

# Media Release



Date: Tuesday 31 March, 2009

**Attention: News editors, Chiefs of staff, environment reporters**

## **Aboriginal involvement in the Alps has a Bright future**

Representatives of various Aboriginal groups from right across south-east Australia met over the last two days in Bright, Victoria, as the Australian Alps Indigenous Reference Group.

This was the third time the group has met following its inaugural meeting in September 2008. The meeting was hosted by Uncle Ernie Innes, a Taungurung Elder.

The gathering was sponsored by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC), a body incorporating government agencies that manage the Australian Alps national parks (AAnp); the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Parks Victoria, and ACT Parks, Conservation and Lands.

The Group discussed a number of matters about Aboriginal involvement in the management of the Australian Alps national parks. The list of initiatives being discussed came out of a meeting of over 100 traditional owners that occurred in 2005 at Dinner Plain in Victoria.

On the agenda for the gathering was the role of Traditional Owners in the Australian Alps National Landscape Program, an innovative program between the tourism industry, park managers and other key stakeholders. Mr John Hepper from the consulting firm Inspiring Place explained to the Group the development of the Australian Alps Tourism Master Plan.

Mr Innes recalled that an audit of tourism experiences carried out in the Alps identified that there was a need for more Indigenous tourism experiences.

“This seems like a perfect opportunity for the Indigenous community around the Alps to be engaged in the tourism industry by offering culturally appropriate experiences to visitors”, Mr Innes said.

“We are quite keen to identify training opportunities and develop products.”

The Group was also presented with information about the Indigenous cultural values that formed part of the recent National Heritage Listing of the Alps.

Mr Innes said, “The National Heritage listing provides some focus for the nationally significant Indigenous values of the Alps but we would like to explore what opportunities there are to highlight even more of our traditional values. We believe that the recent listing could have gone further. The presentation by representatives of the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts gave us some insight to the processes that would have to be followed if we wanted to have other values nationally recognised.”

The meeting concluded with a trip to Mt Buffalo.

### Media Enquiries

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Australian Alps cooperative management  
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