Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy 2014-2023

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Images

Front cover photos courtesy of Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Resort (horse riding) and Finish Line Events (mountain bike riding). All other photos courtesy of communityvibe unless otherwise stated.

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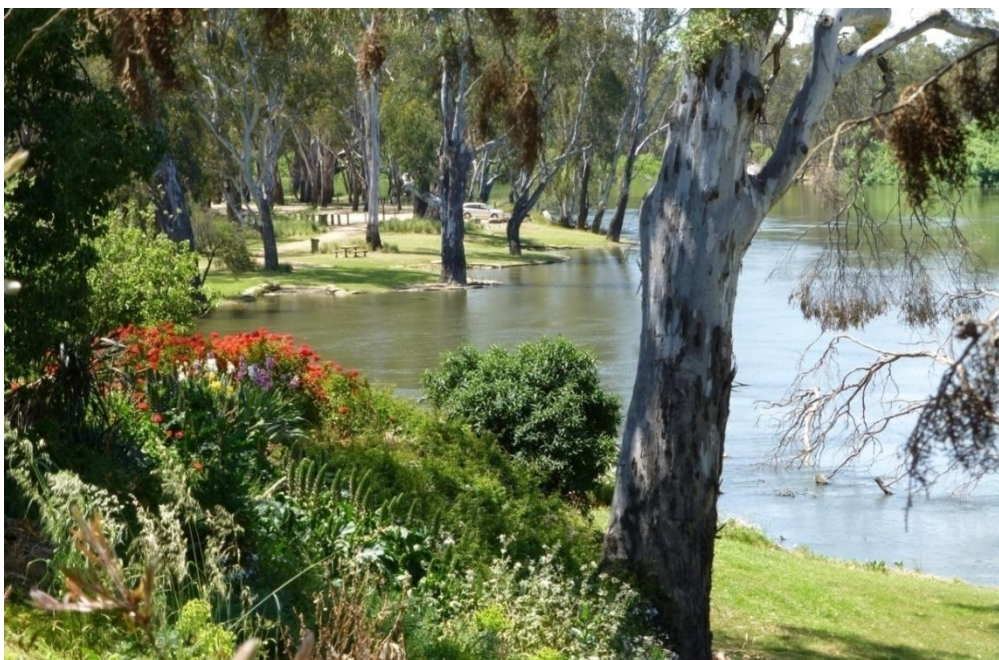
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Figure 1: Wahgunyah on the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail

1.0 Executive Summary

How Will This Document Be Used?

The Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy 2014-2023 will be championed by the Hume Regional Manager's Forum and endorsed by the Hume Alliance Executive Group. In order to implement the recommendations contained within the Strategy, the first step is to establish a Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Committee. This Committee will comprise of Local Government representatives, Alpine Resort representatives, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Parks Victoria, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, Regional Development Victoria, Tourism Victoria and community representatives. Regular liaison will need to occur with peak bodies, businesses, tourism bodies, VicRoads, indigenous representatives, community based organisations and user groups. The first priority of the Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Committee is to establish the terms of reference to outline the roles and responsibilities of each organisation and the overall purpose of the Committee.

Meeting annually, the Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Committee will use the Strategy to support land managers (Local Government Authorities, State Government Agencies and community based groups), to promote tourism potential and to seek funding and resources to develop, enhance and upgrade regionally significant tracks and trails in the region in accordance with the recommendations contained within the Strategy. Whilst the list of recommendations in relation to track and trail development is currently in priority order, it must be noted that these priorities may be reviewed and altered over the next ten years, depending upon a variety of factors, such as levels of community support, available funding, land manager priorities, political will and planning work undertaken to further advance the track / trail. Each of the recommendations contained within the Strategy is therefore of importance to the development of an overall high quality network of regionally significant track and trail opportunities in the Hume region, regardless of its current ranking.

From snow covered mountains to river plains, thick native bush land, waterfalls, river flats and undulating agricultural land, the Hume region of Victoria provides some of the most scenic and diverse opportunities for cycling, walking and horse riding in the nation. It is widely renowned for its natural beauty; its high quality gourmet food and wines; and its ecotourism opportunities. Already thousands of visitors flock to the region annually to enjoy riding or walking along some of Victoria's, and indeed Australia's, best quality rail trails, hiking tracks, horse riding trails, on road mountainous cycle trails and mountain bike tracks. Many local residents also take advantage of the magnificent resources available on their doorstep to improve their health and wellbeing and to enjoy time with family and friends.

The Hume region of Victoria, which encompasses 40,000 square kilometres of land, is managed by 12 Local Government Authorities and three Alpine Resorts. Parks Victoria and Department of Environment and Primary Industries manage vast tracks of this land too. Collectively these organisations wish to continue to lead the way in providing a diverse range of world class tracks and trails that provide a high quality recreational experience for visitors to the region and local residents. At the same time they wish to enhance and protect our natural environment and cultural features;

and provide economic development throughout the various villages, towns and cities that make up the Hume region.

Through this Strategy, specific issues that need to be addressed to further advance track and trail development, create an improved visitor experience, provide opportunities for business development and partnerships, along with several new or upgraded track and trail experiences, have been identified. These strategies link to and complement a wide range of local, municipal and state-wide strategies, including the Victorian Trails Strategy, as detailed in Section 7.0 and the Appendix. The Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy is therefore a blueprint for the Hume region in relation to the development and enhancement of tracks and trails over the next ten years.

Although many track / trail development opportunities were identified through community consultations, a number of these were considered to be very important at a local or municipal level, but not considered to be regionally significant. It is important that Local Government Authorities continue to develop and seek funding for local and municipal level tracks and trails as these facilities create important connections within and between communities and help to facilitate active transportation from people's homes to schools, workplaces, retail areas and recreational facilities. This strategy does not focus on local and municipal level tracks / trails, but does acknowledge the importance of connecting regionally significant tracks / trails to these facilities wherever possible to create better linkages.

A regionally significant track / trail is one that connects areas of significant natural, cultural or economic importance, is likely to appeal to international visitors and is also likely to attract economic development opportunities as well as social, health and environmental benefits. Such tracks / trails may have some degree of length attached to them or provide opportunities for a range of different experiences emanating from one central location and may lie with a number of different agencies across the Hume region and beyond. Ten existing tracks / trails in the Hume region are considered to be of regional significance. These include:

- Murray to Mountains Rail Trail (Bright, Myrtleford, Beechworth, Milawa, Wangaratta, Wahgunyah and Rutherglen)
- High Country Rail Trail (Wodonga to Tallangatta)
- Great Victorian Rail Trail (Tallarook, Yea, Alexandra, Bonnie Doon, Mansfield)
- Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails
- Australian Alps Walking Track (Walhalla to Canberra)
- Bicentennial National Trail (Healesville to Cooktown via the Alpine region)
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing
- Razorback Walk
- Mt Buffalo Big Walk
- Alpine Loop Road Ride (from Falls Creek, through Omeo, Mt Hotham, then back to Falls Creek via Mt Beauty).

To determine new or upgraded tracks / trails likely to produce the most benefits within the Hume region, the project steering committee and the project team firstly classified suggested trails as local, municipal or regional level. All tracks / trails classified as having regional significance were then assessed using a specific planning tool which focussed on seven key areas:

1. Support by key stakeholders
2. Appealing to track / trail users
3. Strengthens tourism potential of a region and creates opportunities for economic development
4. Protects and enhances the natural environment and / or cultural heritage of a region
5. Supported through planning
6. Designed according to industry standards and current best practice methods
7. Connected to communities, transport and other tracks / trails

These key areas have been weighted differently depending on their relative importance in determining the likely success of a trail and each key area clearly outlined (refer to Appendix). Members of the project steering committee (which comprised of representatives of Local Government, State Government and track / trail users) used this tool to produce a final score for each trail, based on information obtained through the consultative and research processes of the project (noting that the final score reflects a snapshot in time, and therefore that the score can change as more work is undertaken). These scores were then averaged out to provide a final score. Specific trail development opportunities (in no particular order) include:

#	Track / Trail Name	New or existing track / trail	Support by key stake-holders	Appeal-ing to track / trail users	Strengthens tourism potential of a region and creates opportunities for economic development	Protects and enhances the natural environment and / or cultural heritage of a region	Supported through planning	Designed according to industry standards and current best practice methods	Connected to communities, transport and other tracks / trails
1	Winton Wetlands	New	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
2	Bright to Harrietville	Murray to Mountains Rail Trail	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
3	Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing		✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Beechworth to Yackandandah	Murray to Mountains Rail Trail	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Oxley to Whitfield	Murray to Mountains Rail Trail	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Wandong to Heathcote	New – extension of O'Keefe Rail Trail	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓
7	Wandiligong HVP MTB Trail Network	New	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓
8	Lake Mountain to Marysville MTB Trail	New	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
9	Falls Creek to Mt Beauty MTB Trail	New	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓

#	Track / Trail Name	New or existing track / trail	Support by key stake-holders	Appeal-ing to track / trail users	Strengthens tourism potential of a region and creates opportunities for economic development	Protects and enhances the natural environment and / or cultural heritage of a region	Supported through planning	Designed according to industry standards and current best practice methods	Connected to communities, transport and other tracks / trails
10	High Country Rail Trail Wodonga CBD Connection	High Country Rail Trail	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Mount Stirling Horse Trail	New	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓
12	Wahgunyah to Lake Moodemere	Murray to Mountains	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓
13	High Country Rail Trail - Wodonga to Tallangatta Trail Sealing	High Country Rail Trail	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓
14	Alexandra to Eildon	Great Victorian Rail Trail	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Yackandandah to Huon	Murray to Mountains Rail Trail	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Bonegilla to Lake Hume	High Country Rail Trail	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓
17	Barmah Canoe Trail	New	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓	
18	Tallarook to Seymour	Great Victorian Rail Trail	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
19	Chiltern to Rutherglen	Murray to Mountains Rail Trail	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓	✓
20	Yarrawonga to Echuca	New	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓	✓
21	Alexandra to Rubicon	Great Victorian Rail Trail	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓
22	Shepparton to Seymour River Trail	New	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓	✓
23	Old Tallangatta to Corryong	High Country Rail Trail	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓		✓	

Each of the priority tracks / trails identified within this Strategy is likely to bring increased revenue into the Hume region, either by providing a completely new experience (e.g. Winton Wetlands and Mount Stirling Horse Trail), or by providing additional experiences or improvements to existing tracks / trails to encourage walkers, cyclists, horse riders or canoeists to stay in the region longer (e.g. the Bright to Harrietville section of the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail and the sealing and CBD

upgrades to the High Country Rail Trail). Details of each of these trails, including proposed route and indicative costings, are included in the Appendix.

The project not only focussed on identifying physical track / trail developments in the Hume region, but also identified many other initiatives to improve existing trails in terms of planning, management, maintenance, marketing, development of partnerships (between government agencies, the business sector and community groups) and enhancing the visitor or user experience. These improvements are likely to encourage people to stay in the region longer and continue to come back to the region to enjoy the diversity of trails. At the same time, these improvements will provide local residents with access to high quality, well connected recreational tracks / trails to enhance their own health and wellbeing.

These improvements include:

Governance and Communication

■ A Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee comprising of Local Government representatives, Alpine Resort representatives, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Parks Victoria, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, Regional Development Victoria, Tourism Victoria and community representatives will be established. Regular liaison will occur with peak bodies, businesses, tourism bodies, VicRoads, indigenous representatives, disability advocacy groups, community based organisations and user groups.

■ Processes for governance of regionally significant tracks and trails in terms of composition of committee and roles and responsibilities of the committee are established.

Management

■ Track / trail managers are informed of best practice regarding track / trail management, including roles and responsibilities, management plans, MOUs, management options, community engagement and volunteer support.

Communication Structures

■ Advocate for the establishment of a state and / or national tracks and trails advocacy group or think tank comprising of representatives from Local Government Authorities, Alpine Resorts, State Government Authorities, Federal Government Agencies, Tourism Victoria, Regional Tourism Bodies, Bicycle Network Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, International Mountain Bike Association (Australia), Rail Trails Australia and Australian Trail Horse Riders Association, which meets once per year (or more if required) to discuss track / trail related issues.

■ Track / trail managers establish a database of track / trail users and provide regular information via tools such as e-newsletters.

Resources

■ Lobby State and Federal Governments for additional funding to Local Government Authorities for the development and management of tracks and trails.

■ Lobby the State Government for additional resources to be made available to public land managers and partners to manage and maintain tracks and trails in their jurisdiction once constructed and to consider whole of life costs.

■ Work in partnership with state/ national based agencies such as Bicycle Network Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, International Mountain Bike Association (Australia), Australian Trail Horse Riders Association, Rail Trails Australia, VicHealth, Tourism Victoria, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and Sport and Recreation Victoria to develop resources to promote the benefits of tracks and trails to Local Government Authorities.

■ Local Government Authorities and Tourism bodies in the Hume region support volunteers and Friends of Groups through recruitment, training, assistance with grant writing and provision of shared trail development and maintenance tools.

Marketing

■ Regionally significant tracks / trail managers develop a marketing plan.

■ Regionally significant track / trail managers work collectively to market the track / trail opportunities available across the entire Hume region, with support from the Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee and regional tourism bodies.

■ Regionally significant track / trail managers develop suitable high quality, fully integrated and fully mobile marketing resources.

■ Regionally significant track / trail managers establish links with appropriate external bodies to assist with cross-marketing.

■ Regionally significant track / trail managers develop a brand style guide, outlining expectations in terms of the tone, style and resources as well as specific details around the brandmark, colours, typography, photography, stationery, online applications, pull up banners, etc.

Signage and Wayfinding

■ Regionally significant track / trail managers adhere to Australian Standards and best practice when installing or upgrading signage and ensure that signage and wayfinding are considered both along the track / trail and in towns.

Risk Management

■ Regionally significant track / trail managers develop a suitable risk management plan and effective mechanisms and procedure for addressing identified risks.

Maintenance

■ Regionally significant track / trail managers develop a suitable maintenance program and budget and commit long term to maintaining each track / trail that it is responsible for, taking into consideration whole of life costs.

Business / Private Sector Development

■ Advocate to State Government authorities to create an environment that is more conducive to private sector development (to meet the needs of walkers and cyclists) on public land where regionally significant tracks / trails exist.

■ Provide information to the private sector of the benefits of investing in track / trail related opportunities.

■ Facilitate training to existing and potential businesses about the culture and needs of cyclists, mountain bike riders, hikers and horse riders so that they are better able to meet their needs and expectations.

■ Advocate to State Government for planning support, advice and small start up grants for businesses wishing to establish themselves along regional tracks and trails to support the needs of walkers and cyclists.

■ Advocate to Tourism Victoria to promote the benefits of working in the hospitality industry to the workforce, including young school leavers.

■ Encourage local tourism bodies to implement an annual award (as part of existing Tourism awards) for exemplary track / trail related businesses and hospitality staff who provide exemplary customer service standards.

Planning

■ Regionally significant tracks / trails managers undertake a feasibility study prior to developing any new tracks / trails.

■ Regionally significant tracks / trails managers develop a track / trail management plan, Memorandum of Understanding, maintenance plan and marketing plan prior to the establishment of the track / trail wherever possible.

■ Regionally significant tracks / trails managers engage with local communities and all other relevant land managers (such as VicRoads, DEPI, Parks Victoria, VicTrack, etc) in track / trail developments from the very beginning of the planning stage and prior to preparing funding submissions.

■ Encourage State Government to identify and document clear processes and requirements around the development of tracks / trails.

■ Advocate to State Government for the development of a state-wide mountain bike strategy.

Trail Design and Planning Guidelines

■ Local Government Authorities undertake their own planning in relation to potential business and partnership opportunities, marketing, and management of local or municipal level tracks and trails throughout the municipality.

■ Distribute the Planning Guidelines contained within the Appendix to Local Government Authorities, public land managers and other track / trail designers and builders in the Hume region and where possible, incorporate this information into Local Government design guidelines.

■ Encourage Local and State Government agencies to ensure that track / trail designers and builders are adhering to relevant Australian Standards, industry guidelines, best practice and universal design principles prior to issuing planning permits.

■ Facilitate a series of training opportunities for track / trail designers, builders and managers relating to track / trail planning, design and development.

■ Advocate to Tourism Victoria to establish a centralised knowledge hub for the sharing of information and best practice examples of all types of tracks / trails, potentially in partnership with Bicycle Network Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, International Mountain Biking Association (Australia) and Australian Trail Horse Riders Association.

Visitor Experience

■ Provide local businesses and regionally significant track / trail managers with information about how to create positive visitor experiences and the benefits that such experiences can make locally.

Events

■ Regionally significant track / trail managers consider developing suitable infrastructure during the design stage to accommodate future events.

■ Regionally significant track / trail managers develop events policies so that processes, expectations, roles and responsibilities of all parties are clearly defined.

■ Support the establishment of events using regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region as per locally developed event policies.

■ Work with tourism bodies to cross-populate an events calendar (advertised through facebook, emails and relevant websites) to avoid potential clashes between events and to inform potential participants of opportunities available.

Public Transport Access

■ Advocate to Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and V/Line to retrofit existing trains to allow for additional bicycles to be carried.

■ Advocate to Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and V/Line to purchase new train carriages (when required) that have a greater carrying capacity of bicycles.

■ Advocate to V/Line to establish a bicycle booking service for trains and buses.

■ Advocate to V/Line to provide linkages from its website to private shuttle buses in the Hume region that are capable of carrying riders and their bikes.

■ Advocate to Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and V/Line to install a bicycle carriage rack on the front of buses in high trail use areas (subject to feasibility).

■ Advocate to Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and V/Line to provide a car and trailer at Southern Cross Railway Station on Friday evenings and /or Saturday mornings to transport bicycles to trail heads when it is not possible to secure a D Van attached to the rear of a train, returning on Sunday evenings.

■ Regionally significant track / trail managers design tracks / trails so that they connect to transportation hubs wherever possible.

■ Regionally significant track / trail managers and tourism bodies work in partnership with airlines to create all inclusive track / trail related packages.

Universal Design

■ Facilitate training to regionally significant track / trail managers in relation to universal design principles.

■ Regionally significant track / trail managers use universal design principles in the design phase of tracks / trails.

Research and Data Collection

■ Managers responsible for regional tracks / trails undertake regular, if not permanent, counts of trail users.

■ Managers responsible for regional tracks / trails undertake regular evaluations of the satisfaction levels of existing track / trail users.

■ Advocate for improved track / trail data collection and distribution of this information by Australian Sports Commission, Australian Bureau of Statistics and Tourism Research Australia.

■ Advocate for the development of tools to assist track /trail builders and managers to estimate potential usage and economic benefits of tracks / trails.

■ Local indigenous communities and regional track / trail managers to work together to create opportunities for indigenous tourism and interpretation on tracks / trails.

Key investments likely to make a difference to the utilisation of tracks / trails and enhanced visitor experience and spend in the Hume region are:

- Tracks / trails developed in unique and attractive places where cyclists, walkers and horse riders want to walk, ride and explore.
- Quality, well designed and maintained track / trail surfaces.
- Well signed tracks / trails.
- Suitable promotional materials including the ability to book all aspects of the trip online and fully integrated and fully mobile marketing resources.
- Suitable private sector business development to support trails (e.g. accommodation, shuttle services along and between tracks / trails, cafes, etc.)
- A high standard of customer service levels of businesses within towns and cities supporting tracks / trails.
- Ability to transport track / trail users and bicycles to, and particularly within, the region on public or private transportation.
- Tracks / trails that connect to key focal points of towns and cities, e.g. railway stations and Visitor Information Centres.
- Tracks / trails that provide options for a variety of experiences, such as self-contained loops and options for different skill levels (especially for mountain bike trails).
- Tracks / trails that provide opportunities for events.
- Supporting infrastructure such as bike parks, seating, etc along trails and at key destinations.
- Tracks / trails that help people connect to the history, stories, culture and natural environment of a location through interpretive opportunities.

Figure 2: High Country Rail Trail

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Aim and Process

The aim of this strategy is to improve existing regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region of Victoria; identify any new regionally significant tracks / trails or extensions required; and identify other factors that will encourage greater use and awareness of tracks and trails in the region.

To assist in the data and information gathering required to produce this strategy, the following activities were undertaken:

- Establishment of a project steering committee to oversee the development of the strategy and to provide advice on policies, strategies, etc
- 40 documents reviewed and analysed to identify key directions, policies and priorities
- 7 regionally significant tracks and trails from Australia and internationally researched in detail
- 10 existing regionally significant tracks and trails physically audited
- 40 interviews / workshops with Council staff, State Government staff, Alpine Resort staff
- representatives of cycling groups, walking groups, horse riding groups, business operators and general community members throughout the entire Hume region as well as Melbourne (154 participants).
- 536 community surveys completed
- 20 written submissions received from community members

The Strategy is divided into three sections. This document provides an overview of key findings and directions, whilst Appendix One contains information such as definitions, overview of cultural and natural attractions in the Hume region, policy context, benchmarking details, survey results, key stakeholder interviews, written submissions, potential funding options and maps. Appendix Two provides some basic design guidelines for consideration when designing tracks / trails.

2.2 Vision and Planning Principles

A key aspect of the project involved developing a vision for regionally significant tracks and trails in the Hume region. This vision is based on the planning principles that have also been developed to guide decision making in relation to tracks and trails developments. Both the vision and planning principles are based on feedback obtained from key stakeholders and community members during the consultative process.

The vision for tracks and trails in the Hume region is:

The Hume region provides diverse, high quality, sustainable tracks and trails of regional, state and national significance to facilitate economic, social, health and environmental benefits.

The seven planning principles which have been designed to guide the strategy and regional track / trail developments are:

Key Planning Principle	Description
Support by key stakeholders.	Track / trail is very well supported at the local, regional and state level by community, private sector, government and other agencies with ongoing support likely. Stakeholders have, or are very likely to make a funding commitment to the trail. Stakeholders have developed or are committed to developing relevant processes to assist with ongoing management and maintenance.
Appealing to track / trail users.	Track / trail has very high appeal and is likely to attract users from local, municipal, regional, state, national and international levels.
Strengthens tourism potential of a region and creates opportunities for economic development.	Track / trail presents significant opportunities for economic or tourism development, e.g. development of accommodation, tours, shuttle services, increased visitation and expenditure in areas, etc.
Protects and enhances the natural environment and / or cultural heritage of a region.	Works along the track / trail enhances and protects environmental / cultural heritage values, e.g. tree planting, interpretive information, diverts users away from highly significant sites or degraded areas, etc.
Supported through planning.	Planning permits issued and the following plans developed: • Feasibility Study • Trail Management Plan • Maintenance Plan • Marketing Plan • Memorandum of Understanding.
Designed according to industry standards and current best practice methods.	Track / trail designed according to industry standards and current best practice methods, e.g. Australian Standards, IMBA standards, DSE walking track classifications, VicRoads Cycle Notes, universal design principles, etc.
Connected to communities, transport and other tracks / trails.	Track/ trail is very well connected to local communities, other tracks / trails, existing infrastructure and transport options in accordance with the type of trail experience planned.

It is a given that each track / trail will also provide a diversity of recreational, cultural and natural experiences which may result in improved health and wellbeing and social benefits for local residents and other track / trail users.

Where new or upgraded regionally significant tracks or trails are to be developed in the Hume region, planners must demonstrate that serious consideration has been given to incorporating universal design principles into the track / trail design. Hence wherever possible, tracks / trails will incorporate at least a section of each track / trail which has been specifically designed to be used by

as many people as possible. In some instances, however, some of the regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region will only be able to incorporate a few elements of universal design due to issues such as steep terrain.

Further, it is recognised that a partnership approach between community organisations, the private sector and government agencies can be extremely beneficial in terms of sharing limited resources; developing a strong sense of community ownership and engagement; and developing a sustainable management model (e.g. Parklands Albury Wodonga's model). Support from local community groups and individuals (local champions) in relation to the planning, development, management, maintenance and running of events will therefore be strongly encouraged on all regionally significant tracks / trails.

These planning principles have also been used in this Strategy to evaluate and prioritise potential regional trail developments (refer to Appendix).

2.3 Focus of the Strategy

The Hume region comprises a wide variety of tracks and trails, including:

- **Local tracks / trails** which provide recreational or commuter linkages from residential areas to community facilities or central business districts and are generally managed by one State or Local Government Authority.
- **Municipal level tracks / trails** which connect key attractions in the municipality or connect towns and may be the responsibility of individual Local Government Authorities, State Government Agencies and / or Alpine Resorts.
- **Regionally significant tracks / trails** which connect areas of significant natural, cultural or economic importance, are likely to appeal to international visitors and are also likely to attract economic development opportunities as well as social, health and environmental benefits. Responsibility for planning, development and management of regionally significant tracks and trails may lie with a number of different agencies across the Hume region and beyond.

Each of these trails is important within the tracks and trails network, and each provides different benefits to local residents and visitors to the area. However, this particular strategy is focussed on regionally significant walking, cycling, mountain biking and horse riding tracks and trails only. Although outside the scope of the Strategy, the opportunity to develop a regionally significant canoe trail has been identified in one municipality. Only a basic level of information has been provided to support this development as it is still in the early stages of investigation.

2.4 What is a Regionally Significant Trail?

A regionally significant track or trail can be described in the following way:

Planning and Design	Some form of formal planning has been undertaken, e.g. feasibility study or master plan. Landholder approval granted.
Management and Maintenance	Track / trail managed and maintained by a variety of key stakeholders (e.g. LGAs, State Government Authorities and Alpine Resorts) possibly in partnership with a community based committee of management. Relevant plans are in place, e.g. Track / Trail Management Plan, Maintenance Plan, Memorandum of Understanding, etc.
Surface	Surface is high quality and is specifically designed and constructed for the intended user groups.
Usage	Likely to attract users from the local, municipal, regional, state, national and international levels.
Infrastructure	Track / trail will incorporate additional supportive infrastructure such as seats, shelter, BBQs, picnic tables, bike racks, public toilets, camping platforms, car parks, viewing areas, etc.
Distance	Track / trail will provide the opportunity to spend multiple hours or potentially days on the track / trail. A variety of alternative / adjunct loops, experiences or attractions are available from the primary track / trail.
Connections	Track / trail should be connected to visitor information services and should connect areas of significant natural, cultural or economic importance such as parks, waterways and tourist destinations. Track / trail should be easily accessible for potential users.
Signage	Track / trail includes combinations of trail head signage, distance markers, interpretive signage, directional signage, regulatory signage, warning signage, and advertising signage appropriate to the desired trail experience.
Promotion / Marketing	Track / trail will be featured on its own website, brochures and maps. It will be well advertised throughout the region, state, nationally and internationally.
Benefits	Track / trail will link tourism products and will encourage economic and tourism growth.

3.0 Why Invest in Tracks and Trails?

Tracks and trails can provide an array of benefits to both the communities in which they are situated and to trail users themselves. These benefits include:

3.1 Economic Benefits

Given that 1.08 million Victorians ride a bike each week and more bicycles than cars are sold in Australia each year[1], the economic impact of cycling alone is significant.

In terms of the total expenditure of all visitors who participated in cycling in 2010, Tourism Victoria estimates that in Victoria alone $362 million was spent, and in Australia the figure is estimated to be approximately $2.4 billion[2].

Data provided in the Alpine Shire's Economic Impact of Cycle Tourism report[3] suggests that overnight recreational cyclists spend approximately $250 per day in the region and day recreational cyclists spend in the vicinity of $50. Cycle event competitors are estimated to spend between $80 and $800 per day. AUDAX race competitors spend an average of $167 per day. The total visitor spend is estimated to be $16,311,000. The study states that the initial stimulus into the NE Victorian regional economy is $17.4 million per annum. By incorporating flow on effects, the regional output / income is $24.4 million per annum and the regional value added is $12.1 million per annum. This translates to 157 full time jobs.

Regionally significant tracks and trails can provide increased income for local businesses that sell walking, cycling or horse riding equipment and gear, as a result of greater demand for such products from local and visiting trail users. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 85,400 Australian households reported spending money on bicycles during 2009-10. The total expenditure on bicycles by Australian households is $96.3 million per year. A further 130,600 Australian households reported the purchase of sports or physical recreation footwear during this time, accounting for a total of $315.3 million annual expenditure by Australian households.[4]

As more income is generated in the local area, employment opportunities are also likely to increase, particularly in accommodation, food, transport, entertainment, guiding and tourist services. During construction of regionally significant tracks / trails there may be some increased employment opportunities for local trades. Events in the region may also contribute to increasing revenue and expenditure in the region. In many areas, properties located near regionally significant tracks and trails have increased in value[5],[6].

From a local resident's perspective, tracks and trails are free of charge to use and are therefore an accessible and affordable physical activity to undertake with family and friends. For Local, State and Federal Governments, the savings to the health services budget as a result of people being physically

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[1] Victorian Government (2012) *Cycling into the Future 2012-2013 and Action Plan 2013-2014*
[2] Tourism Victorian (2011) *Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-2015*
[3] Alpine Shire Council (2011) *Economic Impact of Cycle Tourism*
[4] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) *4156.0 Sport and Physical Recreation: A Statistical Overview, Australia*
[5] http://www.tourism.vic.gov.au/images/stories/Documents/StrategiesandPlans/Victorian-trails-strategy-2005-2010.pdf
[6] http://www.ce.udel.edu/dct/publications_files/Rpt.%20188%20Bike%20Paths.pdf

active can be significant. According to VicHealth[7], physical inactivity costs Australia more than $719 million per year. 22% of heart disease can be attributed to lack of physical activity, as can 11% of strokes, 14% of diabetes and 10% of breast cancer. There are 16,178 premature deaths in Australia each year as a result of insufficient physical activity. Hence by providing cycling, walking and horse riding opportunities, local government authorities can invest in the health of local residents and the nation.

Walking and cycling tracks and trails can help to reduce local traffic congestion and reduce the amount of expenditure required on maintaining roads. There may also be less demand for creation of car parks.

3.2 Social and Health Benefits

Participation in physical activity, such as walking and cycling, can reduce the likelihood of developing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and certain types of cancers such as breast and colon cancer. It also reduces the likelihood of becoming overweight and developing high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Currently the National Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults take part in at least 30 minutes of accumulated moderate physical activity each day. Walking, cycling and horse riding along tracks / trails in the Hume region, by local residents or visitors to the area will help them to achieve these minimum guidelines and at the same time help to off-set chronic disease within the community. In addition, participation in physical activity can increase confidence, self esteem, resilience and social connections.

Tracks and trails can provide opportunities for young people to improve their road skills and to have a greater sense of freedom, through a reduced reliance on parents for transportation in the local area. With more people using public spaces such as shared trails, a sense of activity is created, which may in turn lead to safer places through passive surveillance. Events on tracks / trails can also provide opportunities for community strengthening and connectedness, as well as an alternative form of physical activity to organised sports.

3.3 Environmental Benefits

Tracks and trails produce minimal impact on the environment due to limited or no use of fuel as part of the overall activity. This may result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions as well as reduced noise pollution.

Through the use of interpretive information or licensed tour operators, trail users are likely to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the environment, history, geography and culture of an area. Tracks and trails provide an opportunity to experience and enjoy nature, views and local landmarks.

By planting trees, re-vegetating areas and re-directing trail users away from environmentally or culturally significant areas, the environment can be enhanced.

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[7] VicHealth (2012) *Increasing Participation in Physical Activity. Local Government Action Guide No. 3*

4.0 Overview of the Hume Region

Covering an area of 40,000 square kilometres, the Hume region of Victoria has a diversity of geographical features, ranging from snow covered mountains in the High Country through to thick native bush land, waterfalls, river flats and undulating agricultural land. It is widely renowned for its natural beauty; its high quality gourmet food and wines; and its ecotourism opportunities.

The area incorporates major population centres such as Wodonga, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Seymour and Benalla, and features two major transportation routes – the Hume Freeway and the Goulburn Valley Highway as well as two major rail corridors – Melbourne to Wodonga (and onwards to Sydney) and Melbourne to Shepparton. There are also several major waterways including the Murray River, the Goulburn River, the Ovens River, the Broken River, the Kiewa River and the King River.

From a cultural perspective, the region is rich with indigenous history, gold mining relics, art galleries and stories of high country cattlemen and Ned Kelly.

The current population of the Hume region (around 270,000) is expected to grow by approximately 23% in the next 13 years.

There are twelve Local Government Authorities and five Alpine Resorts that make up the Hume region. These are illustrated in the map on the following page:

- Alpine Shire
- Benalla Rural City
- City of Wodonga
- Greater Shepparton City
- Indigo Shire
- Mansfield Shire
- Mitchell Shire
- Moira Shire
- Murrindindi Shire
- Strathbogie Shire
- Towong Shire
- Wangaratta Rural City
- Falls Creek Alpine Resort
- Lake Mountain Alpine Resort.
- Mt Buller Alpine Resort
- Mt Hotham Alpine Resort
- Mt Stirling Alpine Resort

4.1 Existing Regionally Significant Tracks and Trails in the Hume Region

Figure 3: Farmland near Mansfield

Existing tracks and trails in the Hume region that are considered to be regionally significant include:

- Murray to Mountains Rail Trail (Bright, Myrtleford, Beechworth, Milawa, Wangaratta, Wahgunyah and Rutherglen)
- High Country Rail Trail (Wodonga to Tallangatta)
- Great Victorian Rail Trail (Tallarook, Yea, Bonnie Doon, Mansfield)
- Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails
- Australian Alps Walking Track (Walhalla to Canberra)
- Bicentennial National Trail (Healesville to Cooktown via the Alpine region)
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing
- Razorback Walk
- Mt Buffalo Big Walk
- Alpine Loop Road Ride (from Falls Creek, through Omeo, Mt Hotham, and then back to Falls Creek via Mt Beauty).

Existing Regionally Significant Tracks and Trails in the Hume Region

Cobram
Yarrawonga
Wahgunyah
Rutherglen
Albury
Numurkah
Chiltern
Wodonga
WODONGA CITY
Huon
Tallangatta
Corryong
MOIRA SHIRE
Baranduda
High Country Rail Tr
TOWONG SHIRE
Yackandandah
Wangaratta
Beechworth
INDIGO SHIRE
Dookie
Shepparton
Oxley
Milawa
Tatura
GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY
Winton
WANGARATTA RURAL CITY
Myrtleford
Murray to Mountains Rail Trail
Rushworth
Benalla
Murchison
Mt Buffalo Big Walk
Bright
Mount Beauty
Violet Town
BENALLA RURAL CITY
Whitfield
Euroa
STRATHBOGIE SHIRE
ALPINE SHIRE
Falls Creek
FALLS CREEK ALPINE RESORT
Nagambie
Heathcote
Hotham Heights
Seymour
Australian Alps Walking Tr
MOUNT HOTHAM ALPINE RESORT
Alpine Loop Road Ride
Omeo
Tallarook
Trawool
Mansfield
Mount Buller Alpine Village
Mt Buller - Mt Stirling MTB Park
MOUNT STIRLING ALPINE RESORT
MITCHELL SHIRE
Yea
Alexandra
MANSFIELD SHIRE
Jamieson
Great Victorian Rail Trail
Kilmore
Wandong
MURRINDINDI SHIRE
Bicentennial National Trail
Kinglake
Marysville

20 0 20 40 Kilometers

Legend:
Hume Region
Towns
Existing Regionally Significant Trails
Alpine Loop Road Ride
Australian Alps Walking Track
Bicentennial National Trail
Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing
Great Victorian Rail Trail
High Country Rail Trail
Mt Buffalo Big Walk
Murray to Mountains Rail Trail
Razorback Walk
Mount Buller - Mount Stirling MTB Park
Hume_public_land.shp
Freehold
Public

Of these tracks and trails, the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail is recognised as a world class rail trail; the best of its kind in Australia. The EPIC mountain bike experience offered by Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Alpine Resorts is the only recognised EPIC mountain bike facility in Australia, which essentially means that it too is considered to be of an international standard and therefore very appealing to both the domestic mountain bike market and the international mountain bike market. It has recently secured funding to construct a new 40.39km long distance, cross country descending trail in December 2013[8]. Further, the Alpine Loop Road Ride is one, if not the most, challenging scenically spectacular road rides in Australia. Its appeal is international.

The Bicentennial Trail commences in Healesville and finishes in Cooktown, Queensland. With a total length of 5,330km, it is recognised as the longest connected horse riding trail in the world. Beginning in Walhalla and finishing in Canberra, the 650km long Australian Alps Walking Track is also widely renowned as a regionally significant trail. Spectacular views and challenging walks in remote regions are all part of the attraction of the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing, the Razorback Walk and Mt Buffalo Big Walk. Both the High Country Rail Trail and the Great Victorian Rail Trail provide quality facilities for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, attracting people from all over Australia and internationally to enjoy the experiences offered in the region.

Figure 4: Australian Alps Walking Track

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[8] http://flowmountainbike.com/2013/04/375000-toward-australias-first-imba-epic-mountain-bike-trail/

4.2 Current Geographic Distribution of Tracks / Trails in the Hume Region

From a geographic perspective, the majority of the regionally significant existing tracks and trails in the Hume region are confined to the south and north east. At present there are no regionally significant tracks or trails in Moira Shire, Greater Shepparton City, Strathbogie Shire or Benalla Rural City. Parks Victoria and Parks NSW are currently investigating the feasibility of developing a canoe trail in the Barmah Forest (Moira Shire and Murray Shire) and Benalla Rural City is in the process of developing Winton Wetlands as a regionally significant area for walking, cycling and bird watching. Greater Shepparton City Council has developed a small municipal level rail trail at Dookie and has plans to develop another small rail trail between Rushworth (in Campaspe Shire, Loddon Mallee region) and Murchison. Alpine Shire and Falls Creek Alpine Resort are in the process of developing additional mountain bike trails.

Areas with the largest number of regionally significant trails are Falls Creek Alpine Resort, Mt Hotham Alpine Resort, Alpine Shire and Mansfield Shire. The following table provides an overview of the geographic distribution of existing regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region:

Tracks / Trails	Municipality / Alpine Resort
Alpine Loop Road Ride	Alpine Shire Falls Creek Alpine Resort* Mt Hotham Alpine Resort*
Australian Alps Walking Track	Alpine Shire Mansfield Shire Falls Creek Alpine Resort* Mt Hotham Alpine Resort*
Bicentennial National Trail	Lake Mountain Alpine Resort Mansfield Shire Murrindindi Shire
Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing	Falls Creek Alpine Resort* Mt Hotham Alpine Resort*
Great Victorian Rail Trail	Mansfield Shire Mitchell Shire Murrindindi Shire
High Country Rail Trail	Indigo Shire Towong Shire City of Wodonga
Mt Buffalo Big Walk	Alpine Shire
Murray to Mountains Rail Trail	Alpine Shire Indigo Shire Rural City of Wangaratta
Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails	Mt Buller Alpine Resort Mt Stirling Alpine Resort
Razorback Walk	Falls Creek Alpine Resort* Mt Hotham Alpine Resort*

*Some of the walks at Falls Creek and Mt Hotham Alpine Resorts incorporate parts of another trail, e.g. the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing is a regionally significant trail that is primarily located on another regionally significant trail: the Australian Alps Walking Track.

4.3 Activity Type Distribution of Tracks / Trails in the Hume Region

From an activity type distribution perspective walking is possible on nine of the ten regionally significant tracks / trails. Horse riding is possible on three of the ten trails, although only part of the High Country Rail Trail is accessible and additional work needs to be undertaken to improve the experience along the Great Victorian Rail Trail. From a cycling perspective, recreational cycling is possible along three of the ten trails; mountain biking on two; and road cycling on one. The following table shows the distribution of track / trail based activities within the region:

Track / Trail Name	Walking	Recreational Cycling	Mountain Biking	Road Cycling	Horse Riding
Murray to Mountains Rail Trail	✓	✓			
High Country Rail Trail	✓	✓			✓ part
Great Victorian Rail Trail	✓	✓			✓ possible
Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails	✓ possible		✓		
Australian Alps Walking Track	✓				
Bicentennial National Trail	✓		✓		✓
Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing	✓				
Razorback Walk	✓				
Mt Buffalo Big Walk	✓				
Alpine Loop Road Ride				✓	

4.4 Current Participation Rates in Track / Trail Based Activities in the Hume Region

In order to determine the need for additional opportunities and further investment in track / trail activities, it is important to understand current participation rates. Unfortunately there is very little data available regarding the number of users on tracks and trails at present. We do however know that the Murray to Mountain Rail Trail attracted 59,900 annual visitor days in 2010[9] and that three of the trails at Mt Buller Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails attracted 14,472 users in 2012 (up from 6,112 users in 2010). The Australian Bureau of Statistics[10] states that 22.9% of Australians use off-road cycle ways or bike paths. In Indigo Shire[11] 34% of local residents regularly use tracks and trails in the area and another 31% occasionally use these facilities. In the City of Wodonga[12], 49% of local

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[9] SGS Economics and Planning (2011) *Economic Impact of Cycle Tourism for Alpine Shire Council*.
[10] Australian Bureau of Statistics: *4156.0 Sport and Physical Recreation: A Statistical Overview, Australia, 2012*
[11] Indigo Shire (2008) *Recreation Plan – Volume 3*
[12] Wodonga City Council (2007) *Wodonga City Municipal Recreation Plan*

residents stated that they used the Wodonga Cycleway in the previous 12 months, primarily for walking or jogging.

Figure 5: Cyclists

The following table shows participation rates in the top 17 physical activities in Victoria. Where local data was available, it was included in this table. A key factor to highlight is the fact that three of the most common track / trail based activities rate in the top five physical activities in Victoria, ahead of more traditional organised team sports such as AFL football, golf, tennis, cricket, netball, basketball and soccer.

No.	Activity	% of Adults 15+ who Participate in these Activities					% of Australian children 5-14 years who participate in these activities[13]
		Victoria[14]	Alpine Shire Council[15]	Indigo Shire Council[16]	Rural City of Wangaratta[17]	City of Wodonga[18]	
1	**Walking**	**36.6%**	**63%**	**33%**	**61%**	**38.8%***	**52.1%**
2	Aerobics / Fitness	24.7%	11%	4%	18%	8.3%	Not available
3	Swimming	13.5%	15%	19%	20%	9.4%	37.8%
4	**Cycling**	**12.7%**	**35%**	**18%**	**30%**	**9.6%**	**48.1%**
5	**Running**	**12.7%**	**9%**	**2%**	**5%**	**2.4%**	**7.8%**
6	Golf	7.3%	6%	11%	5%	3.3%	Not available
7	Tennis	6.8%	7%	10%	5%	4.1%	10.6%
8	Australian Rules Football	5.4%	6%	4%	Not available	Not available	8.7%
9	Basketball	4.8%	5%	Not available	Not available	Not available	9.7%
10	**Bushwalking**	**4.6%**	**7%**	**7%**	**7%**	**Not available***	**4.3%**
11	Yoga	4.3%	3%	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
12	Netball	3.8%	5%	5%	Not available	2.0%	Not available

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[13] Australian Sports Commission (2010) *Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport – Children's Report 2010*
[14] Australian Sports Commission (2010) Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport
[15] Alpine Shire Recreation and Open Space Plan 2013
[16] Indigo Shire Recreation Plan 2008
[17] Rural City of Wangaratta Recreation Strategy and Open Space Strategy 2012
[18] Wodonga Municipal Recreation Plan 2007

No.	Activity	% of Adults 15+ who Participate in these Activities					% of Australian children 5-14 years who participate in these activities[13]
		Victoria[14]	Alpine Shire Council[15]	Indigo Shire Council[16]	Rural City of Wangaratta[17]	City of Wodonga[18]	
13	Cricket (outdoor)	3.5%	2%	2%	Not available	Not available	Not available
14	Soccer (outdoor)	3.5%	3%	Not available	Not available	1.3%	16.5%
15	Soccer (indoor)	2.6%	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
16	Dancing	2.1%	2%	Not available	Not available	Not available	13.7%
17	**Horse Riding**	**0.8%**	**3%**	**4%**	**Not available**	**0.9%**	**2.6%**

Figure 6: The Big Walk, Mt Buffalo

4.5 Visitors to the Hume Region

An estimated 7,902,000 visitors to the Hume region (and parts of southern NSW) in the past year. This figure is made up of 4,870,000 domestic day visitors, 2,975,000 domestic overnight visitors and 57,000 international visitors. Expenditure by these visitors is estimated to be in the vicinity of $100-$129 per domestic day visitor to $101-$149 per night for domestic overnight visitors. There are no reliable statistics available for international visitor expenditure, however, based on the average nightly spend of domestic overnight visitors, we will assume that this figure is $124. Based on these figures, visitors to the Hume region (and parts of southern NSW) contributed approximately $1,472 billion in the region in 2012.

Tourism Region	Domestic Day Visitors	Expenditure	Domestic Overnight Visitors	Expenditure	International Visitors	Expenditure
North East / High Country[19]	1,555,000	$148m or $100 per visitor	1,285,000	$594m or $149 per night (average of 3.1 nights)	20,000	Statistically unreliable.
Goulburn River Valley[20]	1,971,000	$197m or $100 per visitor	702,000	$167m or $101 per night (average of 2.4 nights)	17,000	Statistically unreliable.
Albury Wodonga[21]	870,000	$112m or $129 per visitor	539,000	$195m or $127 per night (average of 2.8 nights)	14,000	Statistically unreliable.
Sun Country[22]	474,000	$52m or $111 per visitor	449,000	$183m or $119 per night (average of 3.4 nights)	6,000	Statistically unreliable.
TOTAL	**4,870,000**	**$509m**	**2,975,000**	**$956m**	**57,000**	Statistically unreliable (we will assume a night rate of $124 will equal **$7m**).

NB:

- Tourism North East – incorporates the following municipalities: Wangaratta, Indigo, Alpine, Benalla, Towong, Mansfield and alpine resorts

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[19] http://www.tourismnortheast.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/High-Country-YE-Jun-12.pdf
[20]

http://www.goulburnrivervalley.com.au/sitebuilder/visitationstatistics/knowledge/asset/files/17/goulburnrivervalleyyedec12.pdf
[21] Murray Regional Tourism Board (2013) *Travel to the Murray Region – Year Ended December 2012*
[22] Murray Regional Tourism Board (2013) *Travel to the Murray Region – Year Ended December 2012*

- Goulburn River Valley Tourism – incorporates the following municipalities: Greater Shepparton, Murrindindi, Mitchell, Strathbogie and Euroa
- Albury Wodonga – incorporates Albury (NSW) and Wodonga
- Sun Country (incorporates Cobram, Moira, Numurkah, Corowa (NSW), Corowa region (NSW), Tocumwal (NSW), Finley (NSW) and Jerilderee (NSW).

The majority of these visitors come to the Hume region for 2-4 nights to have a holiday or to enjoy their leisure time. At least three quarters of all domestic visitors to the region are from other parts of Victoria, particularly Melbourne. Domestic visitors are likely to be an older couple or a family grouping comprising at least one parent and the youngest child aged 14 or less. International visitors tend to be either over 65 years of age or between 15-34. Primary countries of origin at present for international visitors are: UK, New Zealand, USA and France.

There is no information available about the number of these visitors who undertake track / trail based activities.

Figure 7: Historic Streetscape in Chiltern

4.6 Tracks and Trails in Neighbouring Areas

Both the Bicentennial Trail and the Australian Alps Walking Track extend beyond the boundaries of the Hume region. Commencing in Healesville, the Bicentennial Trail traverses through the High Country and much of rural NSW and Queensland on its way to its end point in Cooktown, Queensland. The Australian Alps Walking Track commences in Walhalla and traverses through part of the Gippsland region and rural NSW on its way to Canberra.

There are a number of other existing tracks / trails of municipal and regional significance in neighbouring areas of Victoria and NSW which could potentially be linked to tracks and trails in the Hume region. However, linking to other regionally significant tracks / trails would only be recommended if the development is likely to encourage greater use of the regionally significant tracks and trails in the Hume region by local residents and visitors.

Only two of these are connected to the Hume region at Wodonga at present: Hume and Hovell Walking Track which commences in Yass and finishes in Albury, NSW and the network of tracks and trails in Albury, NSW. There is some potential to develop a link from Albury to the High Country Rail Trail via the west side of Lake Hume and Bonegilla. This development could create a good loop along the High Country Rail Trail, but could potentially draw people away from travelling further along the Rail Trail to Tallangatta. Further research needs to be undertaken to determine the possible impact of such a development, although each sections is most likely to attract different user groups. Funding for such a development would need to be shared between Albury City Council and Wodonga City Council. At this stage the priority of Wodonga City Council is to improve its existing trail assets.

Figure 8: High Country Rail Trail, Wodonga

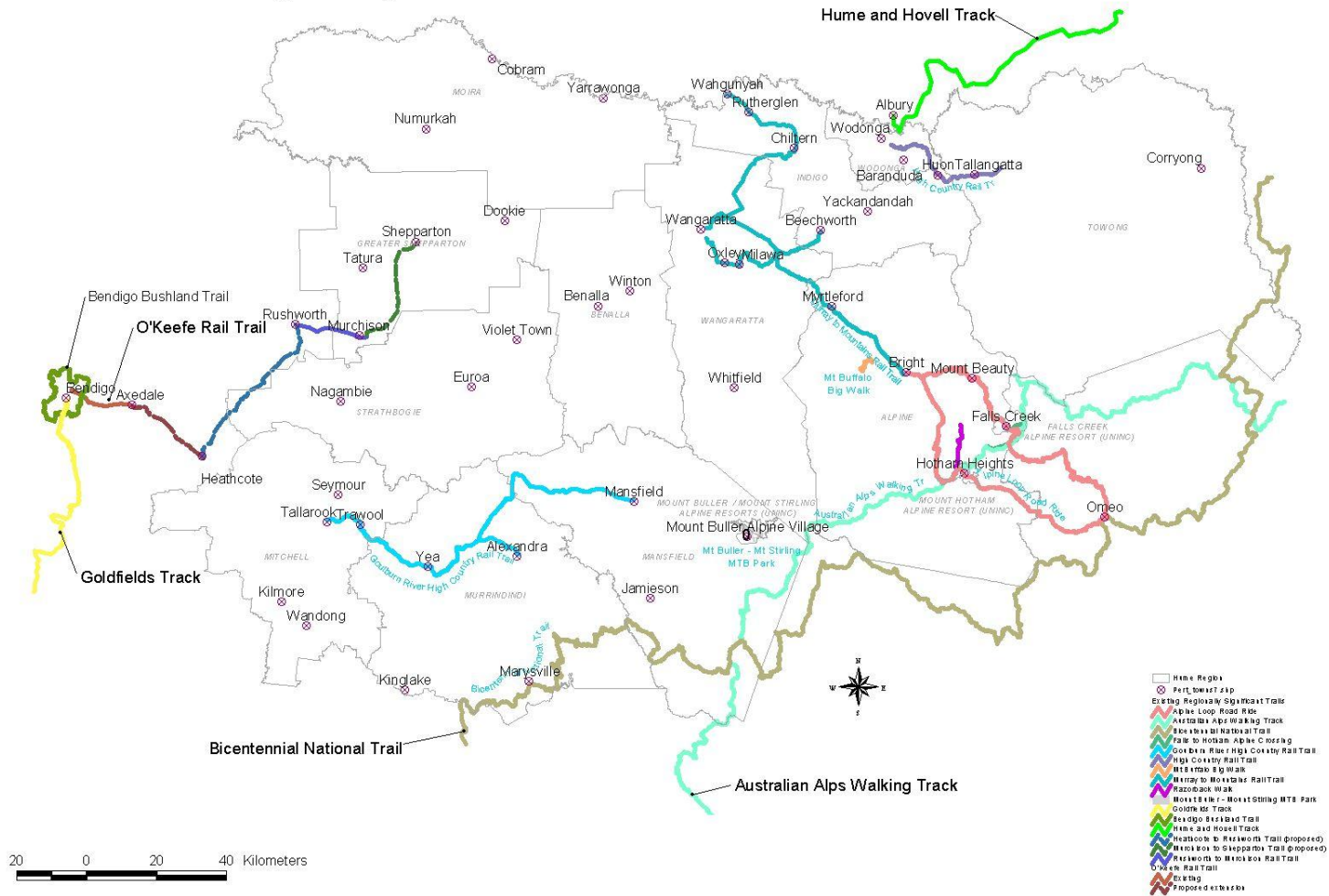# Tracks and Trails in Neighbouring Areas

Figure 9: Beginning of proposed Rushworth to Murchison Rail Trail

The O'Keefe Rail Trail (located between Bendigo and Heathcote in the City of Greater Bendigo) could potentially link with the Great Victorian Rail Trail if the Wandong to Heathcote Trail is established by Mitchell Shire and if linkages are made across to Seymour and Tallarook. The O'Keefe Rail Trail could also potentially link through state forest from Heathcote in the City of Greater Bendigo to Rushworth in Campaspe Shire, all the way through to Murchison in Greater Shepparton via the proposed Rushworth to Murchison Rail Trail and then potentially into Shepparton itself. Both of these are long term plans and are dependent upon the Rushworth to Murchison and the Kilmore to Heathcote trails being established.

Figure 10: Potential site for trail from Rushworth to Murchison

The following table provides an overview of tracks and trails in neighbouring areas:

Track / Trail	Comments
Hume and Hovell Walking Track, Albury (NSW)	Trail currently finishes in Albury. Mostly single track through bushland, part will be converted to a 2.5-3m wide trail. Managed by NSW Crown Lands. Will be sealed. Currently narrow and undefined.
O'Keefe Rail Trail (with links to Goldfields Track and proposed Daylesford to Woodend Rail Trail). Greater Bendigo City Council	Located between Bendigo and Axedale. Currently being extended to Heathcote. Could connect to Hume region through the proposed Rushworth to Murchison Rail Trail or through the proposed Wandong to Heathcote Trail. The O'Keefe Rail Trail connects to Castlemaine, Daylesford, Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh via the 210km long Goldfields Track (an unsealed walking / mountain bike riding trail). Planning is also currently underway for the development of a rail trail between Daylesford and Woodend and an extension of the Goldfields Track from Blackwood to Macedon. Direct connection to Hume region does not yet exist.
Craigieburn Bypass Melbourne	The Craigieburn bypass is a 17km shared off road pathway which connects to the Metropolitan Ring Road Pathway from Craigieburn. It will run along the east side of the bypass to Curly Sedge Creek. At this point it will go underneath the bypass and continue along the west side of the bypass to join the Hume Highway at Amaroo Road, Craigieburn. Direct connection to Hume region does not yet exist.
Merri Creek Trail Melbourne	The Merri Creek Trail commences at Dights Falls where it joins the Main Yarra Trail (Melway 44 F3) and follows the Merri Creek to Moomba Park where it joins the Western Ring Rd path (Melway 7 J11). It is approximately 25km in length. Direct connection to Hume region does not yet exist.
Lilydale to Warburton Melbourne	The Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail is a 38km trail that travels between the Lilydale and Warburton railway stations. Direct connection to Hume region does not yet exist.
Albury Trails (NSW)	A number of trails in Albury travel south to the Murray River and feed into Wodonga's urban network, i.e. Murray River Trail, West Albury Trail, Bungambrawartha Creek Trail, South Albury Trail, Albury Thurgoona Trail, East Albury Trail, Thurgoona Trail and Norris Park Link. The proposed Lake Hume to Wonga Wetlands trail will be mostly off road. Private land issues. Will go to Apex Park. There are trail linkages across bridge. Need to undertake some improvements on causeway around Wodonga Creek. May ultimately link to Howlong.

In terms of value to the Hume region, physical or transportation linkages between the High Country Rail Trail, the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail and the Great Victorian Rail Trail are likely to be more beneficial than linking to tracks / trails outside the region. These linkages will help to create an extensive network of trails which is likely to encourage people from all over Australia and nationally to visit the region for an extended period of time.

5.0 What do we Know About our Tracks and Trails Users?

In order to gain an understanding of the needs of track / trail users, a survey was designed and distributed electronically via a range of different networks. 536 people completed this survey. Based on the result of the survey, we know that:

5.1 Motivation for Trail Use

The prime motivation for using tracks and trails in the Hume region by survey respondents is for enjoyment (36.5%), followed closely behind as an activity to do with family and friends (28.5%).

5.2 Mode of Transport

The majority of people who completed the survey primarily used a mountain or hybrid bike to travel along their chosen track / trail (60.0%). Road riders (17.6%) and walkers (15.9%) were the next two most popular answers.

5.3 Distance Travelled

Distance travelled along regionally significant tracks and trails by survey respondents varied greatly (note that the three quarters of survey respondents travelled by some form of bicycle). Forty-five percent (45%) of trail users travel anywhere between 16-50km per day. Another 15.6% indicated a total travel distance of more than 100km.

5.4 Length of Stay in the Hume Region

Forty percent (40%) of survey respondents were local people. Of those who completed the survey from other parts of Australia, most stayed between two days (30.3%) and three (24.9%), with a reasonable number staying for four or more days (23.9%).

5.5 Track / Trail Experience

In general, users of regionally signficant tracks and trails in the Hume region agree or strongly agree that their experience using trails has been positive.

5.6 Most Desired Characteristics or Features of Tracks and Trails

Respondents were asked (via an open ended question) to identify the characteristics or features that they would like to see included on any new regionally significant tracks or trails in the region. The top ten responses included:

1. Smooth all weather surface – bitumen or well compacted gravel surface (53)
2. Signage that is clear; provides interpretive information; shows distances; and is not able to be vandalised (32)
3. Accommodation, food and attractions accessible to the track / trail (32)
4. Trails that are multi-purpose and suitable for all users including families and people riding road bikes and hybrids (27)
5. Natural bush scenery along the track / trail (18)
6. Access to drinking water along the track / trail (18)
7. Historical landmarks and information to be featured along the track / trail (16)
8. Off road trails with minimal road crossings (16)
9. Opportunities to access tracks / trails by using public transport (15)
10. Links with other existing tracks / trails (15)

5.7 Important Initiatives or Features for Tracks and Trails

Survey respondents were asked to identify the key features of importance (from a specified list) when choosing to use a track or trail in the Hume region in the future. The top ten responses included:

1. Information to allow self-guided tours (301)
2. E-newsletters to keep users up to date on tracks/trails in the region (244)
3. Bicycle transfers between destinations (215)
4. Development of other types of tracks or trails e.g. kayaking/canoeing (204)
5. Development of apps and QR codes for smart phones incorporating track/trail information (196)
6. Ability to transport bicycle on public transport or plane to region (182)
7. Luggage transfers between destinations (173)
8. Ability to book all aspects of visit online (167)
9. Budget packages including guide, luggage transfer, accommodation (163)
10. Mid-range packages including guide, luggage transfer, accommodation (141)

5.8 Preferred Information Sources

Survey respondents were asked to identify their preferred way to find out about tracks and trails. The four most popular sources of information are:

- information on individual track / trail websites (39.7%);
- information on state or regional tourism websites such as Tourism North East or Tourism Victoria (19.1%);
- brochures / maps from tourist information centres (18.5%); and
- signage on the track / trail (9.4%).

Whilst some people like to hear from others about tracks and trails (5.3%), there was little support by survey respondents for sourcing information from activity specific magazines (3.2%); from state based organisations (2.4%) or from guide books (2.4%). Others suggested the Rail Trails Australia website, apps, e-newsletters and online mountain bike forums. A number of respondents believe that the marketing approach needs to be multi-faceted, rather than relying on one source only.

5.9 Barriers to Trail Use

The 70 survey respondents who indicated that they don't use regionally significant tracks or trails were asked to identify the main barrier to participation. Just over one third of these people said that they are not aware of the opportunities available (34.3%). A further 27.1% said that they live too far away from any of the regionally significant tracks or trails; and another 10.0% stated that they don't own a road bike, mountain bike or horse to enable them to use the tracks or trails.

6.0 What can we Learn from Other Internationally Significant Tracks and Trails?

As part of the research component of the Strategy, seven internationally significant tracks and trails were assessed to identify what makes these tracks / trails successful; how they are managed; how they attract funds; etc. These tracks and trails include:

Name of Track / Trail	Track / Trail Type	Distance	Surface	No. of Trail Users Each Year
Milford Track, New Zealand	Hiking track.	54 km	Natural surface.	6,500
Overland Track, Cradle Mountain , Tasmania	Hiking track.	65km	Natural surface.	8,000
Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail, Victoria	Shared trail for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.	39km	Crushed rock and tar.	Not known. Most used rail trail in Victoria.
Otago Rail Trail, New Zealand	Shared trail for mountain bikers, walkers and horse riders.	150km	Gravel surface.	Entire length: 14,503. Poolburn section 20,588.
Mule Trail, Grand Canyon, USA	Trail for mules, horses and walkers.	34km	Natural surface.	10,000 per year (capped)
Valmont Bike Park, Boulder, Colorado, USA	Bike park facilities.	42 acres	Natural surface.	50,000 per year.
The Whole Enchilada	Mountain bike track.	48km descending over 2km	Natural surface.	Not known. Up to 500 users on Saturdays during peak season.

Detailed information on each of these tracks / trails is provided in the Appendix. Key learnings from this exercise include are detailed below.

6.1 Partnerships with Private Businesses

All trails assessed through the benchmarking exercise are supported by private businesses near the track / trail such as accommodation operators, tour operators, transport operators, etc; and some are supported by licensed tour operators or concessions on the track / trail.

Milford Track and the Overland Track have both partnered with private businesses to create more upmarket guided tours and accommodation options along their respective tracks. Each of these private operators pays a license fee each year to the management authority to use the track. These funds are then redirected back into the development, management and maintenance of the track.

Guided tour companies typically charge between $2,000 to $3,000 per walker for an all inclusive guided tour sleeping in more luxurious accommodation.

Otago Central Rail Trail businesses displaying the New Zealand Cycle Trail Official Partner logo meet minimum cycle-friendly standards. They provide a quality experience, high level of customer service for cyclists and prompt friendly service to all cyclists. Their staff can provide first-hand knowledge of the Otago Central Rail Trail and explain how to get more information and maps of other local bike trails. Cycle friendly accommodation will have made provision for securing bikes, a bike stand, basic tools, and/or know the contact details and opening hours of the nearest bike repair shop.

The City of Boulder Parks and Recreation Department selected Avid4 Adventure to provide a variety of cycling classes and programs at Valmont Bike Park. A one-year contract with renewal options for up to two additional years was awarded. Selection was based on criteria established by the department for management of programs and classes to be offered at the park. Avid4 Adventure is the primary provider of all organised recreational programming at Valmont Bike Park, including program development, staffing and registration. The City of Boulder shares revenue generated from these programs.

6.2 Limiting the Number of Trail Users

Both the Milford Track and the Overland Track limit the number of walkers who can start the track each day. The Milford Track allows for 40 independent walkers to start the track each day and 50 through guided opportunities; the Overland Track allows only 60 departures each day during the peak walking season: 34 independent walkers; 13 group members from schools / community groups; and 13 walkers departing with the commercial tour company using private hut accommodation.

The Grand Canyon has capped the number of riders on its Mule Trail to 10,000 per annum.

6.3 Limiting the Season

Due to the potential for snow and wintery conditions, the Milford Track is only open from late October to late April each year. Similarly, the Mule Trail in the Grand Canyon on the north rim is only available from 15 May to 15 October due to the potential for heavy snow. Valmont Bike Park is open daily from dawn to dusk, but is closed during bad weather.

6.4 Raising Revenue

The Overland Track charges walkers a Parks Pass ($30 for up to 8 weeks per person) and an Overland Track Fee ($200). These fees, along with revenue raised through commercial licenses, fully recover the operational and maintenance costs of the Overland Track at T1 standard.

The Otago Rail Trail is operated by the Otago Central Rail Trail Charitable Trust. As this is a registered charitable organisation, it can receive donations from community members. It also sells advertisements on the trail pamphlet, on the website and in the trail passport to help cover the cost of maintenance. Additional revenue raising initiatives of the Otago Rail Trail are a guide book ($25), a trail passport ($10) and a DVD ($20).

The Mule Trails in the Grand Canyon (USA) receives maintenance revenue through park entrance fees; concession franchise fees; Grand Canyon Association (an official fundraising entity for the park) and other Federal Government funding, however this amount is insufficient to carry out all works.

Boulder Mountain Bike Alliance sells individual membership to the Alliance for between $50 and $1,000 to assist with maintenance and development costs of the Valmont Bike Park. Entry to the park is free. Donations were sought from the private sector, various foundations and individuals to establish the park initially.

Figure 11: Donation board at Valmont Bike Park, Boulder, Colorado, USA

6.5 Transportation and Parking

Parking is generally available at trail heads of most of the tracks and trails assessed as part of the benchmarking exercise, and many are serviced by shuttle buses or regular buses or trains. Catch-A-Bus is a passenger service that follows the Otago Rail Trail in its entirety. It offers a 24 hour booking line and will pick up passengers, luggage and bikes door to door. It will also forward baggage to the next overnight stop. Some tour operators along the Otago Rail Trail offer secure off road and undercover parking.

6.6 Protecting the Environment

Trail erosion has been reported as an issue on the Milford Track, the Overland Track, the Mule Trail in the Grand Canyon and the Whole Enchilada Mountain Bike Track. The effects on the sensitive natural ecosystems are a concern on the Milford Track. A key concern for the Overland Track is to protect the area from devastating pests and diseases. To help reduce this risk, boot wash down stations have been installed and Parks and Wildlife Tasmania has produced a bio-security fact sheet which is available on its website. This fact sheet provides information about staying on the track at all times and cleaning and drying all equipment and camping gear.

Waterless composting toilets are used along the Overland Track. This system costs considerably more to maintain than a regular toilet, as it requires helicopter removal of solid wastes and remnant liquid, to an authorised 'Controlled Waste' site. This work is undertaken annually by a licensed waste removal contractor, typically during autumn. This ensures no discharge of faecal matter to the environment.

The Otago Rail Trail and the Grand Canyon Mule Trail have also installed environmentally friendly toilets.

To prevent the introduction of non-native plants into the Grand Canyon, only certified weed free forage (hay, straw, mulch) can be used on the Mule Trails in the park. Stock groups must be prepared to display proof of certification tags. Both in-state and out-of-state residents are required to bring a current health certificate with negative Coggins test for each equine. Horse riders are encouraged to prevent the spread of noxious weeds by cleaning stock trailers and the hooves, coat, mane and tail of stock before entering the park and to feed weed free forage or processed feed to stock for a few days before.

Figure 12: Grand Canyon, Arizona, USA

In relation to the Whole Enchilada Mountain Bike Track, the US Forest Service is constantly pressured by competing user groups to open new trails and sensitive areas and to relax regulations. However, the Forest Service is mandated to conserve resources for future generations and to limit impacts to the level at which the forest health can be sustained on all levels, including water quality, ecology and scenic value. Some strategies of the US Forest Service in Utah are: to encourage

mountain bike riders to wash their bikes before leaving or entering a new area to help prevent the spread of weeds; changing the use designation of some existing non-motorised trails; placing seasonal closures on some trails; and closing and reclaiming some existing trails that are no longer needed on the trail system.

6.7 Trail User Conflict

Both the Milford Track and the Overland Track report some level of trail user conflict and negative interactions between trail users. Crowding has been reported on the Milford Track and both Tracks have reported some conflict between trail users making too much noise in huts. The Milford Track has reported incompatible uses (e.g. those seeking an experience of self-reliance versus those who prefer to be guided). To help alleviate some potential trail conflict, the Overland Track insists that walkers travel in a north to south direction in peak time; limits the number of walkers during peak season; and requires bookings to be made between 1 October and 31 May each year.

Similarly, the Mule Trail in the Grand Canyon has reported conflict between mule riders and hikers, which has partially been alleviated through the introduction of trail etiquette and the realignment of some trails. To prevent congestion and conflicts on the Mule Trail, rules have been established regarding specific times of the day when each trail can be travelled downhill and when it can be travelled uphill.

Occasional conflicts have also been reported between mountain bike riders and hikers on the Whole Enchilada Mountain Bike Track.

6.8 Marketing

All tracks / trails assessed through the benchmarking exercise have their own websites and many use social media sites too. The Otago Central Rail Trail uses social media sites extensively. It is listed with Trip Advisor, features on Stumble Upon, Social Mention, TweetGrader, About Me, Facebook, Linkedin and You Tube. In addition to having its own website, its e-newsletter has 3,500 subscribers.

6.9 Bookings

The Milford Track, the Overland Track and the Otago Rail Trail experiences can be completely booked on line, either through the government agency responsible for the management of the track / trail; through licensed operators or through agencies such as Otago Rail Trail Booking Service (a free service to book accommodation, as well as bike hire, luggage transfers, transport and train bookings).

Due to strong demand, the Mule Trail at the Grand Canyon needs to be booked approximately 13 months in advance.

6.10 Drinking Water

Rainwater tanks are provided at each of the main huts on the Overland Track, whereas on the Mule Trail in the Grand Canyon, trail operators supply overnight riders with a new water canteen and day riders with water.

The Otago Central Rail Trail website encourages people to take their own drinking water with them and to replenish water supplies at local businesses. It states that treated drinking water is not always readily available. It also states: "The Central Otago climate is unique and rainfall is scarce.

Suitable drinking water can be costly for businesses to provide, so you shouldn't expect to be able to fill your water bottle as and when you need to".

Although the Valmont Bike Park provides a drinking fountain, it still encourages users to bring their own water along.

6.11 Risk Management

One of the main issues impacting upon the Overland Track and the Grand Canyon Mule Trail is evacuating walkers and / or mule and horse riders if there is a bushfire. So that management has an idea of how many people are along the trail at a given time, the Overland Track uses information contained within the booking data as well as log books at the beginning and end of the track. Another issue for the Grand Canyon Mule Trail is the emergency evacuation of riders at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

The Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail indicates the state road network number and highlights dangerous road crossings. Trail users along the Otago Rail Trail are advised via websites and promotional materials that there may be some loose material and bumps along the trail and that there are some areas where mobile phone reception is weak or not available.

The Boulder Mountainbike Alliance provides updates on the condition of all trails at Valmont Bike Park on its website and also onsite.

6.12 Involving Community Members and Groups

The City of Boulder Parks & Recreation Department initiated a Trail Crew Volunteer Program at the Valmont Bike Park, which attracted over 600 volunteers. These volunteers firstly learned about bike trail maintenance and then worked side by side with staff to maintain, rebuild, and in the future enhance the bike park. Regular workdays are held on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Boulder Mountainbike Alliance also contributes funding and volunteer effort to build and maintain these trails.

The City of Boulder Parks and Recreation Department has also trained up more than 100 people as Park Hosts to convey information to the general public about the park features including which jump lines are right for them or the best way around the Glade trails.

Many hours of voluntary labour are contributed to the Otago Rail Trail by the four members of the Otago Central Rail Trail Charitable Trust.

6.13 Data Collection

The seven permanent counters on the Otago Rail Trail (metal pads that sit below the ground) cannot differentiate between cyclists and walkers; however technology is currently being developed by New Zealand Department of Conservation to achieve this.

7.0 What Have We Learned from the Literature Review?

A total of 40 documents were reviewed and analysed in order to understand the context and policy directions associated with the development of tracks and trails at a state, regional and local level. A full summary of these state, regional and local level documents are contained within the Appendix.

Key findings of the literature review are:

Issue	Comments
Hume region	The High Country in the Hume region is recognised by Tourism Victoria as the leading cycle tourism region in Victoria due to its diverse terrain suitable for road cycling, mountain biking and rail trails, as well as its existing and potential events (e.g. the Audax Alpine Classic and Terra Australis)[23]. Tourism Victoria's priorities are to further enhance the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail and the Great Victorian Rail Trail, as well as developing mountain bike attractions of an international standard in the High Country. One of the opportunities identified in The Hume Strategy for Sustainable Communities (2010)[24] is to strengthen and expand the cycling economy in the region. Three specific trail developments were identified in this document: Bright to Harrietville; Wangaratta to Whitfield; and Winton Wetlands.
Data and Research	There needs to be a greater emphasis on collecting, collating and analysing data. A methodology for modelling current and potential demand for trails also needs to be developed. This could then help promote a better understanding of the potential impact of cycling on regional tourism[25] [26] [27].
Governance	The process for delivering shared trails across municipal boundaries with multiple land managers needs to be reviewed. Similarly, legislation regarding managing and maintaining off road paths needs to be reviewed[28].
Communication	There is a need to improve communication between industry stakeholders at a local, state and national level that create a productive and supportive industry structure and that also benefits local communities.[29] Consider dissemination of a monthly industry and consumer e-newsletters[30].
The Market	Shared trails, such as rail trails, are predominantly used by couples aged fifty plus and families with children, mostly from Melbourne. They seek an experience that allows them to spend quality time with friends and family and perhaps explore villages and food and wine attractions.

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[23] Tourism Victoria (2011) *Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-2015*

[24] Hume Regional Management Forum (2010) *The Hume Strategy for Sustainable Communities (2010-2020)*

[25] Victorian Government (2012) *Cycling into the Future 2012-2013 and Action Plan 2013-2014*

[26] Victorian Government (2004) *Victorian Trails Strategy 2005-2010*

[27] Murray to Mountains Committee of Management (2010) *Murray to Mountains Cycle Tourism Strategy 2010-2013 (Draft)*

[28] Victorian Government (2012) *Cycling into the Future 2012-2013 and Action Plan 2013-2014*

[29] Murray to Mountains Committee of Management (2008) *Murray to Mountains Cycle Tourism Strategy 2008-2010*

[30] Murray to Mountains Committee of Management (2010) *Murray to Mountains Cycle Tourism Strategy 2010-2013 (Draft)*

Issue	Comments
	Mountain bike riders are generally well educated professional males between 30-39 years of age with high disposable incomes. These riders may come from interstate and enjoy the challenge and health and fitness benefits that can be obtained from riding. They generally travel to an area specifically for mountain bike riding with like-minded people. People who take part in cycling events are generally well educated professional males between 40-54 years of age with high disposable income. They enjoy the health and fitness benefits of cycling and may come from interstate to compete (especially NSW or ACT). They may bring some others along with them as spectators[31].
Private Investment	Private investment is needed to complement tracks / trails and the associated natural attractions[32]. There needs to be an integrated policy and planning framework, or an enabling environment, to encourage private investment. Consideration should be given to: • "providing for longer-term leases of up to 65 years that match tenure to return on investment (excluding national parks) • investigating planning mechanisms to facilitate nature-based tourism infrastructure development on private land • increasing maximum licence terms to 10 years for tour operators on public land • creating a sustainable model for private investment into public land infrastructure."[33]
Business Development	Need to provide training to existing and potential businesses, as well as land managers and business partners to improve tourism knowledge, professionalism and excellence. Also need to consider business skills mentoring programs and other resource tools[34] [35] [36]. Additional aspects such as websites, online booking systems, new events, new tours, infrastructure fund for small businesses to become bicycle friendly and an information strategy targeting the visiting friends and relatives markets should also be considered[37].
Transport	The capacity to carry bikes on public transport in Victoria is limited and innovative ways to increase the accessibility of cycle tourism experiences, in

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[31] Tourism Victoria (2011) *Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-2015*

[32] Tourism Victoria (2011) *Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-2015*

[33] Victorian Government (2008) Victoria's Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2008-2012

[34] Victorian Government (2008) Victoria's Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2008-2012

[35] Murray to Mountains Committee of Management (2010) *Murray to Mountains Cycle Tourism Strategy 2010-2013 (Draft)*

[36] Towong Shire (2010) Tourism Strategy 2010-2013

[37] Murray to Mountains Committee of Management (2008) *Murray to Mountains Cycle Tourism Strategy 2008-2010*

Issue	Comments
	partnership with relevant government agencies and public transport operators needs to be explored[38] [39].
Events	Events can bring significant resources into a community. A key action is to identify and prioritise mountain biking events that have the potential to attract visitors to the State, including Terra Australis MTB Epic and Bike Buller MTB Festival.[40]
Packages	There is a need to encourage the private sector to develop tourism packages that combine trails, transport, tours, accommodation and attractions.[41]
Need to Increase Visitor Yield	Whilst opportunities exist for self-reliant nature tourism visitors, there are limited experiences available for high yield visitors in regional Victoria. Issues hindering growth are the five A's: attractions; access; activities; amenities; and accommodation[42] [43] [44].
Sustainability	Maintain a healthy environment by developing and implementing a consistent approach for reducing visitor impacts on public land. [45] [46] Work with Aboriginal communities to establish Aboriginal tourism products[47] .
Visitor Experiences	Develop authentic and memorable experiences by encouraging high yield commercially-run walking tours and demountable standing camps / accommodation in the High Country. Develop world class visitor attractions at key national parks and position Victoria as Australia's premier mountain bike destination[48]. Visitor experience includes: place; infrastructure; services; tours / activities / attractions; and interpretation[49] [50] [51].
Marketing	Need to develop online booking systems; increase presence of tracks / trails online; develop a full suite of maps; undertake collective or cooperative

[38] Tourism Victoria (2011) *Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-2015*

[39] Murray to Mountains Committee of Management (2010) *Murray to Mountains Cycle Tourism Strategy 2010-2013 (Draft)*

[40] Tourism Victoria (2011) *Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-2015*

[41] Tourism Victoria (2011) *Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-2015*

[42] Victorian Government (2008) *Victoria's Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2008-2012*

[43] Murray to Mountains Committee of Management (2008) *Murray to Mountains Cycle Tourism Strategy 2008-2010*

[44] Towong Shire (2010) Tourism Strategy 2010-2013

[45] Victorian Government (2008) *Victoria's Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2008-2012*

[46] Victorian Government (2004) *Victorian Trails Strategy 2005-2010*

[47] Victorian Government (2008) *Victoria's Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2008-2012*

[48] Victorian Government (2008) *Victoria's Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2008-2012*

[49] Australian Alps National Landscape Inc. (2010) *Australian Alps National Landscape Tourism Strategy for the International Experience Seeker Market*

[50] Murray to Mountains Committee of Management (2010) *Murray to Mountains Cycle Tourism Strategy 2010-2013 (Draft)*

[51] Towong Shire (2010) Tourism Strategy 2010-2013

| Issue	Comments
	marketing; utilise technology and social media; and use high quality images and text to promote tracks and trails in the media[52] [53] [54] [55]. Also need to undertake market research to identify what existing and potential trail users want.[56]
Green Season Visitation	Need to selectively develop 'green season' visitation, or spring, summer and autumn visitation to Alpine Resorts. However, there needs to be product differentiation between resorts and realistic expectations about what is possible in economic terms. It is suggested that the Government build market confidence and show leadership by supporting a small number of key initiatives, which may be of benefit beyond the green season[57].
Infrastructure Development	Need to improve existing infrastructure and develop new infrastructure to build on the overall product offering in the Hume region[58] [59] [60].
Trail Design	Flooding and fires both occur regularly in the Hume region and therefore tracks / trails need to be designed to account for these issues. Steel and earthen structures are generally preferred over timber in such locations[61].
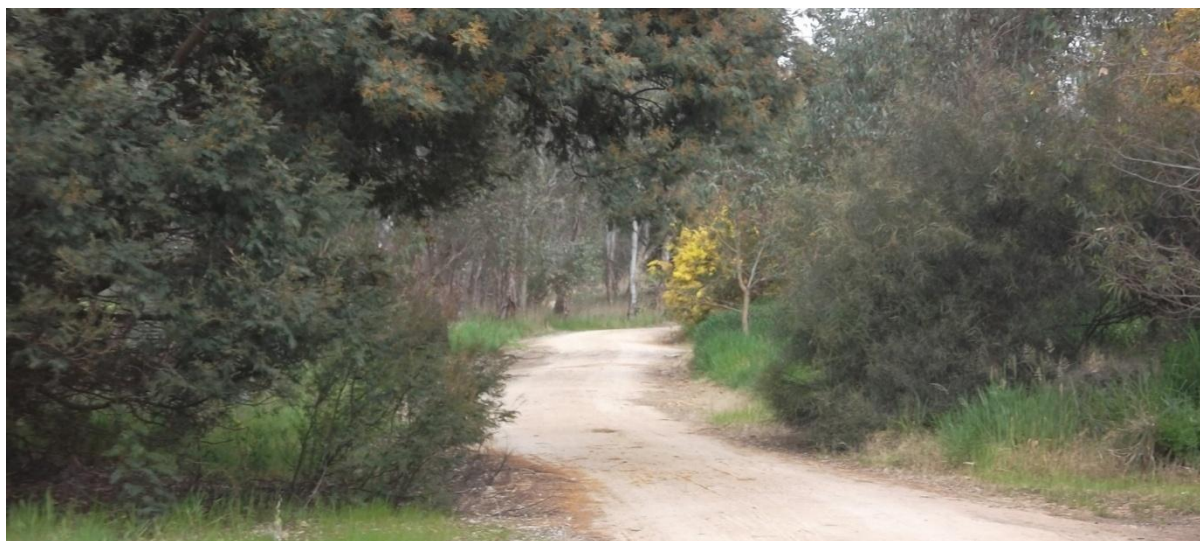
Figure 13: Great Victorian Rail Trail

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[52] Victorian Government (2008) *Victoria's Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2008-2012*
[53] Victorian Government (2004) *Victorian Trails Strategy 2005-2010*
[54] Murray to Mountains Committee of Management (2010) *Murray to Mountains Cycle Tourism Strategy 2010-2013 (Draft)*
[55] Towong Shire (2010) Tourism Strategy 2010-2013
[56] Murray to Mountains Rail Trail Committee of Management (2012) Strategic Plan 2012-2017
[57] Alpine Resorts Coordinating Council (2012) *Draft Alpine Resorts Strategic Plan*
[58] Murray to Mountains Committee of Management (2008) *Murray to Mountains Cycle Tourism Strategy 2008-2010*
[59] Murray to Mountains Rail Trail Committee of Management (2012) Strategic Plan 2012-2017
[60] Towong Shire (2010) Tourism Strategy 2010-2013
[61] Parklands Albury Wodonga Ltd (2010) The Murray River Strategic Plan 2010-2022

8.0 What Have We Learned from the Tracks and Trails Audit?

Each of the existing regionally significant tracks and trails in the Hume region was physically audited to identify possible areas of improvement, prior to consultations taking place. Individual trail observations and suggested improvements are contained within the Appendix of the Strategy. Generic issues that have been identified include:

8.1 Marketing and Promotion

- Need to update promotional materials such as brochures and websites, as much of the information is out of date on some websites.
- Need to articulate the type of surface track / trail users are likely to encounter through marketing material.
- Need develop consistent branding of signage along a trail.
- Need to ensure that track / trail information (including accommodation, guided tours, bicycle hire, shuttle services, etc) is available at Visitor Information Centres in neighbouring municipalities.

Figure 14: Trail head signage on the High Country Rail Trail at Tallangatta

8.2 Signage

- Need to improve signage to trail heads from the centre of towns; to toilets; to drinking water; to car parks / access points; from main roads to the track / trail; and to businesses available in towns.
- Ensure safety signage on trails and roads is adequate (e.g. 'Warning Cyclists' road signs)

- Ensure directional / reassurance signage is adequate, particularly in towns where no formed trail is present.
- Provide good interpretive signage to improve overall appeal of trail e.g. Cobungra Ditch and The Huts Walk at Mt Hotham.

8.3 Surfaces

- Need to improve some track / trail surfaces (e.g. particularly at the Wodonga end of the High Country Rail Trail)

8.4 Maintenance

- Need to ensure maintenance issues are regularly identified and attended to.

8.5 Safety

- Safety is of paramount importance, particularly on road routes such as the Alpine Loop Road Ride. Need to consider widening of road shoulders on dangerous stretches.

8.6 Infrastructure

- Provide sufficient supporting infrastructure such as bike racks, seats, drinking fountains, toilets and shelters.

8.7 Connections

- Need to improve connections from the centre of town to the track / trail (e.g. in Mansfield and Wodonga)

8.8 Businesses

- Need to increase the number of supporting businesses alongside some tracks / trails (e.g. High Country Rail Trail)

8.9 Access

- Need to identify which sections of tracks / trails are accessible for people with disabilities.

8.10 Public Transport

- There are limited connections to public transport along some tracks / trails.

9.0 What Have We Learned from the Consultations?

Extensive consultation was undertaken to determine the key issues and actions required to advance the development, management and maintenance of regionally significant tracks and trails in the Hume region. There were three different types of consultation undertaken with the community. These processes included:

- Conducting 40 interviews / workshops with Council staff, State Government staff, Alpine Resort staff, representatives of cycling groups, walking groups, horse riding groups, business operators and general community members throughout the entire Hume region as well as in Melbourne (154 participants).
- Analysing 536 community surveys.
- Reviewing 19 written submissions received from community members.

Detailed results from each of these consultative processes can be found in the Appendix. Key findings from the consultation included:
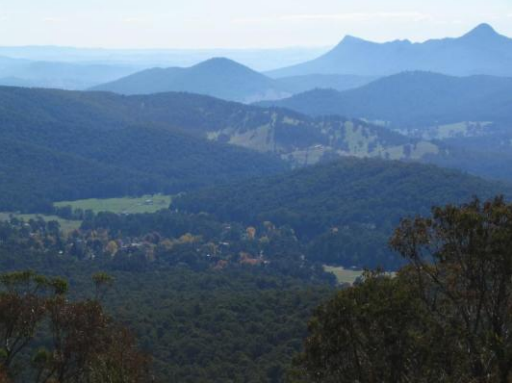
9.1 Specific Trail Developments Suggested

Issue	Details	Source		
		Workshops	**Surveys**	**Submissions**
Murray to Mountains Rail Trail	Support for connecting the trail from Rutherglen to Chiltern and Springhurst	✓	✓	✓
	Support for trail extension from Beechworth to Yackandandah (Indigo Shire's #1 priority)	✓	✓	✓
	Support for trail extension from Beechworth to Huon via Yackandandah	✓	✓	✓
	Support for completion of Lake Moodemere loop from Wahgunyah	✓	✓	✓
	Support for extension of trail from Bright to Harrietville	✓	✓	
	Support to develop the trail from Oxley to Whitfield via the King Valley (Wangaratta Rural City's #1 priority)	✓	✓	✓
	Support to upgrade and widen high use sections, e.g. Bright to Porepunkah			✓
	Support for extension from Chiltern to Beechworth	✓	✓	
	Support for off road mountain bike trail beside M2M between	✓		

Issue	Details	Source		
		Workshops	**Surveys**	**Submissions**
	Beechworth and Everton			
	Support for trail from Rutherglen to El Dorado	✓	✓	
	Support for track from Wahgunyah to Corryong via Wodonga	✓		
	Support for trail from Bright to German Town (Freeburgh)		✓	
	Support for trail from Moyhu to Tarrawingee or Everton		✓	
	Support for trail from Oxley to Glenrowan	✓		
	Support for trail from Wangaratta to Rutherglen via Bowser	✓	✓	
	Support for trail from Beechworth to Albury / Wodonga	✓	✓	
	Support for trail from Wangaratta to Glenrowan	✓		
	Support for trail from Bright to Wandiligong		✓	
	Support for trail from Beechworth to Stanley		✓	
	Support for trail from Myrtleford to Yackandandah via Beechworth		✓	
High Country Rail Trail	Support to extend the High Country Rail Trail from Old Tallangatta to Corryong	✓	✓	✓
	Support for upgrading the surface of the trail between Wodonga and Huon (Wodonga City and Towong Shire's #1 priority)	✓		
	Support for linking the HCRT to Bonegilla Migrant Experience and associated signage	✓	✓	✓
	Support for improving links from Whites Rd, Wodonga to Visitor Information Centre (VIC) in Reid St, Wodonga	✓	✓	✓
	Support to upgrade area around Kiewa River flats			✓
	Support for sealing of the trail between Wodonga and Tallangatta			✓
	Support for upgrading surface of trail from Corryong to Colac Colac			✓
	Support for trail from Wodonga to Yackandandah	✓	✓	
	Support for trail from Corryong to Cudgewa		✓	
	Support for trail from Corryong to Khancoban via Cudgewa and Tintaldra		✓	
	Support to develop Kiewa Valley Walking Tracks		✓	

Issue	Details	Source		
		Workshops	Surveys	Submissions
	Support for trail from Old Tallangatta to Shelley		✓	
	Support for trail from Old Tallangatta to Burrowye Pine Mountain		✓	
	Support for trail from Bellbridge to Granya	✓		
Great Victorian Rail Trail (formerly Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail)	Support to improve horse riding opportunities along the trail			✓
	Support for on-road trail suitable for mountain bikes along Greenslopes Road near Trawool	✓		✓
	Support to link the Great Victorian Rail Trail to the Alexandra Timber Tramway and Museum	✓	✓	✓
	Support to extend Great Victorian Rail Trail from Alexandra to Eildon (a feasibility study is currently being prepared)	✓	✓	
	Support for developing a link from Mansfield to Whitfield (to connect with possible Murray to Mountain Rail Trail extension		✓	
	Support for extension of trail from Tallarook to Seymour (Mitchell Shire Council's #1 priority)	✓	✓	
	Support for extension of trail from Tallarook to Kilmore and Wallan	✓	✓	

Issue	Details	Source		
		Workshops	Surveys	Submissions
Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails	Support for adding single trail sections to Delatite River Trail		✓	
	Support for off road cycle links to Mansfield along Delatite River		✓	
	Support for more mountain bike tracks, e.g. a single track downhill from Corn Hill to Howqua Gap			
	Support for more shuttle services to Mt Buller		✓	
Australian Alps Walking Track	Support to upgrade the Australian Alps Walking Track through better maintenance and signage			✓
	Support to eliminate road sections, join sections together, improve signage, improve maintenance and repair bridges		✓	
	Support for retaining as a remote experience		✓	
	Support for multi-purpose trail between Sun Valley and Wallace's Hut	✓		

Issue	Details	Source		
		Workshops	Surveys	Submissions
Bicentennial National Trail 	Support for connecting Lake Mountain to Lake Eildon	✓		
	Support for connecting Kinglake to the Bicentennial Trail	✓		
	Support for completing the missing sections of the Tall Trees Trail component	✓		
	Support for retaining trail as an undeveloped, challenging experience			
Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing 	Support for better signage		✓	

Issue	Details	Source		
		Workshops	Surveys	Submissions
Razorback Walk	Support for retaining trail as an undeveloped, challenging experience		✓	
Mt Buffalo Big Walk	Support to link walk to other tracks in the region and to accommodation options		✓	

Issue	Details	Source		
		Workshops	Surveys	Submissions
Alpine Loop Road Ride	Support for development of hard shoulders on the road		✓	
	Support construction of verge between Bright and Harrietville		✓	
Other Trail Suggestions 	Support for development of a north south walking track and mountain bike tracks through the Warby Ranges with a link to Wangaratta and Glenrowan	✓	✓	✓
	Support for Rushworth to Murchison Rail Trail to be developed	✓		✓
	Support for extension to Dookie Rail Trail firstly to Cosgrove Golf Course and secondly to Shepparton	✓	✓	✓
	Support for Wandong to Heathcote Rail Trail	✓	✓	✓
	Support for trail from Wangaratta to Yarrawonga via Rutherglen, Bundalong and Mulwala	✓	✓	✓
	Support for development of a canoe trail through Barmah State Forest (Moira Shire's #1 priority)	✓		
	Support for trail from Cobram to Tocumwal	✓		
	Support for trail from Cobram to the Big Strawberry (Koonoomoo)		✓	✓

Issue	Details	Source		
		Workshops	Surveys	Submissions
	Support for trail from Numurkah to Nathalia			✓
	Support for trail from Yarrawonga to Echuca via Cobram, Tocumwal and Barmah Forest		✓	
	Support for trail from Shepparton to Seymour via Nagambie along the Goulburn River	✓		
	Support for mountain bike park at Balmadle Hill near Euroa (Strathbogie's #1 priority)	✓	✓	
	Support for a new mountain bike park, potentially at Barranduda	✓		
	Support for mountain bike track from Falls Creek to Mt Beauty	✓	✓	
	Support for mountain bike track that links Bright, Mt Hotham, Dinner Plain and Falls Creek		✓	
	Support for trails to connect Shepparton with Mooroopna, Kids Town, Kialla West, Tatura, Toolamba and Murchison	✓	✓	✓
	Support for development of horse riding trails on Mt Stirling	✓		
	Support for developing trails at Winton Wetlands (Benalla Rural City's #1 priority)	✓	✓	
	Support for bridle trail from Wangaratta to the Warby's	✓	✓	
	Support for additional trails around Corryong			✓
	Support for development of recreational and mountain bike trails at the Hancock Victoria Plantations (HVP) site at Mystic Park near Wandiligong	✓		
	Support for trail from Kilmore to Kilmore East (Mitchell Shire's #1 priority)	✓		
	Support for 'Murray River Track' along the Murray River from Wodonga to Wahgunyah	✓		✓
	Support for link from Riflebutts Reserve to South Blue Range Trail		✓	
	Support for MTB Trail from Lake Mountain to Marysville	✓		✓

9.2 Other Issues

A variety of other issues were identified through key stakeholder workshops, surveys and written submissions, including

Issue	Comments
Accommodation	Need for additional accommodation and food options along some tracks / trails, including camp sites
Assets Planning	Need to consider whole of life costs, including replacement and maintenance
Business Development	Need to improve training and customer service standards of businesses and at the same time clearly articulate the benefits of trails to businesses.
Communication	Need to identify a structure of communication with trail users and also trail planners / managers / maintainers. Perhaps Regional Leaders Forum made up of industry and agencies could work, or perhaps two separate groups may work better with trail management groups reporting to a committee made up of Local and State government representatives.
Community Involvement	Need to establish ways for community members to actively be involved in tracks and trails management and maintenance and ways to make it easier, e.g. tool sharing scheme.
Data	Need to collect data on track / trail usage
Drinking Water	Need to provide drinking water / information about where to purchase water
High Yield Products	Need to develop some high yield products to attract more revenue to the region.
Horse Riding	Need to provide more opportunities on existing tracks / trails and improved marketing for horse riders. Horse riding along trails is an untapped market.
Infrastructure	Need more infrastructure along tracks / trails, e.g. shelters, picnic tables, toilets, car parks, etc
Innovations	Need to consider areas such as nature strips and levy banks for track / trail developments, particularly if space is limited
Maintenance	Need to improve maintenance of tracks / trails. Agreements in place between State or Federal Government and LGAS re new tracks / trails ensures that LGAs buy into maintenance for a minimum of 10 years. Trail managers need to adhere to maintenance schedules.

Issue	Comments
Market Gaps	Need to consider developing mountain bike experiences for recreational level riders and families; and programs to teach women how to mountain bike ride.
Marketing	Need improved maps and digital resources (e.g. websites and apps) and consistent branding. Need to understand the needs of the market and also need to understand that tracks / trails are not the total experience for a visitor to an area, rather, they are an 'enabler'. Collective marketing is also important. Consider an events calendar.
Natural Disasters	Need to recognise that the Hume region is periodically subjected to fires and floods, hence trail design needs to accommodate these issues.
Packaged tours	Need to develop some sample itineraries for self-guided trail users.
Planning and Policy	Need to address current planning and policies to create a more enabling environment for business investment.
Planning Processes and Regulations	Need to factor in costs of Cultural Heritage Management Plans into project planning; however these costs can be prohibitive for some organisations. VicTrack processes can take a long time to work through. Need to specify planning processes required (e.g. planning permits, biodiversity assessments, etc)
Private Land Ownership	Need to recognise the challenges that private land ownership can play in track / trail development and develop strategies to work with private land owners near tracks / trails.
Public Transport	Need improved public transport services (particularly on weekends) and better opportunities to transport bicycles on public transport. High level consultations at policy level are required to effect change.
Regional Groups of Trails	Need to consider groups of trails such as the Dirty Dozen Mountain Bike Parks (comprising Mt Buller, Falls Creek, Beechworth, Bright and Mt Beauty) as a regional facility.
Resources	Need to lobby State Government for increased resources for Parks Victoria to manage tracks and trails
Risk management	Need to make tracks / trails as safe as possible through sealing shoulders on relevant roads and installing emergency markers.

Issue	Comments
Shade trees	Need to plant more shade trees along tracks / trails
Shuttle Services	Need for more shuttle services for riders and baggage
Signage	Need improved signage for access points, car parks, businesses, directions, interpretation
Trail Design	Need to ensure that tracks and trails adhere to standards
Trail Grading	Need to ensure that all tracks / trails adhere to statewide, national and international grading systems
Trail Heads	Need to improve access from centre part of towns (i.e. Visitor Information Centres and railway stations) to trail heads
Trail Planning Resources	Need a centralised track / trail resource where operators can access information about costings, specifications, suppliers, etc.
Trail Surface	Need to ensure that track / trail surfaces are well maintained and that trail surfaces are accurately described in marketing materials.
Visitor Experience	Need to focus on developing quality and unique visitor experiences

10.0 Identifying Track / Trail Development Priorities

Through the consultation undertaken as part of this Strategy, numerous potential track / trail developments were identified by key stakeholders and the general community. Many of these suggestions were for new tracks / trails or upgrades to tracks / trails of local or municipal significance, rather than regional significance. Hence these suggestions have not been assessed within the Strategy. Nevertheless each of these proposals has been identified in Section 9.1 of the Strategy so that they may be considered within future municipal track / trail strategy developments or by Parks Victoria, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Alpine Resorts or other land managers more at a local level.

Potential track / trail developments deemed to be of regional significance, based on the definition of a regionally significant track / trail contained within this Strategy, were then assessed against the Hume Region Tracks / Trails Evaluation Tool. This tool was used to assess each potential development against the planning principles and was designed in such a way as to provide each track / trail with a score (refer to the Appendix). From this assessment, a priority list of regionally significant tracks / trails have been identified for the Hume region to focus on.

The following list provides an overview of physical track / trail development priorities in the Hume region (in no particular order):

- Winton Wetlands
- Bright to Harrietville
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing
- Beechworth to Yackandandah
- Oxley to Whitfield
- Wandong to Heathcote
- Wandiligong HVP MTB Trail Network
- Lake Mountain to Marysville MTB Trail
- Falls Creek to Mt Beauty MTB Trail
- High Country Rail Trail Wodonga CBD Connection
- Mount Stirling Horse Trail
- Wahgunyah to Lake Moodemere
- High Country Rail Trail - Wodonga to Tallangatta Trail Sealing
- Alexandra to Eildon
- Yackandandah to Huon
- Bonegilla to Lake Hume
- Barmah Canoe Trail
- Tallarook to Seymour
- Chiltern to Rutherglen
- Yarrawonga to Echuca
- Alexandra to Rubicon
- Shepparton to Seymour River Trail
- Old Tallangatta to Corryong

The status of each track / trail proposal should be reviewed each three years to determine changes that may increase or decrease the priority, e.g. political willpower, available funding, community support, etc.

Also, given resource capacities of Local Government Authorities, Alpine Resorts and State Government Authorities and community based organisations it may not be possible to develop each and every one of these trails in the future. In some instances, it may be more beneficial or cost effective to focus on strategies to improve existing assets, rather than to develop a whole suite of new tracks / trails or extensions to a regionally significant track / trail. These improvements, which are outlined in this strategy, include improved management, improved signage, improved marketing, establishment of partnerships with the private sector, improved transportation links, improved trail surfaces, improved infrastructure, etc and are outlined in the next section.

Whilst some consideration has also been given to the geographic distribution of tracks / trails in the Hume region through this Strategy, unless a location is of high appeal to trail users from throughout Australia and internationally; and able to present significant opportunities for tourist product development, it will not be considered for regional track / trail development. However, these locations may still present opportunities for local or municipal level track / trail development which will be widely used by local residents and domestic visitors to the region.

Another focus of the Strategy was to provide linkages to other regionally significant tracks / trail both within the Hume region and in adjoining regions. Whilst it may be technically possible to join up a considerable section of Victoria with tracks / trails if all proposed suggestions eventuate, the Strategy wants to focus on quality, diverse track / trail opportunities that are attractive to the national and international market, rather than necessarily creating the largest network or the longest track / trail which may be constructed in areas where there is limited appeal to trail users. Already there are examples in the Hume region of very under-utilised extensions to regionally significant tracks / trails because track / trail users simply do not want to go to those destinations. These tracks / trails have not necessarily been a good investment of resources, particularly when there are other potential extensions which offer greater appeal and greater potential for economic, recreation, social, health and environmental benefits.

Figure 15: Alpine Loop Road Ride near Falls Creek

11.0 Key Issues to be Addressed to Improve Regionally Significant Tracks and Trails

11.1 Governance and Coordination

In order to work collaboratively on developing regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region, it is important that an appropriate governance and communication structure is established. It is recommended that a high level regional committee is established to oversee regionally significant tracks and trails in the Hume region. This committee will set policies and advocate for additional resources for regionally significant tracks and trails in the region. It may develop initiatives to market a number of trails in the region collectively and to pursue issues which are of relevance to many of the regionally significant tracks and trails such as changing to planning regulations to create a more 'enabling' environment for business investment or advocating for improved access to public transport for bicycles. This committee will not be responsible for the direct management and maintenance of tracks and trails. It is expected that this committee will regularly liaise with State and Federal Government agencies as well as peak bodies and user groups such as Bicycle Network Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, International Mountain Bike Association, Australian Trail Horse Riders Association, Rail Trails Australia, businesses, tourism bodies, VicRoads, local indigenous networks and people, disability advocacy groups and community based organisations.

Ideally this committee will comprise of the following representatives:

- Local Government Authorities (4)
- Alpine Resorts – Falls Creek, Mt Hotham, Mt Buller-Mt Stirling (3)
- Department of Environment and Primary Industries (1)
- Parks Victoria (1)
- Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (1)
- Regional Development Victoria (1)
- Community representatives (cycling, walking and horse riding) (3)

Some discussion occurred during the key stakeholder interviews about the most appropriate model for this committee. While some suggested that it is a role that the regional tourism boards could potentially take on, others suggested that the proposed committee needs to be more representative of other organisations, including those with a health promotion or community connections focus.

The tracks and trails related roles and responsibilities of this group may include:

- Developing regional level policies
- Advocating for regional related issues and resource allocations
- Coordinating collective marketing activities with regional tourism bodies
- Supporting regional track / trail funding submissions, within the context of the Strategy
- Communicating with other relevant organisations such as Local, State, Federal Government agencies as well as state track / trail related associations (e.g. Bicycle Network Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, International Mountain Bike Association, Australian Trail Horse Riders Association, Rail Trails Australia, businesses, tourism bodies, VicRoads, local indigenous networks and people, disability advocacy groups and community based organisations).

- Coordinating a calendar of events across the region in partnership with tourism bodies and Visitor Information Centres.
- Providing information to regionally significant tracks and trails managers on specific issues
- Reviewing the Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy.

It is envisaged that this committee will meet half yearly to discuss issues related to tracks and trails in the Hume region (on the proviso that additional meetings can be held if need be) and that the committee will review the Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy every three years.

Underneath this committee will be individual regionally significant tracks and trails committees (e.g. Murray to Mountains Rail Trail Committee of Management) possibly supported by a regional tourism body and Project Control Groups (PCGs). If a regional tourism body is involved, it will primarily be responsible for marketing and promotion of the tracks / trails and will also provide support to local tracks / trails related businesses. It may also assist with some lobbying or advocacy. If a regionally significant track / trail does not have such an arrangement with a regional tourism body, it will be responsible for each of these functions described above, as well as operational management issues such as developing local policies and managing and maintaining tracks and trails.

Regionally significant tracks and trails committees should ideally comprise of the following organisations / individuals:

- Relevant land owners and managers: Local Government Authority / Alpine Resorts / DEPI / Parks Victoria.
- Relevant Tourism Authority (e.g. Tourism North East).
- Track / trail related businesses.
- Private landholders.
- Relevant track / trail users – walkers, cyclists, mountain bike riders and horse riders.

Key roles of these committees / tourism bodies are:

- Identify a vision for the track / trail.
- Identify the actions required to achieve the vision.
- Develop suitable policies of relevance to the trail.
- Seek resources and allocate accordingly.
- Develop and implement a track / trail management plan.
- Develop and implement a track / trail maintenance plan.
- Develop and implement a track / trail marketing plan (including branding).
- Develop and implement a wayfinding strategy.
- Organise events associated with their particular track / trail.
- Maintain website.
- Data collection.
- Organise for upgrades and works to be undertaken.
- Maintain a register of works undertaken.
- Liaison with trail users.
- Organisation of promotional activities, e.g. visiting journalists program.
- Development of track / trail packages.

- Retail sales (if applicable).
- Support Friends of Groups or other voluntary groups through training, funds and resources.
- Identify risk management issues and take actions to reduce likelihood and impact of risks.
- Communicate with key stakeholders including Local, State and Federal Government partners, businesses, trail users.
- Provide information and training for track / trail related businesses.

> Action: A Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee comprising of Local Government representatives, Alpine Resort representatives, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Parks Victoria, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, Regional Development Victoria and community representatives will be established. Regular liaison will occur with peak bodies, businesses, tourism bodies, VicRoads, indigenous representatives, disability advocacy groups, community based organisations and user groups.
>
> Action: Processes for governance of regionally significant tracks and trails in terms of composition of committee and roles and responsibilities of the committee are established.

11.2 Management

So that tracks or trails are safe, well utilised, protect the natural and cultural environment and create a memorable positive experience which encourages return visits, it is essential that they are managed effectively.

Management of tracks and trails encompasses the following types of tasks:

- Regular meetings with partners and communications with key stakeholders
- Development of relevant policies and procedures
- Management and maintenance of leases and licences along the track / trail
- Establishment of a budget and funding arrangements to undertake maintenance and upgrade works required along the track / trail
- Ensuring that maintenance is carried out as per the maintenance plan
- Ensuring that marketing activities are carried out as per the marketing plan
- Data collection of track / trail users
- Maintenance of an asset register
- Grant applications
- Monitoring of the management plan

A regionally significant track or trail should, at a minimum develop a track / trail management plan incorporating:

- Vision and planning principles for the track / trail
- Objectives of the track / trail
- Governance structure
- Management roles and responsibilities of all agencies and partners
- Maintenance roles and responsibilities for track / trail surface and associated infrastructure
- Agreed track / trail standards
- Signage strategy

- Identification of areas of natural, environmental and cultural heritage significance and the protection processes that need to be put in place
- Policies
- Risk management plan
- Emergency management procedures
- Conflict resolution / complaints procedures
- Asset register
- Media liaison process
- Event management
- Capital works contributions
- Stakeholder engagement
- Agreed strategies and actions

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should also be prepared and signed by all partners, detailing the objectives of a particular track / trail, the purpose of the MOU, the laws / acts that relate to the MOU, the term of the MOU, any exclusions to the MOU, conflict resolution processes, termination clauses, amendment processes, contact details for each partner and roles and responsibilities of all partners.

Trails may be managed by one of or a combination of the following: Local Government Authorities, State Government Authorities, Alpine Resorts or community groups through structures such as Section 86 Committees of Management, Friends Groups, Foundations, etc. Each of these different models of management has a number of benefits and the structure most suited to a track / trail is dependent upon a range of factors including how and why it was originally established, resource availability and location.

These management options include:

Management by Local / State / Federal or Alpine Resort Management	Management by Local / State / Federal or Alpine Resort Management with Friends Group or similar community group	Management by Local Government Act (1989) Section 86 Committee of Management	Management by Track / Trail Foundation
• Usually a committee comprising of representatives from the various land owners. • One organisation is likely to act as lead agency. • Works are carried out by staff of the various agencies, or may be contracted	• Usually a committee comprising of representatives of land owners, key stakeholders and community representatives. • One organisation is likely to act as lead agency. • Works are generally carried out by staff	• A committee, comprising of trail users and other key stakeholders, is delegated responsibility by Council to directly manage the track / trail on behalf of Council. • Council has some control over who is on the committee	• Incorporated not-for- profit organisations • Usually governed by a board of management. • May have paid staff. • May have its own office. • Is a membership based organisation and charges

Management by Local / State / Federal or Alpine Resort Management	Management by Local / State / Federal or Alpine Resort Management with Friends Group or similar community group	Management by Local Government Act (1989) Section 86 Committee of Management	Management by Track / Trail Foundation
out. • Agencies contribute to financial costs associated with developing, managing and maintaining trails. • Some external grants may be applied for. • Some funds may be available from leases and licenses. • Specialist roles such as marketing may be contracted out. • Occasionally have a designated officer, but generally utilise existing staff. • Some tracks / trails managed in this way may have limited involvement by local groups, so may limit opportunities for community capacity building and a sense of ownership.	of the various agencies with support from Friends Groups or community groups. • Agencies contribute to financial costs associated with developing, managing and maintaining trails. • Some external grants may be applied for. • Some funds may be available from leases and licenses. • Specialist roles such as marketing may be contracted out. • Occasionally have a designated officer, but generally utilise existing staff. • Volunteers or Friends Groups are protected under the trail manager's insurances.	as members must be appointed by Council and there are opportunities for Councillors and Council officers to form part of the committee, either as a Committee member or in an ex-officio capacity. • Roles and responsibilities are set out in a Deed of Delegation. • Committee must be auspiced by Council in order to receive grants. • Committee cannot make any alterations to the assets without approval from Council. • Committee members are protected by Council insurance. • Financial checks are in place as the committee is unable to borrow money, set fees, incur any bank overdraft or enter into contracts exceeding a prescribed amount.	membership fees in return for newsletters, discounted merchandise; and discounted events. • Membership fees help to cover maintenance and marketing costs. • Business packages available for a fee and include advertising in newsletters and promotional materials. • Sponsorship packages also usually available. • Seek funding from grants, donations, gifts and bequests. • Can borrow money. • Uses volunteers to help maintain tracks / trails.

The most effective tracks / trails are generally those that involve shared management between government agencies and the community. Such an arrangement has considerable benefits including:

- Regular passive surveillance of the track / trail by local residents and notification of any issues or concerns.
- A sense of ownership of the track / trail by local residents.
- A sense of pride in the track / trail by local residents.
- Potentially greater use by local residents.
- Development of community networks and community strengthedness, brought about by local people working together towards common goals.
- Potential to undertake developments at a faster pace than if reliant on accessing local or state government resources and funding calendars.
- Potential to undertake developments at less cost than if reliant on local or state government budgetary allocation processes, due to potential for in-kind labour and donation of local materials.

However, in order for shared community management to work well, the following issues need to be addressed:

- Insurance cover must be made available for all community volunteers working on the track / trail.
- Training for volunteers in track / trail design and maintenance would be of considerable value and would ensure that the community is skilled and empowered to develop and maintain quality tracks / trails.
- Suitable maintenance equipment needs to be made available to community groups so that they can maintain the tracks / trails to an agreed standard. This equipment may form part of an equipment pool, or may be shared between several locations.
- Grants need to be made available to community organisations to help them undertake track / trail development and improvement projects. Assistance with grant writing could also be of benefit if required.
- Rewards for community organisations managing tracks / trails also need to be considered. Certificates of appreciation, an award luncheon and positive media coverage can all help to sustain enthusiasm and boost morale.
- Support from Councils, Alpine Resorts, Parks Victoria, DEPI and Catchment Management Authorities with major works that are beyond the capacity of local people to perform or fund will also be required periodically.
- Although local community groups could install signage, the signage needs to be provided by the managing authority to ensure consistency across the municipality and across the state and to ensure that Australian Standards regarding signage are met.
- Marketing assistance needs to be provided to ensure that the tracks / trails are included in local and state publications, e.g. Park Notes, Council websites, tourism brochures, tourism websites, etc.

Actions: Track / trail managers are informed of best practice regarding track / trail management, including roles and responsibilities, management plans, MOUs, management options, community engagement and volunteer support.

11.3 Communication Structures

As many regionally significant tracks and trails in the Hume region cross the boundaries of several different Local Government Authorities, Alpine Resorts or State Government Authorities, it is important that robust communication strategies are developed and involve all relevant stakeholders. Ideally the structure for communication will be articulated in each track / trail's Management Plan. Regular and effective communication allows stakeholders to undertake informed planning, discuss potential issues, share information and share limited resources.

However, communication structures should not just be confined to stakeholders managing individual regionally significant tracks / trails. Many of the issues identified at an individual track / trail level, such as being able to transport bicycles on public transport, may be an issue across the entire Hume region or even across Victoria or Australia.   Therefore structures need to be developed at a regional, state and national level to provide opportunities for industry stakeholders to communicate and discuss relevant issues.

At present, communication about tracks and trails related issues and opportunities (such as grant availability, track / trail gradings, training opportunities, legislation, etc) are provided by Local Government Authorities, Alpine Resorts, State Government Authorities, Federal Government Agencies, Regional Tourism Bodies or state / national based associations such as Bicycle Network Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, International Mountain Bike Association (Australia), Rail Trails Australia and Australian Trail Horse Riders Association. There is no one overarching track / trail related organisation in existence and communication between each of the existing bodies is limited. This has the potential for fragmented advice or even duplication of information to regional track / trail organisations.

At a more local level, track and trail users have expressed a desire to be kept more informed of developments. Tools such as monthly emails and consumer e-newsletters should be considered.

> Actions: Advocate for the establishment of a state and / or national tracks and trails advocacy group or think tank comprising of representatives from Local Government Authorities, Alpine Resorts, State Government Authorities, Federal Government Agencies, Regional Tourism Bodies, Bicycle Network Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, International Mountain Bike Association (Australia), Rail Trails Australia and Australian Trail Horse Riders Association, which meets once per year (or more if required) to discuss track / trail related issues.
>
> Actions: Track / trail managers establish a database of track / trail users and provide regular information via tools such as e-newsletters.

11.4 Resources

One of the major inhibitors to the development of regionally significant tracks and trails is the limited amount of resources (human and financial) available.

Many key stakeholders and community groups consider that although Parks Victoria is an important provider of track / trail based experiences, it is under-resourced in relation to personnel and funds to perform the tasks required, particularly maintenance. The Victorian Government's recent reduction in funding to cycling infrastructure has also had a significant impact on track and trail investment in the past 12 months by Local Government Authorities.

Many Local Government Authorities have not in the past allocated an annual budgetary amount for maintenance or replacement of track / trail assets. In some instances, this has lead to tracks and trails being poorly maintained and therefore being used less by cyclists, walkers and horse riders. Presumably the recent focus on development of asset management plans in Local Government Authorities will have redressed this issue somewhat; however there is concern that some LGAs may be reluctant to further develop regionally significant tracks and trails in their municipality due to the ongoing costs of asset maintenance and replacement.

Community based organisations, such as Friends of Groups, also report difficulties in attracting resources such as volunteers, equipment, and funds. They report a lack of knowledge of where to access information, specifications and pricing regarding items such as signage (business, directional, entry/exit points), shelters and picnic tables, interpretive signage/pause points), mapping and digital resources. There is no one central location that such groups can access to find out information about trail design and infrastructure.

In terms of human resources, many tracks / trails rely heavily on volunteer labour as there simply is not enough money available from Government agencies to carry out all of the works required. Whilst recruiting, training and retaining volunteers can be a costly and time intensive exercise, if done well, the benefits can be enormous. Not only will the cost of maintaining trails be decreased, but volunteers also have the opportunity to share their skills, learn new skills and make connections with like minded people in the community. These volunteers are also likely to become protectors or stewards of the track / trail and develop a real sense of ownership of the site.

Action: Lobby State and Federal Governments for additional funding to Local Government Authorities for the development and management of tracks and trails.

Action: Lobby the State Government for additional resources to be made available to public land managers and partners to manage and maintain tracks and trails in their jurisdiction once constructed and consider whole of life costs.

Action: Work in partnership with state/ national based agencies such as Bicycle Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, International Mountain Bike Association (Australia), Australian Trail Horse Riders Association, Rail Trails Australia, VicHealth, Tourism Victoria, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and Sport and Recreation Victoria to develop resources to promote the benefits of tracks and trails to Local Government Authorities.

Action: Local Government Authorities and Tourism bodies in the Hume region support volunteers and Friends of Groups through recruitment, training, assistance with grant writing and provision of shared trail development and maintenance tools.

11.5 Marketing

The Hume region has several competitive advantages over other areas of Victoria in terms of current tracks and trails and also in terms of natural beauty. The high country for example offers a landscape like no other in Victoria, with spectacular views and excellent opportunities for walking, cycling, mountain bike riding and horse riding. Other features such as the new bridge along the High Country Rail Trail differentiates this particular trail from others in Victoria. The well established gourmet food and wine areas of the region are also a point of difference. It is important to take

advantage of our key strengths and market them appropriately so that we can continue to maintain a competitive edge over other tracks and trails in the state and interstate and thereby increase visitor numbers and visitor yield. We need to continually focus on improving what we already have, and adding unique features or opportunities unlikely to be found elsewhere.

An important part of marketing involves understanding the needs and desires of the track / trail user or consumer. Rather than simply marketing a track or trail as an item of infrastructure, we need to market the entire experience that the track / trail contributes to when a person visits a region.

It is recommended that a marketing plan be developed for each regionally significant track / trail in the Hume region in order to most effectively:

- raise awareness of the existence of a regional track / trail in the Hume region at a local, regional, state, national and international level;
- attract more high yielding visitors to use the track / trail;
- create a product that is different and unique compared with others within and outside the Hume region;
- reach target markets;
- build new markets;
- create a cost effective strategy; and
- position the track / trail as regionally significant.

A marketing plan[62] should essentially encompass:

- Objectives and goals
- Current situation
    o Macro environment – influences of technology, socio-cultural, ecological, economic, legal, etc on the site
    o Market analysis – market definition, market size, market segmentation, trends, competitors, etc
    o Consumer analysis – participants, demographics, track / trail user motivations and expectations, nature of the decision to use a track / trail, etc
    o Internal – available internal resources – labour, time, skills, finance, objectives, corporate culture
    o Summary of Situation Analysis – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, critical success factors, sustainable competitive advantages
- Marketing Research – results of any research (such as surveys, track / trail counters, focus groups, etc) undertaken
- Marketing Strategy
    o Product - description of the experience on offer, strengths and weaknesses of product, etc
    o Market segmentation - description of various track / trail users and their needs and expectations, geographical market, distribution channels, etc
    o Price – objectives, method, pricing strategy, discounts, break even analysis, etc (where relevant)

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[62] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marketing_plan:

- o Promotion – promotional mix, advertising, sales force, sales promotion, publicity, electronic promotion, etc
- o Distribution – geographic coverage, distribution channels, physical distribution and logistics, electronic distribution
- Implementation – personnel requirements, financial requirements, management information systems, monitoring results and benchmarks, contingencies, etc
- Financial Summary – assumptions, break-even analysis (if relevant), etc
- Scenarios – predictions of future scenarios and action plan for each scenario.

It is also recommended that the managers of regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region all work together to develop a connected family of recreational experiences through physically connecting and aligning with each other where feasible and through collective marketing and promotion. Together the suite of trails available will define the Hume region and result in much stronger product and diversity of experiences that is likely to appeal to the national and international market.

Observations and information obtained from the consultative phase relating to marketing based issues include:

Figure 16: Visitor Information Centre in Mansfield

- Information about some tracks / trails in the Hume region is difficult to find at some Visitor Information Centres (although others are well geared for such enquiries).
- There is strong demand to change the name of the Great Victorian Rail Trail.
- There is limited access on the internet and on some Council websites to promote regionally significant tracks / trails.
- There seems to be lack of understanding by some community based track / trail groups regarding their market and the needs of the market.
- Some promotional materials fail to provide sufficient information about track/ trail conditions, particularly track / trail surfaces, thereby diminishing visitor experiences when their expectations are not met.

- Some promotional materials need to be clearer about explaining track / trail gradings so visitors can have a shared understanding of expectations and conditions and be able to make informed choices in advance about where they will ride or walk.
- Signage and mapping were two areas frequently identified as needing improvements.
- There is a need to develop a consistent standard of product throughout the Hume region.
- Need to consider new marketing tools such as rider / walker passports whereby track / trail users get a stamp at each railway station along a particular track / trail. The passport becomes a collector's book with a map and history of the track / trail. The passport might cost around $10 to buy, with profits funding the maintenance of the track / trail. Each passport would contain a slip which could be sent in to win a prize – this helps create a database. Businesses could also advertise in the passport to help increase revenue.
- Branding along some tracks / trails has been inconsistent with different images and signs used, depending upon which jurisdiction the track / trail was located.
- There is potential for duplication of information and resources by having three different tourism bodies responsible in part for promotion of regional tracks / trails, unless these organisations work in partnership with each other.
- The Pedal to Produce product is highly regarded as a way to encourage a quality visitor experience and a higher yield.
- There has been a small but steady growth recently in cycling / walking packages in the region, e.g. Rutherglen Belles, Bikes and Bubbles.

Figure 17: Beechworth on the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail

In terms of marketing resources or tools, regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region should have:

- A website providing information about the track / trail, including:

- o Description of the track / trail and its key features (location, length, surface, user groups, infrastructure, etc)
- o Interactive mapping, preferably with elevation profiles and gradings
- o Links to Visitor Information Centres, accommodation providers, shuttle buses, guided tours, etc (preferably with online booking capabilities)
- o Interpretive information – environmental, cultural, historic, local stories, etc (possibly as downloadable podcasts)
- o Integration with social media sites such as facebook, twitter, etc
- o Links to third party endorsement sites such as Trip Advisor
- o Links to other regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region
- o Calendar of events (if applicable)
- o Details of volunteer / friends of groups opportunities (if applicable)
- Printed / hard copy maps or brochures.
- Electronic newsletters sent to a database of interested track / trail users, linked to the website.
- Signage which reflects the theme and branding of the track / trail and incorporates relevant information such as maps, strong visual images and other relevant information such as distance, trail surface, accessibility, etc. May also incorporate QR codes.
- Display materials (such as pull up banners) suitable for use at trade shows, conferences, etc to promote the tracks / trails.
- A series of quality photographs that can be used to promote the tracks / trails on websites and in the general media.

Marketing resources needs to be fully integrated and fully mobile so that potential track / trail users can access information via websites, smart phones, laptops / notebooks and tablets. A dedicated application (app) for smart phones integrated with the website may also be considered.

There should be linkages to each of the regionally significant tracks and trails from Local Government Authority and Alpine Resort websites, regional tourism association websites and possibly from local bike shops, accommodation venues, etc. Further, there should be a marketing package produced to enable local businesses and event managers to 'buy into' trails through signage along trails, advertisements on maps, website advertising, etc, providing details on the various options, standards and costings available. Ideally sponsorship and purchasing of advertising space from the private sector will off-set most, if not all, of the costs associated with marketing regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region.

Marketing resources need to have consistent branding. Branding refers to something such as a logo, a name, a colour combination or a symbol that is easily recognisable by people as representing a particular organisation, service or product. In relation to tracks and trails in the Hume region, it is important that all tracks and trails are branded with the particular style adopted by key stakeholders and used consistently along the entire length of the track / trail. It is recommended that a specific set of colours, possibly representing the features of the regional track / trail will be utilised along with a specific logo.

Action: Regionally significant tracks / trail managers develop a marketing plan.

Action: Regionally significant track / trail managers work collectively to market the track / trail opportunities available across the entire Hume region, with support from the Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee and regional tourism bodies.

Actions: Regionally significant track / trail managers develop suitable high quality, fully integrated and fully mobile marketing resources.

Actions: Regionally significant track / trail managers establish links with appropriate external bodies to assist with cross-marketing.

Action: Regionally significant track / trail managers develop a brand style guide, outlining expectations in terms of the tone, style and resources as well as specific details around the brandmark, colours, typography, photography, stationery, online applications, pull up banners, etc.

11.6 Signage and Wayfinding

Clear, consistent and well branded signage is of great importance on tracks and trails as it helps people to find their way; warns them of any dangers or inappropriate uses of the trail; and provides them with useful information to enhance their experience. The four key signing principles as identified by the Queensland Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and Main Roads (TMR)[63] are:

- Conspicuity
- Legibility
- Coherence
- Function

Key considerations of a signage system, as identified by TMR[64] are:

- Ensure consistency of signage layout and quality across the networks
- Identify important departure / destination locations and decision points
- Maintain rigid consistency in naming locations
- In the event of alternative routes, sign the most direct route
- Indicate distances in kilometres
- Use map display boards at key entry points / trail heads
- Ensure road and street name signs are in place at all network intersections.

A hierarchy of different signs types will be required on tracks and trails in the Hume region. Typically this would include the following:

- Large, clearly visible **trail head signs** – including some with **interpretive** information

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[63] Queensland Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and Main Roads:
http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/~/media/5f790073-df42-4af3-8770-963f30253e55/pdf_guide_to_signing_cycle_networks_part1.pdf
[64] Queensland Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and Main Roads:
http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/~/media/987e62b3-9a36-40a5-ae5c-1780ade32d43/1%2036.pdf

- **Directional signage** providing information about distances to key locations
- **Trail markers** to reassure people that they are still on the right track
- **Regulatory, behavioural and warning signs**.

Interpretive opportunities can play a significant part in helping local residents and visitors understand and appreciate the natural, historical, cultural and built environment in which a regional track or trail is located. Often such information is provided on a track / trail head sign, but many tracks / trails will feature signage at key locations along the route to provide users with snippets of information.

QR (quick response) codes are becoming more common on signs at major tourist attractions or in magazines, newspapers and brochures as a way of providing trail users with additional interpretive information about a particular feature. QR codes essentially provide a quick link to websites through a user's smart phone on which the QR app has been installed.
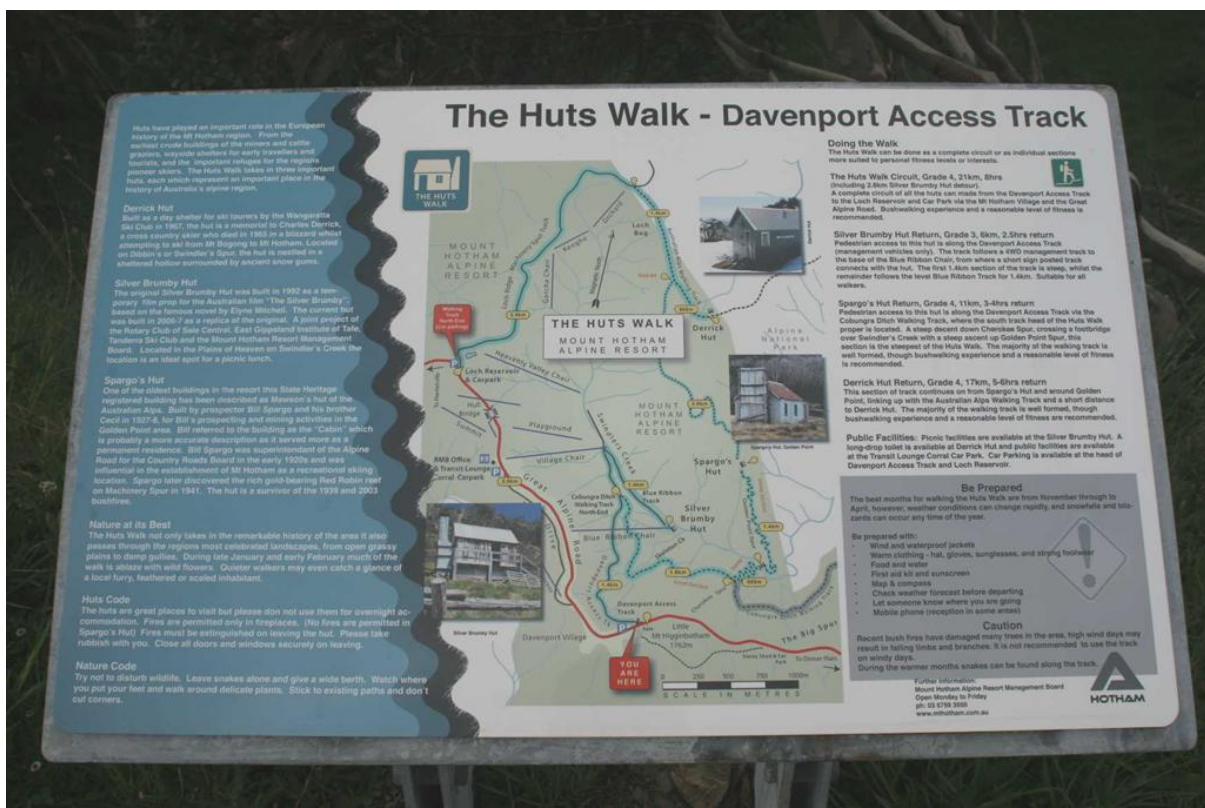
Figure 18: Interpretive Signage at Mt Hotham

Apps designed specifically for tourism areas or tracks / trails which can be accessed via Apple iOS and Android mobile devices are becoming increasingly popular worldwide. Examples of such apps include:

- Backpacker GPS Trails Lite (doubles as a portable trip database and personal navigation device, without relying on data and mobile phone signals)[65]

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[65]

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.trimble.outdoors.backpackerle.android&feature=related_apps#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEwOSwiY29tLnRyaW1ibGUub3V0ZG9vcnMuYmFja3BhY2tlcmxlLmFuZHJvaWQiXQ..

- BackCountry Navigator PR (off-road topographic mapping GPS)[66]
- Hiker (includes a compass, map and GPS in one integrated application)[67]
- Mountain Bike Trails (lists location of mountain bike trails in Australia, UK, USA and Canada and provides user reviews)[68]
- Every Trail (provides guides, maps, description and points of interest for Australian hiking trails)[69].

Figure 19: Signage on Murray to Mountains Rail Trail near Wahgunyah

Apps can provide a more cost effective way of providing up to date information, compared with the production of numerous signs along a track / trail which need to be regularly maintained and upgraded. A key consideration when designing QR Codes and apps, however, is the availability of mobile phone coverage. Whilst some apps allow people to download and store data prior to the trip, so that it doesn't matter whether or not there is 3G mobile internet available, others do not.

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https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.crittermap.backcountrynavigator.license&feature=related _apps#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEwOSwiY29tLmNyaXR0ZXJtYXAuYmFja2NvdW50cnluYXZpZ2F0b3IubGljZW5zZSJd

67

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.grdurand.hiker&feature=also_installed#?t=W251bGwsMS wxLDEwNCwiY29tLmdyZHVyYW5kLmhpa2VyIl0.

68 https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/mountain-bike-trails/id330046884?mt=8

69 http://www.everytrail.com/browse.php?activity_id=5&country=AUSTRALIA

Another area in which the development of apps can be advantageous for tracks / trails in the Hume region, is as a form of revenue. Advertisements on apps with a direct linkage to accommodation providers and transport operators for example, can be sold for a fee. However, if budgets do not allow, rather than developing a specific app, trail managers may choose to link tracks / trails in the Hume region to existing walking, cycling, mountain bike riding and horse riding apps.

Good quality signage was consistently noted during the consultation phase of the Strategy as vitally important. Specific mention was made in relation to directing people from Visitor Information Centres, railway stations and major roads to track / trail heads or access points. Details of the type of information required on each type of sign along regional level tracks and trails in the Hume region is provided within the Appendix.

> Actions: Regionally significant track / trail managers adhere to Australian Standards and best practice when installing or upgrading signage and ensure that signage and wayfinding are considered both along the track / trail and in towns.

11.7 Risk Management

Risk management is an issue that needs to be explored in detail by trail management groups. It is important to construct and maintain all tracks and trails according to Australian Standards and industry regulations where applicable (refer to Appendix for details).

Land management agencies have a duty of care to track / trail users to provide a safe experience. Therefore they are responsible for ensuring that the track / trail is kept in a good state of repair; that the track / trail is inspected regularly and all hazards responded to appropriately within a reasonable timeframe; anticipating potential risks to track / trail users and then taking precautions to protect them from such risks.

At the same time, potential risks should not deter tracks and trails from being developed. Instead, these potential risks need to be identified and strategies developed to manage such risks proactively to an acceptable level.

Some of the specific risks identified in the Hume region and potential solutions include:

Identified Risk	Potential Solution
Unauthorised access to several trails (High Country Rail Trail and Great Victorian Rail Trail) by people driving motorised vehicles.	Installation of suitable barriers or bollards that prevent unauthorised motor vehicles from accessing tracks / trails, accompanied by appropriate signage at access points. However, it is important that these barriers / bollards do not exclude legitimate users due to their design, such as people in wheelchairs, people riding motorised scooters, people with prams, etc.
Narrow roads with limited passing opportunities for motor vehicles.	Sealing of road shoulders; development of overtaking lanes in areas with high numbers of on-road cyclists; and appropriate signage informing motorists that cyclists have the right to share the road.
Fast vehicles near tracks / trail crossings.	Warning signs advising motorists to slow down and be aware of points where cyclists, walkers or horse riders may cross a road. If necessary, some form of traffic calming devices in

Identified Risk	Potential Solution
	areas with high numbers of track / trail user crossings. A recent study has shown that trees planted close to the road give drivers a heightened perception of speed causing them to drive more slowly.
Poor mobile phone reception in some areas	Advise trail users through promotional materials (such as maps, brochures and websites) of the location of public telephones available on trails and that mobile reception may be poor or non-existent.
Walking, cycling and horse riding groups which are not incorporated and may not have insurance cover.	Provide information to groups of the benefits of incorporation and insurance and the disadvantages of not being incorporated or insured.
Logging trucks travelling close to some trails, particularly between Tallangatta and Corryong.	Install signage to warn both trail users and truck drivers that cyclists, walkers, horse riders and logging trucks may all share the road. Indicate on promotional materials specific locations where logging trucks may be found.
Wombat and rabbit holes creating a risk for track / trail users	Inspect trails on a regular basis and provide a mechanism for trail users to report maintenance concerns of this nature. Rectify the situation as per the maintenance schedule.
Possibility of injured track / trail user not aware of their specific location when requesting medical assistance	Install emergency markers on trails.

Actions: Regionally significant track / trail managers develop a suitable risk management plan and effective mechanisms and procedure for addressing identified risks.

11.8 Maintenance

Regular maintenance of regionally significant tracks and trails is critical in terms of providing a safe and enjoyable experience for cyclists, walkers and horse riders and to retain assets in optimum condition so that they do not deteriorate unnecessarily or do not pose an unnecessary or avoidable risk. As many regionally significant tracks and trails cross onto land owned by different authorities, it is imperative that an agreed maintenance plan is adopted and adhered to. In general this plan will detail: the standard of maintenance required; tasks and response times; and roles and responsibilities of each partner. It will also include an asset register; detailed maps of the track / trail; inspection templates; and action report forms.

There may however be circumstances where an agreement is made between the various agencies to distribute maintenance costs differently, e.g. equal distribution of costs, in recognition of the fact that although each agency has different lengths of the track / trail to maintain, the benefits are equally shared amongst agencies. This arrangement should ideally be negotiated during the planning stage of any new track / trail development, and agreed upon by all parties.

Figure 20: Signage on the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail in Wangaratta

The accepted industry standard for the annual maintenance cost of a trail is approximately 3% of the development cost of the trail. The Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail, for example, has estimated that the annual recurrent cost based on 2011/12 works for the upgrade and maintenance of the trail is in the vicinity of $410,000. $150,000 of this amount is incorporated into Council's annual capital budget, and the remainder sourced from lease and license income[70]. Maintenance expenditure for regionally significant tracks and trails will need to increase each year as new tracks and trails are developed. It may be possible to reduce maintenance costs by utilising Friends Groups or people involved in supervised community based order programs. However, if using Friends of Groups or other voluntary community organisations, it is important that they are provided with suitable training, support and resources to carry out their roles safely, effectively and to the standard required.

As well as inspecting for hazards, a suitable response time needs to be identified, as well as a suitable mechanism for the reporting of hazards, inspection of hazards and the completion of works required. The following maintenance plan details suggested minimum maintenance tasks and timeframes for regionally significant tracks and trails in the Hume region:

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[70] Yarra Ranges Council (2012) *Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail Management and Development Plan*

Tasks	Regionally Significant On Road Trail	Regionally Significant Off Road Track / Trail
Clean toilets and replace toilet paper	N/A	Weekly (if provided)
Empty bins at rest stops	N/A	Weekly (if provided)
Full inspection of the track / trail	Every six months	Every six months
Check all directional and warning signage and repair or replace as required	Every three months	Every three months
Check vegetation adjoining track / trail and cut back if necessary	Every six months	Every six months
Check surface of track / trail for weeds, broken glass, branches, etc and clear as required	Every six months	Every six months
Check surface of track / trail for erosion and repair or grade as required	Every six months	Every six months
Check bridges, bollards, culverts and drains	Every six months	Every six months
Check structural stability of infrastructure along the track / trail, e.g. seats, shelters, etc	N/A	Every six months
Undertake hazard identification inspection and prepare a report to be actioned	Annually	Annually
Undertake major repairs and replacements	Every five to eight years	Every five to eight years
Reduce fire hazard by coordinating with State Fire agencies (DEPI and CFA) to carry out fuel reduction burning.	N/A	Once every six years.

Ideally some form of mechanism should be produced to allow track / trail users to report specific maintenance issues, e.g. telephone number or web address on brochures, trail head signs and websites.

In terms of maintenance in the Hume region, several Local Government Authorities have been required to sign an agreement with State and / or Federal Government to commit to maintaining a specific track or trail for a minimum of ten years. This arrangement provides an assurance that Local Government Authorities will carry out necessary works to keep the track / trail in good condition, and will hopefully ensure that the LGA will, after a ten year period, automatically incorporate trail maintenance into its ongoing maintenance budget.

Actions: Regionally significant track / trail managers develop a suitable maintenance program and budget and commit long term to maintaining each track / trail that it is responsible for, taking into consideration whole of life costs.

11.9 Business / Private Sector Development

It is generally the role of the public sector to provide infrastructure to support the development of tourism product and the creation of quality visitor experiences, such as tracks / trails, toilets, shelters, BBQs, bike racks, etc. Often these organisations contribute to the marketing and promotion of visitor experiences through the development of maps, brochures and information on their own websites. Sometimes they will provide seeding grants or training opportunities too. The development of other forms of infrastructure and experiences such as accommodation, food and beverages, tour guiding, shuttle services, etc, usually falls within the realm of the private sector. In order to create quality, viable tracks and trails, it is necessary for both the public sector and the private sector to work collaboratively.

The Murray to Mountains Rail Trail is the most mature trail in the Hume region, and possibly the most mature rail trail in Australia. Since its conception approximately twenty years ago, it has been the recipient of considerable investment from both the public sector and local businesses along the trail and in nearby towns. However, it has taken time to develop the trail to this standard with its current level of investment by the private sector.

Figure 21: Business signage along the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail

Based on consultations with key stakeholders and various private enterprises, it appears that there are several businesses willing to invest in tracks and trails based opportunities in the Hume region (through accommodation development, shuttle bus operations and trail packages), but as yet they do not necessarily believe that a suitable investment environment exists and are unsure of the viability of such operations. Hence in order to encourage private sector development, the public sector needs to be able to demonstrate the potential benefits that such tracks / trails can provide and help to facilitate and support an environment that is conducive to private sector development.

Figure 22: Shuttle bus with bike trailer at Milawa on the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail

Other factors, such as land management and regulation issues may also impede the development of private sector development. The key message contained within the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (2011) *An Inquiry into Victoria's Tourism Industry Report*, for instance, is that the way public and private land is managed and regulated, especially in national parks, impedes investment in tourism. A follow up report released by Department of Environment and Primary Industries in April 2013, *Tourism Investment Opportunities of Significance in National Parks* paves the way for sensible and sensitive tourism investment opportunities in national parks, providing that such opportunities provide a benefit to the public and complement environmental and heritage values. All proposals will be subjected to a comprehensive assessment of potential impacts and lease conditions. It is anticipated that the new guidelines will allow Victoria to compete on a more level playing field with other locations nationally and internationally where such investment is already permitted. The public sector in Tasmania and New Zealand, for example, has allowed the development of high yielding private sector developed tours and accommodation on public land (i.e. on The Overland Track in Tasmania and on the Milford Track in New Zealand). As a condition of agreement between the public sector and the private sector, a proportion of income raised through these tourist ventures is returned to the public sector to be reinvested in infrastructure development and maintenance.

There is a very clear need for additional private sector development along most of the tracks and trails in the Hume region, including the Great Victorian Rail Trail and the High Country Rail Trail, such as cafes, camping sites and the packaging of trail opportunities. The Alpine Resorts have indicated a desire for more of the ski resorts, hotels and cafes to open over summer months to support the growth in mountain bike riding and hiking in those areas. However, businesses will only do so if they are confident that they will make a profit.

Facilitated cycling experiences are also a key priority in the north east of the region.[71] Such experiences have the potential to "reposition the North East as Australia's premier cycle destination", particularly if integrated with other experiences, services and authentic connections with local cultures and characters. The ability to book all aspects of a trip online is also very important.

In order to ensure that existing businesses have the opportunity to benefit from the cyclists, walkers and horse riders who may visit their area, they need to develop an understanding of the culture of these activities and the needs of participants. For example, they may choose to provide drop sheets in hotel rooms for bicycles, bike racks in front of wineries, energy gels in their cafe, water troughs for horses, horse yards, etc. They also need to understand the potential economic value to their business that can be generated through word of mouth by cyclists, walkers and horse riders who may have previously visited their establishment, as many of these people will report their experiences to websites such as Urban Spoon and Trip Advisor.

The public sector can play a key role in educating businesses about the benefits of tracks and trails and the benefits of providing high quality service. There may be a role for Tourism Victoria to change some people's perceptions about careers in hospitality as being considered short term jobs to actually being considered a worthwhile, long term and enjoyable career option. There also needs to be a greater focus on encouraging exemplary customer service levels throughout the region if high yielding visitors are to be encouraged to return. Partnering with non-traditional tracks / trails businesses should also be considered.

Actions: Advocate to State Government authorities to create an environment that is more conducive to private sector development (to meet the needs of walkers and cyclists) on public land where regionally significant tracks / trails exist.

Actions: Provide information to the private sector of the benefits of investing in track / trail related opportunities.

Actions: Facilitate training to existing and potential businesses about the culture and needs of cyclists, mountain bike riders, hikers and horse riders so that they are better able to meet their needs and expectations.

Actions: Advocate to State Government for planning support, advice and small start up grants for businesses wishing to establish themselves along regional tracks and trails to support the needs of walkers and cyclists.

Actions: Advocate to Tourism Victoria to promote the benefits of working in the hospitality industry to the workforce, including young school leavers.

Actions: Encourage local tourism bodies to implement an annual award (as part of existing Tourism awards) for exemplary track / trail related businesses and hospitality staff who provide exemplary customer service standards.

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[71] Tourism North East (2012) *Tourism Gap Analysis*

11.10 Planning

Rigorous planning of tracks and trails should be undertaken prior to deciding whether or not to develop such a facility, or to determine the most suitable location for such a facility. A study to determine the feasibility of a track / trail is usually the first step. This planning process involves determining:

- The rationale and evidence to demonstrate the need for the track / trail
- The exact location of the track / trail and its length
- Who owns the land on which the track / trail is proposed to be developed
- Land zoning and potential restrictions associated with such zoning.
- Issues associated with leases and licenses
- Potential partners – local community groups, Local Government, State Government, Federal Government, business sector, etc.
- Proposed market / user groups and potential numbers
- Likely benefits to be achieved, e.g. recreational, health, social, economic (note that local economic data will be needed to support funding applications) and environmental
- Track / trail requirements or specifications (e.g. width, surface, signage, loops, access points, etc)
- Proposed trail grading
- Any potential linkages to other tracks / trails and transportation (both public and private options)
- Existing supporting infrastructure, e.g. public toilets, car parks, etc
- Existing businesses to support track / trail users and identification of gaps
- Issues that may impact track / trail development, e.g. Cultural Heritage, environmental sensitivity / biodiversity issues, land prone to floods, etc.
- Potential risks
- Estimation of whole of life costs related to track / trail and infrastructure planning, design, construction, maintenance, upgrades and replacement
- An assessment of the feasibility or otherwise of the track / trail.

If a proposed track / trail is deemed feasible, it will then be necessary to undertake detailed design work either as a stand-alone document or as a master plan, incorporating drawings of track / trails, bridge designs, road crossings, drainage requirements, legislative requirements (e.g. Cultural Heritage Management Plan) and cost estimates. These tasks may be undertaken internally or contracted out.

It is recommended that a track / trail management plan, Memorandum of Understanding, maintenance plan and marketing plan are developed prior to the establishment of the track / trail so that all parties are committed to the development and are aware of their ongoing roles and responsibilities. Local communities should be engaged in track / trail developments from the very beginning so that they can have genuine input, share their knowledge and expertise and develop a real sense of ownership of the facility and its outcomes.

In relation to the development of future local or municipal level tracks / trails, it is important that individual Local Government Authorities undertake their own planning in relation to potential

business and partnership opportunities, marketing, and management of tracks and trails throughout the municipality.

Some specific feedback obtained during the consultative period of relevance to the Hume region includes:

- The process to develop tracks / trails on land managed by Parks Victoria and DEPI is unclear.
- It can be time consuming and difficult to obtain leases from VicTrack for access to disused rail lines.
- Privately owned land and leases may have a great impact on track / trail locations and developments and needs to be dealt with carefully.
- Some of the older logging areas may have good infrastructure for trail users, but there is limited planning in relation to usage of this infrastructure.
- Need to ensure that land zoning along tracks / trails is suitable so that businesses can start operating as soon as a trail is developed.
- The need for and benefits associated with tracks / trails needs to be clearly demonstrated in order to attract Government grants.
- Although DEPI has just developed a Mountain Bike Guide as an internal document to assist its staff and Parks Victorian staff to assess authorised and unauthorised trails and to determine which trails should be further developed and which ones should be closed, there is no mountain bike strategy in existence at present to prioritise developments across the state or regions.
- Cultural heritage management assessments can be prohibitive for some organisations from a financial perspective.
- There is considerable environmental sensitivity and restrictions related to developing or upgrading trails in the alpine region.
- Balancing environmental concerns with the desire to allow people to enjoy and appreciate the natural environment is a challenge.

Actions: Regionally significant tracks / trails managers undertake a feasibility study prior to developing any new tracks / trails.

Actions: Regionally significant tracks / trails managers develop a track / trail management plan, Memorandum of Understanding, maintenance plan and marketing plan prior to the establishment of the track / trail wherever possible.

Actions: Regionally significant tracks / trails managers engage with local communities and all other relevant land managers (such as VicRoads, DEPI, Parks Victoria, VicTrack, etc) in track / trail developments from the very beginning of the planning stage and prior to preparing funding submissions. .

Actions: Advocate to State Government to identify and document clear processes and requirements around the development of tracks / trails.

Actions: Advocate to State Government for the development of a state-wide mountain bike strategy.

11.11 Trail Design and Planning

Poor trail design can greatly influence not only the track / trail user's overall experience, but also create potential safety risks. Regardless of the fact that track / trail standards exist and that best practice design information is widely available, some tracks / trails that have been developed in the Hume region in recent years still fail to observe some of the standards and best practices. It appears that track / trail designers are overlooking, ignoring or simply not aware of the trail design resources that are available, or may be looking at ways of reducing the establishment cost of a track / trail. Invariably poor quality design leads to more intensive maintenance requirements and costs, as well as the potential for earlier replacement of infrastructure and / or costly retrofits.

During the audit of regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region, it was observed that:

- Some tracks / trails are not sufficiently wide to meet Australian Standards / industry guidelines and the amount of use they receive.
- Some tracks / trails have fences built right to the edge of the track / trail thereby not allowing space for cyclists, walkers or horse riders to get off the path or enough space for maintenance equipment.
- Inappropriate fencing (i.e. star pickets) has been placed along some tracks / trails.
- The surfacing of some tracks / trails is poor resulting in bicycle punctures and the potential for minor accidents by less experienced riders.
- There is inadequate signage along many of the tracks / trails.
- There are insufficient car parking spaces and a lack of secure car parking at some track / trail heads.
- There are insufficient secure lockable bicycle parking facilities at track / trail heads and key attractions along the track / trail such as wineries.
- There are poor linkages from Visitor Information Centres and railway stations to track / trail heads.
- There is a lack of sealed shoulders along regionally significant on road cycle routes.

Some key aspects to consider when designing tracks and trails, as identified through the community consultation component are the need to consider:

- The impact of flooding and fires on track / trail surfaces and infrastructure.
- Future-proofing vulnerable areas such as bridges and boardwalks through the construction of rock armoury and use of concrete materials.
- The use of shuttles (using existing or new transport operators) in preference to building new trails in some areas
- The use of innovative ways to create trails in locations where there is limited space, e.g. use nature strips where required.
- Infrastructure needs to have a long life, low maintenance requirements and be reasonably vandal resistant.

- Need to use materials that are sourced locally, long lasting and limit maintenance costs wherever possible.
- Track / trail should be safe to use and accessible in the case of an emergency.
- Track / trail is accessible for people of all abilities wherever possible.
- Need to develop vantage points for officials and spectators, as well as viewing areas along track / trails that will be used for events.
- The use of consistent branding and similar signage along tracks / trails.
- Provision of suitable infrastructure, e.g. rest areas, toilets, parking areas and horse tie up areas.
- Designing, constructing and signing tracks / trails in accordance with industry gradings, i.e. DEPI (DSE) Walking Track Standards and International Mountain Bike Association (Australia).

Planning Guidelines have been incorporated into the Appendix, along with details of relevant Australian Standards and industry sources. Note that best practice, guidelines and standards are regularly updated, so this information should only be used as a guide.

Action: Distribute the Planning Guidelines contained within the Appendix to Local Government Authorities, public land managers and other track / trail designers and builders in the Hume region and where possible, incorporate this information into Local Government design guidelines.

Action: Facilitate a series of training opportunities for track / trail designers, builders and managers relating to track / trail planning, design and development.

Action: Encourage Local and State Government agencies to ensure that track / trail designers and builders are adhering to relevant Australian Standards, industry guidelines, best practice and universal design principles prior to issuing planning permits

Action: Advocate to Tourism Victoria to establish a centralised knowledge hub for the sharing of information and best practice examples of all types of tracks / trails, potentially in partnership with Bicycle Network Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, International Mountain Biking Association (Australia) and Australian Trail Horse Riders Association.

11.12 Visitor Experience

A key tourism and economic development priority for the Hume region is to provide existing and potential visitors to the area with a diversity of year-round high quality experiences that will encourage them to stay in the region longer, spend more money in the region and return again. In the past, some areas of the Hume region have attracted high numbers of visitors, however the yield, or spend, has been quite low. The focus now is on retaining these existing visitors, but also providing additional opportunities to attract higher yielding visitors and therefore more economic benefits (such as viable business development; local employment opportunities; and investment in infrastructure development to support residents, etc) in the villages, towns and cities that make up the Hume region.

It is important to note that tracks / trails are enablers, or one of the many activities that visitors may choose to enjoy whilst in the region. Therefore tracks and trails, whilst part of the overall visitor experience, are not the sum total experience for visitors.

In order to create a quality visitor experience, that will encourage people to return to the region, we need to develop product (i.e. opportunities, services and facilities) that meet or exceed visitor needs and expectations; are easily accessible; and are of a very high standard.

In relation to regional tracks / trails, this means:

- Providing opportunities for visitors to book every aspect of their visit to the region online prior to arriving.
- Developing tracks / trails in areas where people want to walk, cycle or horse ride, i.e. areas that have unique natural, built or cultural features and provide an enjoyable experience for users.
- Developing tracks / trails that create a sense of journey and allow users the chance to immerse themselves in the natural, built and cultural aspects of the region.
- Creating opportunities for track / trail users to come away with more knowledge / education of the local area and possibly a spiritual connection with the area through the use of interpretive materials, guided tours, carefully placed look-outs, etc.
- Creating tracks / trails that are appealing from a landscape amenity perspective (i.e. not developed in industrial areas or next to busy freeways) and have supporting infrastructure that is aesthetically pleasing.
- Regularly developing new product to enhance the tourism potential of the region and ensuring that there is a concentration of tourism product along a track / trail.
- Instigating initiatives that may reduce visitor conflict such as well designed tracks / trails or limitations on visitor numbers in highly sensitive areas.
- Providing the expected level of services and infrastructure in relation to issues such as secure car parking, public transport access, bicycle hire, easily accessible shuttle services, luggage transfers, signage, etc.

- Ensuring that local businesses have sufficient training to provide a quality service to all track / trail users through things such as accommodation venues providing secure places to lock bicycles, through to cafes providing information on tracks / trails in the region.

Figure 24: Winton Wetlands

A number of issues specific to the Hume region were identified through the community consultations that may have a negative impact on visitor experiences. These include:

- Visitors often get lost in larger towns trying to locate track / trail heads from Visitor Information Centres or train stations.
- Visitors may arrive at a railway station with their bicycle, only to find that there is no room available to carry their bicycle, or the train service has been replaced by a bus.
- The need to pre-book shuttle services around 48 hours prior to use may limit spontaneous rides or walks.
- Inability to book the track / trail experience online may lead visitors to regional trails in other locations.
- Inadequate signage sometimes causes riders or walkers to get lost.
- Logging trucks travelling close to the road and the landscape degradation associated with a recently cleared forest may reduce the overall experience for many riders / walkers.
- Conflicts with motorised trail bike riders and four wheel drivers can reduce the overall experience and enjoyment of riders / walkers.

- Lack of clarity on marketing material about water access has led to conflicts with shop owners.
- Some businesses along tracks / trails tend to over-promise, but under-deliver.
- Some tracks / trails, especially during peak times, are too busy and deplete the visitor experience.

We must be mindful that when developing upgraded or new tracks/ trails in the Hume region that we are building new product, rather than just moving people from one trail to another.

> Actions: Provide local businesses and regionally significant track / trail managers with information about how to create positive visitor experiences and the benefits that such experiences can make locally.

11.13 Events

Cycling, mountain bike riding, walking and horse riding events not only provide recreational and / or competitive opportunities for local residents and visitors to an area, they can also create pride in local communities and bring in significant revenue to a region. There are numerous events held throughout the Hume region related to existing regionally significant tracks and trails including (but not limited to):

Name of Event	Type of Event	Date Held / Last Held	Description
SCODY 3 Peaks Challenge	Road ride	Victorian Labour Day long weekend (10 March 2013)	This is one of the world's toughest and most picturesque cycling challenges of the Victorian Alps. It features a 13 hour one-day ride over a 235km course with three major climbs: Tawonga Gap, Mount Hotham, and the back side of Falls Creek. It attracted 1,800 entries in its first year and has significant potential for growth[72].
Marysville Lake Mountain Challenge	Road ride	3 March 2013	Short course (35km) Short course plus Lake Mountain (80km) Long course (120km) Long course plus Lake Mountain (160km)[73]
Audax Alpine Classic	Road ride	27 January 2013	Starting in Bright, this event attracts 2,500 riders and 3,000 supporters. The event incorporates the road climbs up Mt Buffalo and Falls Creek as well as the full QVR route[74].
Kelly Country Classic	Road ride	11 November 2012	A recreational challenge ride based out of Glenrowan that supports the fundraising efforts of North East Health Wangaratta. There are two

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[72] http://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/general/great-rides/42359/
[73] http://www.vic.cycling.org.au/?MenuID=Recreation%2Fc20073%2F17268%2CMarysville_Lake_Mountain_Challenge%2Fc20345%2F40045
[74] http://www.alpineclassic.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=64&Itemid=83

Name of Event	Type of Event	Date Held / Last Held	Description
			routes: 105km and 55km. 200+ riders take part in the event[75].
Tour de Rutherglen	Road ride	29 September 2012	A recreational ride focussed on showcasing the food and wine of the Rutherglen region. The event is capped at 100 and has been going for over a decade[76].
Rutherglen Cycling Classic	Road ride	1 May 2010	100km circuit road race commencing in Rutherglen. Attracted 140+ participants. Graded Criterium over a 1.2 circuit. Attracted 70 riders. Winemakers of Rutherglen challenge race. First event held in 2010[77].
Tour of Bright	Road ride	1-2 December 2012	This competitive event is a two day race format, organised by the Alpine Cycling Club, and is centred around the township of Bright. The event is capped at 550 competitors and is one of the most popular events on the club race calendar in Australia[78].
Bright 6 Hour	Mountain bike		The Bright 6 Hour is run by the Alpine Cycling Club. The event attracts 200+ riders[79].
Six Hours in The Saddle (S.H.I.T.S)	Mountain bike	31 August 2013	The S.H.I.T.S is a popular MTB race that uses the course through the Beechworth Mountain Bike Park. Capped at 400 riders. Usually attended by 300 supporters[80].
Mitta to Mt Beauty	Mountain bike	27 April 2013	A legendary race run by Team Mt Beauty. The event attracts 150 riders[81].
Alpine Assault	Mountain bike	31 March 2012	A 100km epic mountain bike race from Falls Creek to Mt Beauty incorporating the Big Hill Mountain Bike Park[82].
Terra Australis	Mountain bike	18-22 March 2013	An epic 5 day stage race through Victoria's High Country, based out of Bright (Holiday Park). Terra is the showcase MTB event for the region and may

[75] http://www.wangarattabug.org.au/index.php?view=article&id=63%3Akelly-country-classic-2012&option=com_content&Itemid=28

[76] http://www.rutherglenrotary.org/tour%20de.htm

[77] http://www.victoriahotelrutherglen.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21:rutherglen-cycling-classic&catid=1:news&Itemid=2

[78] http://www.tourofbright.com.au/

[79] http://www.alpinecyclingclub.com.au/

[80] http://adventurerace.com.au/Events/2536/Six-Hours-in-the-Saddle

[81] http://tmb.org.au/

[82] http://www.alpineassault.com.au/default.htm

Name of Event	Type of Event	Date Held / Last Held	Description
			develop into Australia's premier MTB event and become a strong international drawcard[83].
Gravity 12 Hour	Mountain bike	2 February 2013	This mountain bike event is based out of Bright (Holiday Park) and attracts 750 riders and 500 supporters from all over Australia. The competitor (or team) with the most laps after 12 hours of racing is declared the winner[84].
Bike Buller Mountain Bike Festival	Mountain bike	8-10 March 2014	Four different mountain bike events including cross country, enduro and downhill. Attracts 700+ riders. 30% of participants are from interstate. Held in conjunction with Picnic in the Park food, wine and music festival.

The most popular of these events, amongst survey participants, are the Audax Alpine Classic in Bright (26.4%); followed by State or National series mountain bike events (15.7%); Bike Buller Festival (14.6%); and the 3 Peaks Challenge (14.0%).

It is important in the design stage of tracks and trails to identify whether or not the asset is likely to be used for events. Mountain bike tracks in particular, such as those located at Mt Buller-Mt Stirling, are often used for major events with hundreds of participants. Where events are likely, consideration needs to be given to tracks / trails that are designed for multiple riders / walkers at the one time, administration areas, viewing areas, parking, emergency vehicle access, toilets, food and beverage outlets, etc.

Figure 25: Alpine Assault Event (Finish Line Events)

Whilst events should be strongly supported due to the benefits that they can provide the region and participants, it is important that access to regionally significant tracks / trails is not restricted on a

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[83] http://www.terraaustralismtbepic.com/RaceInformation.asp
[84] http://adventurerace.com.au/Events/2595/Bicycle-Superstore-Gravity-12-Hour

regular basis. Such restrictions can create resentment amongst regular users and may turn other potential users away permanently. A policy should be developed as part of the management plan by managers of regionally significant tracks / trails around events, to ensure that hosting of the event does not place undue costs on their staff or volunteers and so that access times along with roles and responsibilities of all parties are clearly identified.

Survey participants also expressed demand for more events aimed at families, lower entrance fees, shorter / modified events as part of larger events for beginners or young people; improved advertising through local media; and more horse riding events. The need for an events calendar in the Hume region so that events can be spread out across the year and so that all parties are aware of existing annual events was also identified by survey respondents and key stakeholders.

Actions: Regionally significant track / trail managers consider developing suitable infrastructure during the design stage to accommodate future events.

Actions: Regionally significant track / trail managers develop events policies so that processes, expectations, roles and responsibilities of all parties are clearly defined.

Actions: Support the establishment of events using regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region as per locally developed event policies.

Actions: Work with tourism bodies to cross-populate an events calendar (advertised through facebook, emails and relevant websites) to avoid potential clashes between events and to inform potential participants of opportunities available.

11.14 Public Transport Access

The ability to carry bicycles on public transport services such as V/Line trains, bus services and aeroplanes originating in locations such as Melbourne and Sydney and travelling to the Hume region was identified as a key issue through community consultations. 182 out of a total of 536 survey respondents (34%) indicated that being able to transport bicycles on a train or bus is a priority. A further 215 survey participants (40%) indicated that intra-regional transportation (such as bicycle transfers between destinations) is an even greater priority to most trail users, i.e. how to get from A to B when in the region, particularly if using a linear trail such as a rail trail. This priority is also supported through the literature, e.g. Tourism North East (2012) *Tourism Gap Analysis.*

Currently bicycles can only be carried on V/Line trains if there is sufficient space. Available space is anywhere between two to six bicycles, depending upon the type of train in operation. D Vans can be attached to the rear of larger trains servicing long distance travel (e.g. Melbourne to Albury / Wodonga or Shepparton). These vans can be booked in advance for special events and are able to transport around 30-40 bicycles. The major issue for cyclists in the Hume region is the lack of certainty about whether or not their bicycle can be transported on the train when they turn up at a railway station, as there is currently no booking service in place. This is particularly the case when several people are travelling as a group of friends or as a group of family members. For train operators and other passengers, the key issue is whether or not there is sufficient space to safely store bicycles on board trains.

Only folding bicycles of certain dimensions which are placed in a cover or bag can be transported on V/Line buses. However, some bus drivers will, at their own discretion, allow the carriage of bicycles.

In relation to aeroplanes, bicycles will generally only be accepted as checked baggage on Virgin Airlines and Qantas if packaged in a suitable bike box / bag and checked in at least one hour prior to departure. Some of the smaller aeroplanes which fly into Albury, such as Skywest will only carry bicycles if there is available space and if the bicycle fits within the limit of one piece of checked baggage under 23kg (appropriately boxed). Rex Airlines only allows one checked bag per person to a total of 15kg. Any baggage over 15kg will be charged at $6.50 per kilogram and will only be carried if there is sufficient space. Where there is insufficient space, the bicycle may be transported on a later aeroplane.

A study undertaken by the Institute for Sensible Transport (2010)[85] reported that cyclists interviewed as part of the strategy believed that the four most useful improvements to better connect cycling with regional public transport in priority order are:

- More room for bikes on trains.
- Ability to travel with bicycle on coach.
- Better cycling network.
- Booking system to ensure that bicycle will be carried on train or coach.

Currently 0.9% of V/Line passengers or 119,000 people annually take a bicycle on board. During weekdays the majority of these passengers use their bicycle for commuting purposes, whereas on weekends, the majority of these passengers use their bicycle for recreational purposes. Forecasts provided by the Institute of Sensible Transport (2010) indicates that the percentage of people who may carry a bicycle on public transport if a range of new initiatives are introduced could potentially reach 3% by 2020, or 560,000 people. This figure is comparable with bicycle passenger numbers in the UK. The study indicates that forecasting recreational demand is quite difficult as many recreational cyclists are likely to be infrequent users of the service.

Bicycle Network Victoria, in partnership with the Victorian Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, instigated a 6 week pilot project called Trail Transporter in the Ballarat and Leongatha regions in 2010 in order to provide an alternative to cyclists transporting their bicycles on board trains or in the luggage compartment of buses. This pilot project involved the provision of a large trailer at a transport terminal (e.g. Southern Cross), which cyclists could load their bikes onto free of charge at least 15 minutes prior to the departure of a corresponding V/Line service on Friday afternoons, returning on Sunday afternoons. Riders were required to pre-book their bicycles onto the service.

In relation to the Hume region, the initiatives that are most likely to improve the ability of cyclists to carry their bicycles on public transport, whilst being mindful of the needs of other passengers and transport operators, are:

- Retrofit existing train carriages to allow the carriage of bicycles so that they hang vertically and do not take up as much floor space as bicycles stored on the floor. In the long term,

[85] Institute for Sensible Transport and Victorian Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (2010) A Technical Evaluation of Bicycle Carriage on Victorian Trains and Coaches

- new carriages should be designed to allow greater numbers of bicycles to be safely stored on board.

- Provide a booking service through V/Line website and booking offices so that bicycle passengers have greater certainty about being able to take their bicycle on board a train. Discussions need to take place to determine if an additional fee is required and how this booking system will fit into the Victorian Government's MYKI card scheme.

- Provide linkages on the V/Line website and all regionally significant tracks and trails websites to private shuttle bus companies operating in the Hume region so that all train users, including larger groups, are provided with information about an alternative transportation option.

- Install a bicycle carriage rack on the front of buses in high trail use areas to allow the carriage of up to three bicycles at a time, whilst freeing up the luggage compartment area for storage of bags and suitcases.

Figure 26: Bus carrying a bicycle on the front of the vehicle, Flagstaff, Arizona, USA.

- When it is not possible to secure a D Van attached to the rear of a train, provide a car and trailer at Southern Cross Railway Station on Friday evenings and /or Saturday mornings to transport bicycles to trail heads in Tallarook / Seymour (Great Victorian Rail Trail), Wangaratta (Murray to Mountains Rail Trail) and Wodonga (High Country Rail Trail), whilst the owner of the bicycle travels via train (operating at the same time). Relationships with private shuttle services on these routes should be established so that bicycles can be transported back to the Tallarook / Seymour, Wangaratta and Wodonga trail heads in time for a Sunday afternoon departure back to Melbourne. These private operators could also meet trail users at one of the trail heads on Friday evening or Saturday morning and then transport them to other regionally significant tracks / trails which are a little further away such as the Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails or to a different section of the rail trails (e.g. Bright). On weekdays it is expected that larger groups will use the services of private shuttle bus operators due to the limited capacity of trains and buses.

- Ensure that all regionally significant tracks and trails in the Hume region are connected to transportation hubs such as train stations or bus terminals wherever possible.

Actions: Advocate to Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and V/Line to retrofit existing trains to allow for additional bicycles to be carried.

Actions: Advocate to Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and V/Line to purchase new train carriages (when required) that have a greater carrying capacity of bicycles.

Actions: Advocate to V/Line to establish a bicycle booking service for trains and buses

Actions: Advocate to V/Line to provide linkages from its website to private shuttle buses in the Hume region that are capable of carrying riders and their bikes

Actions: Advocate to Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and V/Line to install a bicycle carriage rack on the front of buses in high trail use areas (subject to feasibility)

Actions: Advocate to Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and V/Line to provide a car and trailer at Southern Cross Railway Station on Friday evenings and /or Saturday mornings to transport bicycles to trail heads when it is not possible to secure a D Van attached to the rear of a train, returning on Sunday evenings.

Actions: Regionally significant track / trail managers design tracks / trails so that they connect to transportation hubs wherever possible.

Actions: Regionally significant track / trail managers and tourism bodies work in partnership with airlines to create all inclusive track / trail related packages.

11.15 Universal Design

It is important to provide regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region which are designed according to universal design principles wherever possible. This will ensure that such tracks / trails are usable to as many people as possible. Universal design principles refers to equitable use; flexibility in use; simple and intuitive use; perceptible information; tolerance for error; low physical effort; and size and space approach and use[86].

The surface of both the Great Victorian Rail Trail and the Murray to Mountains Trail are both designed to meet the needs of as many users as possible. However, there will be other tracks / trails where such broad use may only be achieved for a portion of track / trail, or perhaps not at all, especially for those located in steep and remote mountainous areas. It is important to note on all promotional materials such as brochures, maps, websites and signs which components of tracks / trails incorporate universal design principles.

To help ensure that as many people as possible can use regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region, the following works and initiatives could be considered, depending on the type of track / trail and the experience offered:

- Relatively flat tracks / trails (where appropriate) with a compacted or hardened surface such as asphalt, concrete or granitic sand. Any compacted granitic sand surfaces should be cement stabilised and require excellent drainage to avoid the forming of erosion

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[86] Department of Planning and Community Development Universal Design Fact Sheet

corrugations. Granitic sand surfaces need to be regularly maintained to repair soft spots or scouring.

- Signage that is clear and easy to read using simple English and recognised symbols, with a contrast luminance of greater than 30%.
- Directional signage at intersections.
- Use architectural statements / public art to assist with wayfinding.
- Raised tactile information with adjacent Braille signage.
- Toilets suitable for people with mobility aids and which provide baby change facilities.
- Bollards that are easily distinguishable from the track / trail with a luminance contrast of greater than 30%.
- Picnic tables designed to allow a person in a wheelchair to sit at the table.
- Seats with arm rests and backs.
- Parking at track / trail heads suitable for mini buses and for vehicles requiring extra space (such as those with prams or wheelchairs).
- Good sight lines so that people can see oncoming track / trail users
- Tracks / trails sufficiently wide to allow people to pass oncoming track / trail users.
- Tracks / trails with sufficient flat run-off at the sides.
- Tactile ground surface indicators (where applicable).

Actions: Facilitate training to regionally significant track / trail managers in relation to universal design principles.

Actions: Regionally significant track / trail managers use universal design principles in the design phase of tracks / trails.

11.16 Research and Data Collection

In order to encourage further investment in tracks and trails opportunities and infrastructure, data is needed in relation to:

- Existing number of track / trail users
- Latent demand for track / trail users (especially for tracks / trails that are not yet developed)
- Number of local residents participating in cycling, walking and horse riding
- Number of visitors to the region who participate in cycling, walking and horse riding
- The economic spend by trail users (both local residents and visitors) to the region on items such as accommodation, cycling / walking / horse riding equipment, food and beverages, entertainment, fuel, etc.

Unfortunately where such data is available for the Hume region, the data is often not specific enough, not relevant to specific types of tracks / trails, and in some instances it may even be misleading. The collection of accurate and useful data is therefore a very high priority in the Hume region so that informed decisions about track / trail investments can be made. Local Government Authorities, Alpine Resorts, State Government, Federal Government and community based organisations need accurate data to determine the feasibility and cost-benefits of developing new tracks / trails or undertaking extensions to existing tracks / trails.

Trail counters are used on the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail and the High Country Rail Trail during peak weekends such as Melbourne Cup, Australia Day, Easter and Queen's Birthday to determine

the number of users of various sections of the trail. Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails has also used counters on several of its mountain bike trails, and the Great Victorian Rail Trail has recently installed counters along the trail. Hence some base data will become available shortly from which to make assumptions, although there are still some gaps in this data collection. It is imperative that all regionally significant tracks and trails developed contain data counters to assist with monitoring and good management.

Further research is required into the needs of existing track / trail users and potential track / trail users to determine key enablers to participation.   Our community consultation indicates that riders and walkers are particularly interested in:

1. Smooth all weather surface – bitumen or well compacted gravel surface (53)
2. Signage that is clear; provides interpretive information; shows distances; and is not able to be vandalised (32)
3. Accommodation, food and attractions accessible to the track / trail (32)
4. Trails that are multi-purpose and suitable for all users including families and people riding road bikes and hybrids (27)
5. Natural bush scenery along the track / trail (18)
6. Access to drinking water along the track / trail (18)
7. Historical landmarks and information to be featured along the track / trail (16)
8. Off road trails with minimal road crossings (16)
9. Opportunities to access tracks / trails by using public transport (15)
10. Link with other existing tracks / trails (15).

More specific and localised data would assist track / trail managers to provide a better quality visitor experience and encourage repeat visitation.

Over the past decade, the Australian Sports Commission has published its Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) results on an annual basis. This information has been extremely valuable in determining Victoria wide participation in certain activities such as walking, bushwalking, cycling and horse riding. It did not however provide information specific to mountain bike riding. Unfortunately funding for this survey by the Federal Government has been discontinued and so such information is no longer available. Some data is available through the Australian Bureau of Statistics in relation to participation levels of children between 5-14 years of age in certain activities and people over 15 years of age, but this information is fairly limited.

Although municipal level recreation needs strategies conducted in the Hume region generally includes a survey of participation levels in certain activities by local residents, there is no standardised set of questions used in these strategies to allow data to be easily compared between municipalities. Similarly, an analysis of the demographics of respondents indicates that a significant number of people who may have filled in a participation survey are females over the age of fifty. The results therefore may not be representative of the broader community's participation levels and needs.

Tourism data available for the Hume region is not specific enough to make accurate assessments of existing and potential participation levels in track / trail based activities as the National Visitor Survey and Tourism Research Australia does not provide information at a municipal level. Currently there are three tourism bodies covering the region (and into southern NSW):

- Tourism North East – incorporating the following municipalities: Wangaratta, Indigo, Alpine, Towong and Mansfield
- Goulburn River Valley Tourism – incorporating the following municipalities: Greater Shepparton, Murrindindi, Mitchell and Strathbogie.
- Murray Tourism – incorporating the following regions: Albury Wodonga, Sun Country, Echuca Moama, Swan Hill and Mildura Wentworth. Specific information is available for Albury Wodonga and Sun Country (incorporating Cobram, Moira, Numurkah, Corowa, Corowa region, Tocumwal, Finley and Jerilderee).

Figure 27: Vineyard between Oxley and Whitfield

These bodies provide information about domestic day trippers, domestic overnight visitors and international visitors in terms of numbers, market share, purpose of visit, accommodation used, origin of visitors, length of stay, age, lifecycle, activities undertaken and expenditure. Local Visitor Information Centres also provide some level of data, but it does not specifically identify the number of people who use tracks and trails.

A number of studies have attempted to determine the economic contribution of cycle based tourism in recent years. One study, undertaken by Dr Sue Beeton of La Trobe University in 2009[87], indicated that the average daily contribution of people using the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail was $258 per person (not including multipliers). This amount included:

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[87] Presentation by Dr Sue Beeton at Parks and Leisure Australia Nature Based Tourism and Trails Seminar in Bendigo on 19 May 2010.

- $52 for accommodation
- $123 for food and beverages
- $18 for fuel
- $6.50 for cycling expenses
- $6.50 for souvenirs / gifts
- $38 for other expenses

The figures developed by Dr Sue Beeton have been widely cited in recent years in track / trail feasibility studies and other reports. However there are very few tracks / trails at the same standard as the trails researched by Dr Beeton, and less developed tracks / trails are unlikely to be able to deliver the same results (in the immediate future at least).

Several studies undertaken to determine the economic benefits of tracks / trails do not take into account the moderate economic contribution of local users. Nor do they take into consideration that the time spent on a track / trail may not have been the reason for the visit to the area, or the main activity undertaken whilst in the region.

The Barwon South West Regional Trails Master Plan[88] suggested that visitor contributions should be in the realm of $10 per trail user and the Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy[89] conservatively suggested $50 for overnight visitors (in recognition that tracks / trails may not be the primary purpose of the visit to the region); $10-$25 per day visitor; and $2-$5 local user. SGS Economics and Planning used an amount of $50 per day trip cyclist and $250 per overnight cyclist in its *Economic Impact of Cycle Tourism for Alpine Shire* (2011) study. As can be seen from these figures, there are numerous different methodologies and assumptions used in determining possible economic impacts of tracks and trails.

The economic impact of a track / trail can also be dependent upon its location and the activities available. Information supplied by Mt Buller Mt Stirling[90] states that mountain bike riders at the Mt Buller Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails will spend in the vicinity of $149 per day. Similarly, organisers of the AUDAX event state that competitors spend an average of $167 per day. People visiting the Mt Buller Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails or taking part in the AUDAX event are likely to be visiting the area specifically for these activities and therefore their expenditure is directly attributed to the facility they are visiting or the event that they are taking part in. For many people using other tracks / trails in the region, time spent on a track / trail may form only a fraction of their time in the area and may be one of many activities undertaken.

An input output model was developed by SGS Economics and Planning to attempt to determine the economic and employment contribution from visitors, marketing and promotion expenditure and infrastructure investment expenditure in terms of direct benefits and flow on effects. However, this tool still relies on knowing what a reasonable amount of expenditure is likely from event cyclists (both road riding and mountain bike riding) and trail based recreational cyclists. It does not have fields available for walkers or horse riders and does not cater for the fact that cyclists typically involved in road riding and mountain bike riding may in fact spend quite different amounts per day. Nor does this model assist in identifying potential usage of a track / trail.

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[88] Barwon South West Region (2009) *Barwon South West Regional Trails Master Plan*
[89] Loddon Mallee Region (2010) *Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy*
[90] Mt Buller Mt Stirling (2013) *Epic Mountain Bike Trail Project – Stakeholder Consultation Information*

REMPLAN is an economic modelling tool used by the majority of Local Government Authorities within the Hume region. In relation to tourism initiatives, this tool relies on users from a particular area (e.g. a local government area or the whole Hume region) inputting information about user numbers and / or economic contributions from users (obtained through surveys implemented by the LGA or region). In the case of the Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy, there is very little (if any) data available on some of the tracks / trails, and where new tracks / trails proposed, there is no data. Similarly, many of the existing or proposed regionally significant tracks / trails cross boundaries of several different areas. Further, the economic impact of some groups, i.e. those specifically going to Mt Buller-Mt Stirling to ride mountain bikes for a weekend, as opposed to someone who may be passing through Mansfield and decides to walk along the Great Victorian Rail Trail for one hour, is significantly different. Hence whilst the REMPLAN tool works well for a variety of different purposes within Local Government, it still has some limitations for a study of this type.

More research is required into an accurate model of determining the economic contribution of existing and proposed regionally significant tracks and trails. In addition, more local research and data collection is required to identify existing usage levels and characteristics of such users. That being said, based on existing trails such as the Murray to Mountains Trail, the economic contribution of tracks and trails to the Hume region can be significant.

Actions: Managers responsible for regional tracks / trails undertake regular, if not permanent, counts of trail users.

Actions: Managers responsible for regional tracks / trails undertake regular evaluations of the satisfaction levels of existing track / trail users.

Actions: Advocate for improved track / trail data collection and distribution of this information by Australian Sports Commission, Australian Bureau of Statistics and Tourism Research Australia.

Actions: Advocate for the development of tools to assist track /trail builders and managers to estimate potential usage and economic benefits of tracks / trails.

Figure 28: Great Victorian Rail Trail

12.0 New Opportunities for Track / Trail Development

Some of the key gaps and opportunities identified in the Hume region in terms of regionally significant tracks and trails developments and usage for future consideration include:

12.1 Horse Riding

There are a significant number of horse riders living in the Hume region. Throughout the consultation process, there was a strong desire expressed to develop more and improved opportunities for horse riding along trails. One of the key recommendations in the strategy is to develop a horse riding trail in the vicinity of Mt Stirling. To accommodate horses and their riders, there may need to be larger car parks developed at trail heads for parking of horse floats, as well as rails, horse yards, drinking troughs along the trail and at accommodation venues. In some instances, it may be best to develop a separate bridle trail.

Figure 29: Horse riding at Mt Stirling (photo courtesy of Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Alpine Resort)

12.2 Mountain Bike Riding

Key stakeholders suggested that there are two specific gaps in the suite of mountain bike experiences currently offered in the Hume region. The first of these is a 'gateway' trail, which is essentially an easy trail where beginners learn the basic skills of mountain bike riding. It may form part of a bike park and could incorporate features such as wide open trails, some smooth flowing turns, some small climbs and descents, berms, rollers, log rides, ramps, platforms, etc. Such trails or facilities help beginners to develop the skills to tackle more technically advanced mountain bike tracks / trails in the future. There are numerous gateway trails and bike parks throughout the USA such as the Valmont Bike Park in Boulder, Colorado. The Village Family Trail at Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails is an example of one basic level trail in the Hume region and the Easy Skills Trail provides opportunities for people to develop basic skills before tackling more difficult trails.

The other gap in the mountain bike track / trail suite of experiences at present in the Hume region is in the area of gravity trails. Gravity trails generally entail riders being driven to the top of a

mountain by a shuttle bus or vehicle, and then descending by mountain bike to the bottom of the mountain over several hours. The Moab Whole Enchilada in Utah, USA, is a good example of this type of trail experience. Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails provides opportunities for mountain bike riders to travel downhill on several different trails, varying in length from 1km to 8.65km and then to return to Northside Discovery Centre via a chairlift (except for the Klingsporn Bridle Trail which finishes in Mirimbah at the base of the mountain) or shuttle service.

12.3 Events

There are already a number of road riding and mountain bike events held throughout the Hume region. These events bring considerable economic benefits to the areas in which they are held. There is also the opportunity to use existing regionally significant tracks / trails more effectively for other types of events. For example, triathlons could be considered along the High Country Rail Trail, or music events could be organised in townships along the Murray to Mountains Rail, with participants being encouraged to travel by bicycle between each destination. Festivals such as the Fat Tyre Festival in Melrose, South Australia and the Fat Tire Festival held in Fruita, Colorado, USA provide mountain bike riders with a range of different non-competitive recreational rides during the day and entertainment in the evening. The Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails holds the Picnic in the Park food, wine and music festival in March each year in partnership with a major mountain biking event.

There was support identified through the community surveys for more social events suitable for families, rather than events geared towards the more elite athletes. Other events that could be considered include trail running, triathlons, group fitness challenges (e.g. Tough Mudder), endurance racing and horse versus human endurance challenges, to name a few.

Figure 30: Mountain Bike Riders at Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Mountain Bike Trails

12.4 School Groups

Regionally significant tracks and trails have the potential to be used by large groups, such as schools. In order to further encourage school groups to use the tracks / trails, the opportunity needs to be packaged, preferably as an all inclusive product that incorporates bike hire, support vehicle, mechanical support, skills development, accommodation, food and tour guiding. The rail trails in the Hume region in particular could lend themselves very well to school groups.

12.5 Recreational Vehicle Travellers

There are over 360,000 Recreational Vehicle travellers in Australia, many of whom already travel to regional areas such as the villages, towns and cities within the Hume region. A number of these travellers carry bicycles on their vehicles, whilst others may be interested in walking; hence there is likely to be a proportion of these travellers who would be very interested in enjoying the regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region. The challenge is to identify ways to market the regionally significant tracks and trails in the region to this group of travellers so that they will visit the region and further contribute to local economies by staying longer and spending more money. Possible marketing opportunities could include the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia and the various industry related magazines supporting people who enjoy caravans, campervans and motorhomes / recreational vehicles.

12.6 Indigenous Interpretation and Tourism

Given the wealth of indigenous cultural places and artefacts within the Hume region, there is potential that providing permission has been received from relevant authorities and communities, and providing measures are in place to protect artefacts and significant sites, that small guided walking tours or canoeing tours could be conducted by indigenous people to promote their customs, dreamtime stories and their traditional ways of life. The ability to offer such tours may be a major draw card to tracks / trails in the region (particularly for international visitors) and could also create employment in indigenous communities. There is potential to partner with relevant training providers to offer tour guiding training to indigenous people. Funds may also be available from the Victorian Government to support the growth of indigenous businesses. As a minimum, interpretive signage could be installed along tracks / trails to help share the Dreamtime stories and cultural practices of indigenous people in the Hume region.

According to Aboriginal Affairs Victoria[91], specific indigenous artefacts likely to be found in the Hume region include:

- Scarred Trees
- Mounds
- Rock Art
- Freshwater Shell Middens

- Quarries
- Ground Edge Axes
- Surface Scatters
- Axe Grinding Grooves

- Flaked Stone Tools
- Grinding Stones
- Burial Sites
- Historic Places

> Actions: Local indigenous communities and regional track / trail managers to work together to create opportunities for indigenous tourism and interpretation on tracks / trails.

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[91] Aboriginal Affairs Victoria website: http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-affairs/publications-and-research/aboriginal-cultural-heritage-mini-posters. Viewed 3 July 2013.

13.0 Recommendations

13.1 Track / Trail Developments

The following tracks / trails upgrades or developments have been identified to enhance the quality and diversity of regionally significant track / trail experiences in the Hume Region and to encourage increased and repeat visitation. Whilst some of the proposals involve an extension to an existing track / trail, others are completely new tracks / trails. In some instances, very little planning has yet been undertaken, hence costings proposed are indicative only and may vary considerably once the tracks / trails are more fully scoped.

Indicative costings are based on the following assumptions:

Cost per metre for sealed trail	$ 120.00
Cost per metre for unsealed trail	$ 80.00
Cost per metre to seal existing trail	$ 100.00
Cost per metre for signage on existing track	$ 1.00

Once raw costs are calculated a mark-up of 50% has been applied to account for ancillary project development costs such as planning, project management, engineering design and trail infrastructure. Although this method provides only a coarse estimate, it aligns well with project cost estimates provided by several councils for specific trail developments that have been costed in more detail.

The planning stage for any new trail of regional significance will require the production of detailed cost estimates. Some trail managers in the region are able to develop trails at a lower cost per metre than those indicated above, by using volunteer labour and donated materials. However, for the purpose of this Strategy, all costs will be based on industry figures or actual costings developed by land managers.

No.	Location	Land Owner / Manager(s)	Indicative Costing
1	Winton Wetlands	Benalla Rural City Council	$57M[92]
2	Bright to Harrietville	Alpine Shire	$1.8M[93]
3	Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing	Falls Creek and Mt Hotham Alpine Resorts	Not known[94]
4	Beechworth to Yackandandah	Indigo Shire Council	$3.05M[95]
5	Oxley to Whitfield	Rural City of Wangaratta	$6.9M[96]
6	Wandong to Heathcote	Mitchell Shire, City of Greater Bendigo	$9.4M[97]
7	Wandiligong HVP MTB trail network	Alpine Shire Council, Hancock Victoria Plantations	$225,000[98]
8	Lake Mountain to Marysville MTB Trail	Lake Mountain Alpine Resort, Murrindindi Shire	$595,000[99]
9	Falls Creek to Mt Beauty MTB trail	Falls Creek Alpine Resort, Alpine Shire Council	$100,500[100]
10	High Country Rail Trail Wodonga CBD connection	Wodonga City Council, Parklands Albury Wodonga	$1.13M[101]
11	Mount Stirling Horse Trail	Mt Buller Mt Stirling Alpine Resort, Mansfield Shire Council	$300,000[102]
12	Wahgunyah to Lake Moodemere	Indigo Shire Council	$145,000[103]

[92] As detailed in *The Winton Wetlands @ Benalla MASTER PLAN, 2012.* Only a portion of this will relate to cycling / walking tracks / trails.

[93] Based on 10km in centre section of trail currently unfunded. Estimated at $120/metre plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure.

[94] A master plan is currently being developed and will include detailed cost estimates.

[95] Estimate supplied by Indigo Shire.

[96] Cost estimate based on 38.3 km of sealed trail at $120/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure.

[97] Cost estimate based on 78 km of unsealed trail at $80/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure.

[98] Cost estimate provided by Alpine Shire

[99] Cost estimate from World Trail Concept Plan, August 2012

[100] Cost estimate based on installing signage over 67km of unsealed trail at $1000/km, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management and contingencies.

[101] Cost estimate based on 6.3 km of sealed trail at $120/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure. Estimate will vary depending on which route is chosen.

[102] Estimate provided by Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Resort Management.

[103] Cost estimate provided by Indigo Shire.

No.	Location	Land Owner / Manager(s)	Indicative Costing
13	High Country Rail Trail - Wodonga to Tallangatta trail sealing	Wodonga City Council, Indigo Shire, Towong Shire Council, Parklands Albury Wodonga	$4.2M[104]
14	Alexandra to Eildon	Murrindindi Shire Council	$3M[105]
15	Yackandandah to Huon	Indigo Shire Council	$3.8M[106]
16	Bonegilla to Lake Hume	Wodonga City Council	$900,000[107]
17	Barmah Canoe Trail	Moira Shire Council, Parks Victoria	Not determined
18	Tallarook to Seymour	Mitchell Shire Council	$1.08M[108]
19	Chiltern to Rutherglen	Indigo Shire Council	$4.3M[109]
20	Yarrawonga to Echuca	Moira Shire Council, Campaspe Shire Council, DEPI, Parks Victoria	$18.8M[110]
21	Alexandra to Rubicon	Murrindindi Shire Council	$2.75M[111]
22	Shepparton to Seymour River Trail	Greater Shepparton Shire Council, Strathbogie Shire Council, Mitchell Shire Council	$17.4M[112]
23	Old Tallangatta to Corryong	Towong Shire Council, Parklands Albury Wodonga	$10M[113]

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[104] Estimate based on sealing 28km of existing trail at $100/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure.

[105] Cost estimate based on 25.3 km of unsealed trail at $80/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure.

[106] Estimate based on 29.7 km of sealed trail at $120/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure.

[107] Estimate based on 5 km of sealed trail at $120/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure.

[108] Estimate based on 9 km of unsealed trail at $80/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure.

[109] Estimate based on 23.8 km of sealed trail at $120/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure.

[110] Estimate based on 157 km of unsealed trail at $80/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure.

[111] Estimate based on 22.9 km of unsealed trail at $80/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure.

[112] Estimate based on 145 km of unsealed trail at $80/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure. Being a river trail final cost may be significantly higher due to requirements for bridges, culverts and other engineering structures.

[113] Estimate based on 83.8 km of unsealed trail at $80/metre, plus 50% mark-up for planning, management, engineering and infrastructure.

13.2 Track / Trail Initiatives

No.	Focus Area	Action	Lead Agency and Potential Partners	Resource Requirements	Priority
1	Governance and Coordination	A Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee comprising of Local Government representatives, Alpine Resort representatives, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Parks Victoria, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, Regional Development Victoria and community representatives will be established. Regular liaison will occur with peak bodies, businesses, tourism bodies, VicRoads, indigenous representatives, disability advocacy groups, community based organisations and user groups.	*Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee* Local Government Authorities Alpine Resort representatives Department of Environment and Primary Industries Parks Victoria Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure Regional Development Victoria Community representatives Peak bodies Businesses Tourism Bodies VicRoads Indigenous representative(s) Disability advocacy groups Community based organisations User groups	Officer time	High
2		Processes for governance of regionally significant tracks and trails in terms of composition of committee and roles and responsibilities of the committee are established.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee	Officer time	High
3	Management	Track / trail managers are informed of best practice regarding track / trail management, including roles and responsibilities, management plans, MOUs, management options, community engagement and volunteer support.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Bicycle Network Victoria Bushwalking Victoria International Mountain Bike Association (Australia)	Officer time	Ongoing

No.	Focus Area	Action	Lead Agency and Potential Partners	Resource Requirements	Priority
			Rail Trails Australia Australian Trail Horse Riders Association		
4	Communication Structures	Advocate for the establishment of a state and / or national tracks and trails advocacy group or think tank comprising of representatives from Local Government Authorities, Alpine Resorts, State Government Authorities, Federal Government Agencies, Regional Tourism Bodies, Bicycle Network Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, International Mountain Bike Association (Australia), Rail Trails Australia and Australian Trail Horse Riders Association, which meets once per year (or more if required) to discuss track / trail related issues.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Local Government Authorities Alpine Resorts State Government Authorities Federal Government Agencies Regional Tourism Bodies Bicycle Network Victoria Bushwalking Victoria International Mountain Bike Association (Australia) Rail Trails Australia Australian Trail Horse Riders Association	Officer time	High
5		Track / trail managers establish a database of track / trail users and provide regular information via tools such as e-newsletters.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	Ongoing
6	Resources	Lobby State and Federal Governments for additional funding to Local Government Authorities for the development and management of tracks and trails.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee	Officer time	Ongoing
7		Lobby the State Government for additional resources to be made available to public land managers and partners to manage and maintain tracks and trails in their jurisdiction once constructed and consider whole of life costs.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee	Officer time	High
8		Work in partnership with state/ national based agencies such as Bicycle Network Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, International Mountain Bike Association (Australia),	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Bicycle Network Victoria	Funding to develop resources	Medium

No.	Focus Area	Action	Lead Agency and Potential Partners	Resource Requirements	Priority
		Australian Trail Horse Riders Association, Rail Trails Australia, VicHealth, Tourism Victoria, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and Sport and Recreation Victoria to develop resources to promote the benefits of tracks and trails to Local Government Authorities.	Bushwalking Victoria International Mountain Bike Association (Australia) Australian Trail Horse Riders Association Rail Trails Australia VicHealth Tourism Victoria Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure Sport and Recreation Victoria		
9		Local Government Authorities and Tourism bodies in the Hume region support volunteers and Friends of Groups through recruitment, training, assistance with grant writing and provision of shared trail development and maintenance tools.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Local Government Authorities Tourism Bodies	Officer time. Some funding to purchase tools and contract trainers.	Ongoing
10	Marketing	Regionally significant tracks / trail managers develop a marketing plan.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	Ongoing
11		Regionally significant track / trail managers work collectively to market the track / trail opportunities available across the entire Hume region, with support from the Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee and regional tourism bodies.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Tourism Bodies	Officer time	Ongoing
12		Regionally significant track / trail managers develop suitable high quality, fully integrated and fully mobile marketing resources.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers Tourism Bodies	Officer time	Ongoing
13		Regionally significant track / trail managers establish links with appropriate external bodies to assist with cross-	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	Ongoing

No.	Focus Area	Action	Lead Agency and Potential Partners	Resource Requirements	Priority
		marketing.	Tourism Bodies		
14		Regionally significant track / trail managers develop a brand style guide, outlining expectations in terms of the tone, style and resources as well as specific details around the brandmark, colours, typography, photography, stationery, online applications, pull up banners, etc.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers Tourism Bodies	Officer time	High
15	Signage and Wayfinding	Regionally significant track / trail managers adhere to Australian Standards and best practice when installing or upgrading signage and ensure that signage and wayfinding are considered both along the track / trail and in towns.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	Ongoing
16	Risk Management	Regionally significant track / trail managers develop a suitable risk management plan and effective mechanisms and procedure for addressing identified risks.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers Local Government Authorities Parks Victoria Department of Environment and Primary Industries	Officer time	High
17	Maintenance	Regionally significant track / trail managers develop a suitable maintenance program and budget and commit long term to maintaining each track / trail that it is responsible for, taking into consideration whole of life costs.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	High
18	Business / Private Sector Development	Advocate to State Government authorities to create an environment that is more conducive to private sector development (to meet the needs of walkers and cyclists) on public land where regionally significant tracks / trails exist.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee	Officer time	High
19		Provide information to the private sector of the benefits of investing in track / trail related opportunities.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee	Officer time	Medium
20		Facilitate training to existing and potential businesses about the culture and needs of cyclists, mountain bike riders, hikers and horse riders so that they are better able to meet their	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Business Victoria	Officer time	Medium

No.	Focus Area	Action	Lead Agency and Potential Partners	Resource Requirements	Priority
		needs and expectations.	Tourism Victoria		
21		Advocate to State Government for planning support, advice and small start up grants for businesses wishing to establish themselves along regional tracks and trails to support the needs of walkers and cyclists.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee	Officer time	Medium
22		Advocate to Tourism Victoria to promote the benefits of working in the hospitality industry to the workforce, including young school leavers.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Tourism Victoria	Officer time	Medium-Low
23		Encourage local tourism bodies to implement an annual award (as part of existing Tourism awards) for exemplary track / trail related businesses and hospitality staff who provide exemplary customer service standards.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Tourism Bodies	Officer time	Medium
24	Planning	Regionally significant tracks / trails managers undertake a feasibility study prior to developing any new tracks / trails.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	Ongoing
25		Regionally significant tracks / trails managers develop a track / trail management plan, Memorandum of Understanding, maintenance plan and marketing plan prior to the establishment of the track / trail wherever possible.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	Ongoing
26		Regionally significant tracks / trails managers engage with local communities and all other relevant land managers (such as VicRoads, DEPI, Parks Victoria, VicTrack, etc) in track / trail developments from the very beginning of the planning stage and prior to preparing funding submissions.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers Local communities Land managers	Officer time	Ongoing
27		Encourage State Government to identify and document clear processes and requirements around the development of tracks / trails.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee	Officer time	Medium
28		Advocate to State Government for the development of a state-wide mountain bike strategy.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Parks Victoria	Officer time	Medium

No.	Focus Area	Action	Lead Agency and Potential Partners	Resource Requirements	Priority
			Department of Environment and Primary Industries Local Government Authorities		
29		Local Government Authorities undertake their own planning in relation to potential business and partnership opportunities, marketing, and management of local or municipal level tracks and trails throughout the municipality.	Local Government Authorities		
30	Trail Design and Planning Guidelines	Distribute the Planning Guidelines contained within the Appendix to Local Government Authorities, public land managers and other track / trail designers and builders in the Hume region and where possible, incorporate this information into Local Government design guidelines.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Local Government Authorities Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	High
31		Encourage Local and State Government agencies to ensure that track / trail designers and builders are adhering to relevant Australian Standards, industry guidelines, best practice and universal design principles prior to issuing planning permits.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Local Government Authorities	Officer time	Ongoing
32		Facilitate a series of training opportunities for track / trail designers, builders and managers relating to track / trail planning, design and development.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee	Officer time	Medium
33		Advocate to Tourism Victoria to establish a centralised knowledge hub for the sharing of information and best practice examples of all types of tracks / trails, potentially in partnership with Bicycle Network Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, International Mountain Biking Association (Australia) and Australian Trail Horse Riders Association.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Tourism Victoria Bicycle Network Victoria Bushwalking Victoria International Mountain Biking Association (Australia) Australian Trail Horse Riders Association	Officer time	Medium

No.	Focus Area	Action	Lead Agency and Potential Partners	Resource Requirements	Priority
34	Visitor Experience	Provide local businesses and regionally significant track / trail managers with information about how to create positive visitor experiences and the benefits that such experiences can make locally.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Tourism bodies	Officer time	Ongoing
35	Events	Regionally significant track / trail managers consider developing suitable infrastructure during the design stage to accommodate future events.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	Ongoing
36		Regionally significant track / trail managers develop events policies so that processes, expectations, roles and responsibilities of all parties are clearly defined.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	Ongoing
37		Support the establishment of events using regionally significant tracks / trails in the Hume region as per locally developed event policies.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee	Officer time	Ongoing
38		Work with tourism bodies to cross-populate an events calendar (advertised through facebook, emails and relevant websites) to avoid potential clashes between events and to inform potential participants of opportunities available.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	High
39	Public Transport Access	Advocate to Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and V/Line to retrofit existing trains to allow for additional bicycles to be carried.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure V/Line	Officer time	Medium
40		Advocate to Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and V/Line to purchase new train carriages (when required) that have a greater carrying capacity of bicycles.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure V/Line	Officer time	Medium
41		Advocate to V/Line to establish a bicycle booking service for	Hume Region Tracks and Trails	Officer time	High

No.	Focus Area	Action	Lead Agency and Potential Partners	Resource Requirements	Priority
		trains and buses.	Committee Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure V/Line		
42		Advocate to V/Line to provide linkages from its website to private shuttle buses in the Hume region that are capable of carrying riders and their bikes.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure V/Line	Officer time	Medium
43		Advocate to Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and V/Line to install a bicycle carriage rack on the front of buses in high trail use areas (subject to feasibility).	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure V/Line	Officer time	Medium
44		Advocate to Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and V/Line to provide a car and trailer at Southern Cross Railway Station on Friday evenings and /or Saturday mornings to transport bicycles to trail heads when it is not possible to secure a D Van attached to the rear of a train, returning on Sunday evenings.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure V/Line	Officer time	Medium
45		Regionally significant track / trail managers design tracks / trails so that they connect to transportation hubs wherever possible.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure	Officer time	Ongoing
46		Regionally significant track / trail managers and tourism bodies work in partnership with airlines to create all inclusive	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	Ongoing

No.	Focus Area	Action	Lead Agency and Potential Partners	Resource Requirements	Priority
		track / trail related packages.	Tourism bodies Airlines		
47	Universal Design	Facilitate training to regionally significant track / trail managers in relation to universal design principles.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee Regional Development Victoria	Officer time	Ongoing
48		Regionally significant track / trail managers use universal design principles in the design phase of tracks / trails.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee	Officer time	Ongoing
49	Research and Data Collection	Managers responsible for regional tracks / trails undertake regular, if not permanent, counts of trail users.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	Ongoing
50		Managers responsible for regional tracks / trails undertake regular evaluations of the satisfaction levels of existing track / trail users.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers	Officer time	Ongoing
51		Advocate for improved track / trail data collection and distribution of this information by Australian Sports Commission, Australian Bureau of Statistics and Tourism Research Australia.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee	Officer time	High
52		Advocate for the development of tools to assist track /trail builders and managers to estimate potential usage and economic benefits of tracks / trails.	Hume Region Tracks and Trails Committee	Funding for tool development	High
53	Other Opportunities	Local indigenous communities and regional track / trail managers to work together to create opportunities for indigenous tourism and interpretation on tracks / trails.	Regionally Significant Track / Trail Managers Local indigenous communities	Possibly some Government funding to help develop indigenous business opportunities	High