommended to facilitate safe and easy skier movement;
- Nomination of areas where additional car parking is to be provided;
- Identification of areas where visitor transit lounge facilities are to be provided.

### **Clause 21.06-4 Objectives – Strategies – Implementation includes a section on Movement, set out here in full:**

#### **Movement**

Access to and within the Resort is a critical issue during the winter snow season. The current shared use of the Great Alpine Road by skiers, pedestrians and vehicles creates conflict and reduces the efficiency of traffic flow. The movement of skiers between the Hotham Village and Davenport precincts is also difficult.

The proposed relocation of the Great Alpine Road at Hotham Village and Davenport is designed to improve vehicle access and circulation through the Resort, as well as improving pedestrian/skier safety. The provision of new skier bridges and cross country trail underpasses at various points along the Road will also reduce the potential for conflict between vehicles and pedestrians/skiers. The movement of skiers from the Village to Davenport will be improved by a new off-road skier access trail/path.

Access to the Resort has been fundamentally altered by the construction of the Mt Hotham airport. Travel times from major interstate cities and overseas destinations are greatly reduced, which opens up new markets for Mt Hotham and Dinner Plain and provides a competitive edge over other resorts. A helicopter link to Falls Creek during winter also enhances visitor access.

#### Objectives

- To ensure a high level of accessibility to the Resort.
- To ensure that parking provision and public transport to and within the Resort meets visitor needs.
- To ensure vehicles, pedestrians and skiers can safely and efficiently move within and throughout the Resort.
- To provide convenient access to, egress from and movement within the developed areas and ski fields, thus facilitating integration between residential areas and the ski field system.
- To discourage vehicular access on subdivisional roads within the Davenport precinct during declared snow season.
- To provide car parking on sites where direct access is available from sealed roads.
- To develop improved pedestrian and skier links between the Davenport and Hotham Central areas.
- To provide safe access for fire brigade vehicles at all times.

#### Strategies

The strategies for achieving these objectives are:

- Continued co-ordination and co-operation with VicRoads regarding the management and maintenance of the Great Alpine Road.
- Co-operatively market the Resort with the Mt Hotham Airport Management through package promotions and encourage airlines/aircraft to service the Resort during nonpeak periods.
- Assess the realignment of the Great Alpine Road at Hotham Village (behind the Snowbird Inn and the Resort Management Board building) and Davenport (adjacent the Davenport subdivision) to facilitate safe pedestrian and skier movement within the Village Centre and Davenport mixed-use precinct.
- Improve crossing of the Great Alpine Road to the ski field through provision of a skier overpass adjacent to Spiral Stairs and skier underpasses at Wire Plan and to the west of Slaty Cutting.
- Create a skier and pedestrian spine along the existing alignment of the Great Alpine Road at Hotham Village and Davenport and ensure adequate

lift infrastructure is available to facilitate skier movement within the Resort.

- Limit private vehicle movements in the Resort (other than through traffic) to drop-offs and pick-ups at the designated loading points and prohibit vehicle movement within Davenport during the designated ski season.
- Manage parking on the basis of length of stay. Short term/day car parking areas are to be located as close as possible to the Resort with day parking to be provided at Loch car park and at the former helicopter landing site opposite Spiral Stairs.
- Encourage persons residing at the Resort for long periods of time (e.g. throughout the ski season) to park their vehicles off the mountain at locations such as Harrierville.
- Assess the need for additional visitor parking in undercover, multi-level parking facilities at the Corral car park within Hotham Village, at Whitey's car park and Lawlers car park. Any proposals must be assessed taking into account environmental, ecological, economic, aesthetic, servicing and safety considerations.
- Encourage buses as the preferred form of transport between Mt Hotham, the parking areas beyond the developed area and Dinner Plain. Provide undercover bus transit facilities at the Corral car park within Hotham Village and well-located pick up and drop off points throughout the Resort.
- Encourage sites with all weather road access to provide on-site car parking, preferably with shared access. Ensure new developments do not lead to a reduction in the existing provision of public car parking.
- Maximise the capacity of existing car parking areas by facilitating their expansion and consolidation after appropriate environmental assessment.
- Maintain an operational oversnow link between and through the Village and Davenport precincts.

### Implementation

These strategies will be implemented through the following actions:

- Investigate the feasibility of, and potential funding options for, the proposed realignment of the Great Alpine Road at Hotham Village and Davenport in partnership with VicRoads.
- Undertake a feasibility study of the potential for an undercover bus transit interchange and car park under the Corral car park at Hotham Village.
- Undertake a feasibility study of the potential for a multi level undercover car parking facility at Whitey's car park and Lawlers car park.
- Apply a Local Policy for car parking as an interim management measure until the car parking management arrangements and level of provision is resolved through the preparation of a Parking Precinct Plan.
- Prepare a Parking Precinct Plan for the Resort, which clearly sets out the infrastructure and management arrangements necessary for the operation of the existing and planned transport, as well as the access system within the Resort.

Clause 21.06-5 Monitoring and review of the LPPF includes:

Key Element	Indicator	Target
<b>Movement</b>		
Provision of adequate car parking	Number of car spaces provided as part of new development	1 car space per 3 beds in Hotham Village and Davenport Road Frontage CDP areas.
Separation of vehicle and pedestrian/skier traffic	Number of applications for enhancement of pedestrian/movement within the Village.	Improvement in safety conditions for pedestrians/skiers.

Clause 22.06-1 introduced under Amendment C6 is the interim parking requirement for Mt Hotham. It needs to be read in conjunction with the general parking requirement in Clause 52.06. The Scheme provides that all aspects of the latter Clause apply at Mt Hotham except where provision is made in Clause 22.06; i. e. for accommodation buildings. Any use not specified in the Table to Clause 52.06 shall provide parking to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

The detailed dimensions and other design matters in Clause 52.06 are relevant to the Heavenly Valley planning application, but are more relevant to consideration at the planning approval stages of the proposed NHVRP.,

## 4. Alpine Resorts 2020 Strategy

Acting Premier and Minister for Environment John Thwaites released the Alpine Resorts 2020 Strategy in June 2004. The 2020 Strategy provides a blueprint for growth and future confidence for Victoria's alpine resorts. It points out the Crown land context, stating:

The alpine resorts are owned by the Crown and managed for and on behalf of all Victorians to grow the common wealth of Victoria through the optimal management of these Crown assets.

(p. 34)

The Strategy's main actions for most Victoria's Alpine resorts including Mt Hotham will:

- remain committed to snow tourism and manage the impacts of climate change through further investment in snow making for higher altitude alpine resorts, and move towards four season use;
- stimulate the winter market, acknowledging leisure trends and a maturing population and stimulate ... high quality experiences and safe access;
- develop the visitor experience by providing attractive mountain villages with local character, and ... promote individual resort character;
- encourage a diverse range of quality accommodation in a variety of styles;
- ensure the resorts will be vibrant economic entities; and
- develop an investment strategy for each resort to attract further private sector interest.

While not specifically addressing the operational issue of parking, the Strategy sets the strategic context for its consideration as one component of development proposals.

## 5. Access & Parking Strategy / Parking Precinct Plan

When advising the Mt Hotham Board of his approval of Amendment C6, the Acting Minister for Planning in his letter of 30 June 2002 drew attention to a number of subsequent matters to be pursued. One of these was "Investigate the development of a Car Parking Precinct Plan".

The Mt Hotham draft Access and Parking Strategy and Parking Precinct Plan (APS/PPP) has been developed since 2002 with surveys, assessment and reporting work by The Planning Group and Ashton Engineering in addition to surveys by Board staff, and cost information from IRAS Engineering Service. I understand the form and content of the APS/PPP have evolved in response to the altering format and contents preferences expressed by Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).

After DSE general support, the consultation draft was considered by the Board on 25 February 2005, and made available for public consultation from April to June 2005, including a meeting in Melbourne on 18 May 2005. Eight submissions were received, and considered by the Mt Hotham Board on 18 November 2005, when the draft was adopted..

Some relevant parts of its Conclusions are:

Presently there are 1,751 carparking spaces (which include public and private spaces) at Mt Hotham.

The Resort experiences peak demand events where the parking demand is at 95-100%, rather than the usual 60% parking.

The strategy forecasts that the sleeping capacity will increase by 49% by 2012. Three scenarios were considered to forecast potential parking demand and their effect on the parking shortfall:

**Scenario 1:** Small decrease in bus and coach use – 1,385 carpark spaces;

**Scenario 2:** Significant increase in bus and coach use – 401 carpark spaces; and

**Scenario 3:** Business-As-Usual, increase Dinner Plain Shuttle – 959 carpark spaces.

It is believed that Scenario 3 with an increase in the proportion of day visitors utilizing the bus, is the most achievable.

A proportion of the required 959 parking spaces can be provided by developments providing on-site car spaces as planned in two of the Comprehensive Development Plan areas: Hotham Village and Davenport GAR Frontage. The nett yield of parking spaces on development sites is expected to be 315 (Table 25); this leaves 644 carparking spaces to be provided by other means.

The strategy evaluates seven sites having ability to accommodate further carparking or identified by the Resort as having potential:

- GAR
- Lawler's and Higgi Drive in Hotham Village;
- opposite CFA in Davenport;
- between Taki and Hangman's Drop Lodges in Davenport;
- Whitey's Carpark;
- Wire Plain; and
- Whiskey Flat.

The Strategy concludes there are several options for further parking at Mt Hotham. Extended surface parking at Wire Plain, a structure including coaches opposite CFA and a multi-deck carparking facility at Taki / Hangman's Drop are the three preferred locations, in that sequence. It also concludes that two further sites (a parking structure at Whitey's and from CFA towards Big D) are also feasible and can be added when needed.

Funding of these proposals would be levied through a cash-in-lieu scheme on new development or refurbishment of all land uses, not just residential, that cannot provide on-site carparking.

The parking space contribution in lieu was costed at an average of the costs of new surface and structure parking provision. It was \$11,000 for the Board's financial year from 1 November 2004, automatically indexed annually at 1.25 the eight capital cities' CPI.

It considered that there would be no parking available at Loch Spur from 2006, after completion of the Water Recycling Reservoir.

At the time of the Board's adoption of the APS/PPP, the MFS / Ray Group commenced discussions with the Board and DSE for new, centrally located managed parking in the central village as part of the NHVRP.

Managed parking is an innovation for Mt Hotham. To date there has not been an economy of scale that would warrant this approach. Given the significant change in car parking numbers and management arrangements proposed by this development, the Board decided to defer any further work with DSE until consideration of this proposal by MFS/Ray Group was concluded

## 6. Amendment C17 / NHVRP parking provision and assessment

NHVRP proposes that the accommodation buildings on most of the relevant sites are to have central parking under the GAR. Some sites in the exhibited CDP1 (2006) are to provide their own on-site parking such as sites 14 and 18 as shown on the CD Plan. The proposed accommodation, on the sites included in the NHVRP needing the central parking, has 1,164 beds. Car parking spaces in the NHVRP, total 501 cars.

However, the exhibited CDP1 (2006) lists sites 22 and 23 as included in the 501 car spaces, whereas I am advised that the 1,164 beds do not include the accommodation provision on those two sites. If this is correct, then I consider that these two sites should be excluded from the list in the exhibited CDP so that their parking needs can be assessed when redevelopment options are available.

In addition to accommodation provision, NHVRP proposes 4,511 m<sup>2</sup> of ground floor retail (taken as 25% of buildings 1 – 8).

The parking provision calculations under the Scheme are, for accommodation uses, in the Hotham-specific Clause 22.06. It requires one space for three beds. The NHVRP specifies parking for 1,164 beds in its central location creating a need for 388 car spaces at the 1 carspace per 3 beds ratio specified in the Scheme.

Clause 52.06, applying throughout Victoria, addresses uses not covered by another Clause or by a Parking Precinct Plan. The Clause 52.06 rates apply to the non-accommodation uses in NHVRP. It specifies that its requirement for parking spaces can be reduced or waived, and that for this purpose the applicant must satisfy the responsible authority that the reduced provision is justified due to:

1. Any relevant parking precinct plan.
2. The availability of car parking in the locality.
3. The availability of public transport in the locality.
4. Any reduction in car parking demand due to the sharing of car spaces by multiple uses, either because of variation of car parking demand over time or because of efficiencies gained from the consolidation of shared car parking spaces.
5. Any car parking deficiency or surplus associated with the existing use of the land.
6. Any credit which should be allowed for a car parking demand deemed to have been provided in association with a use which existed before the change of parking requirement.
7. Local traffic management.
8. Local amenity including pedestrian amenity.
9. An empirical assessment of car parking demand.

10. Any other relevant consideration.

Mt Hotham is a destination for visitors in its own right especially in winter when the Mountain is at its peak load for parking. The resort is unlikely to be the destination for only one experience. Given its relative isolation and its intrinsic values as a snow/hiking experience, it would be reasonable to consider that visitors are likely to experience the snow/hiking in some recreational form as well as shop and eat within the resort as part of the one trip. For example it would be highly unlikely for a visitor to come to Mt Hotham for a meal only and not utilise other facilities. Given this it is reasonable to expect that there would be some associated uses with the trip to the snow or mountains and that each use would not generate its own traffic.

Cl. 52.06 rates for non-accommodation parking should therefore be considered in this context in addition to the Cl. 22.06 accommodation-based parking provision.

The reduction in parking numbers criteria of Cl. 52.06, especially 2 – 4, 7 and 9, are met in a number of ways by several beneficial / efficiency factors applying to NHVRP. These include:

1. at the few peak parking demand times in winter, as mentioned above, the non-accommodation uses at Mt Hotham do not generate parking demand in addition to that already generated by the accommodation. Put simply, no one goes to Hotham in winter solely to shop. The non-accommodation uses are support to the NHVRP's and the Resort's accommodation, and are components of NHVRP, in conjunction with MFS's other projects at Dinner Plain and the Horsehair Plain Airport, aimed at implementing Government's intention to make Hotham an all-seasons Resort. Thus, the additional requirements of Clause 52.06 over Clause 22.06 are not a reasonable indication of cumulative parking generation or need for NHVRP. Accepting this has been practice at Mt Hotham in the last few years; before that, the responsible authority did not require new development to provide on site parking or a specific parking contribution..
2. the efficiency dividend of managed parking. Clause 52.06 recognises this efficiency potential without quantification and requires promotion of the "efficient use of car spaces through the consolidation of car parking". Two types of management apply to make car parking at Mt Hotham more efficient. The first is that the Board's dedicated parking officers manage and direct all public parking in the Resort (94% of car spaces; draft APS/PPP p. 36), and will continue to do so; quite different from other developments outside of the alpine resorts.. Parking officers at Mt Hotham are co-ordinated and linked by radio. The second is that the 501 car spaces in NHVRP will be available on a 'hot space' basis. They will not remain unused in the way on-site parking spaces can remain if the related accommodation is vacant.

While there is no current experience on which to estimate the quantum of this factor in the Mt Hotham situation, the average accommodation occupancy in Mt Hotham throughout winter is 59%. This may indicate that there is up to a 41% efficiency factor due to 'hot' managed parking alone.

3. I understand the NHVRP is to be a staging development proposal and this staging is not part of the CDP or the Amendment but is included in the development consents that would form part of the ongoing approvals required for the development. The calculations above are end-state; when the whole NHVRP is completed in more than a decade at the proponents timing. A major short and medium term public benefit of the NHVRP is that it provides 501 parking spaces in Stage 1. The development proposes that for some years until the Ford Carpark (part site 32-34) is fully built on by the end of stage 5, at earliest winter 2011, there will be 501 new NHVRP car spaces plus the residual Ford car spaces; all in the centre of Mt Hotham. It is considered that this timing is realistic given the difficulty of timing of construction in Alpine areas. The additional parking provision prior to demand is likely to be a significant benefit over at least the next four snow seasons, and is likely to have concomitant energy and air pollution savings.

The proposed staging plan shows five similar-sized buildings 4 – 8 are planned to occupy the present 150 car spaces of the Ford Carpark, and that they will be constructed as follows:

- buildings 7 and 8, south 40% of Ford, in stage 2, at earliest winter 2008; lose 60 car spaces. Then, there will be an extra surplus central 447 car spaces (501 + 150 – 96 for Bale in stage 1, 60 lost and 48 needed for buildings 7 and 8 in stage 2);
  - building 4, north 20% of Ford, in stage 4, at earliest winter 2010; lose 30 car spaces. Then, there will be an extra surplus central 313 car spaces (501 + 150 – 96 for Bale in stage 1, 90 lost, 48 needed for buildings 7 and 8 in stage 2, and 104 for buildings 1 – 4 in stages 3 and 4);
  - buildings 5 and 6, central 40% of Ford, in stage 5, at earliest winter 2011; lose 60 car spaces. Then there will be an extra surplus central 201 car spaces (as last point, less 60 lost and 52 needed for these new buildings);
4. The NHVRP development states it intends to attract an increased number and proportion of guests by air, both interstate and international. The efficiency of this cannot be realistically quantified at this stage, but should be a further small reduction in car parking need.
  5. I am informed that the adjacent Lawler's Apartments (site 20 on the exhibited proposed CDP1) have recently proposing a parking structure for that large property. While it will be neither a commercial or publicly

available carpark, the proposed 20 additional parking spaces on that central site can be expected to remove those vehicles from public car spaces, most probably at Ford. It is conceivable that there may be further proposals of this kind within Mt Hotham.

6. The Board has decided to implement another strategic intention in the Scheme by constructing 32 parking spaces on Higgi Drive. Both this parking and the all-weather intent for this road are shown in the Scheme. This is a similar offset provision for present Ford car spaces to the Lawler's proposal above.
7. Since the draft APS/PPP it appears to me that not all of the Davenport Elbow / Hub / Icon site may be needed for accommodation and related development, as was the assessment then. This provides another parking opportunity south of the recently completed Police Station. I understand there are other opportunities in the future for parking in the resort that meet the strategic intent of the Scheme and these would considerably expand the parking provision at Mt Hotham and will be included in the revised PPP when reconsidered.

Related benefits in energy and vegetation retention terms from the MFS proposal have been mentioned. There should also be significant safety and amenity benefits from the underground parking proposed, with its limited number of accesses and other features. There is also a proposed weather sheltered transit centre.

The Scheme requires no nett loss of present parking spaces. There are 150 in the Ford Car Park, which should be replaced by NHVRP. The total car spaces required are therefore 388 plus 150; equals 538.

For the central parking, the NHVRP proposes 501 parking spaces in a three levels structure below the realigned GAR. The Amendment C17 exhibited material includes a report by Ashton Traffic Services Pty Ltd dated February 2006 concludes its chapter 4, Parking provision, by stating "Provision for parking exceeds the number required by the Masterplan by 110 spaces."

Based on the proposed provision of parking in 10 years time through the NHVRP, and not considering the efficiencies mentioned above, there may be a shortfall in parking numbers however in my view this is unlikely.

Given all the provisions of the Scheme in relation to parking and the situation at Mt Hotham as described including the above efficiency and other dividends, I am of the view that the 501 car spaces proposed in NHVRP will be adequate for that development and for the loss of existing car spaces; and will permanently improve the quantity, location, safety, environmental and sustainability aspects of parking at the Resort. I do not consider that there is a shortfall that should be met by a contribution in lieu.

I therefore agree with the conclusion in the Amendment C17 exhibited Parking and Access report of February 2006 by Ashton Traffic Services P/L (p. 9) to the effect that the proposed parking provision in NHVRP will be adequate, and with other comments including:

The provision of car parking in this format, at a central location, has advantages from an operational and efficiency perspective. It allows for the optimum use of the car spaces provided, particularly at peak times. It means that management arrangements can be implemented so that all spaces can be used at all times, as opposed to car spaces provided on individual sites which may not be available if the associated apartments are not in use. (p. 8)

The Board has an overall management role including land management and parking, and can adapt its existing intentions for further public parking in the light of new surveys about parking needs if and when NHVRP proceeds. As shown, there will be a major surplus of central parking for several years. The NHVRP if implemented defers new carpark provision by the Board by several years, and creates a short and medium term surplus of new central parking. During this period, the Board's annual parking surveys and operational experience can make a better judgement on the efficiencies actually gained through the new managed parking and the other benefits mentioned above.

## **7. Heavenly Valley planning application parking provision and assessment**

Until November 2005, this area was mostly an informal unsealed carpark, at an access point to a number of Mt Hotham and Alpine National Park walks including the West Kiewa, Red Robin Mine, Mt Loch summit, the 650 kms Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) from Walhalla to Canberra and the Three and Four Huts Tracks. The Three Huts Track, a 12 kms circuit connecting the Derrick, heritage-listed Spargo's and Silver Brumby Huts, is proposed for improvement in the Scheme. These Tracks now include the 6.5 m wide southern bank of the new Loch Reservoir past the proposed public toilets.

In the last nine months, the Water Recycling Reservoir has recently been completed on much of the former Loch Carpark. .

The Scheme's Clause 22.06-1 provides "The Loch Car Park shall be retained as a day car parking area for those visitors who do not require access to the Village and for general overflow day parking on peak days." This has been superseded to the extent of the permit for the constructed Reservoir.

I have been asked to consider parking in the planning application's amended plan of 26 July 2006, titled:

### **WORKSHOP ROTATION OPTION 1G - TOTALLY INSIDE GAR ALIGNMENT, SHIFTED FOR AS-BUILT DAM and ADJUSTED FOR DRIVEWAY GRADIENT**

It continues to propose access from the GAR at its Loch Spur apex, and will similarly need to meet VicRoads' requirements. The amended plan proposes the following buildings:

1. skifield workshop of 1,132 m<sup>2</sup>;
2. 225 m<sup>2</sup> indoor restaurant including kitchen, and 270 m<sup>2</sup> verandah;
3. public toilets of 55 m<sup>2</sup>;
4. snowmaking workshop of 220 m<sup>2</sup>;
5. 'improved' pump house, area not given but about 80 m<sup>2</sup>; and
6. new ski patrol building of 120 m<sup>2</sup>.

It also proposes to retain 24 public sealed parking spaces, as well as adequate provision for parking all vehicles generated by the skifield workshop within its compound.

The amended plan's parking need under the Scheme's Clause 52.06 is assessed as follows, with the public toilets and ski patrol facility assessed as not needing additional parking:

Use	Clause	Rate
Skifield workshop (motor repairs)	52.06	10% of site area
Snowmaking workshop (industry)	52.06	2.9 per 100 m <sup>2</sup>
Restaurant	52.06	0.6 per seat
Existing spaces to be replaced	22.06	

Table 1: Parking spaces needed for amended plan by Scheme

My comments are:

The skifield workshop design shows that more than 10% of its fenced site area is available for parking.

- The snowmaking workshop is 220 m<sup>2</sup> floor area, and would need six car spaces. However, its peak use is on winter nights, specifically those when temperature and humidity are appropriate for snowmaking. At these times, other parking demand is unlikely. Also, personnel may frequently access this workshop by oversnow vehicle. It is not considered necessary to provide six car spaces for this use alone.
- The restaurant is 495 m<sup>2</sup> floor area. No seating figures are provided in the Application's documentation. To assess seating capacity, 40% is generally taken for kitchen and service areas, leaving 297 m<sup>2</sup>. Seating density varies considerably by restaurant type, and in this location I estimate 1 seat per 3 m<sup>2</sup> may apply; requiring 59 car spaces under Cl. 52.06.

Having regard to the reduction or waiver provisions of Cl. 52.06, in winter it appears this skiers' facility will cater for skiers already in the locality, and utilising staff who are also already in Mt Hotham. Apart from servicing vehicles, I doubt there will be significant winter need for parking, and that the proposed 24 car spaces in addition to other parking in Hotham Village will suffice for this facility, Nordic skiers and others.

The application states that the facility will not trade in summer until promoted. If and when that occurs, the facility may well operate as part of MFS' proposed conference centre and related all-seasons activities. It is difficult to envisage the parking needs here in this eventuality, and there will be a very large amount of free parking nearby at Hotham Village whether NHVRP proceeds or not. On balance, there is no evidence to contest the applicant's view that 24 public car spaces will suffice.

- After Loch reservoir construction, the permit requires parking to be maximised. The Board has prepared a plan showing 63 car spaces. There is a loss of 39 car spaces.

As to walkers' needs, I have resided at Mt Hotham for some 21 weeks, including summer 2005 - 06 when there was no parking available at Loch Spur. During these stays that included most of the January holidays and the peak Australia Day weekend during perfect weather in both 2005 and 2006, I observed the Loch Spur area on most days before and during the Reservoir's construction, including as a walker on the AAWT at least once per week in both years. I estimate I have made more than 200 observations of parking around Loch Spur over the last two summers.

Because car parking has been lost to visitors and AAWT users by construction of the Water Recycling Reservoir and more will be by the proposed workshop if approved, I have observed how many walkers' cars parked at this locality throughout these stays. My observations covered:

- on the Loch Car Park before reservoir construction fenced it off for safety reasons in November 2005;
- The Cross, where observation over a time was usually able to distinguish between casual parkers who stayed a few minutes for the view, and the longer stay cars of walkers; and
- GAR verges between Hull Skier Bridge and The Cross.

I never observed more than five cars total at any time in these locations. Usually, three was the most I observed; and one of these was sometimes my own. The car numbers observed matched the number of walkers seen. The maximum seen in a day walk is seven people, with three or four the usual maximum. I saw no other people at all on the majority of my walks from or through Loch Spur, including all day on Australia Day 2005.

During Reservoir construction throughout summer 2005 – 06, there was no parking available on the Loch Car Park. I never observed any parking problem in that locality, with the few cars present parked on GAR verge or at the Cross.



Figure 1: Loch car park, early afternoon, Australia Day 2005 – no cars

My observations of summer public parking need at Loch show a quite limited demand, different from that at Diamantina Hut where walkers park for the Mount Feathertop Walk, and walks to and from Harrietville via Bungalow Spur and other routes. There, all parking takes place on wider GAR verges. The average summer weekend parking I observed there is in the range of 10 – 12 cars and sometimes a small Coaster-sized bus.



Figure 1: Loch Reservoir & GAR, mid-morning, Saturday 4 March 2006 – only my car

While there will be 39 fewer sealed car spaces at Loch that the potential 65 at present if the amended planning application is approved there are many car spaces available in Hotham Village, and more if the NHVRP proceeds than

now. They will be free in summer. Walkers on circular walks will not need to travel additional distance if they park in Hotham Village or Davenport rather than at Loch. As a walker or cross country skier it is likely I would prefer not to leave my car for any number of days in an open carpark subject to weather and security issues at Loch but would consider park in the central managed parking centre in the Village. Currently this is not an option for these visitors. As a manager of parking, as well, I would consider the Board may see this as a preferred option in winter. This approach of centralised parking is consistent with the parking precinct strategy.

Assessing the amended plan, all the relevant factors including my observations of summer walkers need and the requirements and discretionary provisions of the Scheme, I am of the view that the proposed 24 sealed public car spaces, together with the existing and hundreds of extra parking spaces at Ford if NHVRP proceeds, will meet public parking needs in summer and winter.

## 8. Response to Amendment C17 parking submissions

I have read the 34 supplied submissions made to the exhibited Amendment C17. I am advised that one of these, number 25 dated 10 July 2006 from the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), was withdrawn by its letter dated 25 July 2006, and it now consents as referral authority to Amendment C17 being approved.

The remaining submissions raised parking issues in Amendment C17, as summarised in the following Table 1:

number	author	parking issue	Response
4	K Boxer	Sets out in B7 & C5, analysis that proposed NHVRP car spaces are not adequate (pps. 10 - 12)  In C5, also opposes Higgi Drive parking	Disagree, for reasons stated. Submission does not express the discretionary provisions of Scheme  Not part of NHVRP or Amendment C17.
5	MHCC	6, p. 2 states parking inadequate	Disagree, for reasons stated
8	Jane Burke	p. 4, 'no information is given regarding how much public parking will be available'	All 501 car spaces will be public, with 30 allocated to MHSC and Board; as now in Ford. Public parking means available to public, not necessarily free
17	IHP Club	fully supports all matters raised by Mr Boxer	See comments on 4 above
20	M Shaw	'will remove all the public car-parking from the central village hub'  parking car spaces' dimensions should accommodate large mix of 4WDs  recognizes environmental benefit of structure rather than surface parking	Incorrect; see response to 8 above  The applicable standard already does this. The proposal can comply, and it is a matter for a later design stage  One of many reasons why Board supports NHVRP
22	HSA	queries parking adequacy	Disagree, for reasons stated in my report
26	Taki Club	'generally supports the comments made, and concerns raised, in Mr Boxer's submission'	See response to 4 above
27	VNPA	Inadequate parking, including replacement of existing	All 501 car spaces will be public, with 30 allocated to MHSC and Board; as now in Ford

Table 1: submissions to Amendment C17 raising parking issues

## 9. Response to Heavenly Valley parking submissions

I have read the 12 supplied submissions made to the exhibited Heavenly Valley planning application 2005/0337. I am advised that two of these from DSE have been withdrawn on the basis of the amended plan dated 26 July 2006, by DSE's letter dated 26 July 2006, and it now consents as referral authority to the issuing of a permit subject to that plan and conditions it sets out.

Of the ten remaining, six are from public agencies and utility providers; they either raise no concern or set out requirements that can be met. The remaining four submissions, two identical ones from private individuals and two from community organisations as well as two of the submissions to Amendment C17 that also raise parking issues about this planning application, are summarised in the following Table 2:

Date	author	parking issue	Response
21.6.06	K Boxer	States 25 car spaces will be lost  States 'in busy periods during the summer months the original Loch Car Park was more than half full ie. At least 75 vehicles ...'  Queries where more than 25 cars will park, as GAR verges here are hazardous	Accepted  The submission does not state which year(s); but is very different from my repeated observations during last two summers; never more than five cars. See photos in my report. See also two statements from Board staff  If there is a demonstrated need for more, can be reviewed by Board and MHSC. In summer, there is extensive free public parking in Hotham Village
21.6.06	L Guy	Identical to K Boxer's above	See above
12.7.06	VicWalk 3, p. 2 (sub 34, C17)	Expresses concern about adequacy at Loch	Consider 24 public car spaces are adequate
10.7.06	VNPA 7 (sub 27, C17)	Expresses concern about adequacy at Loch	Offers no evidence that 24 public car spaces are not adequate

Table 2: submissions re Heavenly Valley planning application parking issues

I made enquiries amongst Board staff as to their experience of parking numbers at Loch Spur, and attach statements from two of them with considerable experience (Appendices 2 and 3).

## Appendix 1: Curriculum vitae of Peter Nichols

Born in Liverpool, UK on 29 September 1943. Married, with two adult children, and resident at 12 Waterview Avenue, Wynnum, Brisbane, Queensland, 4178. Dual citizenship - UK citizen by birth; Australian citizen since 1975.

### Recent work experience

Peter Nichols, sole consultant, is a practitioner in environmental planning. He has 40 years professional experience in environmental management in the following positions:

- public sector practitioner in UK for 6 years (Devon, Durham),
- public sector practitioner in Australia for 18 years (NSW, Warringah, Darwin),
- lecturing in universities for 7 years (part-time --- Universities of Sydney and NSW),
- Branch director in Brisbane City Council for 5 years, and
- environmental consultancies for 15 years (Sydney, Darwin, Brisbane).

Peter has provided advice to national, state and local governments directly at elected leader and CEO level on most aspects of urban planning and environmental sustainability including on strategy, policy, operations, training, organizational / administrative structures and arrangements, and regulation for a wide spectrum of natural resource management across coastal, catchment and inland environments in urban and rural conditions. He has given similar advice to major Australian companies.

Peter is a strategist and project manager in:

- *studies for town planning schemes, integrated plans, environmental policy and regulation*
- *training, facilitation and environmental communications,*
- *impact assessment and management plans;*
- *regional plans for land, including open space, recreation and resource management*
- *corporate structures, budgets, policies, programs, plans and processes*
- *environmental management systems and performance evaluation*
- *community involvement, consultation and ownership institutional arrangements for sustainability*

### Consultancy projects since 1996

27 conservation and natural resource management strategies / plans

11 waterways and catchment protection plans

16 environmental training and awareness projects

15 legislative and program reviews for the Commonwealth government

19 corporate strategies, structures, plans and/or budgets

9 environmental management plans

Recent examples of projects undertaken include:

- providing and maintaining all-weather multi-modal transport infrastructure to over 500 remote communities in the Northern Territory (1986 – 90).
- developing Brisbane City Council's new Environment Branch, and winning the Banksia Foundation's national Award for Environmental Achievement (1993).
- developing Brisbane City's Environment Management Information System, providing on-line environmental information about 300,000 parcels to employees and subscribers (1994).
- strategising Brisbane Council's bushland acquisition programme, including its focus on five new major natural areas for Brisbane; Tinchi Tamba Wetlands, Deagon Wetlands, Bayside Regional Park, Karawatha Forest and Brisbane Koala Park. Operationalising this programme by initiating, negotiating and completing 22 land purchases over 1,100 ha, value \$25m (1992-94).
- finalising the Bicycle Brisbane Plan, to increase cycling (and particularly commuter cycling) from 1.5 to 8% of all trips by 2011 (1995).
- creating, securing funding and commencing implementation of the Brisbane Busways Strategy, in co-operation with Federal and State governments, so public transport use doubles to 17% of all trips by 2011 (1995).
- amending the draft New Town Plan for Brisbane to ensure land use planning support for the above transport modal changes (1995).
- conceiving and implementing "Travelsmart", the Brisbane contract between the Council and residents, to prefer walking, cycling and public transport over car use (1995).
- advising the Queensland Government on the selection of consultants to perform environmental and community consultation about the Gateway to Gaza Busway (1996).
- participating, with Mary Maher & Associates and Environment Science & Services, in preparing the Framework Plan for the Regional Open Space System (ROSS) for the Gold Coast Hinterland, for the Queensland Department of Environment (1996).
- participating in producing the preferred regulatory and management structures to achieve the Brisbane River Vision (1998).

- preparing the Shorebird Habitat Management Plan for Moreton Bay Marine Park (1999) and the remainder of SEQ's coast (also 1999).
- preparing with Mary Maher, the Moreton Bay Action Plan (July 2006).

#### Qualifications

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Geography with Economics, University of Liverpool (1965)

Ordinance 4 Certificate No. 363 as an Environmental Planner, under the New South Wales Local Government Act (1974)

Graduate Certificate in Applied Science (Ornithology), Charles Sturt University (1999)

#### Professional affiliations

Member, Royal Town Planning Institute, 1970 -1992.

Member, Royal Australian Planning Institute, 1974 -1992.

Inaugural executive member, Local Government Planners' Association (NSW), 1979 - 81.

Associate Member, Institute of Municipal Management, 1986 -1991.

Member, Environment Institute of Australia, 1991 - 1998.

Member, Birds Australia, 1986 – present.

Member, Birds Queensland, 1992 – present.

Member, Queensland Wader Study Group, from its formation in 1994 – present.

#### Career history

1965-67 Trainee town planner, Devon County Council, UK; tourist, national park and environment policies.

1967-68 Town Planner, Durham County Council, UK; settlement and employment policies.

1968-71 Section Head, Devon County Council, UK; all strategic land use planning, including production of the Second Review of the County Development Plan, correlating public and private investment for Devon; managed staff of 11 professional planners plus support staff.

1971-72 Town Planner, State Planning Authority of NSW, assessing major development applications in Sydney and the NSW Central Coast.

State Commissioner of Inquiry for significant development appeals, "called in" from local jurisdictions for determination.

1972-81 Chief Environmental Planner, Warringah Shire Council, NSW. Advised Council on all development, planning, conservation and environment matters for a population of some 180,000 and a

budget of over \$1m and 27 staff. a vocal, environmentally aware and politically astute community.

- 1975-84 Part-time lecturer in town planning matters at Macquarie University and at the University of New South Wales.
- 1981-85 Local government and environmental planning consultant, NSW. Clients included the NSW Government, several large metropolitan and rural councils, private clients including the retailer Hammerson Group of Companies and Leighton Contractors Pty Ltd; as well as individuals and resident groups. Specialised in preparing and giving expert evidence in town planning appeals, especially on conservation issues.
- 1986-87 Director, Local Government and Community Affairs, Department of Community Development, Northern Territory. 41 staff with annual budget over \$60m. Introduced the Local Government Act 1985, Australia's first general competence local government legislation. Management responsibility covered policy, legislation, operations and finance for some 60 local government-type bodies in the Northern Territory; the Heritage Act; provision of transport and essential services to more than 500 Aboriginal and remote communities through an annual \$30 million consultant-delivered program; establishing 12 of the Territory's 22 local government councils; establishing and operating the Local Government Grants Commission for the Northern Territory. Chair, Jabiru Town Development Authority, with responsibility for administering the town of Jabiru and the related Cost-Sharing Agreement between the Northern Territory and Energy Resources Australia; Commissioner, Northern Territory Grants Commission; member, Local Government Joint Officers' Group (the departmental heads of local government from Australian states/territories and New Zealand who advise Australia's Local Government Ministers) [Stephen Dunham 08.8999.7960]; and member, Batchelor College Council.
- 1989-1991 Local government and environmental consultant.
- 1991-1994 Director Environment Management, Brisbane City Council. Create and head the largest (66 permanent staff, \$23m budget) and most successful Environment Management Branch in Australian local government, in Australia's fastest growing capital city of 760,000 people. Responsibilities included flora and fauna conservation, pollution management, environmental impact assessment, ecological planning, training for all the preceding; major strategic projects (including Brisbane River, Moreton Bay and Moreton Island), \$33m bushland acquisition program over three years, community environmental education and co-operation, and a bushland rehabilitation program involving 45 community groups and a Unit which provided over 1200 jobs for

federally-assisted Jobskills employees in 1993/94. Member of Professional Advisory Boards for Griffith University's Bachelor of Science (Australian Environmental Studies) and Queensland University of Technology's Centre for Applied Environmental and Social Education Research.

- 1994-1996 Director Transport Planning and Policy, Brisbane Transport. Manage new Branch of 51 staff and \$34m. budget implementing the strategic transport reform agenda for Brisbane. Its strategic approach is an integrated land use/transport/environmentally responsible intermodal plan, with strong emphasis on increased use of public transport, cycling and walking to maintain and improve Brisbane's livability. Acting Manager, Brisbane Transport (1,500 staff and \$108m budget).
- 1996 – present Self-employed consultant in the above and related fields, including to Australian Government agencies on river management.
- 1996 – 98 Director, McCormick Rankin Pty. Ltd., transport planners.
- 2001 voluntary Ranger, Birds Australia Gluepot Bird Reserve, Waikerie, South Australia (March – July)
- 2004 – present consultant to the Mt Hotham Alpine Resort and another Alpine Management Board on planning, environmental and Crown property policies, practices and operations.

## Appendix 2: Statement by Nicole Epema

27/07/06

To Whom it may concern.

This letter is in response to a request to document my observations on the usage of the Mt Loch car park during the non winter months.

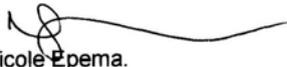
I have been working full time at Mt Hotham for the Resort Management board (previously the Alpine Resorts Commission) for twenty years (1986) current position, resort operations manager.

I do not live on the mountain and must travel past Mt Loch car park mornings and afternoons and during the course of my working day.

I have on occasion observed up to six to eight vehicles using this car park for day excursions to Mt Loch but on average it is empty.

I have observed at most three vehicles, sometimes a coaster bus parked there overnight.

Yours Sincerely,



Nicole Epema.

Resort operations manager  
Mt Hotham Resort management  
0418558469  
03 57594040

As I do not reside on mountain and can therefore not give accurate information on the weekend usage of the Mt Loch car park, I have asked a fulltime resident and staff member for their observations, which I have attached. (see overleaf)

### Appendix 3: Statement by Greg O'Donohue

July 29<sup>th</sup> 2006

#### Observed Rates of use at Mount Loch Car Park

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been working seasonally at Mount Hotham since 1982 and full time since 1998. Since 1998 I've lived at Mount Hotham and participated in activities such as mountain biking which have taken me to or past the Mount Loch Car Park on many occasions.

I've observed cars and buses parked there both short term and long term.

Usually the number of cars will be few midweek and a handful on weekends with maximums in the ten to twenty range on long weekends and holiday periods.

Short term parking is common with people stopping to enjoy the view and moving on within half an hour or after a short walk. Others park for as long as ten days while they participate in longer bushwalks. I've seen converted bus campers and school busses with trailers parked overnight and sometimes for several nights.

I cannot recall ever seeing more than twenty cars in the Mount Loch Car Park on any occasion.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg O'Donohue', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Greg O'Donohue