



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE FROM LA TROBE AND INDIGO SHIRE COUNCIL

5 April 2011

### **La Trobe University at Beechworth: Communications update**

An update on the sale process of the La Trobe University's facilities at Beechworth will be the lead item on the agenda at next Tuesday's Indigo Shire Council community forum, which follows the monthly Council meeting.

The Acting Director of the facility, Rob Woodward, will outline the process to date, and provide details of a consultation process for the community and other stakeholders.

Mr Woodward said the university confirmed on 22 March that it would sell the Beechworth site, with the hotel and conference centre closing on 23 May. The university is serious about guiding the Beechworth facility towards a viable future, and getting the best outcome for the site.

The first step in the process is underway, with the site being available for purchase by other government agencies for several months. If there is no buyer during this period, an Expression of Interest process for the private sector will begin.

Mr Woodward said that the university wanted to hear from the community, including businesses, about their aspirations for the site.

"This information will be fed into the Expression of Interest process. This site is part of the community and any potential buyer needs to know what that community context is," Mr Woodward said.

Mr Woodward will outline other measures next Tuesday including dates and times for meetings, and methods for people to provide feedback.

"The first step for us with the community is a Family Fun Day at La Trobe from 11am to 3pm on Sunday 10 April, two days before the Community Forum. This is open to the whole community and we hope as many people as possible will come and join us. And there will be an opportunity for people to record their connection to the site," Mr Woodward said.

"There will be a barbecue lunch, local wine tastings, great music from Beechworth local Ben Williams and Sparkie the clown for the younger ones. And there will be opportunities for people to sample what The Spa has to offer as well as take part in a Ghost Tour."

Mr Woodward said that apart from the hotel and conference centre closing on 23 May, it would be business as usual for the tenants on the site.

"We have had discussions with our tenants and where practicable all arrangements will continue. La Trobe University will continue to maintain the grounds and facilities at the current high standard until the property is sold," Mr Woodward said.

"We are aware of community concern about the impact the sale of the site may have on the town's tourism and commercial activity. We are keen to work with the community as we go through this sale process. To that end we

have formed a working group with myself, other representatives of La Trobe University, the Indigo Shire Mayor and Deputy Mayor, senior Council staff, the Beechworth Chamber of Commerce and representatives from Regional Development Victoria and the Department of Planning and Community Development to drive the community engagement process.”

Mr Woodward said people wanting to provide input could call Lisa Cartledge on 03 5720 8000.

Businesses are asked to contact Beechworth Chamber of Commerce president Jason Dawson, on 03 5728 2200 who will collate their input.

Community members are asked to contact either Mr Woodward or Indigo Shire Mayor Cr Ali Pockley 0448 803 411, or Deputy Mayor Cr Bernie Gaffney on 0419 181 234. Mr Woodward said he hoped as many people as possible could attend the Community Forum next Tuesday, 12 April, at 6.30pm in the Memorial Hall.

“La Trobe University understands that the Beechworth site is important to the community and we want to hear directly from residents and businesses about that,” Mr Woodward said.

**ENDS**