

HANGING ROCK RESERVE DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT PLAN



CONSULTANT BRIEF

September 2011



INTRODUCTION

Hanging Rock (formally known as Mount Diogenes), in Central Victoria, is a distinctive geological formation, 718m above sea level, and approximately 80km north-west of Melbourne and a few kilometres north of Mount Macedon. Best known as the site where a fictional party of schoolgirls disappeared in February 1900 in the book *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, Hanging Rock is located within the Wurundjeri nation's territory.

The Hanging Rock Recreation Reserve is managed by Macedon Ranges Shire Council. The reserve is listed on the Register of the National Estate and features a forest, horserace track, picnic grounds, creek, interpretation centre and cafe. The reserve is a habitat for endemic flora and fauna, including koalas, kangaroos, wallabies, possums, powerful owls, gliders, peregrine falcons, wedge-tailed eagles and kookaburras. The reserve is open to the public from 9am to 5pm (6pm over summer) seven days a week. Entry is charged per vehicle.

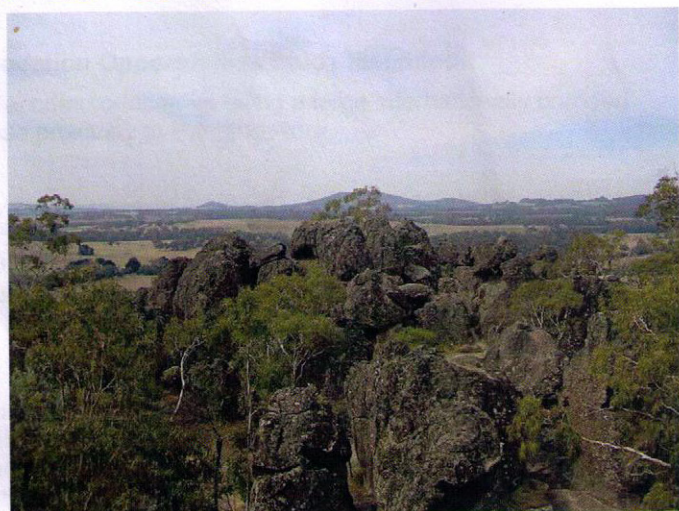
The Hanging Rock Recreation Reserve is comprised of two distinct areas. The first area, the original Crown reserve, is 66 hectares in area and is comprised of the Rock, racecourse and picnic areas. The second area of 22ha is a freehold property to the east (known as the East Paddock) which is almost entirely treeless, having been used for grazing purposes. Council is interested in exploring options for the potential development of the East Paddock for tourism use such as events and tourist accommodation.

The Macedon Ranges Shire receives an estimated one million visitors per annum including 446,000 overnight visitors and day trips. The Hanging Rock Reserve received approximately 105,000 visitors in the 2009/10 financial year. There is growing demand for enhanced visitor experiences and accommodation in the region, particularly servicing the food and wine touring market.

Hanging Rock Reserve is experiencing a steady visitor growth - particularly since the opening in 2001 of the Hanging Rock Discovery Centre and the growing popularity of events at the Reserve (including The Age Harvest Picnic, Race Meetings, film night and an annual Car Show). Most recently the reserve hosted a significant concert by the internationally acclaimed artist Leonard Cohen with over 15,000 people in attendance. Three more similar concerts are planned for 2011/12.

The challenge ahead is to plan for future visitation growth and sustainability in a way that will help capture yield in the region but at the same time preserve the environmental features that have made Hanging Rock popular.

The Hanging Rock Reserve Management Plan (1993) and the Macedon Ranges Shire Tourism Strategy identify a range of tourism related development opportunities for the reserve and the surrounding region.



This study will be used to guide development ensuring that the reserve's identity, character and environment is maintained and enhanced for future generations.

The Hanging Rock Reserve Management Plan (1993) and the Macedon Ranges Shire Tourism Strategy identify a range of tourism related development opportunities for the reserve and the surrounding region.

Tourism Victoria's regional strategic plan (09-12) states:

The major opportunities for tourism development in Daylesford and the Macedon Ranges are:

- Continuing to develop high quality, large capacity accommodation; and;
- Expanding activities aimed at attracting international visitors.

Tourism Victoria will work with State Government agencies, the Regional Tourism Board, Local Government, investors and industry to facilitate the following priority projects:

- High quality accommodation with large capacity integrated with spa and well-being product;
- Boutique accommodation integrated with food, wine, spa and well-being products, with a particular focus on opportunities in strategic locations; and
- Develop tourism product associated with natural mineral water.

The Loddon Mallee Southern Regional Plan direction 3 strives to:

- *Strengthen and diversify our economy and key initiative 3.5 to initiate and support investment in public infrastructure for natural, cultural and other tourism assets.*

The Daylesford Macedon Ranges Strategic Plan objective 4 aims to:

To facilitate new public and private investment in tourism infrastructure that supports the growth of a sustainable tourism industry throughout the region by becoming the lead tourism body for advice and consultation.

The Macedon Ranges Visitor Accommodation Opportunities Study identified:

- A key gap in the supply of tourist accommodation as being a large internationally branded resort or conference facility in close proximity to Hanging Rock.

Considering that tourism is the main industry which contributes \$292 million to the Macedon Ranges Shire Economy (aggregate output) annually, it is imperative that the region continue to invest in longer term planning to support its growth and to ensure that the appropriate level of infrastructure is available to support the growth.

Council currently manages the Reserve on behalf of the Department of Sustainability and Environment however, other than human resources and a minimal marketing and promotional budget, does not fund development or maintenance of Hanging Rock from its general rate base. The gate takings and grants fund any work undertaken which is not a sustainable model however it is challenging for Council to allocate any additional resources which is why we must look to private investment.

AIMS

The aim of this study is to develop in consultation with the relevant authorities, Council and the local community, a comprehensive development and tourism investment strategy that will increase tourism visitation and yield for the region.

This study will develop a comprehensive masterplan and tourism investment strategy to provide guidance on the future management of the Hanging Rock Reserve (including the Eastern Paddock).

STUDY AREA

The study area is the Hanging Rock Reserve, and the adjoining Council owned East Paddock, a map of the site is attached to this brief. The study area also includes the Hanging Rock racetrack, viewing areas and associated buildings.

The study must also consider the reserve in context of the region's marketing strengths and examine opportunities for utilising this positioning in the branding and enhancement of the reserve.

PROJECT SCOPE & OUTPUTS

For the reserve and precinct generally, undertake a strategic review of the current physical layout, visitor infrastructure and management, including a peer review of the 1993 management plan.

Key outputs required:

1. A comprehensive, prioritised development and investment plan for the Reserve including the East Paddock and entry precinct.
2. A comprehensive masterplan that will guide development of the precinct over the next ten years. The plan should include, but not be limited to potential reconfiguration and recommendations specifically:
 - Visitor and car entry, circulation, parking, picnicking and events spaces, conservation areas;
 - Opportunities to upgrade or change existing infrastructure (such as upgraded café and retail, expanded interpretation);
 - Potential Multi Purpose Venue (replacement of race club facilities) and to address limitations with the conference market locally.
 - Potential tourist accommodation on the East Paddock site (informed by a review of regional market demand and industry interest) taking into account preserving this area also for use by large events, concerts and general picnicking;

- New park infrastructure: car parking, events infrastructure, public conveniences, picnic/barbeque facilities, etc;
 - Freeway and feeder road directional signage.
3. A project feasibility including a cost analysis for each of the recommendations made in the development and masterplan.
 4. A cost breakdown and delivery strategy for priority reserve enhancement works required.

For the East Paddock accommodation investment opportunity, a detailed feasibility analysis is required that will explore and make recommendations on:

- The current regional visitor accommodation market;
- Estimated market segmentation;
- Future competitive supply;
- Product positioning and indicative size of facilities;
- Mix of facilities and opportunities for ancillary building functions;
- Competitive market demand outlook;
- The most appropriate concept layout and functional arrangements for the proposed accommodation;
- Net benefit analysis.

Options as to the best method of delivering accommodation investment should also be explored.

These documents are to be highly illustrative and developed in a way that allows the recommendations of the study to be conveyed and marketed to a broad cross section of the community. This report is to be suitable for Council to market the investment potential of the reserve and to support funding submissions.

It is anticipated that the final report will include the following:

1. A review and exciting new vision for the future of the reserve as a vibrant regional tourism and events destination whilst maintaining the environmental attractiveness.
2. A series of detailed development plans for key tourism and investment opportunities. This includes plan to seek expressions of interest from respected accommodation providers on potential investment opportunity.
3. A series of action plans for the reserve with realistic timeframes and budgets.
4. A marketing plan for the reserve that considers the most suitable way to promote and encourage the outcomes proposed in the action plans.
5. Ten bound copies of all documents produced as part of this study are to be provided to the Project Manager along with digital copies of all reports (compatible with Microsoft products).

All intellectual property, including all reports, plans, photographic material and supporting data gathered or produced as part of this consultancy are to remain the property of Macedon Ranges Shire Council and cannot be reproduced without the written consent the Council.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The following documents can be made available:

- Macedon Ranges Industry Tourism Strategy
- Hanging Rock Recreation Reserve Management Plan
- Macedon Ranges Accommodation supply demand analysis
- Macedon Ranges Tourism Economic Impact Study
- Macedon Ranges Local Planning Policy
- Hanging Rock Business Plan (2011)
- Hanging Rock – Regional Development Australia Funding application (2011)
- Macedon ranges Shire Council Leisure Strategy
- Tourism Victoria's Regional Action Plan – Daylesford Macedon Ranges
- Daylesford Macedon Ranges Regional Strategic Plan

All material provided during the course of the project shall be treated as confidential and shall remain the property of Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

STAKEHOLDER LIST

1. Hanging Rock Advisory Committee and its members
2. Dept of Sustainability and Environment
3. Tourism Victoria and Regional Development Victoria where relevant
4. All regular users of the reserve eg. pentanque club, events etc.
5. Relevant Council staff including but not limited to: planning and development, environment, economic development & tourism etc.

CHALLENGES

The following are some of the key issues that must be explored as part of the study:

- Town planning;
- Tourism growth/ potential induced demand;
- Environmentally sensitive region/community
- Traffic management;
- Regional events;

TIMELINE

Due to the fact that part of this project is grant funded it needs to be complete by 28 February 2011.

A more detailed timeline including community consultation will be discussed with the preferred supplier.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The project will be managed by Kylie Lethbridge, Manager Economic Development & Tourism of Macedon Ranges Shire.

RESPONSE TO BRIEF

The consultants should provide the following:

- Approach and methodology to achieve each of the project requirements as outlined in the brief;
- Resources to be allocated to the project, including any sub contracted consultants;
- Proposed timeframe for the completion of the study.
- An outline of the relevant experience of the nominated project team;
- Fix fee proposal for the project.

Submissions are due by 5pm on Friday the 23rd of September 2011 and should be forwarded to:

Bridgette O'Brien
Project Support Officer
Macedon Ranges Shire Council
PO Box 151
KYNETON 3444
Ph: 5421 9616.

PROJECT BUDGET

Macedon Ranges Shire Council has allowed a maximum lump sum budget of \$100,000 (excluding GST) for this Study. This is to include all costs required to deliver the project. Any additional costs recommended but not part of the brief should be proposed as a separate cost.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used in the evaluation of submissions:

1. Appreciation of the key issues;
2. Project methodology;
3. Demonstrated experience in projects of this calibre;
4. Proposed fee
5. Ability to meet the project time frame.

6. Consultants proposing to quote on this project should inspect the site prior to lodging their quotation. No allowance will be made for those who do not make themselves familiar with the work involved.

The proposed fee payment schedule is open to negotiation.

INDEMNITY

The Consultant will perform all work under the consultancy at their own risk and shall indemnify and hold harmless Macedon Ranges Shire against all liabilities, losses, damages, costs and expenses arising out of or in connection with the services provided by the consultant and any act or omissions by the Consultant of his/her officers, employees or agents.

The Consultant must hold professional indemnity insurance to the value of \$10,000,000 and maintain the insurance for a period of 2 years following the commencement of the study.