

30th of May, 2016

The Hon. Lisa Neville
Minister for Police
Level 16
121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne
Victoria, 3000

Dear Minister Neville,

As you would be aware, the Victorian Alpine Resorts are due to celebrate the opening of the snow season on the weekend of June 11th. The season typically lasts for four months, with resorts finishing the official snow season at the end of September/early October.

During this time, the three larger, higher alpine resorts of Falls Creek, Mt. Buller and Mt. Hotham (and Dinner Plain) will have visitation of circa 1 million visitor days as domestic tourists, snow sport enthusiasts and international visitors enjoy the magnificent high country and unique Australian Alps.

During the season our communities swell. The alpine villages see an influx of returning and new seasonal staff, business owners, vendors and obviously guests. These communities typically have a stable population living in resort of up to 2,000 people. With the addition of day resort visitors and longer stay guests, these figures see up to an additional 5,000 to 10,000 people being in resort at any one time.

With visitor and community numbers of this magnitude, the current uncertainty surrounding the intended deployment of police resourcing is extremely concerning.

As with any holiday destination during peak periods a higher element of risk is introduced both in terms of travelling to the destination and in the activities undertaken at the high altitudes of the Victorian Alps. It would be an understatement to suggest the environment in which these guests are holidaying, or these communities exist, is anything but high risk.

The combination of a high risk environment, the high influx of transient workers, the inherent risks of snow sport, remote and challenging access routes for the many thousands of daily visitors, the unpredictable and extreme weather events etc, reinforces the need, in fact the necessity to have a physical police presence and permanent in situ deployment of police resources. All alpine resorts consider this to be essential.

Each of the resorts is isolated from the neighbouring townships due to physical geography of the alps and the limited access in severe weather periods. In any emergency situation in such a high risk environment, the option to police "off mountain" would see minimum response times for vehicular police of not less than 45 minutes, (at best) across all resorts. The consequences of this response time, under any number of reported incidents that occur in and around resort would result in near fatal, if not fatal consequences.

The contention of policing "on mountain/in situ" during busy periods only, as has been indicated, is just as unacceptable. Extreme weather events, or periods of considerable snow accumulation cannot be

predicted, nor the influx of guests to capture the magic of snow sports in these conditions. The challenge to resource the ad hoc management of these "busy periods" would understandably be a greater tax on police resourcing than the permanent allocation or rostering of police members being in resort for the entire duration of the season.

The physical full time presence of a police force in a community of the sizes discussed must be considered essential in order to be proactive in the safety and well-being of the community, preserving the peace, protecting life and property, helping those in need, whilst detecting and apprehending offenders.

A part time presence cannot meet the objective and mission of the police with regards to the enforcement of their commitment to the community. We have strongly supported, over a number of years the proactive policing efforts by the police members operating within the resorts that has resulted in substantial improvements in safety, community engagement and reduced crime and incidents rates. These proactive efforts, and the resulting improvements, have been greatly enhanced through the on-mountain/in-situ nature of the policing force in the resorts and would not have been achievable through the incident response only, or peak periods only proposals currently being contemplated.

All of the undersigned resorts have had long standing relationships with their regional police forces and tremendously collaborative approaches to ensuring the safety of the respective resorts. Given the immediacy of the snow season and the limited consultation with the resorts and their stakeholders we would ask that the above be given due consideration.

We respectfully request your assistance on the matter of ensuring the Alpine resorts continue to be as safe as they can possibly be by ensuring a permanent police presence for the duration of the declared season.

Yours Respectfully



Stuart Smythe
CEO
Falls Creek Resort Management Board



John Huber
CEO
Mt. Buller & Mt. Sterling
Resort Management Board



Jon Hutchins
CEO
Mt. Hotham Resort
Management Board