

# Big plans for Binna Burra

The historic Binna Burra Mountain Lodge is aiming to increase its marketshare in Australia's thriving eco-tourism sector with a multistage, 15-year redevelopment plan.

STAGE one will cost \$12 million and comprise 18 luxury sky lodge apartments to be sold freehold to private buyer-investors.

The building and development plan will result in the eco-resort extended into a 4 to 4.5-star, family-focused property.

Binna Burra Lodge (BBL) chairman Hal Morris, says the business has returned to basics under a new board elected in 2008, simplifying and repackaging its product.

"We aim to provide a modern expression of the things that made Binna Burra strong from day one," he says.

"The concept of the master plan is about creating a walkable village, with a linking track from the new sky lodges to the existing lodge and down the spine to Campground Hill. We see it developing almost like an island in the sky, or a ski lodge-type village where you leave your car when you arrive and don't see it until you leave."

Established by eco-tourism pioneers Arthur Groom and Romeo Lahey in 1933, the resort has a history of innovation and of re-inventing itself.



Established as a remote slab hut retreat in the Lamington National Park, it is one of Australia's oldest nature tourism operations and has been popular with generations of outdoor and nature enthusiasts.

"We celebrated 75 years in business last Christmas and Binna Burra was operating in the 1930s before anyone even knew what eco tourism was," says Morris.

"Eco tourism is booming. It is also about running a sustainable business, so the turnaround in operations and implementation of the master plan sets up Binna Burra for a strong future."

Architects Deicke Richards were commissioned to design the first stage of the project.

Future stages will include self-contained cabins, a seminar centre and health hub, better camping facilities, an eco-centre, walking tracks, public spaces, picnic grounds, pavilions and viewing platforms.

Fully-furnished sky lodge apartments are being marketed off the plan for between \$310,000 and \$1.08 million. They will be managed and maintained by BBL under pooled letting arrangements and 28 days free access per year to investors.