

# COMMUNITY UPDATE

Falls to Hotham  
Alpine Crossing

Winter 2022

## Welcome to the Winter 2022 edition of the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Community Update

The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing will be one of Australia's outstanding alpine walking experiences that captures the essence of the Australian Alps – the solitude, the seasons, the breathtaking beauty and the stories of the High Country.

The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan outlines the proposed 57-kilometre, multi-day route, combining and upgrading an existing track network. It will take in the Diamantina Spur and Razorback with an optional ascent of Mount Feathertop, Victoria's second-highest peak. The facilities created as part of the five-day, four-night route may also provide options for shorter overnight walks.

Since finalising the Master Plan, Parks Victoria received funding in 2018 to start doing the detailed planning and Business Case. In 2020 further funding was received to build the first stage of the walk.

**Since our last update in Autumn, the Landscape and Visual Assessment and Business Case for the project have been completed.**

### Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is a detailed independent assessment of the visual impacts of the project on the landscape. In particular, it considers impacts of roofed accommodation.

The visual consultant visited 15 prominent locations in the park, along and around the proposed trail and accommodation locations and took high resolution photography of various views. Computer designs of the infrastructure were then created and overlayed on the images at scale to assess the visual impact.

The report concludes that the visual impact of the proposed roofed accommodation will be minimal. This is based on the selected locations when using materials designed to blend into the surrounding environment.

It is important to note that the design of the accommodation is a simple approximation only. Design work has not yet started on roofed accommodation.

Below are some images that are included in the report. These illustrate the minimal visual impact of the proposed overnight camping site near Tawonga Huts, when looking from Mt Jaithmathang.



*Above: Current view from Mt Jaithmathang*



*Above: View from Mt Jaithmathang with location of proposed roofed accommodation and track indicated in red*

The full report will be released to the community in the coming months. As soon as this is available we will notify you.

## Business Case

A Business Case has also been completed. This is an independent in-depth analysis of the project and investigates its viability, implementation and operating costs, impacts and benefits.

The structure of a Business Case document is dictated by the Department of Treasury and Finance Victoria and is required for all projects with an investment over \$10 million. These documents provide the State Government with evidence that money it is investing is going towards viable projects. The Business Case is not an environmental assessment, although it does of course mention environmental aspects as they are key considerations of this project.

The Business Case outlines benefits associated with the project including increased accessibility within the Alpine National Park, cultural sustainability focussing on both indigenous and non-indigenous heritage, with additional funding to be provided for conservation of existing huts, as well as additional tourism and economic stimulus for the Alpine Region.

In coming months, we will release those parts of the Business Case that are not commercial-in-confidence.

Previously we shared the full Preliminary Environmental Values Assessment with the community. If you haven't had a chance to look at this yet and wish to, you can access it [here](#).

## Environmental approvals

A range of complex environmental approvals and assessments have been undertaken and will continue as part of this project. In late 2022 we will make detailed self-referral submissions on the project under both State and Commonwealth environmental Acts. These acts protect Flora, Fauna, Waterways, Historical Heritage, Indigenous Heritage and many more.

Assessments that have been completed are Environmental Risk Assessment – Biosis (2016); [Preliminary Environmental Assessment](#) – Abzeco (2021), and; Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Hansen (2022).

Assessments still to be completed are the Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Historic Archaeological Survey and Detailed Environmental Assessment.

### Extra funding for historic huts

In addition to the \$200,000 within the project that will be used to help conserve historic huts along the trail, two grants have recently been received to help tell the stories of High Country huts.

A total of \$240,000 has been granted to government agencies and the Victoria High Country Huts Association to create 3D computer models of over 100 huts across the Australian Alps.

The 3D models will be available online so everyone can take virtual 3D tours and walk throughs with interpretive material attached, for example drone footage, videos and historic information. The models are also a useful tool for conservation planning such as creating a permanent record, condition assessments, scoping works, bushfire protection planning, costing and project planning. Parks Victoria was not responsible for securing these grants but is very supportive of them. This additional funding is great opportunity to connect the conservation works delivered by this project to the broader investment in the High Country Huts.

Check out the collection of 3D scans to date here: <https://theaustralialpsnationalparks.org/australian-alps-iconic-heritage-huts/>

### Community information session update

A community session was held on 11 May to provide an update on the project, including the Visual Landscape Assessment and the Business Case. If you were unable to attend, you can watch a recording of the presentation [here](#). A copy of questions asked during the session is also available [here](#).

### Stay up to date

Parks Victoria will provide updates and information as the project progresses. To stay updated you can:

- [Subscribe](#) for email updates
- Phone 13 19 63 or email [engage@park.vic.gov.au](mailto:engage@park.vic.gov.au)
- Visit [www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects)
- Attend community information session