

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources



Tuesday, 19 May 2020

BACKING MOUNT BUFFALO TOURISM AND JOBS – YEAR ROUND

The Victorian Government is investing in the future of Mount Buffalo as a 12-months-a-year tourism destination through support for new “eco pod” accommodation.

Part of the Government’s \$2.7 billion *Building Works* package, the Mount Buffalo community and its visitors will benefit from the \$1.5 million injection to build the luxury Alpine pods.

Building Works is backing shovel-ready projects – big and small – to get thousands of people back to work.

The eco pod investment comes as Parks Victoria prepares to instigate an Expression of Interest process to seek private investment for a cafe within the iconic Mount Buffalo Chalet. The EOI proposal is for a year-round café in the front part of the Chalet, which would offer regional produce along with self-guided tours of the Chalet ballroom.

Mount Buffalo is a winter wonderland attracting more than 230,000 visitors a year and the addition of a new accommodation option and potential new café will attract more visitors in summer to hike, camp and kayak.

The potential for a café and environmentally-friendly accommodation were raised after the Alpine Shire Council undertook a business case assessment, funded by the Victorian Government, to help realise Mount Buffalo National Park’s potential to become a year-round destination.

The Government has previously committed \$1.5 million to upgrade the Gorge Visitor Centre Area within the Mount Buffalo National Park. The project has been carried out in two stages, due to the complexity of works.

The stage two works featuring a new lookout are nearly complete and will also enhance Mount Buffalo National Park’s appeal as an all-seasons destination. Visitation at the national park is increasing by 5 per cent annually, with the majority of visitors attending over summer. This strength in summer visitation is unique in the High Country.

Local businesses and industry groups were consulted as part of the business assessment and demonstrated an appetite for experienced tourism and hospitality operators to be involved in future tourism opportunities.

Development of the Chalet is subject to planning requirements and the Government is working with the Alpine Shire to ensure any planning restrictions are resolved ahead of the EOI process expected to commence in late 2020.

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Jaclyn Symes

“We’re backing regional Victoria and jobs with support for projects like the Mount Buffalo eco pods which will provide immediate and ongoing benefits for local economies.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D’Ambrosio

“The Chalet is an important part of Victoria’s heritage and any development at the site must add value to our High Country’s natural assets.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula

“Providing new accommodation options will allow more people to experience the beauty of Mount Buffalo, providing benefits for the wider region.”

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