



## Mission

Alpine Community Plantation Inc. (ACP) is an independent community-based not-for-profit. We are the result of an innovative public, private and community partnership – the first of its kind for Australia – and are responsible for the recreational, educational and community use of almost 20,000 hectares of HVP Plantations estate within the Alpine Shire.

Our aim is to develop a managed nature-based tourism precinct within an active commercial plantation. Through cooperation with HVP Plantations, our mission is to continue to improve and foster this precinct as a safe community-run recreational space with iconic trails.

Through our key precinct – Mystic Park – in Bright, we aim to continue our success at attracting both national, international and community events to our region, supporting local recreation and business activity in the Alpine Shire while growing awareness of forestry operations within the region.



# Contents

<b>Mission</b>	1
<b>Message from the Chair</b>	3
<b>Operations Report</b>	5
<b>About Us</b>	9
<b>Our People</b>	10
The ACP Board	10
ACP Operational Team	10
<b>Our Governance</b>	11
HVP	11
The Alpine Shire Council	11
The Alpine Cycling Club (ACC)	12
Bright and District Chamber of Commerce (B&DCC)	12
North East Victoria Hang Gliding Club (NEVHGC)	12
<b>Structure &amp; Licences</b>	13
ACP Broad Operations	14
<b>Financial Report</b>	15

# Message from the Chair

2022-2023 has been a transformational year for ACP that has culminated in Mystic Park being recognised as one of the premium mountain bike parks in Australia.

The momentum from the previous year continued to build with park visitation numbers growing as locals and visitors enjoyed the sense of post-COVID freedom and local tourism thrived while overseas travel remained an uncertain prospect from many Australians.

The Park has evolved into a significant community asset and economic driver for Bright and surrounding locations, and with the benefits that flow, so do the challenges.

Customer expectations are continually increasing, including trail variety, trail quality, trail maintenance and rider safety.

The success of Mystic Park had become so great, that it required a new mindset and operating model that relies on a sustainable revenue source in order to meet the growing customer expectations.

This resulted in Mystic Park being the first mountain bike park to introduce a membership model to ensure its longer-term financial sustainability.

ACP continues to work closely with Mystic Park's landowner, HVP Plantations, to cater for the coexistence of recreation in a working forest plantation. This creates a unique and continually evolving trail network.

This transformation and success of Mystic Park has been made possible by the vision of the original founders of ACP and Mystic Park, the tireless volunteers that built and maintained the original trail network and the incredible support and commitment from HVP Plantations, Alpine Shire Council, Alpine Cycling Club, Bright Chamber of Commerce and the North East Victoria Hangliding Club.

Mystic Park is a true community-led initiative and showcases what is possible when like-minded people team up and work together with a common goal to create an amazing community asset.

In closing, I thank ACP board members, volunteers and staff who have made this year's achievements possible.

**Alan Rees**

Chair, ACP Board



# Operations Report

In the past twelve months, both ACP and Mystic Park underwent substantial transformations.

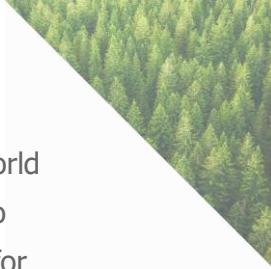
The appointment of a dedicated Sales and Marketing Officer enhanced administrative efficiency and rejuvenated our park's online presence, boosting our social media engagement and storytelling capabilities.

Concerns about financial sustainability prompted us to introduce a pay-to-play model at Mystic Park in October 2022, offering memberships ranging from day passes to annual passes to cater to all riders. This shift also mandated the signing of a waiver via the new HivePass app, with key stakeholders ensuring a consistent message to our community.

Remarkably, the response exceeded our expectations, with 3,472 unique sign-ups within the first three months. The success can be attributed to the collaborative efforts of both ACP and our key stakeholders, who effectively conveyed the necessity of memberships, the park's future stability, and the purpose of the generated income.

Membership Type	Top 13 - Month / # Members												Grand total ...	
	Oct 2023	Sep 2023	Aug 2023	Jul 2023	Jun 2023	May 2023	Apr 2023	Mar 2023	Feb 2023	Jan 2023	Dec 2022	Nov 2022		Oct 2022
One Day Shuttle Membership	98	338	97	92	99	159	283	198	241	695	435	344	7	3,087
Annual Family Membership	40	197	40	44	50	89	280	85	67	472	408	180	248	2,202
One Day Pedal-In Membership	37	155	56	58	35	60	233	165	119	306	272	165	66	1,727
Annual Adult Membership	48	83	24	28	39	102	134	111	93	240	243	234	176	1,566
One Day Shuttle Family Pass	27	116	6	19	8	7	88	55	64	267	140	-	-	797
2 Week Membership	8	71	2	1	7	110	83	82	32	150	161	56	10	775
One Day Pedal-In Family Pass	17	120	6	16	22	18	137	33	13	172	107	5	-	666
Annual Youth Membership	6	50	15	11	22	59	76	36	53	117	77	51	54	627
One Day On-Foot Membership	-	59	3	2	24	-	68	115	-	-	-	-	-	271
Annual On-Foot Membership	-	7	1	-	4	2	5	178	-	-	-	-	-	197
ACC Annual Membership	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	2	5	24	35
Basic Membership	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Annual Non-Bike Membership	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
NEVHC Membership	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>1,196</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>1,388</b>	<b>1,060</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>2,419</b>	<b>1,845</b>	<b>1,041</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>11,961</b>

The membership announcement coincided with the suspension of private shuttles in the park, driven by safety and maintenance concerns. Minimal resistance was encountered, thanks largely to effective communication and FAQs on our website. The introduction of a new boom gate further restricted unauthorised vehicle access.



In November 2022, Iconic Trails initiated a rebuild of the popular "Hero" trail, while World Trail conducted the inaugural trail audit across Mystic Park, Council, and DEECA land to ensure compliance with new TDRS standards. The audit also led to recommendations for improved wayfinding signage.

Recognising the impending impact of harvesting on the park from 2023/2024 onwards and the need for future management options, Dirt Art was engaged to produce four critical reports for the park's future:

1. Master Plan Review and Update
2. Management Options Report
3. Safety Management Systems Report
4. Location Options Analysis

November also brought challenges when QBE Insurance ceased coverage for mountain biking activities, including Mystic Park. We were fortunate to receive guidance from contacts in the adventure world, ultimately securing new insurance with Affinity Insurance to keep the park operational.

December presented further challenges with the departure of the Executive Officer and Park Manager. Quick action from the Board led to the appointment of a new EO and engagement with Blue Dirt to provide 600 hours of monthly park maintenance in addition to their shuttle service. One immediate priority was rectifying the TDRS noncompliance and defects revealed in the World Trail audit.

To enhance park operations, a Project Working Group was established, consisting of Board members, Sales and Marketing, the EO, and Blue Dirt. The PWG conduct fortnightly meetings to discuss and review the operations of the park.

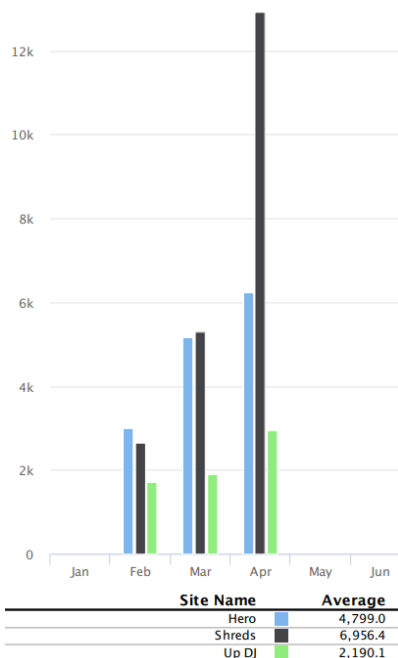
The summer of 2022 into 2023 witnessed a significant increase in park membership and user numbers.



Data from the Palgate boomgate system allowed us to determine contributions for road maintenance from user groups of the park:

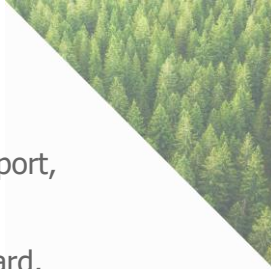
	NEVHGC	Blue Dirt	HVP	Other
December	588	855	10	29
January	1021	2086	29	10
February	914	1058	190	5
	2523	3999	229	44

In February, Trafx trail counters were installed to provide detailed usage statistics for key trails, confirming the significant use of the park:



The draft master plan for Mystic Park was finalized in mid-2023, emphasizing its appeal to both complementary and enthusiastic riders. It identified a need for 20 new trails to be constructed over the next 5-10 years, including an increase in green trails to accommodate complementary users. The estimated cost for these new trails, including associated infrastructure and project management, is just below \$5 million.





The preferred management model, as outlined in the Management Options Analysis report, involves a single operator overseeing all aspects of the park. Discussions in 2023 have focused on the park's future, which is expected to outgrow the capacity of the ACP Board, necessitating the involvement of a professional operator.

Negotiations are ongoing between HVP and Alpine Shire Council for sub-licensing the park to the Council, with plans to subsequently engage a professional operator for park management, shuttles, maintenance, trail construction, sponsorship, merchandise, food, drink services, and potentially bike rentals. A risk assessment and financial modeling are being conducted to ensure transparency of what is required to manage the park.

HVP has agreed to extend the agreement with ACP to April 2024 to facilitate the negotiations, Council approval of the agreement, and the selection of a professional park operator via an EOI process.

The BSBR funding obtained has been allocated to various projects, including the Hero trail rebuild, shuttle road regrading, and the master plan and trail audit.

In August 2023, TrailScapes was awarded the contract to construct three new trails within a recently forested area of the park, with expected completion in December 2023/January 2024. Buckland Bridge was contracted to manage the new secondary access shuttle road, including upgrades to the trailhead at Pioneer Park and a new shuttle drop-off and pick-up area. These works are also scheduled for completion in December 2023/January 2024.

Mystic Park is entering an exciting phase – but one that will see the dissolution of ACP on the horizon.

It is the Board's dedication and commitment that has brought the park to this point, making it a crucial community asset deserving of recognition.



# About Us

Alpine Community Plantation Incorporated (ACP) is an independent not-for-profit community group licensed by HVP Plantations to manage the recreational use of about 20,000ha of plantation estate within the Alpine Shire. The organisation is made up of two board representatives from HVP Plantations, two representatives from Alpine Shire Council and three community group representatives: Alpine Cycling Club, North East Victoria Hang Gliding Club and the Bright and District Chamber of Commerce.

ACP was established in 2013 to manage the recreational use of HVP Plantations land with a focus on mountain bike activity in Bright due to the large number of informal trails in the area. ACP was created to legitimise and coordinate public access within these working pine plantations to enable recreational activity to take place in a safe and authorised manner.

Without the existence of this not-for-profit community group acting in the role of recreational land manager, the sanctioning of these trails and activities within the plantations would not have been realised.

ACP has experienced a period of rapid growth as a result of the opening of the Hero Trail at Mystic Park in December 2016 and Shred Kelly's Last Stand in December 2018. These trails form part of Alpine Shire Council's Alpine Events Park project, and have been successful in its design to attract visitation to the region.

Since 2016, ACP has focused on meeting the growing needs of this dynamic community space and positioning itself to take advantage of new opportunities for growth with the aim of becoming a financially sustainable organisation to enable it to maintain the precinct at a high level and continue to develop new and exciting experiences in line with harvesting activity. In 2018, ACP achieved some key milestones with the recognition of the area as an Outdoor Recreation Facility.

Mystic Park has had a somewhat challenging few years, with significant visitation growth, and subsequent management challenges associated with this growth. Despite this, Mystic remains **widely considered as one of Victoria's top mountain bike destinations.**

The Park has several unique attributes that contribute to its potential and strength as a mountain bike destination. Many of these attributes will contribute to its potential to retain and grow its market position.

# Our People

## The ACP Board

Member	Organisation	Role	Term
Alan Rees	Alpine Shire Council	Chair	Full Year
Prue Day	HVP	Vice Chair	Full Year
Mick Evans	HVP	Treasurer	Full Year
Emma Chadwick	Alpine Shire Council	Secretary	Full Year
Karl Texler	NEVHGC	Board Member	Full Year
Ash Gray	Alpine Cycling Club	Board Member	Full Year
Andrew Geekie	Bright Chamber of Commerce	Board Member	Full Year

## ACP Operational Team

Jessica Short	Executive Officer	From 20 December 2022
Kirsten Seeto	Executive Officer	Until 20 December 2022
Mark Turner	Park Manager	Until 20 December 2022

Plus PWG Members: Ash Gray, Emma Chadwick, Andrew Geekie and Anne Chiew.

# Our Governance

The ACP Board is made up of the following representatives:



## HVP

Melbourne-based HVP is one of Australia's largest private timber plantation companies. The company is owned by a combination of Australian, Canadian and US superannuation and investment funds. The Manulife Investment Management's timberland group, based in Boston, acts as overseeing manager on behalf of investors. Senior management from Manulife Investment Management's timberland group also represent US investors on the HVP Board. HVP Plantations' estate is situated across areas of southern Victoria, extending from Gippsland in the east to the border with South Australia in the west and large plantations in the north east of the state. The total area of land managed by HVP equates to over 240,000 ha, with almost 20,000 ha of this within the Alpine Shire. About 165,000ha of HVP's total estate is pine and eucalypt plantation.



## The Alpine Shire Council

Alpine Shire Council is a municipality of about 12,000 residents located in North East Victoria. The Shire stretches across 4,787 square kilometres from Gapsted in the north to Cobungra in the South, Dandongadale to the west and Mount Beauty to the east. The Council comprises seven Councillors who serve a four-year term. The Shire's economy is based on tourism, forestry and agriculture. About 92% of the shire is public land including parts of the Alpine National Park and all of the Mount Buffalo National Park. Most of the freehold lands are alluvial flood plains along the Ovens, Kiewa and Buffalo Rivers together with the adjoining gentle slopes and hills.



## The Alpine Cycling Club (ACC)

The Alpine Cycling Club promotes road cycling and mountain biking in the High Country around Bright in North East Victoria. The club is working closely with ACP to develop one of Australia's best mountain bike parks – Mystic Park – only minutes from the centre of Bright, with club volunteers building and maintaining the trails within the precinct. ACC has a robust Junior Mountain Biking Program and supports the running of a number of key regional cycling events, including the MTBA Mountain Bike Nationals and the Tour of Bright.



## Bright and District Chamber of Commerce (B&DCC)

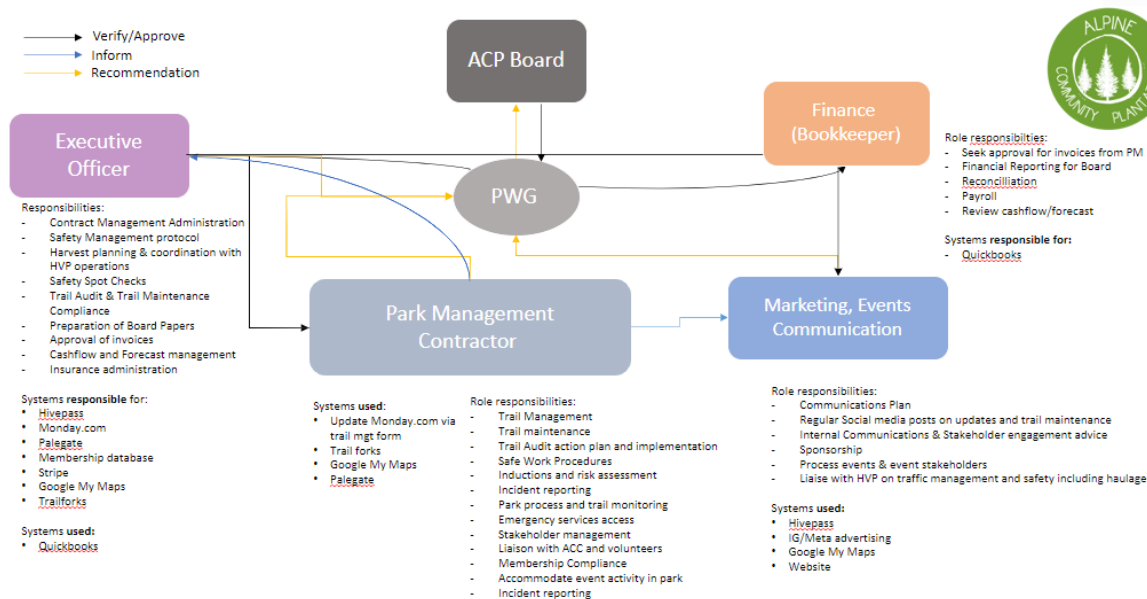
The Chamber is a business forum that provides networking opportunities and leadership to empower and encourage opportunities that benefit local business and the community. It encompasses a vast range of business and community interests and advocates on behalf of its members to drive growth and development in the region.



## North East Victoria Hang Gliding Club (NEVHGC)

NEVHGC is based in Bright and is responsible for maintaining flying sites and good land-owner relations in the area, with its key site located at Mystic Park – one of the best flying sites in Australia. The club also seeks to provide development opportunities for its pilots; including license upgrades and provide resources for competition organisers who conduct competitions in our area such as the Mystic Cup, Southern Series and the Bright Open. Three flying schools operate in NEVHGC's area, offering pilot training and tandem flight experiences for the general public.

# Structure & Licences



Alpine Community Plantation Inc. is an Incorporated Association registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria. Its strategic vision is driven by a volunteer board, with an employed Executive Officer to manage daily business and a part-time Park Manager to manage operations in the park. A small crew of casual staff members are also engaged to perform park maintenance and gate monitoring.

The organisation’s Annual Statement is based on the financial year ending in June each year. The Rules of Alpine Community Plantation Inc. (July 2013, updated June 2019), recorded with Consumer Affairs Victoria, determines the framework in which ACP may operate.

ACP is licensed by HVP to manage recreational activities within the plantation estate of the Alpine Shire under the 2018-2023 Licence for the Management of Organised Recreational and Educational Activities of HVP Plantations’ land in the Alpine Shire.

The organisation has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Alpine Cycling Club for the management of mountain bike trails within the estate as well as a new MOU with NEVHGC. ACP also works within a Joint Operating Procedure with HVP Plantations outlining communications and responsibilities between the two parties. It has a road management agreement with North East Victoria Hang Gliding Club, which also holds a separate sub-licence with HVP for access to, and use of, the Mystic launch and landing areas.

## ACP Broad Operations

The following diagram demonstrates how ACP uses its structure and resources to deliver a safe recreational environment.



# Financial Report

## For Year Ending 30 June 2023

**Financial reports are prepared and presented to ACP by;**

- **Stewart, Tracy and Mylon**

Alpine Community Plantations Inc. Financial Report

For the year ended 30 June 2023

16 page report submitted to ACP on behalf of Stewart, Tracey and Mylon to the ACP Treasurer on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023

- **Candour Solutions**

Finance Report

Submitted to ACP on behalf of Candour Solutions to the ACP Treasurer on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

### **Financial Year 2022-2023 summary**

#### **Opening balance, at the commencement of the Financial Year period 2022-2023:**

- \$144,673 (*retained profits at the beginning of the financial year*)

#### **Income for the financial year period (2022-2023):**

- \$807,316

This includes all income sources, such as BSBR funding

Income is less than Total Revenue (\$823,781) as a result of the reduction of Less Cost of Goods Sold/Cost of Sales (Merchandise Purchases) of \$16,465





### Expenses for the financial year period (2022-2023):

- \$710,832

### Balance at the end of the financial year period (2022-2023):

- \$96,484

Also referred to as *Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to members of the association*

### Retained profits at the end of the financial year period (2022-2023):

- \$241,156

This includes *Opening balance*, plus the balance at the end of the financial year period

### General notes and commentary:

- BSBR funding expenditure was \$275,283
- BSBR funding received \$851,773
- All unexpended BSBR funding is retained as the ACP balance sheet as a liability
- Excluding BSBR funding sources, revenue was \$548,294
- Excluding BSBR funding sources revenue was \$548,294, compared to a revenue in 2021-2022 of \$382,719
- Membership is a main source of revenue increase between financial year periods, and was \$267,583 in 2022-2023
- Balance (or, profit for the year) at the end of 2022-2023 was \$96,484. Compared to a loss of \$35,762 for the financial year period 2021-2022
- All known, and required, year-end adjustments have been attended;
  - Income adjustment of \$30,000
  - Sales adjustment of \$436.78
  - Allocation of 2022 contributions (\$10,955) to the 2022-2023 financial year revenue

