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## ANOTHER STEP FORWARD FOR CRESWICK TRAILS

Hepburn Shire Council last night issued a Notice of Decision to grant a planning permit for construction of 60 km of mountain bike trails as part of the Creswick Trails Network.

Mayor, Cr Tim Drylie, said this is a major milestone for the project.

“This trail network will be a fantastic asset for locals, and a terrific destination for visitors to our beautiful shire,” said Cr Drylie.

“It will be a unique way to explore some of the bushland surrounding Creswick, and ties in with the aspirations in our Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan to provide opportunities for active living in our Shire.

“There are still a number of steps in the process before we can start construction, but this is an important stage in what has proven to be a complex project,” he said.

Appeals by submitters to the application regarding the Notice of Decision of Council to grant the Planning Permit may be made within 28 days of the Notice of Decision. The permit will be issued once this period has passed based on no appeal being made, otherwise it will go to Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal.

A planning permit is a significant step towards realising the Creswick Trails, but it is not the final requirement. A Protected Flora Permit is also required, along with completion of all the requirements for Land Manager Consent to Construct. This includes a finalised Land Use Activity Agreement with DJARRA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation).

The trail network will be located primarily on Crown Land, which is currently managed by DELWP and Parks Vic, along with a section managed by HVP Plantations. Land managers must consent for construction of the trails after the planning permit is issued.

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The timeline for construction will depend on the length of time it takes to complete all the necessary approvals.

“A lot of work has gone into progressing the project to this point, and each step is important to ensure we have an exciting network of trails that compliment, respect and highlight the natural, cultural and historic heritage of our region,” said Cr Drylie.

“We’ve provided considerable information to ensure Heritage Victoria is satisfied with the route and the potential impact of the project. We’re confident this project meets all requirements and we look forward to delivering it for our community.”

The Victorian Government has committed \$2.65M to the Creswick Trail Network through Regional Development Victoria, with a further \$2.1M towards the Hammon Park trailhead through the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund – Stimulus Round. The tender for construction of the trailhead closes in January 2022.

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