



# Award boosts chalet

A TOURISM award for Mt Buffalo Chalet has reinvigorated the campaign to save the popular Victorian holiday spot.

The heritage-listed chalet won the Most Improved Bed and Breakfast award in the Victorian Hotel Motel and Accommodation Association Awards on Wednesday night.

The award followed an announcement last month that the ski resort would close on February 28 next year.

But assistant general manager Susie Cadigan said the closure could still be avoided, and Victorians were campaigning hard to save the chalet.

"At this stage, the closing date is still February 28, but we don't want that to happen," Ms Cadigan said.

"We're still negotiating with Parks Victoria and the State Government to keep the chalet open."

The key issue for the chalet is the lease length.

Ms Cadigan and her husband and general manager Brendan Cadigan run the lease for the Burbank Group.

The lease is managed by Parks Victoria, and will expire in 2014.

Ms Cadigan said that was not long enough to make the ski lodge viable.

"We want a commitment for a long-term lease, and we need that sort of

## Mary Bolling

guarantee to justify putting money into developing the site," she said.

The managers are hoping for a perpetual lease.

They are also campaigning for the power supply to be extended to Mt Buffalo National Park.

"At the moment, we're just running on generators, which means a very high overhead, and that's just not viable for a large-scale business."

Ms Cadigan said the Mt Buffalo regional community was also campaigning strongly to keep the chalet open.

"Now the tobacco industry is out of the region, everyone wants tourism to grow and prosper," she said.

"This just highlights why the chalet is so important to the region, and the award shows that it's still very special to all Victorians."

The Mt Buffalo Chalet is approaching its 100th anniversary, in 2010.

Parks Victoria spokesman Alex Holt said discussions were continuing.

"The lessees want to run the chalet over summer, then renew their position," he said.

"Obviously the chalet is an icon and there is a lot of sentiment attached, so we want to reach some sort of agreement that will be the best way forward to the chalet."