

# hepburn shire walking and cycling strategy



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# contents

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|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | Introduction                                       | 4 |
|   | 1.1 A Walking and Cycling Vision for Hepburn Shire | 5 |
|   | 1.2 Methodology                                    | 7 |
|   | 1.3 The Importance of Walking and Cycling          | 8 |

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|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| 2 | Existing Conditions                             | 10 |
|   | 2.1 Community Profile                           | 11 |
|   | 2.2 Existing Walking and Cycling Infrastructure | 14 |
|   | 2.3 Current Strategic Directions                | 18 |
|   | 2.4 Key Research Findings                       | 20 |

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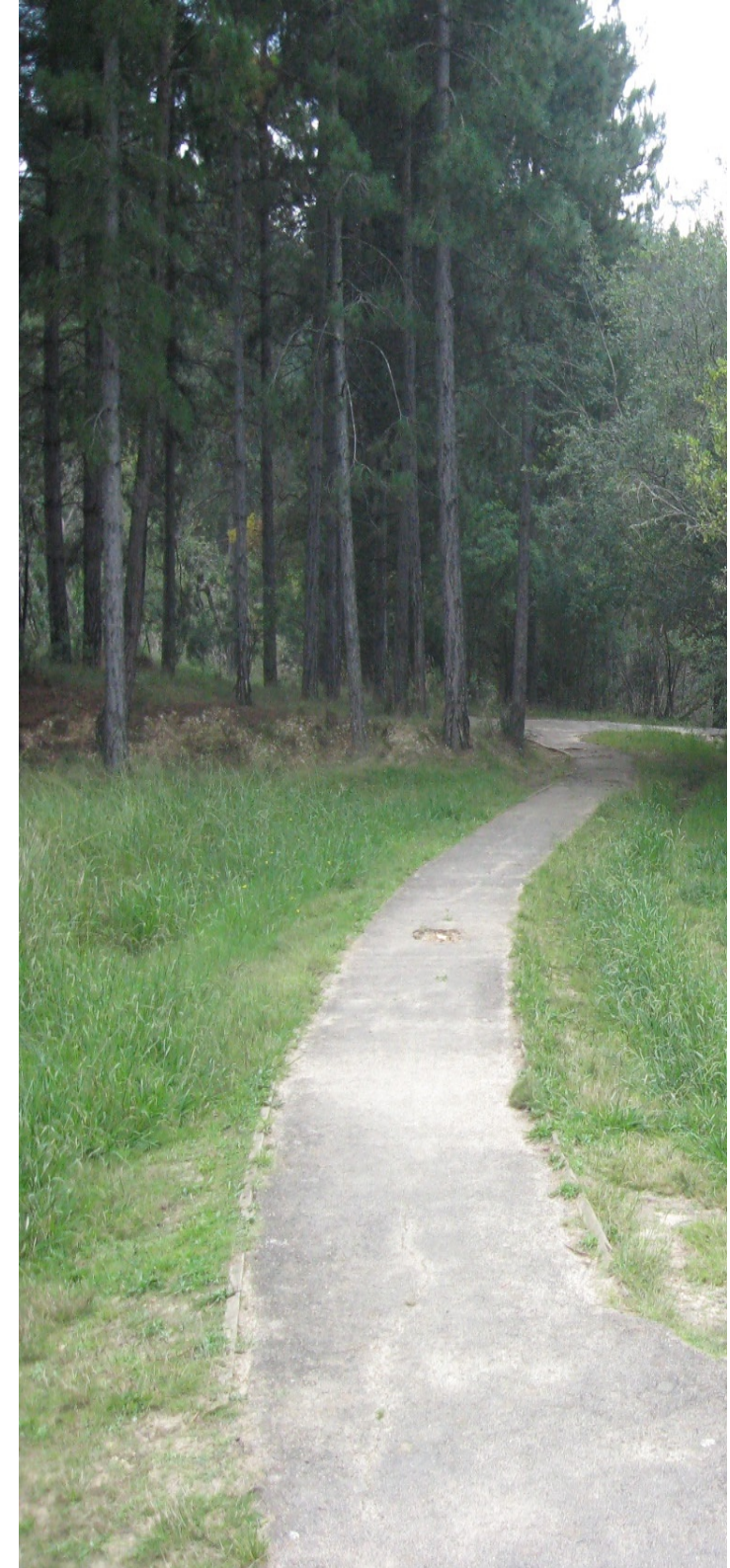
|   |                         |    |
|---|-------------------------|----|
| 3 | Consultation            | 22 |
|   | 3.1 Site Visits         | 23 |
|   | 3.2 Community Workshops | 34 |

---

|   |                      |    |
|---|----------------------|----|
| 4 | Strategic Directions | 35 |
|---|----------------------|----|

---

|   |  |    |
|---|--|----|
| 5 | Community Health and Safety- Designing for Walking and Cycling | 36 |
|   | 5.1 Footpath Network Design                                    | 37 |
|   | 5.2 Footpath Network Design Recommendations                    | 42 |
|   | 5.3 Footpath High Priority Work Plan                           | 43 |
|   | 5.4 Bike Lane Network Design                                   | 44 |
|   | 5.5 Bike Lane Network Design Recommendations                   | 49 |
|   | 5.6 Bike Lane High Priority Work Plan                          | 50 |
|   | 5.7 Trail Network Design                                       | 51 |
|   | 5.8 Trail Design Recommendations                               | 55 |



|       |  |    |
|-------|--|----|
|       | 5.9 Trail High Priority Work Plan                                  | 56 |
| <hr/> |  |    |
| 6     | Community Health and Safety - Engaging Community                   | 58 |
|       | 6.1 Programs for encouraging walking and cycling                   | 58 |
|       | 6.2 Education  | 59 |
|       | 6.3 Providing Best Practice  | 60 |
|       | 6.4 Promoting the Network  | 61 |
| <hr/> |  |    |
| 7     | Economic Prosperity - Iconic Trails                                | 62 |
|       | 7.1 The Goldfields Track (Great Dividing Trail)                    | 62 |
|       | 7.2 The Domino Trail   | 64 |
|       | 7.3 Mineral Springs Walk (Hepburn and Daylesford)                  | 65 |
|       | 7.4 The Daylesford Woodend Rail Trail Proposal                     | 66 |
|       | 7.5 The Peace Mile Walk (Daylesford)                               | 69 |
|       | 7.6 Creswick Mountain Bike Trails Proposal                         | 69 |
| <hr/> |  |    |
| 8     | Economic Prosperity- Tourism and Marketing                         | 71 |
|       | 8.1 Wellbeing and Trails   | 71 |
|       | 8.2 New Trail Opportunities  | 72 |
|       | 8.3 Events   | 72 |
| <hr/> |  |    |
| 9     | Environmental Sustainability- Active by Design Planning Principles | 74 |
|       | 9.1 Statutory Planning Guidelines for Active Design                | 74 |
|       | 9.2 Active By Design Policy Statement                              | 74 |
|       | 9.3 Active By Design Planning Assessment                           | 76 |
| <hr/> |  |    |
| 10    | Environmental Sustainability- Sustainable Development              | 78 |
| <hr/> |  |    |
| 11    | Priority Work Details  | 80 |

- Attachment 1 Township Maps
- Attachment 2 Implementation Plan
- Attachment 3 Consultation Records
- Attachment 4 Background Paper

# executive summary

Walking and cycling provide fundamental opportunities for individuals to get around their local community, exercise and reduce their carbon footprint. On a broader scale, walking and cycling can provide tourism and economic benefits

The Hepburn Walking and Cycling Strategy sets an exciting and achievable vision for the development of opportunities to walk and ride throughout the municipality, providing economic prosperity, health and safety for residents and visitors, in an environmentally sustainable manner.

It is also important to highlight the significant financial pressures experienced by Hepburn Shire Council in meeting capital replacement and new capital works requirements across a range of public asset areas and Council functions. Recent flooding across the Shire has exacerbated this issue, placing further strain on Council budgets for capital works. This highlights the need for a strategic approach that provides a staged and long term view to infrastructure upgrade and implementation.

The strategy has involved community and stakeholder engagement on a broad scale with over 90 people attending community workshops and a further 32 interviews with other stakeholders. The input from this engagement has been crucial in determining projects and priorities for the development of infrastructure, path and trail maintenance, signage, mapping and programs to promote and encourage higher levels of walking and cycling.

Consultation and research has indicated the following broad conclusions;

1. There is a strong desire amongst local residents to see the slower pace of life and contemplative lifestyle in the Shire reflected in slowing the speed of cars and prioritising rights of pedestrians and cyclists, particularly in town centres.
2. Broadly, many residents wanted to get from their homes to the shops or schools and also be provided with opportunity to undertake safe 20-30 minute loop trails that brought them back to where they started from.



3. Although many main streets are quite wide and have some lines marked, there is a lack of well signed and designated bike lanes developed to provide for safe and convenient bike commuting activity.
4. The footpath network is quite good but needs higher levels of maintenance and some gaps and links completed, particularly as the population ages and the requirement for continuously accessible paths becomes increasingly important.
5. Creek lines should be utilised to develop more formalised trails that create a 'spine' for cycling and walking activity.
6. Hepburn Shire has a significant suite of trail assets that have potential to be marketed in a coordinated fashion to hiking groups, mountain biking groups and tourists interested in a mix of nature based tourism and health and wellbeing

Based on these outcomes, and the three fundamental Council commitments of **Community Health and Safety**, **Economic Prosperity** and **Environmental Sustainability**, the following vision, key focus areas and priority actions are proposed.

*The VISION:  
The Hepburn Shire will deliver **infrastructure, programs and policy** that encourage cycling and walking in a manner that improves the **economic prosperity, health and safety** of our communities in an **environmentally sustainable manner**.*

### Focus Area: Community Health and Safety

#### Strategy 1: Designing for walking and cycling

1. Provide both design guidelines and priority tasks based on developing a network of footpaths, bike lanes and trails that encourage and promote local walking and cycling outcomes.
2. Priorities will be an urban network of footpaths and bike lanes, bike lanes on major routes to township fringes and trails that provide convenient loop walks or connect key recreation destinations. Key projects include;
3. Improving pedestrian links to and around key recreation and tourist destinations such as Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve, Lake Daylesford, Calemben Park and St Georges Lake.
4. Delivering bike lanes and footpaths that connect Newlyn Primary School, Daylesford Secondary College, St Michaels Primary School, Daylesford Primary School, Hepburn Primary School and Clunes Primary School to town centres and residential areas
5. Provide bike lanes on arterial roads through townships to provide a 'spine' for cycling. (particular focus on Daylesford, Hepburn and Creswick)
6. Develop loop trails easily accessible from town centres that provide 20-30minute walks for residents, including use of creek lines as linear reserves.
7. Enhance high profile iconic trails that provide opportunities for residents and tourists.

#### Strategy 2: Engaging Community

Support should be provided to develop a series of programs and initiatives either directly through Council or other project partners to engage local communities in walking and cycling activity. Suggested areas of focus include;

- Walking school or work bus programs
- Walking/Riding themed activities
- Support to local walking and riding clubs
- Supporting delivery of programs such as walk in the parks series or bike maintenance workshops
- Support to bike education in schools
- Council as a leader in walking and cycling innovation such as providing bikes for inter-office commuting or urban meetings or advocating for trialling of bike carrying racks on buses.

**Focus Area: Economic Prosperity****Strategy 1: Develop Iconic Trails**

Enhance a series of iconic trails that highlight and celebrate the natural assets of the Hepburn Shire in a state, national and international environment.

Focus should be on development of hiking and mountain biking along with interpretation of the historical aspects of the region.

Many great trail networks already exist and the focus should be on mapping, signage, coordination and a shared vision between land managers.

Specific actions include;

1. Extend Domino Trail to Lyonville
2. Feasibility analysis of the development of the Daylesford to Woodend Rail Trail
3. Feasibility and business planning of Creswick and Daylesford Mountain Bike experiences
4. Explore opportunities to fully capitalise on marketing and drawing power of the Goldfields Track
5. Ensure key sites such as Lake Daylesford, St Georges Lake, Mineral Springs Walks etc. are well maintained, well signed and provide access for a wide cross section of community.
6. Develop mapping and MoU with DSE and Parks Victoria which clearly articulates geographic boundaries of responsibility, minimum standards and maintenance levels for iconic (and other) trails.

**Strategy 2: Tourism and Marketing**

Support should be provided to develop appropriate material in order to market local business, trail assets and other tourist opportunities (accommodation, dining, local wares etc.). Support should focus on

1. Advocating and supporting funding submissions for iconic trails (e.g. The Goldfields Track, mountain bike concept)
2. Supporting local business in developing the nature based tourism market
3. Developing strong links with Tourism Victoria, Parks Victoria and other partners and work toward commonly styled mapping, websites, signage and management principles for trail development.

**Focus Area: Environmental Sustainability****Strategy 1: Active by Design Planning Guidelines**

In order to create a sustainable approach to walking and cycling, it is important to ensure that future development recognises and, where practical, applies principles of active design.

Active design principles have particular regard to walking and cycling opportunities as alternative forms of transport, focussing on the environmental sustainability of our communities and the prioritising of walking and cycling over cars as a preferred form of short distance transport.

The design principles can be incorporated as a planning checklist for enhancing community and environmental outcomes of future developments. The aim is to provide a simple checklist of factors that encourage or detract from an active design and introduce these principles into the Municipal Strategic Statement and as part of the statutory and strategic planning process.

**Strategy 2: Sustainable Development**

Much of this report provides direction on the construction or maintenance of trails and footpaths and the introduction of signage and mapping. An important element to consider in this approach is the use of recycled or sustainable materials for these developments.

In conclusion then, the Hepburn Walking and Cycling Strategy provides a range of practical and innovative strategies based around policy, infrastructure design and development and support of programs that encourage and promote walking and cycling opportunities.

These initiatives are aimed at providing walking and cycling opportunities that improve community health, safety and economic prosperity whilst also delivering a more sustainable lifestyle and environment.

# 1 introduction

Cycling and walking are healthy choices, encouraging an active lifestyle. Hepburn Shire Council recognises the benefits of these activities in providing health and wellbeing for communities and individuals, creating tourism opportunities and contributing to an environmental ethic through reduction of chemical and noise pollution caused by other modes of transport.

This strategy is an exciting and positive step toward improving access to infrastructure and services focussed on getting more people walking and cycling more often.

Council has developed the plan with the aim of providing an achievable set of actions that delivers greatest benefit and innovative solutions for increasing mobility of residents and visitors.

The strategy embodies the broad principle that everyone should have access to convenient and safe infrastructure that encourages walking and cycling activity.

To this end, the footpath, bike lane and off road trail networks are analysed and recommendations made for improvements in these areas.

More broadly, the strategy also provides guidelines for introducing policy specifically focussed on statutory planning considerations and design of new works related to walking and cycling.

The Walking and Cycling Strategy has a wide audience including a range of land managers, engineers, community planners and residents of Hepburn Shire. With this in mind a range of actions, works and initiatives are recommended that provide opportunities for partnerships and provide clear roles for all stakeholders in a shared direction.





## 1.1 A Walking and Cycling Vision for Hepburn Shire

The current Hepburn Shire Council Plan provides a series of fundamental Council commitments which provide the basis for the strategic vision for this strategy.

These include the following;

### **We will assist our residents improve the health, safety and vibrancy of our communities.**

Consideration of good design for future development of footpaths, bike lanes and trails will be a priority. Key infrastructure requirements, engaging community, improving access and innovative approaches will be a focus in increasing health and safety through walking and cycling initiatives.

### **We will guide our Shire towards environmental sustainability.**

Encouraging 'active design' as part of a statutory planning process where cycling and walking are viewed as viable alternatives for commuters is important in reducing an overall carbon footprint and the use of finite resources. Planning guidelines therefore need to be considered as part of a sustainable and long term approach to encouraging these low impact activities.

### **We will help improve economic prosperity.**

Areas for consideration should include nature based tourism such as hiking and mountain biking. Requirements for quality trails, mapping, signage and coordinated management need to be considered as part of a nature based tourism approach. Highlighting key destinations and understanding how best to improve access through walking or riding will be crucial.

This strategy identifies identify a clear direction for the Hepburn Shire Council around development, management and marketing of existing and proposed walking and cycling infrastructure within Hepburn Shire

## The Walking and Cycling Vision for Hepburn Shire.

*The Hepburn Shire will deliver **infrastructure, programs and policy** that encourage cycling and walking in a manner that improves the **economic prosperity, health and safety** of our communities in an **environmentally sustainable** manner.*

### **Narrative**

*The Hepburn Shire will be a place where people prefer to walk and cycle as a legitimate form of transport and as an enjoyable way to experience nature and stay healthy.*

*Council will provide a network of footpaths that provide connection between shops and schools and recreation facilities and is designed to ensure safety and priority for pedestrians. Town centres will have motorised vehicles travelling at low speeds and cyclists and pedestrians will feel safe and well catered for in these areas. As a result, town centres will be less polluted and noisy and will reflect the quiet, contemplative environment reflective of the region.*

*Council will work with VicRoads to prioritise bike lanes on main roads in and out of key townships providing access into town centres from quieter neighbourhood streets. Work will be done on ensuring that quieter country roads are maintained with solid shoulders and mown verges and cyclist sharing signage is installed to remind motorists that in Hepburn Shire, walking and cycling is welcomed.*

*The extensive array of off road trails will be coordinated by cooperating land managers aiming to provide a tiered system of trails catering for local loop walks, walks to key natural destinations, and iconic trails with a state and national profile. These will be available for walking and mountain bike activities. Visitors will know that in the Hepburn Shire you drive slower but can ride fast.*

*Most importantly, the community will be engaged in walking and cycling, because it is convenient and safe and because they have an understanding of the personal, environmental and community benefits that come with it.*

A series of key strategies have been developed based on these focus areas of Economic Prosperity, Community Health and Safety and Environmental Sustainability, as outlined in the project vision. These are provided below and are used as the foundation for developing more specific tasks based on research and consultation outcomes.

### Focus Area: Community Health and Safety

#### **Strategy 1- Designing for cycling and walking**

Develop a series of design guidelines and priority developments for footpaths, bike lanes and trails. The focus should be on developing a positive bias toward pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure as future works are constructed. An Implementation Plan with associated works is provided in addition to broader design guidelines. Priorities will be an urban network of footpaths and bike lanes, bike lanes on major routes to township fringes and trails that provide convenient loop walks or connect key recreation destinations.

#### **Strategy 2- Engaging Community**

Support should be provided to develop a series of programs and initiatives either directly through Council or other project partners to engage local communities in walking and cycling activity. Suggested areas of focus include;

- Walking school or work bus programs
- Walking/Riding themed activities
- Support to local walking and riding clubs
- Support to bike education in schools

### Focus Area: Economic Prosperity

#### **Strategy 1- Develop Iconic Trails**

Develop a series of iconic trails that highlight and celebrate the natural assets of the Hepburn Shire in a state, national and international environment. Focus should be on development of hiking and mountain biking along with interpretation of the historical aspects of the region. Many great trail networks already exist and the focus should be on mapping, signage, coordination and a shared vision between land managers. An Implementation Plan also provides specific works required as part of this strategy.

#### **Strategy 2- Tourism and Marketing**

*Support should be provided to develop appropriate material in order to market local business, trail assets and other tourist opportunities (accommodation, dining, local wares etc.). Support should focus on*

- *Advocating and supporting funding submissions for iconic trails (e.g. The Goldfields Track)*
- *Supporting local business in developing the nature based tourism market*
- *Developing links with Tourism Victoria, Parks Victoria and other partners and working toward commonly styled mapping, websites and signage*

### Focus Area: Environmental Sustainability

#### **Strategy 1- Planning Guidelines for 'Active Design'**

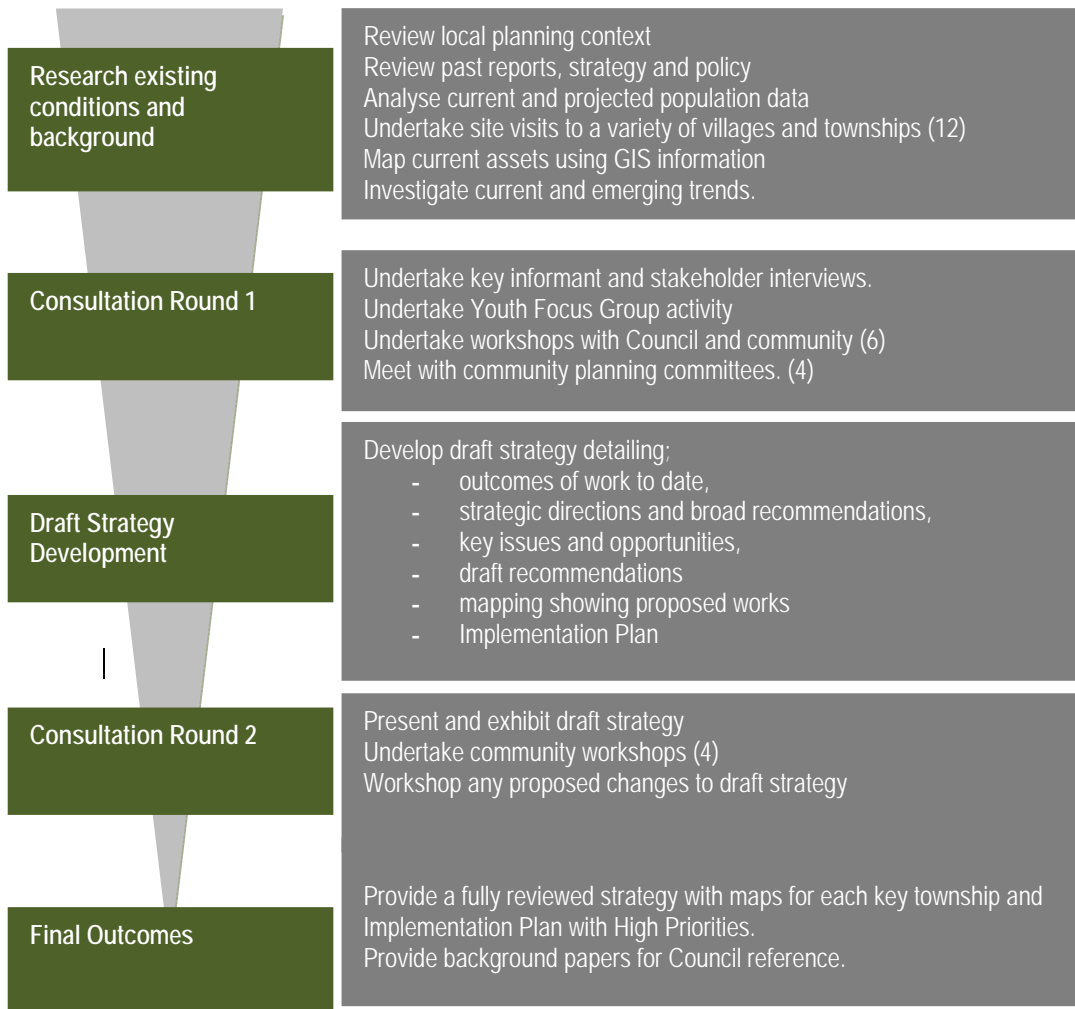
The development of guidelines aimed at highlighting the need to consider the 'active design' components of any proposed project or proposal. Active design principles have particular regard to walking and cycling opportunities as alternative forms of transport, focussing on the health, wellbeing and environmental sustainability of our communities.

The design principles can be incorporated as a planning checklist for enhancing community and environmental outcomes of future developments. The aim is to provide a simple checklist of factors that encourage or detract from an active design and introduce these principles into the Municipal Strategic Statement and as part of the statutory and strategic planning process.

In this sense, the proposed principles can be used to assist future development be active by design, enhancing sustainability outcomes as towns and villages develop.

#### **Strategy 2- Sustainable development**

Much of this report provides direction on the construction or maintenance of trails and footpaths and the introduction of signage and mapping. An important element to consider in this approach is the use of recycled or sustainable materials.



## 1.2 Methodology

The approach to this strategy has been strongly supported by extensive consultation.

Engagement of local communities has been crucial to setting the overall directions provided in the report. Over forty separate meetings and workshops with community groups, interested residents, Council staff and other stakeholders has taken place through the five month planning process.

In conjunction with this consultation, extensive site visits have been undertaken in order to define projects, issues and ideas in as much detail as possible.

Mapping has been provided in detail for five key townships as well as provision of further aerial mapping for smaller villages where actions are proposed.

A Township Implementation Plan with detailed High Priority Works Plan is also provided to deliver a more specific and directed strategy.

### 1.3 The Importance of Walking and Cycling

Cycling and walking deliver a variety of benefits to individuals and communities. These activities transcend social status, providing equitable access to independent mobility and healthy, active choices. Specific benefits are detailed below to provide examples of the importance of investing in infrastructure that improves walking and cycling opportunities.

#### Focus Area: Environmental Sustainability

The broad environmental benefits of increased opportunity for cycling and walking also bring added health benefits that come, for example, from cleaner air, less traffic noise and fewer road accidents.

Australia produces almost 46 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year. The average family's transport is estimated to generate about six tonnes of greenhouse gas each year mostly due to car usage.<sup>1</sup> Walking and cycling represent sustainable alternatives to the combustion engine driven vehicle, particularly for short trips.

Reduction in embodied energy used in the construction of large vehicles and roads is also an important consideration.

The provision of footpaths and trails within an urban environment is also an opportunity to provide welcoming streetscapes with shaded and landscaped surrounds.

Council is also aiming to reach a carbon negative level by 2025 and this is reflected in the Council Plan.

The use of recycled materials for construction of trails and signage should also be considered as critical elements of this plan are implemented.

*"Walking and cycling are highly efficient in use of urban space and energy, rarely cause injury and give streets vitality and personal security. Many car trips are quite short, less than 2 km, indicating that walking or cycling could be a feasible alternative and contribute to reducing the pollution from a cold-start vehicle travelling only a short distance."<sup>1</sup>*



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/gwci/transport.html> Accessed January 17, 2011

*Physical health benefits of cycling and walking include:*

- Reduction in risk of heart disease by as much as half;
- Reduced risk of having high blood pressure and high cholesterol;
- Prevention of obesity and weight management;
- Increased lean muscle, muscle strength and bone density;
- Improved fitness and stamina;
- Stronger immune system;

*Mental health benefits of cycling and walking include:*

- Reduction in stress, anxiety and depression;
- Improved mood and sense of wellbeing;
- Improved concentration, enhanced memory and learning;
- Reduced feelings of fatigue and depression; and
- Improved psychological wellbeing and mental awareness.

*Social benefits of cycling and walking include:*

- Increased community cohesion;
- Improved social/community networks and social capital;
- Improved family and community connectedness;
- Safer communities; and
- Reduction in sense of isolation and loneliness.

**Focus Area: Community Health and Safety Benefits**

The provision of publicly accessible infrastructure for cycling and walking provides a range of social, physical and emotional benefits for individuals and community.

The broad health benefits of access to public open space for recreation and physical activity are numerous and research provides much evidence to support this. Specific benefits are articulated in the figure at left.

**Focus Area: Economic Prosperity**

Cycling and walking add to the economic activity of a place in numerous ways. Improving the environment and creating a sense of place in urban centres through high quality footpaths and pedestrian friendly streetscapes increases propensity to stay and walk and pass shops that rely on foot traffic for business.

In an area as geographically significant as Hepburn Shire, the delivery of cycling and walking through scenic and historic areas provide immense potential as a tourist destination. Increased tourist visitation provides immediate economic activity, creating wealth, jobs and secondary multipliers throughout the broader economy.

The capacity of small business to capitalise on the geography and culture of the area trails and develop the walking and cycling market is evidenced through the successful development and ongoing operation of local walking tour businesses and bicycle hire businesses.

# existing conditions

It is important to understand some existing conditions in the Shire of Hepburn to provide a context for further recommendations regarding walking and cycling in the municipality.

This section provides a brief contextual analysis of the Hepburn Shire community, recognising that as a whole, many individual community traits can be obscured. Further detail on individual communities is provided within a later section on consultation.

The 'bigger picture' can however also provide important information on how and where people live along with expectations for changes in our community profile. Consideration of age and economic prosperity are important for example, in determining future emphasis on accessibility and equity.

This section also provides information on the existing network of footpaths, bike lanes and trails, highlighting broad characteristics of each along with potential implications for the study.

Council also has a number of plans and strategies that inherently overlap with the Walking and Cycling Strategy. Works such as the Ageing Strategy or Access and Inclusion Plan are important documents that have recommendations and findings that complement and inform those that will be developed this strategy.



## 2.1 Community Profile

### Geographic Distribution of Population

Hepburn Shire is a municipality of villages and townships with the major population centres of;

1. Daylesford (2,100 people),
2. Hepburn Springs and Hepburn (976 people)
3. Creswick (2,423 people),
4. Clunes (1,054 people) and,
5. Trentham (622 people).<sup>2</sup>

Overall, the Shire has a population of approximately 13,732 people with just less than half of residents living in smaller villages such as Lyonville, Glenlyon, Yandoit, Franklinford, Newlyn, Bullarto, Musk and many others. These smaller villages have more limited access to community services, schools and other specialised commercial services.

### Strategy Implications

The population is broadly distributed geographically, making walking and cycling connections between populations an often challenging achievement.

Shoulder sealing along main roads may be a significant consideration in this strategy given the distribution of population across a range of areas. This would, in part be a role for VicRoads in sealing shoulders on arterial roads connecting townships or villages.

The use of low traffic country roads for walking and cycling may be feasible however signage notifying motorists of use by pedestrians and cyclists should be implemented.

Other than cycling and walking, the capacity to ride to buses and either lock up bikes or carry them on buses will need to be considered for those travelling between towns.

Population is low whilst geographical area is large, immediately putting pressure on Council capacity to deliver new capital works and indeed maintain infrastructure once constructed. Council capacity to consistently expand the delivery of capital infrastructure is limited given the need to also then maintain or replace capital items. Recent events such as flooding across the Shire highlight the pressures on Council to maintain or replace existing assets across a range of Council functions and the need therefore is to provide opportunity for partnership funding and more innovative use of existing assets for walking and cycling.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/ABSNavigation/prenav/ViewData?producttype=QuickStats&subaction=-1&areacode=LGA22910&action=401&collection=Census&textversion=false&breadcrumb=LP&period=2006&javascript=false&navmapdisplayed=true> Accessed 23-3-2011

### Age Distribution

Young people and the older adults (55 and over) are particularly challenged when transport and mobility is considered.

The Hepburn Shire has a higher than average ratio of older adults (55+ years) with 31.9 percent of the population in this cohort compared to 24.3 percent nationally.<sup>3</sup>

The Shire has a lower than average ratio of young people (0-24 years) with 28.1 percent compared to a national figure of 33.4 percent.<sup>4</sup>

Young people are generally disadvantaged with respect to personal modes of transport, with most relying on parents to drive them, public transport or walking and cycling to connect them with activities and places. Restricted mobility can have negative impacts on a young person's lifestyle and personal development through the following:

- Restricted education and employment opportunities
- Restricted social opportunities
- Restricted access to services
- Isolation
- Late arrival for appointments
- Compromised safety levels

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/ABSNavigation/Quickstats> Accessed:15-2-2011

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

### Strategy Implications

The need to provide a well connected pedestrian and cycling access from residential precincts to transport nodes (i.e. buses and trains) and retail or activity nodes is crucial in providing local access for young people in a safe and effective manner.

With a significant cohort of older adults, Hepburn Shire must also focus on the need to improve accessibility and ensure that, in particular, the footpath network is maintained to a high standard in areas of high activity. The onset of chronic disease (arthritis, diabetes, heart disease) becomes more prevalent as we age therefore the use of seating, level surfaces, ramping instead of steps and connection to key community and health services is important for an ageing community.

This is equally important for families and parents of young children who may be pushing prams. Accessibility is a key driver for Council action in a range of areas and the Walking and Cycling Strategy needs to reflect the recommendations of other related studies such as Disability Action Plans, Ageing Strategy and Children Services Plans.



### Economic Prosperity

The median income (individual, household and family) across Hepburn Shire is significantly lower than the national average.<sup>5</sup>

| Income (\$)       | Hepburn Shire | National |
|-------------------|---------------|----------|
| Median Individual | 358           | 466      |
| Median Household  | 624           | 1027     |
| Median Family     | 907           | 1171     |

This would suggest that discretionary income is comparatively lower for Hepburn and that a need for alternative, accessible transport modes could be important for ensuring mobility and connection for residents.

Given the geographical spread of population in Hepburn, vehicle ownership and usage is relatively high. ABS data indicates that single passenger vehicles are the most common form of transport used to access a work place.<sup>6</sup> It is important that this be noted as an opportunity to change behaviour through the introduction of practical and well maintained walking and cycling routes and the promotion of these for short trips to and from local locations.

Although oil prices have been volatile over recent years, price increases for fuel over the last 3 years may well have changed behaviours toward individual use of motor cars. Again this provides opportunity to develop and invest in infrastructure related to lowering the use of vehicles for shorter, localised trips.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> [www.censusdata.abs.gov.au](http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au)

### Strategy Implications

Generally lower than average incomes would indicate that the capacity to walk and ride for commuting purposes or easily access public transport is important in managing household and individual budgets.

Vehicle ownership and usage is still high as residents grapple with the geographical distances they need to cover to access services. This may make walking or cycling as a commuting option difficult for some residents however, good routes to public transport may again provide a motivation to walk or ride to save on fuel costs.

## 2.2 Existing Walking and Cycling Infrastructure

The Shire of Hepburn has an existing network of footpaths, on road cycling lanes and off road trails that provide opportunity for cycling and walking activity across the municipality.

### Footpath Network

Footpaths primarily serve a commuting function, providing a stable and easily traversed surface for people to walk to destinations such as shops, schools and work. In general, the footpath network is provided in the five main centres of Daylesford, Hepburn Springs, Creswick, Clunes and Trentham. These primarily connect several blocks within main town centres where most retail and civic buildings are located and begin to become less connected and frequent as development moves into residential zones. In some instances, footpaths are provided to key recreation or community services.

Footpath infrastructure is of varying age and design. In high traffic areas (commercial zones) footpaths are at least 2.5 metres wide. These are generally in main streets. The condition of footpaths is good in these areas with the exception of Creswick where cross sectional gradient of the main footpath, particularly outside the local supermarket is steep leading to difficulty for those with decreased mobility.

The urban or residential footpath network is of variable condition, being constructed out of either concrete, asphalt or on rare occasions, gravel. Maintenance appears to be an issue in isolated areas with evidence of weeds, slab movement and cracking. There are some obvious gaps in the network which will provide opportunity for future recommended works.

Smaller villages in the Shire (i.e. Newlyn, Lyonville, and Glenlyon) have limited footpath infrastructure, relying generally on roadside verges or quiet roads to navigate locally.



*Hall Street Footpath, Creswick. Maintenance required.*

### Cycling Lane Network

Cycling lanes provide for a mixture of recreation and commuting purposes, providing links between off road trails through urban centres as well as providing a direct road linked path of travel for commuters.

Marked cycling lanes are only provided in the major centre of Daylesford, where a bike lane is partially marked and in place between Hepburn Springs and Daylesford.

No designated lanes are provided in other towns or villages although some areas are line marked on road edges. No standard approach to width or designated road marking or signage indicating cycling use is in evidence.

Generally, marked bike lanes are required in busy urban centres and usually end in areas where vehicular traffic frequency drops off and cycling along roads is deemed to be comparatively safer.

Very few cycling lanes are provided throughout the municipality and this may be an area of focus for this strategy in providing a network of lanes within the central activity nodes of major townships.

*Central Spring Road, Daylesford*  
*Wide thoroughfare with no marked lanes for cycling*



*Hepburn-Daylesford Road*  
*Marked bike lane provided by VicRoads*

### Off Road Trail Network

The Hepburn Shire has a vast range of off road trails maintained and developed by a range of public land managers.

Some of the iconic trails in the area pass through mineral springs and scenic forests, providing a significant opportunity for nature based tourism. These trails assist in highlighting the natural beauty of the area and provide access to spots frequented by tourists and locals alike.

Tourism is a significant industry in the Hepburn Shire with service industries linked to tourism generating substantial economic activity. The four major townships in the Hepburn Shire had a total of 110,097 access local visitor information centres in 2009-10.<sup>7</sup>

Councils draft Economic Development Strategy identifies further opportunity for “tourism development around the natural environment” and enhancing “tourism potential by improving the tourism based product based on natural and heritage assets.”<sup>8</sup>

### Iconic Trails in Hepburn Shire

**The Goldfields Track (formerly the Great Dividing Trail,** Creswick to Daylesford) has been mapped by the Great Dividing Trail Association and supported by Parks Victoria and Hepburn Shire Council. The Goldfields Track passes through numerous municipalities and is used both for hiking and mountain biking.

**The Three Lost Children Walk** from Daylesford to Wombat Picnic Ground commemorating the tragic story of three boys who went missing in the area.

**The Peace Mile Lake Daylesford loop track** is a well used, accessible track looping round picturesque Lake Daylesford.

**Mineral Springs Walks** branch off at Lake Daylesford, Lake Jubilee and arguably most significantly at Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve. These walks provide good access to the unique mineral springs of the area and represent an important tourism and community asset.

**The Domino Trail** is a local trail in Trentham almost reaching Lyonville. The trail is part of a potential rail trail between Daylesford and Woodend.

**St Georges Lake Walking Track** is a well visited site in Creswick with a walking loop around the lake and opportunities to branch off into surrounding bushland.

**Calembeen Park Walking Track (Creswick)** is to be upgraded to provide a loop track around the historic reserve and swimming venue.

<sup>7</sup> Hepburn Shire Council VIC data 2009-2010

<sup>8</sup> Shire of Hepburn Economic Development Strategy 2011

One of the key issues for trails is the provision of ongoing maintenance of already existing trails and the integrated management of trails between different land management agencies.

The proactive management and improved maintenance, signage and mapping of existing trails will be a focus for this study involving key land managers such as Parks Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment and Hepburn Shire Council.

An excellent variety of trails already exists ranging from easy walking to challenging mountain bike riding.

Mountain bike riding represents a significant opportunity for Hepburn Shire, with a focus of interest currently on central Victoria and mountain biking opportunities. Some areas are not available for Mountain Biking currently and further discussion with Parks Victoria and DSE is required to consider where this activity is sustainable and appropriate.

There is a clear need to coordinate the management and marketing of these assets to create a legible network of trails. This should include coordination of;

- Signage style and installation
- Shared vision between management agencies (DSE, PV, Council)
- Mapping
- Development of brochures
- Interpretive opportunities
- Online material – maps, podcasts etc.
- Consistent marketing



### 2.3 Current Strategic Directions

A number of Council generated plans and strategic reports provide specific direction for the Hepburn Cycling and Walking Strategy.

Key reports considered include the following;

#### ***Reserve Management Plans***

Lake Daylesford Reserve, Jubilee Lake Reserve, Calembreen Park Reserve, Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve, Bath Street Reserve

#### ***Community Plans***

Jim Crow Creek (Yandoit, Franklinford and Clydesdale)

Lyonville, Clunes, Newlyn/Rocklyn, Trentham, Glenlyon, Creswick

In terms of policy and design guidance, the following reports provide a basis for development of walking and cycling infrastructure.

#### ***Positive Ageing Strategy (2009-2012)***

88% of respondents report undertaking some form of regular physical activity, 42% daily.

Walking was the most common form of exercise.

#### **Seating**

Undertake a review of seating in main shopping areas and highly patronised reserves to ensure there is adequate seating options and include community stakeholders in this process.

Investigate and develop a community sponsorship scheme allowing community to recommend a site and fund the installation of seating.

#### **Footpaths**

Conduct a review of footpaths in main shopping centres, significant points of access leading to them and other missing links in the network for quality and need for development.

Formalise system of community input for development and maintenance of footpaths.

### Implications of Strategies

#### Recreation Reserve Management Plans

##### *Trails*

- Develop loop walking tracks connecting key destinations
- Provide local pedestrian links from townships to reserves
- Improve condition of walking paths

##### *Signage*

Provide commonly themed signage that:

- identifies the reserve and activity nodes
- provides directional guidance along trail
- Interprets historical aspects of the reserve
- Reduce or consolidate signs
- Provide way finding signs

##### *Traffic Management*

- Provide clear delineation between vehicles and pedestrians/park users
- Restrict vehicle access- park and walk approach

### Community Plans

- Focus on increasing participation of local residents in sporting, recreation and leisure activities.
- Provide loop trails around townships
- Establish tourist railway/bike walking track to Trentham and repair Coliban Bridge
- Improving pedestrian safety and footpath linkages at Clunes Primary School.
- Footpath extension and crossing to Newlyn Primary School
- Roadside maintenance including weeds and safer walking areas
- Investigate the development of walking / cycling trails including to Trentham Falls, Rail Trail to Lyonville/Bullarto and in the adjoining Wombat Forest
- Loop trail from Glenlyon to Daylesford
- Develop and upgrade Loddon River tracks

### Transport

Promotion of active transport options through the Front SEEAT Transport Connections Project.

### Promoting Physical Activity

Six monthly promotions focused on keeping active and physically fit, using print media and in collaborating agencies newsletters, i.e. Hepburn Health Service.

### *Access and Inclusion Plan (2010)*

*Key areas of relevance with the access and inclusion plan are discussed below;*

### Footpaths

Ensure that Council's footpath maintenance program identifies and rectifies barriers to access; e.g. cracks, lack of kerb ramps, lack of made footpath, inappropriate guttering, etc., and make recommendations for Action

Ensure that priority for maintenance is given to footpaths located in the main thoroughfare and select routes that provide access for all.

Implement a systematic review of all kerb ramps on street crossings. Priority for maintenance to be given to high traffic street crossings.

Conduct regular inspections of footpaths to ensure that private assets (Street furniture, A frames etc) are being placed according to Local Laws Policy 19 to ensure access is maintained.

### Overhanging Branches

To undertake annual inspections of street frontages, where there are established footpaths, to ensure that overhanging branches from private properties are trimmed back.

To actively publicise the danger of overhanging branches and requirements of private property owners to ensure that footpath access is maintained.



## 2.4 Key Research Findings

The Hepburn Shire has very distinctive qualities that deliver a set of specific implications for the Walking and Cycling Strategy. Key research findings assist in providing a context for all recommendations and provide a strategic foundation for proposed actions. Key findings that should consistently be considered in future planning for cycling and walking include the following.

1. There is substantial, documented evidence supporting the environmental, physical and economic benefits of walking and cycling. Providing a pedestrian and cycle friendly region can assist in individual wellbeing, reduced carbon emissions, noise pollution abatement and a tourist friendly environment that blends well with Council's Nature Tourism focus.
2. The Hepburn Shire population is not concentrated in a main urban centre but is spread geographically between several key townships (Daylesford, Creswick, Trentham etc.) and numerous smaller villages and rural areas. This results in a dependency on motorised vehicles, generally in the form of personally owned cars to access services, shops or indeed visit family and friends. Related to this small, widespread population is the resultant capacity limitation for Council to take on major new works to cater for small populations.
3. The geographic spread of villages and locations across the municipality also means that there is a large extent of Council managed road network. The delivery of this road network does not include cycling lanes or (generally) sealed shoulders for safer cycling. Providing this type of infrastructure will be costly for a Council the magnitude of Hepburn Shire (large space with a low rate base). Council is already under considerable pressure with competing priorities and limited funds available for new capital works. With the development of bike lanes or footpaths, user contribution to projects may be considered. Larger projects or arterial road shoulder sealing should be funded (partially or completely) by other agencies or reserve managers.
4. The Hepburn Shire age profile shows a population with a significantly higher proportion of older adults (55+ years) than the Victorian average and with less young people (0-24 years) proportionally than the Victorian average. This would indicate a need to focus on





*accessibility* given the increase in mobility issues and chronic disease that occurs as a population ages. Quality construction of footpaths, regular maintenance, rest points and consideration of gradients is crucial in providing a usable network as the population ages.

5. Young people are one of the most frequent users of footpaths and bike lanes given their lack of access to other forms of transport. Providing a well connected network of paths from schools to town centres, residential areas and public transport in order to provide opportunities for young people to socialise, get to work, get to school and get home without relying on parents to always drive them.
6. A footpath network exists in key townships across the municipalities however there are areas of the network that are incomplete and with further completed sections and footbridge development over creeks, further connections could be made.
7. The cycling lane network is minimal with very little signage or marked areas provided for cyclists. In many cases, bike lanes would be achievable given wide road reserves and line marking that exists (e.g. Central Springs Road or Raglan Street, Daylesford.)
8. A significant off road trail network exists within Hepburn Shire. This is reflective of the extensive areas of natural landscape, Regional Park and State Forest throughout the municipality. Standards of provision differ and lands across which trails traverse are managed by a range of land managers such as Council, Department of Sustainability and Environment, VicTrack, Department of Transport and Parks Victoria. This creates issues in terms of consistent maintenance, signage, promotional material and design. The extensive nature of the trail network also stretches the resources of existing land managers.
9. Extensive planning has been undertaken by Hepburn Shire Council that partially addresses walking and cycling within specific recreation reserves and local communities. A number of specific recommendations in these reports are also supported by this strategy.
10. Council's Positive Aging Strategy and Access and Inclusion Plan reflect the need to provide a well maintained footpath network in particular considering gradients, kerb crossing points, seating, width, quality and maintenance.





## consultation outcomes

Consultation for this project has been significant and comprehensive. It has involved the following activities.

1. Site visits to twelve locations, including meeting with community leaders (where available and practical) to discuss outcomes for their area.
2. Community workshops in five key townships giving consideration to infrastructure and policy that would provide positive outcomes for walking and cycling.
3. Stakeholder interviews with land managers and other interest groups including;
  - a. Bicycle Victoria
  - b. Parks Victoria
  - c. Transport Victoria
  - d. VicRoads
  - e. VicTrack
  - f. Department of Sustainability and Environment
  - g. Department of Planning and Community Development
  - h. Rail Trails Australia
  - i. Great Dividing Trail Association
  - j. Mountain Biking Australia
  - k. Hepburn Springs Mineral Reserve Advisory Committee
  - l. Creswick Mountain Bike Working Group
  - m. Central Highlands Rail Trail Working Group
  - n. Surrounding municipalities

These consultation activities have provided an extensive level of information which is provided in more detail in the Attachment 3. A summary is provided below.

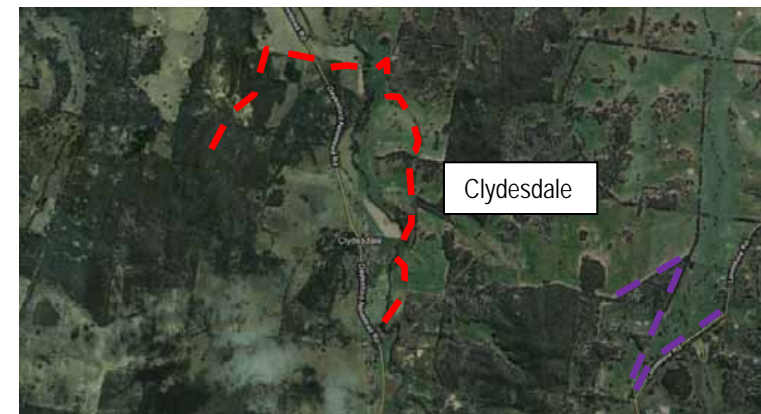
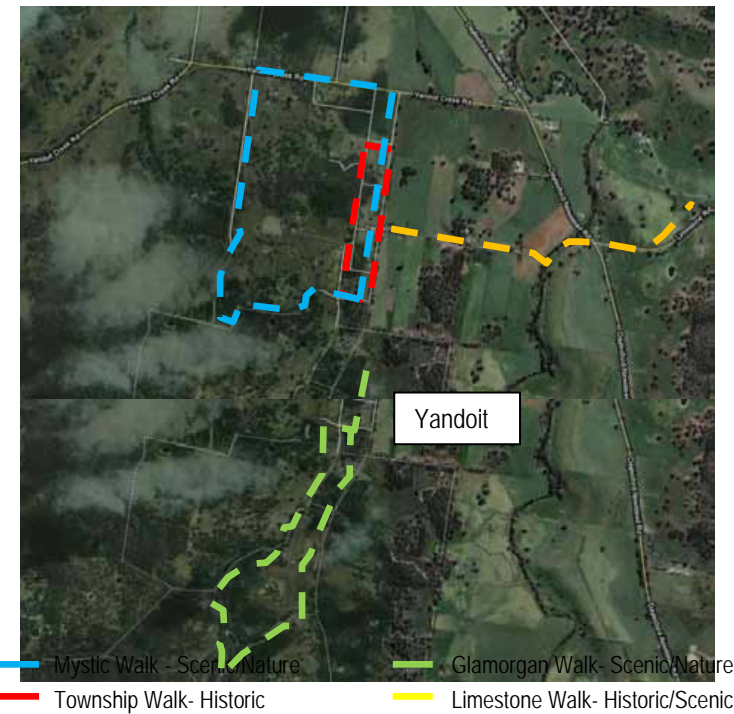
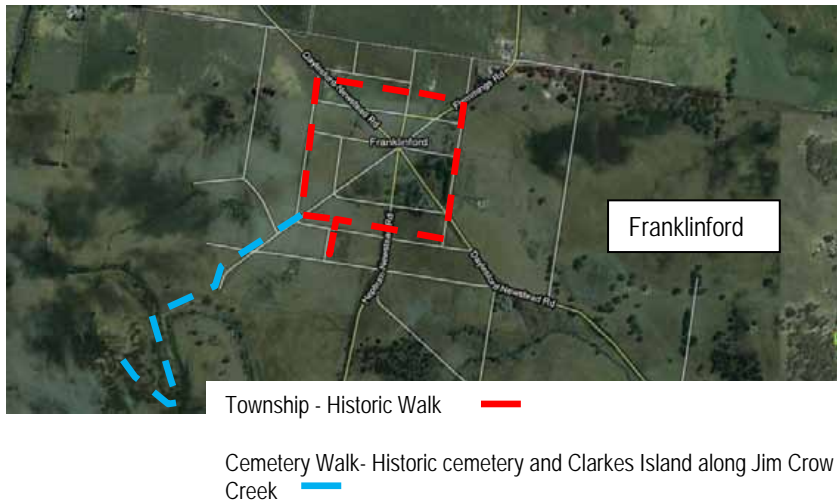
### 3.1 Site Visits

The outcomes of site visits are provided below. Information and advice was provided by Council staff, Land Managers, Community Planning Committees and other local groups that were consulted on site. Some of these walks link into Parks Victoria managed Regional Park or DSE managed State Forest and approval will need to be sought in order to progress the projects.

#### Yandoit, Franklinford and Clydesdale

Potential for 'loop' trails already exists in these areas with the main requirement being signage to mark and theme the potential trails and development of some easy to read mapping that can also provide interpretation of the environment and history of the area.

These trails would have a dual focus of providing recreation for local residents and an attraction for some tourists. Although the walks may not attract large numbers of tourist, the establishment costs would also be reasonably minimal, given the existence of the actual trails or roads.



**Glenlyon**

Glenlyon again provided a number of formed walks that required mapping and signage to provide for easier use.

The Loddon River represents a superb natural asset for the Glenlyon community and one that lends itself as a 'spine' for walks to areas such as the recreation reserve and other local features such as Loddon Falls. At present this is not entirely possible due to specific properties that adjoin the river having 'old titles' that provide for private ownership into the centre of the river itself. Council and the CMA should look to rectify this as ownership changes over time.

The other key driver for Glenlyon was providing safer access into Daylesford by providing an off road trail option.

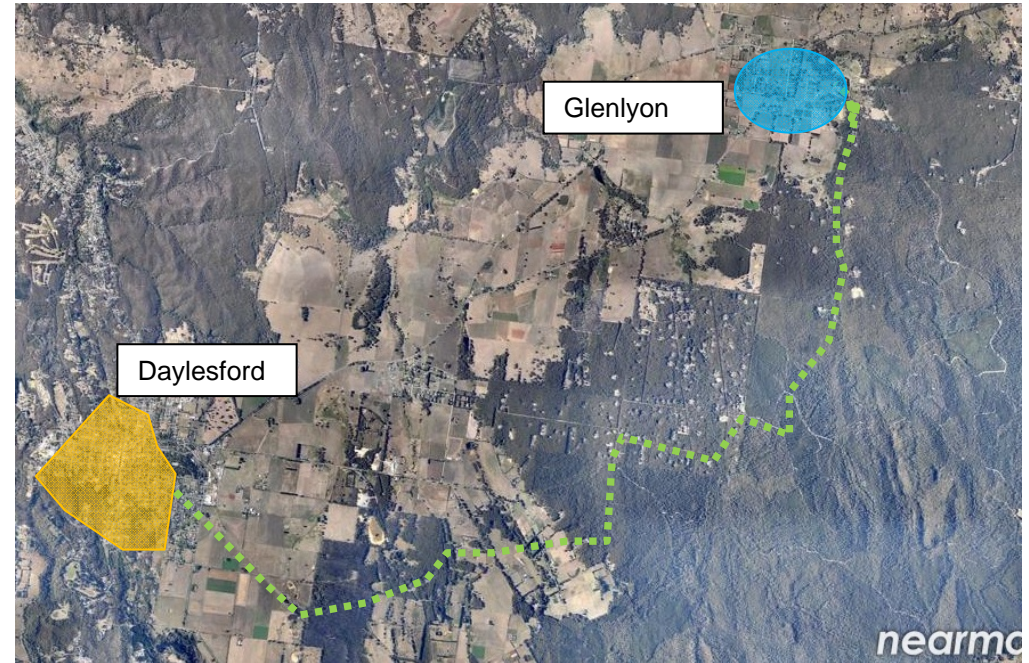
Specific trail opportunities were noted by the Glenlyon community. Broadly these include:

**Glenlyon to Daylesford Loop Walk**

The aim of this walk is to produce an alternative, safer, off road trail for access between Glenlyon and Daylesford. Many bush tracks exist and the key requirement for the development of such a walk will be the development of mapping and signage to ensure easy navigability. The map at right principally shows where the track would be located, coming into Daylesford possibly along the rail track.

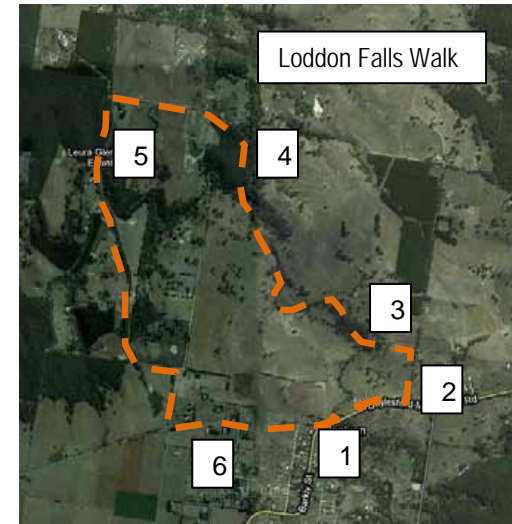
Jones and Reece Road Walk- elevated walk, memorial cairn and Rise and Shine Heritage Park. —

Christmas Reef Road Walk- Historic/Scenic —



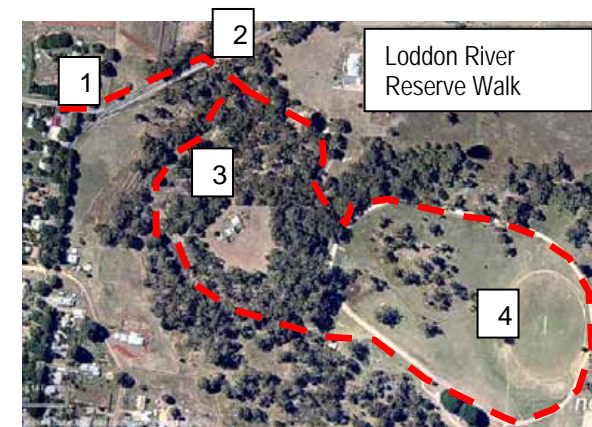
### Loddon Falls Walk

1. Begin at Glenlyon General store.
2. Walk up Daylesford/Malmsbury Road to Holcombe Road.
3. Turn into Sewells Road and walk to Loddon Falls.
4. Follow the falls to Butlers Lane.
5. Follow Butlers Lane to Green Gully Road.
6. Continue to Back Glenlyon Road and continue back to the General Store.



### Loddon River Reserve Walk (requires DSE approval over specific sections)

1. Begin walk at Glenlyon Store, corner Daylesford/Malmsbury Road and Ford Street.
2. Walk along Daylesford Malmsbury Road to Loddon River Drive.
3. Drop down to the Loddon River and walk along bush track along the side of the river to the Glenlyon Recreation Reserve.
4. Walk around the reserve following the race track and exit back along Loddon River Drive and back to the Glenlyon General Store.



### Daylesford

Daylesford is the largest township in Hepburn Shire and is a key activity node for tourism, recreation and population growth. As such, connections are required to complete a footpath network that meets the needs of residents and tourists alike. This approach aims to provide the highest quality footpaths in the most frequently used pedestrian areas (i.e. commercial and tourist destinations) with a lower level network provided for surrounding urban and residential areas.

The aim of this is to provide for residents and visitors to navigate through the main centre of Daylesford and back out to urban or residential zones or other trails and destinations. *Specific recommendations for Daylesford are provided in Attachment 2.*

Key recreation trails include Lake Daylesford loop walk (Peace Mile), Jubilee Lake Walk and Mineral Springs Walks.

Mineral Springs walks are easily accessed from Lake Daylesford and cross into crown land managed directly by Parks Victoria, with the springs managed by the Victorian Mineral Water Committee.

Further walks such as the Great Dividing Trail (Goldfields Track section) are also accessed in this area.

Key issues that require resolution include;

- Completion of a footpath network connecting residential and urban areas of Daylesford to key destinations.
- Development of bike lanes into commercial zone (namely Vincent Street) from surrounding road network
- Marking and signage for cycle lane along Vincent Street to Daylesford Primary School



**Current exit from Lake Daylesford on to Bleakely Street.**  
*Pedestrians are directed almost immediately on to the roadway.*

- Marking and signage for cycle lane along Raglan Street and up Smith Street for St. Michaels Primary School and Daylesford Secondary College.
- Completion of Peace Mile Loop with pedestrian bridge and crossing at Bleakely Street
- Connection of Lake Daylesford to town centre.
- Connection of Lake Jubilee with trail to Lake Daylesford
- Increase in bike racks and street trees in town centre (to be addressed through the Daylesford Streetscape Revitalisation Strategy)
- Improve access to hospital and increase use of tactile markers in this area
- Wayfinding signage linked to town centre and improvement of navigation to nearby destinations such as Lake Daylesford or Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens.
- Signage highlighting pedestrian crossings and cyclists at key intersections (e.g. roundabouts at upper and lower Vincent Street, Bleakely Street)
- Removal or treatment of steps leading on to Central Springs Road from Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens.



**Steps leading directly on to roadway at Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens**

*Further treatment is required to allow for pausing and crossing or steps should be removed.*



Central Springs Road- wide road with no bike lane marked. Looking toward Midland Highway

### Hepburn Springs

Hepburn Springs is home to the iconic Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve (HMSR), one of the largest collections of natural springs in Australia. The township is stretched along the main road between Daylesford and the HMSR with housing also developing along the Hepburn-Newstead Road.

There is a partial on road and off road bike lane between Daylesford and Hepburn however there are some issues with this development where it crosses service roads and interfaces with motorised traffic. Further treatments to prioritise the pathway for cyclists should be implemented including raised or coloured crossings at road interfaces and more graded kerb treatments.

The other key pathway in the urban area of Hepburn is the footpath along Main Road (Hepburn-Newstead Road) up to the Hepburn Primary School. This pathway climbs steeply and in places the cutting is quite narrow. Further railing is needed in some areas to mitigate the risk of falls.

The area immediately surrounding the urban or residential area of Hepburn Springs is mainly taken up with publicly accessible bushland managed either by Council (Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve) or Parks Victoria.

This bushland has an extensive network of trails that link Hepburn Springs Township to the Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve (HMSR) and back into Daylesford.

Key requirements for these trails include;

- Improve signage and pedestrian crossing between town centre and HMSR
- Improve maintenance levels on high use trails and paths
- Provide mapping and wayfinding signs at key locations
- Provision of connecting footbridges across Spring Creek (from Main Road to HMSR and at Hepburn Reservoir down to Westwood Road and into Daylesford)



*Pathway to Hepburn Primary School is steep and requires some railing to protect from the edge of the incline.*

*Narrow roadway along route to Hepburn Primary School is also an issue- the grassed incline to the left (photo below) provides opportunity for pathway.*





### Lyonville

Several local trail opportunities exist in Lyonville that provide opportunity for both locals and tourists to experience the natural beauty and historical story of the area.

Concepts for trail development in and around Lyonville include the following.

1. **Mineral Springs Walk (requires DSE approval for specific sections)**  
A local walk that provides connection into the surrounding State Forest and connects with No.1 Spring and No.2 Spring. No.2 Spring has been refurbished and provides a picturesque destination for bush walkers. Signage and mapping would again be a key requirement for this development.
2. **Development of Rail Trail between Lyonville and Trentham**  
This project would effectively be the first stage of a much larger project to develop a rail trail between Daylesford and Woodend. This section is the simplest given the smaller number of leases and reasonable terrain however there is the need to at least re-sheet the Coliban River Bridge at the Lyonville end of the proposed trail. Ongoing maintenance and management of the trail also remains a question that should be answered with a comprehensive feasibility study.
3. **Historical Walk around Lyonville**  
Lyonville has an interesting past and opportunity exists to interpret this through a themed and signed historical trail around the township. Much research has already been undertaken by the local historical society and interpretive signage, mapping and potentially podcasts could be used for visiting tourists.



Bushwalk, Lyonville



The Historic Railway at Lyonville

THE DOSE SERIES, P. 1878  
Copyright

THE RAILWAY STATION, 2400 ft., LYONVILLE, VICTORIA

## Newlyn

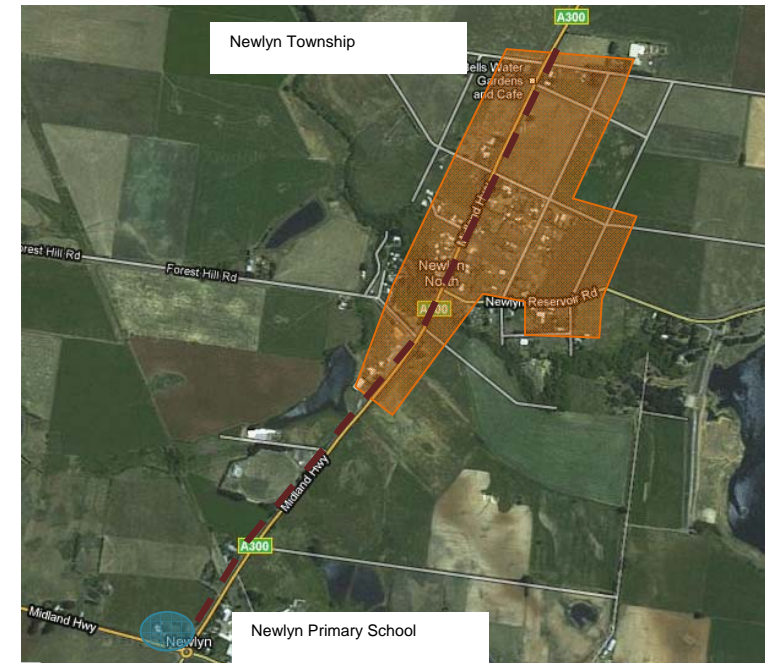
Newlyn is a small village which has developed around a small section of the Midland Highway (A300) between Daylesford and Creswick.

A key driver for the development of further walking and cycling assets for the town is the fact that new housing is being developed at the northern end of Newlyn whilst the Newlyn Primary School is at the southern aspect of the township, with the Midland Highway effectively splitting through the middle.

To overcome this issue, the following recommendations are made;

- Extend existing footpath along Midland Highway further north to Bells Road
- Reduce speed between Bells Road and Newlyn Primary School at standard school arrival and departure times (50 km/hr through township and 40 km/hr outside school).
- Provide road crossing treatment at safe point in order to cross the Midland Highway to the north of the village centre

The concept of developing a local recreational walking trail using the existing road network and connecting the village centre with the Newlyn Reservoir was also proposed. This development would require signage and map development.



*Footpath should extend from Primary school through Newlyn township up to Bells Road.*

*Speed reductions at school times and lit pedestrian crossing should be considered in the northern aspect of the township.*

## Creswick

Creswick is the second most populous township in Hepburn Shire and is close to the regional city of Ballarat.

Creswick has an extensive footpath network which needs some work to close small gaps. There is also evidence of maintenance required to repair or replace certain areas of the footpath network.

Creswick has an extremely wide main road reserve with no designated cycling lane. This presents an opportunity to undertake an urban design project to consider the introduction of a cycling lane, review car parking and improve pedestrian connections.

Key destinations such as schools and railway station are reasonably well connected by footpath however some bus stops could be provided with further shelter to increase the comfort of commuters.

Expected key works include:

- Maintenance to La Gerche Track (PV approval required)
- Sealing of shoulders along Clunes-Creswick Road
- Bike lane developed along Albert Street
- Completion of connection from Novotel Resort to Creswick
- Development of Mountain Bike Trail Feasibility (see Iconic Trails section for more detail, PV and DSE approval required))
- Completion of Calembreen Park Trails and connection to King Street
- Investigate potential to develop trail along Creswick Creek and Slaty Creek (PV approval required)
- Develop connection between Calembreen Park in the north and St Georges Lake in the south
- Correction of steep cross section gradient on footpaths



Steep cross section gradient of footpath has been raised as an issue by community



Opportunity exists to formalise and sign a trail along Creswick Creek.

### Clunes

Clunes is a village of just over 1,000 people with a small network of footpaths mainly focussed on the main activity centre of the township.

The Clunes footpath network is incomplete and some areas require maintenance as concrete slabs have lifted or cracked.

A key priority is the connection of Clunes Primary School into the town centre and residential area. A footpath linking from the school crossing into the township down Cameron Street is a priority task.

The connection of other sections of footpath is also important in creating a more complete network. These include Fraser Street and Bailey Street.

There is evidence of a historical interpretation trail called "The Golden Way" which highlights some of the history and architecture of the town. This is a driving/walking experience between a number of historic gold mining towns in the area.

There is opportunity to create some pleasant recreation based walking experiences along, and branching off from Creswick Creek. This trail is partially in place however flood damage has removed much of any established track which now needs to be reinstated and extended in places.



*The Golden Way Trail exists as a drive and walk interpretative trail between local gold mining towns.*



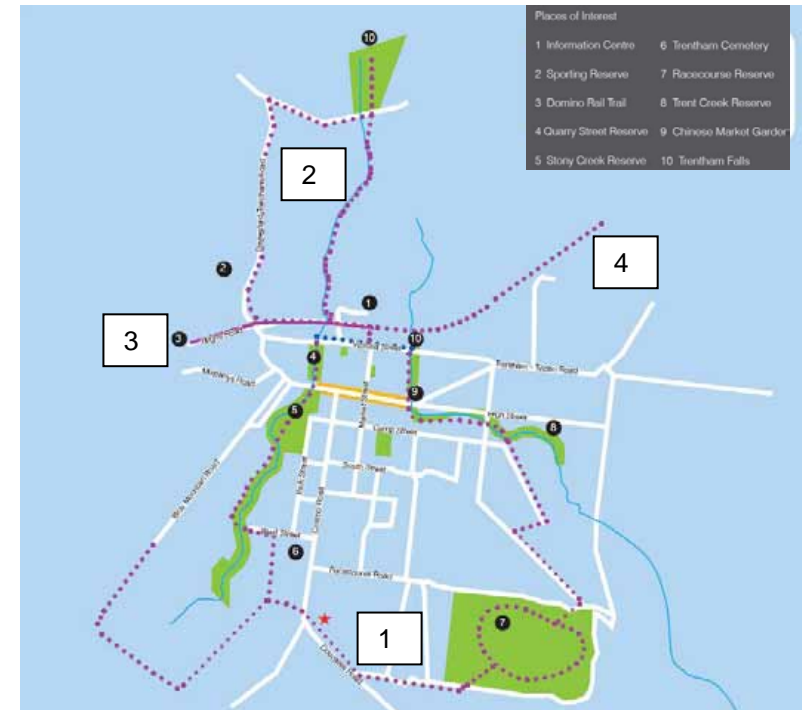
*Creswick Creek being cleaned up following flood damage in Clunes- opportunity exists to reinstate and improve Creek Trail.*

### Trentham

Trentham is a village of over 600 people with an interesting mix of natural landscape features, boutique businesses and agriculture. Council's economic development strategy highlights "nature based tourism opportunities" for Trentham, reflecting potential to develop a trail network servicing both local and tourist needs.

A local working group has initiated planning for several well considered trail opportunities through and around Trentham. (see map in Attachment 1)

1. **The Wombat Trail (DSE approval required for specific sections)**  
Provides a loop trail around Trentham, connecting significant recreation reserves including Bath Street Reserve, Quarry Street Reserve and the old Racecourse Reserve. Provides good local resident benefits for health and wellbeing and also tourist opportunities as a showcase of local habitat in an achievable loop trail.
2. **Trentham Falls Trail (PV approval required)**  
Proposal to sign and connect Trentham Falls to Trentham by providing a trail from the Visitor Information Centre, along The Domino Trail, follow
3. **Extension of The Domino Trail to Lyonville (DSE approval required for sections)**  
This requires the renovation and repair of the bridge across the Coliban River toward Lyonville as the major piece of work. The changeover of some leasing arrangements with VicTrack may also be an issue. The other key issue is ongoing management responsibility of the extended trail and Council or local capacity to do so in a sustainable manner.
4. **Consideration of the development of a Daylesford to Woodend Rail Trail**  
This project is larger than Trentham however it is being driven by residents in Trentham who recognise the opportunity to investigate the feasibility of developing a rail trail along the old rail line between Daylesford and Woodend. A number of key issues need to be explored with this project and these are expanded upon in the "Iconic Trails" section of this report.



*Map showing proposed trails for Trentham providing loop walks and proposing an extension of the Domino Trail to Lyonville with the potential to expand the development as a Rail Trail from Daylesford to Woodend. This would be the subject of a further feasibility study.*

### 3.2 Community Workshops

Community workshops were undertaken at the following townships;

1. Trentham
2. Daylesford
3. Hepburn
4. Clunes
5. Creswick

The workshops were well attended (88 participants) and generally provided an excellent level of information based around changing approaches to management, maintenance and design and with positive ideas for infrastructure development and improvement.

Key directions highlighted at workshops have included;

#### Trail development using signage and mapping

Particularly in smaller townships, the development of trails using existing roads and bush tracks that could be themed, signed and mapped in a local brochure has been a common direction. Communities have been positive in recognising that new infrastructure is costly and that many reasonable and interesting tracks exist but need better mapping and promotion to improve local use and present tourism opportunities.

#### Safe routes to schools

Improving connection for school children from Primary to secondary has been highlighted on a regular basis. The provision of a good footpath and bike lane network from schools into town centres has been highlighted.

#### "Last links"

Providing a final piece of infrastructure that may well open up or complete a network of footpaths or trail connections has also been a common theme. This has regularly required footbridges across creeks and in many cases the reinstatement of footbridges washed away in floods or the refurbishment of older assets.

#### Connecting to other transport modes

Ensuring connection to bus stops and the innovative idea of bike racks on buses to allow for riders to access bus services between towns.

#### Condition of road shoulders and prioritising bikes and pedestrians

Issues were raised regarding the quality of road edges, (i.e. drop off of edge, undulating edges, unsealed shoulders, gravel, wide bell mouth intersections with no cycle lane), more cycle and pedestrian friendly approaches to road design and slowing vehicle speeds.

#### Accessibility of footpath network and iconic trails

An aging population has increased demand for highly accessible footpath network, issues raised regarding maintenance and inspection rates and completing the network to provide for those with mobility issues.

Some key trails need to be developed and maintained for those people with prams/wheelchairs etc. with stable, compacted gravel surfaces. Trails highlighted as requiring high standards of accessibility and regular consistent maintenance include;

Peace Mile Track around Lake Daylesford

St Georges Lake track at Creswick

Mineral Springs Walk at Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve

Domino Trail, Trentham

Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens Walk, Daylesford

# strategic directions

Based on the outcomes of research and consultation, the key strategies for Council should focus on upgrading existing infrastructure through implementing design changes, developing a more coordinated approach to management with other stakeholders, providing opportunity to market trails as a nature tourism package,

Council's role as an advocate and driver of local change is also important in developing strategy, as many of the assets linked to walking and cycling are managed and developed by other key stakeholders where Council can highlight issues but has little jurisdiction with regard to actual works.

Based on the three focus areas that reflect Council's fundamental commitments, key strategic directions will include the following;

## Focus Area 1: Community Health and Safety

### Strategy: Design

Council will design new works with consideration to the prioritisation of the pedestrian and cyclist through implementation of infrastructure such as footpaths, bike lanes and off road trails. Connections between schools, shops and recreation reserves will be a priority.

### Strategy: Community Engagement

Council will engage the community in walking and cycling through a range of related activities and social initiatives.

## Focus Area 2: Economic Prosperity

### Strategy: Iconic Trails

Council will deliver or work with partners to deliver a series of iconic trails throughout the municipality which showcase the natural assets of the area. Iconic trails will be well serviced and highly accessible, with a coordinated management approach from all stakeholders but driven predominantly by Council.

# 4

## Strategy: Tourism and Marketing

Council will support local businesses and advocate to other stakeholders for further development of marketing collateral to value add to infrastructure development. This is expected to include web development, themed brochures and signage

## Focus Area 3: Environmental Sustainability

### Strategy: Active Design Planning Guidelines

Council will develop guidelines to assist planners (both statutory and strategic) to assess proposed commercial and residential developments with regard to their adherence to 'active by design' principles.

These principles reflect urban design which promotes a positive bias toward walkers and cyclists. The aim is to provide a level of infrastructure and good design that creates convenience, comfort and safety that attracts people to walk or ride to get around, rather than use a vehicle.

### Strategy: Sustainable development

Much of this report provides direction on the construction or maintenance of trails and footpaths and the introduction of signage and mapping. An important element to consider in this approach is the use of recycled or sustainable materials.

The following sections detail these key focus and strategy areas and provide further definition and priority tasks to be undertaken in each area.

# community health and safety

## designing for walking and cycling

This section is particularly relevant for internal planning and design tasks initiated by Council. It aims to provide detail on best practice considerations in design, construction, community engagement and promotion in the context of walking and cycling.

Footpaths, bike lanes and shared trails are used by a wide variety of people with different motivations. The motivation to use these assets may be incidental and be more about reaching a destination or it may be and end in itself based on enjoyment of the environment or for health and fitness.

The Hepburn Shire Council plays a key role in providing these assets and in engaging community to use them effectively. In this sense, it is important that Council have a strategic framework within which to consider the possible *enablers or attractors* that can be added to the network of assets through good design, quality construction, appropriate maintenance and community engagement.

The following sections provide a comprehensive set of guidelines and recommended actions for Council to consider when undertaking activities related to these key areas of footpaths, bike lanes and shared trails.





## 5.1 Footpath Network Design

The footpath network is crucial in providing an integrated network of stable pathways that enables walkers (and cyclists to a lesser degree) to get to places of common interest or use. Such destinations include;

- Workplaces
- Retail or shopping precincts
- Community or civic facilities
- Education facilities
- Public Transport nodes (train and bus)
- Trails
- Recreation spaces or venues (parks, pools etc.)
- Health or related services

The footpath network should also be considered as a hierarchy in order to provide an appropriate level of resourcing and maintenance based on use and importance.

Those footpaths that make up the central activity node of townships will be maintained to the highest standard.

Those footpaths that connect residents to the central activity node of townships and link into the town centre will be delivered to a minimum design standard and may be delivered to higher standards at Council discretion.

The following key headings provide recommended design guidelines aimed at developing a footpath network that will encourage and support increased usage and participation in walking.

### Positive Bias for Pedestrians

In attracting people to walk instead of drive, it is important to create an environment that emphasises the priority of pedestrians over other forms of transport, particularly in the Commercial Network. The footpath network should be designed to;

#### **Align paths directly across roads**

Footpaths should be directly aligned at intersections to provide the most direct and intuitive link possible, prioritising the pedestrian link over any vehicle infrastructure. The footpath route should inherently provide the most direct link which reduces the time and energy expended by the pedestrian in reaching their goal.

#### **Provide raised or coloured pedestrian crossings at intersections, roundabouts or car parks that provide direct crossing points.**

Raised or coloured pedestrian crossings provide a physical level change which is similar to a speed bump for drivers. Drivers who may not register a painted crossing section will physically experience a shift in driving conditions and be more likely to note this as a pedestrian crossing point. These types of facilities can be particularly useful in areas where there are many stimuli for drivers, or where traffic is consistently mingling with pedestrian activity.

#### **Provide signalised or signed crossing points on major roads and intersections.**

The provision of lit or signed crossings (raised or zebra) can provide extra safety and alert drivers to crossing points. Pedestrians should always be given right of way at these types of crossings.

Signalised crossings can also assist in providing safe crossing points for pedestrians in areas that are either high speed traffic areas or busy intersections where cars are entering from multiple directions.

#### **Provide 'shortcuts'**

It is often the case that walkers and cyclists can navigate routes that vehicles cannot, through reserves or other appropriate land easements that provide more direct routes to destinations than roads. E.g. a dead end road may well provide a small easement that connects to a destination point such as a recreation reserve or shopping precinct.

### Footpath Quality

The quality of the infrastructure provided is crucial to ensuring that the pedestrian experience is an enjoyable and safe one. Hepburn Shire Council will need to consider the following key points in designing an effective footpath network;

#### 1. Materials used

Sealed footpaths using either concrete or asphalt are recommended for all principal networks. Comparatively, asphalt is a less costly capital investment but can attract higher life cycle costs with more maintenance required.

Concrete can tend to create sharp tripping edges where tree roots or other conditions create movement along expansion joints whereas asphalt does have some flexibility in movement. Flood prone areas may be better suited to concrete given the issue of scouring and washaway that is more likely to damage asphalt.

Gravel footpaths are less accessible, more expensive to maintain and more prone to washaway however they are far less expensive to develop and can provide a basis for later sealing works. Some areas of the secondary footpath network may be delivered initially as a gravel surface and upgraded to a sealed surface as funds allow.

#### 2. Maintenance

Maintenance of footpaths is paramount to ensuring a safe and reputable network. Inspection of footpaths should be scheduled annually for the Commercial Network and biannually for the urban network. High use footpaths such as those directly adjacent to a school should also be designated for annual inspections. The results of these inspections should be summarised highlighting all non conformance items and subsequent recommended actions. Where non conformance items fall outside maintenance budgets, special consideration should be made to Council for budget allocations or application for the following year's capital works should be considered.

A separate budget item should be considered each year to reactively repair issues that are highlighted to Council by means other than the designated inspections (e.g. other workers or resident requests)

New footpath works should be considered under the proposed Special Rates and Charges Policy of Council in order to offset initial works costs or replacement costs.

#### 3. Road Verges

Where footpaths do not exist, it is often accepted that people will walk alongside the road. In this sense, road verges that clearly link in with secondary footpath networks should be maintained and be free of weeds or high grasses that impede pedestrian access.

#### 4. Footpath width

Footpath width needs to be considered in the light of intended use and traffic intensity. Main shopping or civil precincts for example may well need to include space for outdoor dining areas and signage as well as a mix of pedestrians wheeling bikes, prams or wheelchairs. Residential footpaths may need to be able to provide only for two people walking side by side. It is recommended that;

Footpaths within the Commercial Footpath Network should be maintained at between 2.0 and 2.5 metres in width with wider footpaths encouraged where footpath dining, footpath trading (display of goods/signage) &/or parallel parking are common.

Urban Network footpaths should be maintained at a minimum of 1.2 metres in width.

### Pedestrian Comfort and Safety

Providing an external environment that is comfortable and safe for pedestrians can be achieved in a number of ways that attract higher levels of use. Treatments that should be considered include the following;

#### 1. Shading and seating

The use of street trees and other plantings, particularly on the northern side of a footpath can provide maximum shading benefit. The use of deciduous trees can also provide solar access in winter months and solar protection in summer. Shade structures are recommended at key destinations such as public transport stops or other activity nodes. Seating should be provided at regular intervals to accommodate pauses required for pedestrians. Seating can be varied and could include the edges of planter boxes, seats with arms, bench seating, public sculpture or other landscape features.

#### 2. Traffic Calming

A number of physical changes in road surface and orientation can assist in providing slower but more consistent flow of traffic. Slowing vehicles provides a safer environment for pedestrians. Direct correlation exists between lowering speed and lowering pedestrian injury rates (see point 4 below). A number of street treatments exist that can assist in physically changing the road environment to slow vehicles. These include chicanes, raised crossings, speed bumps, rumble strips, narrowing of roadways, narrowing of intersections and signage.

#### 3. Lowering Speed Limits

The simplest way to reduce traffic speed is to lower speed limits. A reduction in motor traffic speed to 30 km/hr would not only reduce the levels of pedestrian injuries sustained in collisions, but also give both parties a better chance of avoiding the collision in the first place. The chances of being killed rise dramatically with an increase in the speed of the car. The



Chicane provides traffic calming in a one way street



Narrowing of roadway to calm traffic and prioritise pedestrians



Raised and coloured pedestrian crossing to slow motorists



Turning radius has been reduced to slow turning vehicles

probability of a pedestrian fatality is 5% at 30 km/hr, rising to 37% at 50 km/hr and to 83% at 70km/hr.<sup>1</sup>

Council should discuss and negotiate speed reduction with VicRoads across the municipality, focussing on main streets, key destination locales and back roads, off arterial vehicle routes.

#### 4. Improving Driver Behaviour

Improving driver behaviour is an ongoing aim of both a number of public authorities including Council, Victorian Police and VicRoads. Council should continue to work with these agencies on improving road safety through community safety prevention measures and coordination of a comprehensive education, prevention and infringement approach.

#### 5. Drinking Fountains and Public Toilets

Provision of and signage to these types of facilities should be used on trails and networks to ensure users have capacity to access amenities as required. Any brochures or mapping should also highlight public toilets and drink stops.

#### 6. Crossover points

Providing safe crossing points along roadways is paramount in delivering a well connected path network. The prioritisation of pedestrians should ensure that footpath infrastructure is attractive to potential users as a safe and direct way of accessing services or locations. The following options should be considered for crossover points;

- Use of tactile markers for vision impaired pedestrians
- Raised or coloured crossing points
- Signalised or signed crossing points
- Rumble strips
- Reduction of road and intersection width (lane crossings no greater than 4 metres)
- Use of pedestrian refuges

Accessibility

1. **Managing obstructions on footpaths**

In high activity areas, it is common for street furniture, signage, bins and café seating to encroach on the 'walkability' of a footpath network.

Street furniture is important, however layout and planning requirements for outdoor eating areas should be strictly adhered to and placement of equipment should provide for a continuous and clear path of travel for pedestrians.

Footpath obstructions related to commercial activity were reported by many clients in a recent survey by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT. These included:

|                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Footpath dining             | reported by 60% of respondents |
| Goods displayed on footpath | reported by 53% of respondents |
| Signage on footpaths        | reported by 14% of respondents |

A clear path along the building line is an important element that provides a consistent guiding line for people to follow. People who are blind or vision impaired usually prefer to travel along the clear path next to the building line as this provides many clues for directionality and entry location.

Planning permit requirements should clearly stipulate the placement of outdoor eating spaces and signage. Redundant infrastructure should be promptly removed.

2. **Tactile Markers**

Tactile markers should be installed in the Commercial Network and within other high activity nodes. These markers provide directions in a non visual manner, providing assistance to those pedestrians with vision impairment. They also provide a non slip surface at crossing points where drop kerbs may be installed.

3. **Wayfinding**

Wayfinding signage is important to provide contextual signage for those pedestrians who may not be familiar with destinations. Wayfinding signs can provide as little information as a series of distances to various destinations or can provide maps and photographs of destinations as well as descriptions. These should be provided at key points within the commercial zones of key townships.

4. **Grades**

Gradient in footpaths can have a negative impact on use particularly for those pedestrians with mobility issues. Generally, the Hepburn Shire is a hilly environment and steep gradients are sometimes unavoidable (e.g. footpath access to Daylesford Hospital). Where practical Council should reduce gradients to a maximum of 1 in 14 for all footpaths and provide adequate rest points on steeper grades.

5. **Overhanging Branches**

Council should undertake the following with regard to street trees;

Ensure that street trees are trimmed so that they do not present a hazard

Respond promptly to complaints about the need for trees to be trimmed

Ensure that footpaths are swept regularly, to minimise slip hazards caused by fallen leaves and seed pods

Council should also ensure that homeowners are made aware of their responsibilities to maintain trees based inside property lines.

## 5.2 Footpath Network Design Recommendations

### Recommendations

*Council will regularly review planning requirements for outdoor dining placement and undertake inspections to ensure compliance.*

*Council will provide wayfinding signage for main town centres.*

*Council will progressively implement tactile markers in all high traffic pedestrian areas such as town centres, schools and hospitals.*

*Council will work to rectify gradient issues in footpath (cross sectional and linear) with remedial work and ensure new footpaths are built to gradient standard of 1 in 14*

*Council will consider a range of intersection treatments and alternative route options to consistently provide positive bias toward walkers in the footpath network, particularly in relation to main streets and town centres.*

*Council will work with VicRoads where relevant on advocating for the prioritisation of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in the town centres of key townships and villages.*

*Council acknowledges the aging of its community and will look to improve accessibility through maintaining a high quality footpath network.*

*Council will provide quality footpaths generally made of bitumen or concrete and will maintain these with a documented inspection and rectification program. The inspection schedule (and consequential maintenance) currently in place should be increased in frequency and also be reactive to community reporting.*

*Council will maintain minimum standard widths as noted for both Commercial and Urban footpath networks and will, where assessed, aim to provide higher than minimum standard infrastructure for high use footpaths.*

*Footpaths within town centres or along main streets should be maintained at between 2.0 and 2.5 metres in width with wider footpaths encouraged where footpath dining, footpath trading (display of goods/signage) &/or parallel parking are common..*

*Residential footpaths should be maintained at a minimum of 1.2 metres in width.*

*Council will consider the implementation of crossing treatments to prioritise and highlight pedestrians as a priority at road crossings.*

### 5.3 Footpath High Priority Work Plan

| Proposed Works  | Benefit  | Responsibility | Estimated Cost |
|---|--|----------------|----------------|
| Provide crossing at Lake Daylesford along Bleakely Street (at bridge). Coloured crossing preferred, with appropriate signage.               | Reduces risk and vehicle/pedestrian conflict along Bleakely Street. Increase pedestrian comfort in using Lake Daylesford Trail.  | Infrastructure | \$5,000        |
| Develop footpath and signage from Lake Daylesford to the Daylesford Town Centre. Along Bridport Street.                                     | Provides stronger pedestrian connection between town centre and Lake Daylesford.   | Infrastructure | \$40,000       |
| Install and improve footpath along Hepburn Newstead Road cutting from Mineral Springs Road to Golf Links Road                               | Increase safety for pedestrians, particularly school children walking to school. Develops stronger link between Hepburn township and Primary School.   | Infrastructure | \$35,000       |
| Complete footpath between Hepburn-Daylesford Road and corner of Hepburn-Newstead Road   | Path is gravel only and is washed out and sloping, creating risk and lessening preference to walk.   | Infrastructure | \$5,000        |
| Provide two coloured (paved) and raised pedestrian crossings along the main street of Hepburn near Tenth St and near Hepburn General Store. | Improve pedestrian safety through Hepburn and increase permeability into and from HMSR   | Infrastructure | \$20,000       |
| Provide pedestrian crossing treatment at Albert Street Creswick, near Cushing Avenue.   | Improves pedestrian safety and alerts motorists entering off highways of pedestrian activity.  | Infrastructure | \$10,000       |
| Provide footpath directly from Clunes Primary School down Cameron Street to Fraser Street.  | Provision of footpath increases safety for school children moving from primary school to town centre.  | Infrastructure | \$15,000       |
| Extend footpath along Fraser Street to new ford at Scenic Drive/Creswick Creek  | Provides connection along main historic road of Clunes to the ford crossing of Creswick Creek walk and loop trail  | Infrastructure | \$15,000       |
| Complete missing section of footpath along Bailey Street between Pioneers Park Reserve and VIC  | Completes a missing section of footpath that abruptly stops then starts again.   | Infrastructure | \$30,000       |
| Complete footpath connection along Midland Highway at Newlyn to Bells Road and provide crossing treatment                                   | Improves propensity to walk to shops and school and increase safety of pedestrians walking well off the Midland Highway. Should be undertaken in conjunction with advocating to VicRoads for lower speed limits, particularly at school times. | Infrastructure | \$30,000       |

## 5.4 Bike Lane Network Design

Community consultation indicated that cyclists in the urban areas of towns are looking for safe on road or off road routes to conveniently access destinations such as;

- Work, retail , community or school facilities
- Public Transport nodes (train and bus)
- Recreation spaces or venues (parks, pools etc.)
- Quieter residential zones

### Positive bias for Cyclists

As with pedestrians, cyclists should also be prioritised through a series of treatments that can emphasise to vehicle traffic that cyclists can be expected in bike lane areas. The Bike Lane Network should consider the following design principles in order to emphasise the presence of cycling commuters;

#### 1. Coloured lanes

Where traffic is particularly busy or cyclists are crossing intersections, the use of coloured lanes may be appropriate as an additional treatment to standard marking with road paint and cycling stencils. The use of raised markers which create an auditory warning for drivers may also be helpful in giving cyclists more protection.

#### 2. Separated lanes

Separated lanes provide best practice protection for cyclists by effectively delivering a bike lane physically separated from the road either by height or by barriers such as car parking, median strips or landscape. This design provides a dedicated area that cars cannot physically enter, effectively eliminating the possibilities of driver error causing accidents.

#### 3. Signage

Provision of signage both for cyclists and drivers is important in raising the profile of the cyclist. Signage can be provided in a multitude of way in order to give priority to cyclists.

Where lanes are implemented, road surface bike signage should be marked at a minimum frequency of every 150 metres. Bike lane signs should be provided at a minimum frequency of every 200 metres.

Consideration (in conjunction with VicRoads) should be given to including a bike lane symbol on road signs to delineate the bike lane network.

Other signage on roads warning motorists of cyclist should also be considered, particularly outside of towns where speeds increase on back roads.

#### 4. Provision of 'shortcuts'

Bikes are far easier to manoeuvre through an urban landscape than cars. Opportunities exist to create shortcuts that prioritise walkers and cyclists and create faster routes to destinations than roadways that may simply be dead ends. This can improve convenience and increase propensity to cycle for commuters.

#### 5. Cycling Support Services

Provision of appropriate support services to ensure cycling is a positive experience is important. The provision of bike racks, showers and changing cubicles in workplaces is important in delivering a convenience for cyclists and promoting a message of a cycling friendly township. An innovative approach is to consider the installation of bike carrying racks on commuter bus services.



## 6. Preferred Road Cycling Routes

Road cycling is a popular recreation past time and, although no formal club exists in the Hepburn Shire, there is adequate evidence to indicate that road cyclists are active and that preferred routes for cyclists should be developed. Preferred Road Cycling Routes should be prioritised for the following works;

- Shoulder sealing
- Signage warning motorists of cyclists
- Signage for cyclist navigation
- Consideration of lower speed limits

Those routes recommended by local cyclists include the following;

- Daylesford – Mount Franklin – Shepherds Flat – Hepburn Springs
- Daylesford to Smeaton
- Daylesford to Creswick
- Daylesford- Musk – Leitches Creek
- Daylesford to Glenlyon
- Ballarat to Clunes (through Creswick)

These routes should be mapped, with online and hard copy mapping available for users.

In this way, safer facilities for on road cyclists, covering larger distances can be developed. It is expected that these will be a medium priority within the plan and be developed in conjunction with VicRoads who would need to be a collaborative partner with Council in delivering signage and shoulder sealing.



## Quality of Bike Lanes

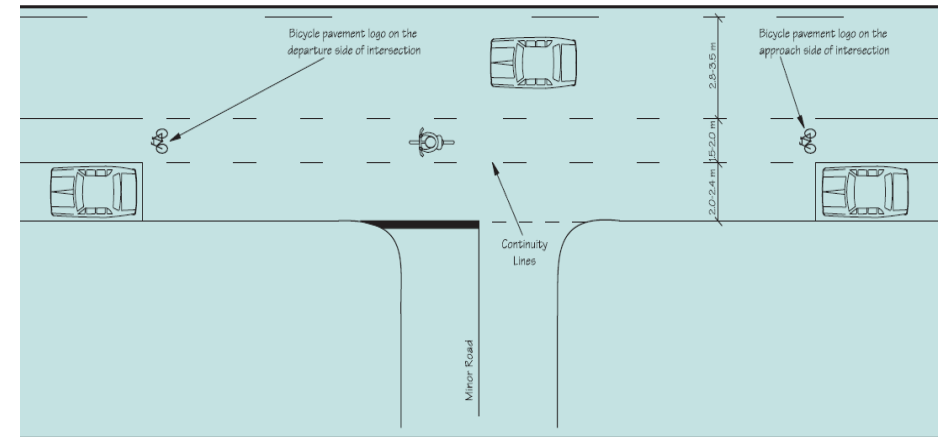
### 1. Width

The width of bike lanes will vary according to the road width and some marking should always be considered better than none.

Where possible, a dedicated bike lane provides the highest protection levels for cyclist and results in the most convenient and comfortable level of use through reduced hazards. Dedicated lanes should be provided ideally between 1.2 and 1.5 metres in width.<sup>9</sup>

Where lanes are shared with car parking a desired width of 4 metres provides for parking and allows space for door opening to occur with minimised risk to the cyclists. Solid white lines should be used to mark car parking areas to ensure vehicles park as close to the kerb as possible, leaving the maximum space for cyclists. Cycling lanes should be marked with Bike Lane symbols (Australian Standard 1742.9).

The symbols should be used both sides of minor intersections (see right) and every 200 metres on straight road sections. The symbol should be used more frequently in places of high activity or potential conflict such as retail activity zones.



*VicRoads standardised approach to implementing a bike lane*

<sup>9</sup> VicRoads- Arterial on road bicycle routes 1999

## 2. Treatment

A number of treatments for cycling lanes exist and the most appropriate depends upon existing conditions, budget and levels of activity in the area.

Possible treatments include the following;

### *Reduce width of traffic or parking lanes*

Traffic or parking lanes can often be wider than necessary and can be reduced to provide a bicycle lane or shared parking and cycle lane. Reducing the width of traffic or parking lanes involves line marking and some signage which is a very effective and low cost treatment.

### *Sealing shoulders*

Many rural or regional roads have gravel verges that can be sealed to provide a line marked cycling lane.

This is particularly useful for links between towns or suburbs where road width is available. Given the use of asphalt, this treatment is more expensive but provides effective use of existing road reserve to create good connections along otherwise quiet roads.

### *Indent car parking*

This treatment involves the reduction of nature strip areas to free up roadside car parking for a cycle lane. This treatment can become expensive particularly if the removal of trees and relocation of services is required and should therefore only be considered for a principal cycling connection that is crucial to continuity.

### *Prohibiting or removing car parking*

Where unnecessary car parking space is provided on roadsides, it may be possible to remove or prohibit parking on one or both sides of the road. This will provide space for cycling lanes possibly on both sides of the road.



*An example of reducing traffic width to implement a bike lane*



*An example of sealing shoulders to provide space for cyclist and pedestrians*

### 3. Maintenance

The ongoing condition of bike lanes and road shoulders must be monitored, with budgeting provided to ensure that, lane sweeping, pothole or crack repair, respraying of lines or symbols and implementation of signage can all be undertaken promptly when issues are identified.

It is recommended that Council allocate funds each year toward bike lane maintenance and ensure that a six monthly inspection regime is implemented with a closed loop system of ensuring non conforming items are recorded, actioned and completed.

Many of the potential bike lanes or road verges in the municipality fall under the responsibility of VicRoads. It will be important therefore to develop and maintain a good communication link with VicRoads in order to deliver well maintained bike routes.



*Road shoulder in Creswick North- Creswick –Clunes Road*

## 5.5 Bike Lane Network Design Recommendations

### Recommendation:

*Development of bike lanes will occur in urban areas and provide space for cyclists to ride between shopping, school and residential zones.*

*Lanes will be developed in accordance with VicRoads guidelines*

*Council will develop a partnership relationship with VicRoads for the development of lanes and sealed shoulders on arterial roads between townships.*

*Council will communicate and reported maintenance issues on arterial road bike lanes to VicRoads in a clear and timely manner.*

*Council will introduce signage to back roads around key townships highlighting the use by cyclists.*

*Council will consider use of coloured lanes for high traffic areas and areas where children are riding (around schools).*

*Council will install bike racks in all town centres in a practical location.*

*Council will advocate for the introduction of bike carrying racks on commuter buses between towns.*

## 5.6 Bike Lane High Priority Work Plan

| Proposed Works  | Benefit  | Responsibility                | Estimated Cost   |
|---|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Develop bike lane on Raglan Street between Vincent Street and the Midland Highway and up Smith Street to Daylesford Secondary College   | Increase safety for cyclists along the busy Raglan Street entry into Daylesford and makes strong connection between town centre and Daylesford Secondary and St Michaels Primary Schools.  | VicRoads/Council              | \$70,000   |
| Improve cycling and walking trail/lane between Daylesford and Hepburn   | Mitigates current risks which include cyclists entering intersections and service roads, steep kerb drop offs and bollards providing low levels of protection.   | VicRoads/Council              | \$70,000   |
| Respray bike lane in front of Daylesford Primary School back to Central Springs Road  | Increase safety for cyclist, particularly school children riding to school.<br>Develops stronger link between Daylesford town centre and access into Lake Daylesford.  | VicRoads/Council              | \$20,000   |
| Provide bike lane along Albert Street, through Creswick township from Midland Highway turnoff to Bungaree-Creswick Road.  | Albert Street is a very wide street and requires a designated bike lane to provide an 'arterial' route through town that can then allow cyclists to access off road trails, or quieter side streets to reach or return from their destination. | VicRoads/Council              | \$100,000  |
| Advocate for sealing of shoulders on major roads as noted;<br>Daylesford - Ballan<br>Creswick - Clunes<br>Daylesford -Newlyn<br>Daylesford - Trentham   | Improves capacity to ride between key townships in the Hepburn Shire.<br>Improves the poor condition of shoulders on many important routes between townships   | VicRoads- Council to advocate | More than \$500,000  |
| Advocate for bike lanes to be introduced to all arterial roads connecting townships to the edge of the urban boundary. Namely;<br>Daylesford – Ballan<br>Daylesford – Trentham/Glenlyon<br>Daylesford – Creswick<br>Creswick - Clunes | Provides main arterial roads with bike lanes which can be used to reach quieter road networks if travelling between towns or used as the 'arterial bike route' before branching off on to quieter residential streets or trail networks.       | VicRoads/Council              | \$200,000<br>(approximately in addition to works noted above that overlap) |
| Initiate discussions and advocate for the trial installation of bike carrying racks on inter-town buses   | Improves practicality of riding a bike to a bus stop and being able to catch a bus and then ride once you have finished your bus journey. Particularly useful in bus trips between towns.  | Council                       | Staff resources  |

## 5.7 Trail Network Design

In this instance “Trails” are defined as those paths and tracks that are used mainly for cycling and walking and are not part of the road or footpath networks.

The Hepburn Shire Council is home to a vast range of off road tracks and trails that are managed by a variety of land management agencies and can take the form of bitumen pathways in historical parks through to dirt tracks in native bushland.

The tracks are used by both local residents and tourists, often as an experience in themselves, passing through areas of cultural, historical and natural significance.

Generally the trails that exist represent an excellent range of facilities and provide a sound foundation on which to build a comprehensive network across the municipality.

Management of trails remains an area with potential for better coordination and partnerships particularly between Council and Parks Victoria. A more proactively driven approach between these two agencies could assist in more fully realising the potential of the trail network.

Trail user groups often seek out very different experiences that varying types of trails can provide. For example, the less formed trails that surround Creswick provide a challenging experience for hikers whilst The Domino Trail in Trentham provides a more accessible nature trail for walkers and riders at a variety of levels.

A number of potential trail routes exist in smaller villages within the Shire. These can generally be realised with the addition of themed signage and mapping to create village loops and historical and scenic tours.

The following principles of trail management and development will assist in providing an improved trail network.



*The Domino Trail in Trentham represents a flat, accessible recreation trail for most walkers and cyclists in the Trentham area.*

### Positive bias for Trail Users

The key to providing positive bias toward trail users is in treatment of road crossings where vehicles, cyclist and walkers interact.

Safe road crossings provide continuity to off road trails increasing the propensity to regularly use this type of asset. An effective road crossing treatment prioritises the cyclist and walker and delivers a high quality experience for trail users.

Road crossing should at a minimum provide signage for both cyclists advising of a road crossing and for motorists advising of a trail crossing. The use of holding rails and some level of road treatment is also advised.

Cycling/Pedestrian refuges may also be used to allow users to cross busy roads in two stages, provide further physical evidence to drivers of a crossing point and increase protection through physical separation.

Other treatments may include raised pavements, signals or coloured pathways to provide priority for trail users.

### Connection to footpath and bike lane networks

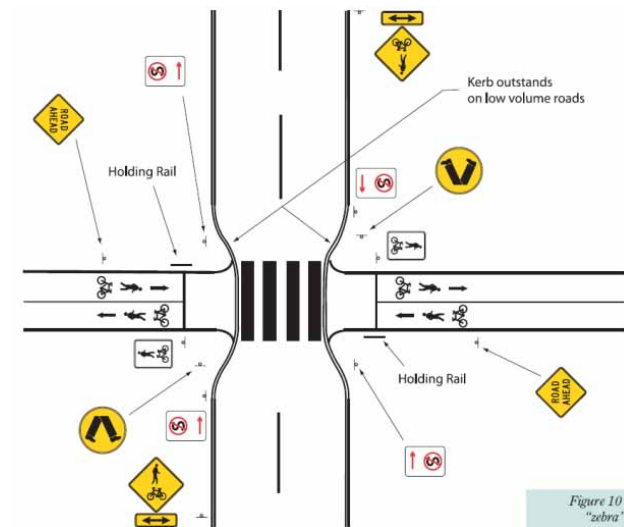
Where practical, trails should provide connections into the footpath and bike lane networks, transitioning from off road to on road or footpath networks seamlessly.

Where possible, off road trails should be extended into town centres. This is particularly possible where recreation reserves, creek lines or disused railway lines exist. If this is not possible, a seamless transition on to a well signed bike lane or footpath should be implemented.

Off road connection to primary schools, with limited road crossings is particularly important. These trails provide a safe route for school children who generally have less peripheral awareness and increased risk in vehicle traffic zones.



*Trail crossing at road, prioritising the cyclist and walker*



*Figure 10 - 1  
"zebra" crossing*

*Typical VicRoads plan for trail crossing at roadway*



### Iconic Trails

Iconic trails are defined as those larger trails that are of regional or greater significance and particularly provide strong recreational and tourism values.

Key trails within the Hepburn Shire that conform to this classification are described in Chapter 9 of this strategy.

Iconic Trails should generally be designed to promote high levels of accessibility and use stable surface material such as bitumen or granitic rock that compacts well but is relatively low in cost per lineal metre. Iconic Trails should also be well mapped with brochures and downloadable maps available and be themed and signed appropriately. The development of stylised logos as specific branding would be appropriate for these trails.

### Identified Iconic Trails include:

The Goldfields Track (previous Great Dividing Trail) (Ballarat to Bendigo via Creswick and Daylesford)  
The Domino Trail (Trentham)  
Mineral Springs Walk (Hepburn, Daylesford)  
The Peace Mile (Daylesford)  
Calembeen Park Trail (Creswick)  
St Georges Lake Trail (Creswick)  
Creswick Mountain Bike Trails (proposed, subject to feasibility study)  
The Daylesford-Woodend Rail Trail (proposed, subject to feasibility study)

Iconic Trails are further discussed in Chapter 7 of this report.

### Trail Heads

Trail heads act as starting points for significant trails and may represent common points where footpath, bike lane and trail networks meet.

The development of trail heads as part of Iconic Trails is important in providing a common point of information for users, providing key amenities such as;

Signage (including way finding with distances to destinations, location maps)  
Seating  
Bike rack  
Car park  
Public Toilets  
Drinking fountain or tap

### Quality of Trails

The quality of trails will vary depending on intended use and expectation of use. Mountain bike users for example may well be looking for a challenging ride on reasonably rough tracks.

The majority of users however, will be looking for a relatively easily accessed, well signed trail that can be traversed with low to moderate levels of physical fitness.

Iconic trails should be developed and maintained with the following key features;

- Provides a crushed rock or compacted gravel surface that is solid underfoot but has minimum impact on the natural environment
- Should not cut straight through the landscape but twists and turns around the natural features in a sympathetic manner.
- Provides opportunity to contemplate nature and enables us to take in our surroundings.
- Identifies itself clearly as a trail that is free of conflict caused by incompatible users e.g. motorised vehicles.
- Provides information about features such as views, natural features, history, special habitat and a narrative that will encourage both the novice and the experienced to try it.
- Is easy to access and use. e.g. good transport access to trail heads, vehicle security arrangements.
- Provided close to population centres.

### Width

Width should be maintained on shared trails at 2.5 metres, where practical. Areas of particular narrowness should be well signed to allow for those that cannot access certain points, to turn around.

### Accessibility

Access to a series of key trails is important and consideration of grade, condition and surface treatment are important.

The trail network within Hepburn Shire is generally made up of trails accessing areas of natural significance and the use of organic materials such as granitic sand or compacted gravel is seen as the most appropriate and cost effective ways of delivering these trails.

These surfaces are generally stable but do require more maintenance than bitumen or concrete. Bitumen or concrete may be more appropriate in flood prone areas where wash away regularly occurs. Rutting and loose surfaces can cause issues for those with mobility concerns.

### Maintenance and Management

A specific budget allocation should be provided for maintenance to trails specifically managed by Council. Inspections schedules should be implemented to deliver the

It is also recommended that a more formalised management arrangement be developed to coordinate trail management between key land managers including Parks Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Hepburn Shire Council.

## 5.8 Trail Design Recommendations

### Recommendation:

*Council will work toward developing and maintaining selected Iconic Trails*

*Council and other land managers will develop trail heads for Iconic Trails that provide a recognised start/finish point along with relevant amenities and information as required.*

*Council will advocate to and with Parks Victoria regarding funding for improving trail quality on Iconic Trails where Parks Victoria are a partner in management.*

*Council will provide clear signage and road crossing treatments at intersections of trails with main road, delivering a positive bias toward trail users at these points.*

*Council will provide connection of trails to back roads, footpaths and cycling lanes to ensure access from urban centres to trails is seamless and easily understood.*

## 5.9 Trail High Priority Work Plan

| Proposed Works  | Benefit   | Responsibility                      | Estimated Cost  |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Complete accessible trail around Lake Daylesford by constructing a protected pedestrian bridge at Bleakely Street, attached to the existing vehicle bridge.   | Increase safety for cyclists for walkers and completes a loop trail of the iconic Lake Daylesford. Increases safety for walkers, improves the quality of experience and removes pedestrians from entering on to the road unnecessarily.   | Council                             | \$100,000       |
| Provide alternative entry into HMSR over Spring Creek. Provide raised or coloured crossing with signage and lower vehicle speed. Provide short trail and footbridge across Spring Creek, potentially using redundant water pipe structure as a base for footbridge. | Mitigates current risks which include people walking around sharp bends in Mineral Springs Road to enter HMSR via car park. Removes conflict between pedestrians and vehicles and provides a more direct access from the Hepburn township to the HMSR and HMS Spa Centre.   | Council/VicRoads                    | \$120,000       |
| Extend the Domino Trail to Lyonville  | Provides Domino Trail with recognised destination at Lyonville  | Council/RDV/DSE approval required   | unknown         |
| Develop Stage 1 of proposed Wombat Trail at Trentham providing first half of the loop trail incorporating the Domino Trail, Quarry Street Reserve, Stony Creek Reserve and Racecourse Reserve.  | Provides a loop trail in Trentham that can be used by both local residents and tourists. Represents a loop walk of appropriate distance for everyday walkers and traverse a number of key recreation reserves and natural bushland that provides interpretative opportunities.  | Council/DSE approval required       | \$45,000        |
| Develop Trentham Falls Walk   | Provides a loop trail opportunity to one of Trentham's iconic natural features, Trentham Falls.   | Parks Victoria approval/Council/RDV | \$45,000        |
| Undertake a feasibility study for the development of a Rail Trail between Daylesford and Woodend (further detail in section 7.4 of this report)   | There is potential to develop a Rail Trail from Daylesford to Woodend (and potential extend from Daylesford to Creswick however initial work indicates that a number of issues need to be understood in more detail such as leasing arrangements and land ownership, risk mitigation, ongoing management, capital work requirements etc. (further detail in Section 7.4 of this report) | Council/RDV/DPCD                    | \$40,000        |
| Develop walking track around Calemben Park reflecting Management Plan and working group outcomes  | Provides an excellent loop trail walk for local residents, particularly servicing the northern part of Creswick.  | VicRoads/Council                    | \$100,000       |
| Complete track between Novotel Resort and Creswick Township (from Tait Drive to footpath in Albert Street)  | Complete the trail that comes into Creswick from the Novotel in a safer, more direct fashion to strengthen connection between the resort and Creswick.  | Council                             | Staff resources |
| Develop connection between Calemben Park and King Street, Creswick North  | Provides good off road connection into Calemben Park for Creswick North residents. Provides shortcut compared to driving.   | Council                             | \$20,000        |
| Develop path along Creswick Creek from Calemben Park through  | Formalise and sign a trail that runs the length of Creswick Creek, providing a  | Council                             | \$250,000       |

| Proposed Works   | Benefit   | Responsibility  | Estimated Cost |
|--|---|---|----------------|
| to St Georges Lake Trail (including Slatey Creek footbridge)   | 'spine' off road trail from which people can enter and exit as required.  |   |                |
| Develop feasibility study and business plan for the Mountain Bike Trails Concept for Creswick and Daylesford, linking into the Goldfields Track. | Investigates a structured 'package' of trails that are promoted and managed by a mix of stakeholders such as the School of Forestry (Creswick), Parks Victoria, Council, Tourism Board, etc. These provide economic benefit to small towns such as Creswick and other areas along the Goldfields Track. | Council, Tourism Victoria, School of Forestry, Parks Victoria, RDV. | \$30,000       |
| Provide signage and mapping for Yandoit, Franklinford and Clydesdale Trails.   | At relatively low cost, the development of some loop trails in smaller townships provides formalised routes for local walkers and cyclists and an opportunity for tourists to search out a different experience in an area relatively close to the tourist centres of Daylesford and Hepburn.           | Council, DPCD, Parks Victoria approval required                     | \$15,000       |
| Provide signage and gravelling treatment for Loddon River Walk at Glenlyon   | Provides a local loop walk in the Glenlyon township, covering the Loddon River environment, local recreation reserve and returning to town.   | Council/DSE approval required                                       | \$6,000        |

# community health and safety engaging community

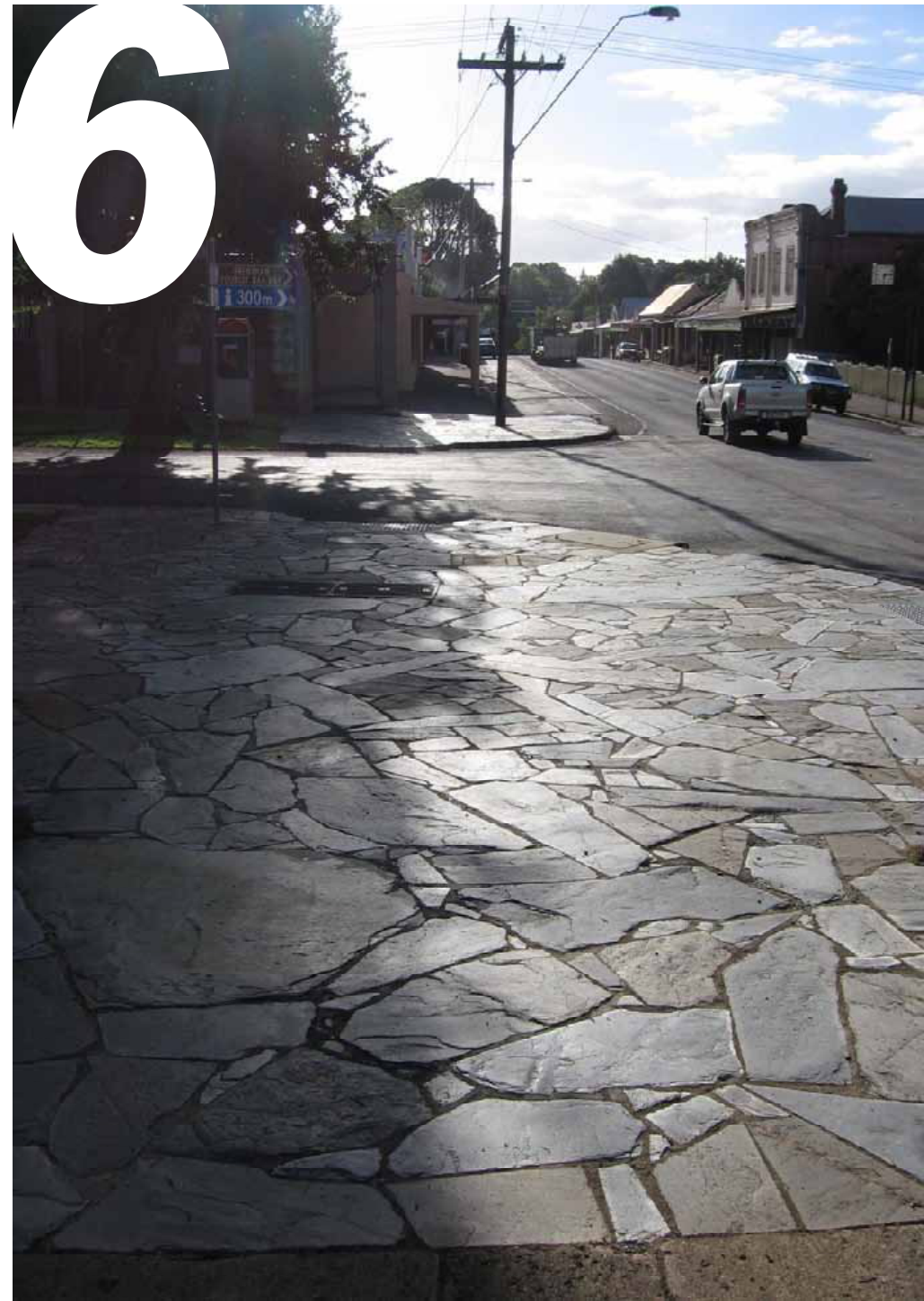
Building paths and trails is simply one part of an equation in providing opportunity for people to walk and cycle. Engagement of community in walking and cycling needs to be done in a way that creates significant and sustainable cultural shifts.

Engagement goes beyond marketing and provides opportunities for genuine involvement, community interaction and behavioural shifts in the way people think about walking and cycling in their community. Key activities that Council can use to engage communities include the following;

## 6.1 Programs for encouraging walking and cycling

Programs to be considered for implementation include;

1. **Walking School Bus and Riding School Bus Programs**  
Adult supervised walking and cycling program for school children with some funding available through VicHealth.
2. **Walk to Work and Ride to Work Days**  
Bicycle Victoria supported initiatives where council can take a lead role in providing riding leaders at different points
3. **Walking Work Bus and Riding Work Bus Programs**  
The potential exists to transfer the successful school bus program to an adult version and provide leaders to support groups getting to work on foot or by bike.
4. **Support the delivery of bike education programs in schools**  
Ensure that Council and VicRoads work together to provide education programs in schools for cycling.



**5. Support coordination of themed walking and riding programs**

Work with local bushwalking groups (such as group based at Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre) or cycling groups to deliver themed programs such as Spring in the Bush walks, winery cycling tour or bike maintenance workshops.

**6. Support local businesses involved in walking and cycling**

A number of operators are beginning to provide a range of walking and cycling related services. These range from bike hire to organising and arranging supervised or guided walks. These businesses should be supported through Council's economic development team with further exposure and marketing.

**7. Promote a 'boot and bike club'**

Coordinate development of a 'club' that encourages households to walk and cycle regularly. Run awards for the most involved households and produce newsletters on a regular basis

## 6.2 Education

The delivery of information reminding cyclists and motorists of their rights and responsibilities can be undertaken in innovative ways. Partners in this type of activity should include Bicycle Victoria, VicRoads and the Victorian Police. Education activities could include;

1. The delivery of flyers or brochures with car registrations or rates notices providing a summary of relevant road laws.
2. The distribution of promotional material such as bright 'be seen' vests or drink bottles, wrist bands, etc. that deliver a simple message and reminder.
3. The delivery of radio or television advertisements targeting a locally relevant issue in driver behaviour.
4. Provision of free "bike registering" days where police register and provide serial numbers for bikes whilst promoting safe cycling.

### Recommendations:

1. *Council will allocate responsibilities for the delivery or facilitation of cycling and walking programs (as noted left) to various roles within Council and develop a walking and cycling internal working group to coordinate the Council response.*

### Suggested lead roles;

Walking School Bus/Walking Work Bus- Recreation/Sustainability  
Walk to Work and Ride Tow Work Days Recreation/Sustainability

Bike Ed in Schools- Recreation (advocacy)  
Boot and Bike Club- Recreation

Themed walking and riding programs- Community Wellbeing/Tourism

Local business Support- Economic Development/Tourism

2. *Council will work with and support other agencies such as Bicycle Victoria, VicRoads and Victorian Police to coordinate and promote education opportunities for cyclist, walkers and motorists.*

### 6.3 Providing Best Practice

As a community leader, the Hepburn Shire Council has the opportunity to undertake activities that can encourage behavioural change within its community. The following points provide some direction for Council on possible activities.

1. The use of Council bikes for moving between a workplace and a practical meeting destination or specific site should be considered.
2. The introduction of bike racks, secure bike lockers and shower facilities in Council offices should be highlighted as best practice and implemented for relevant Council facilities.
3. The Council Planning Scheme should provide regulations on subdivision or other development requirements for positive bias toward walkers and cyclists. This may include the provision of bike racks, design of trails and footpaths to ensure connectivity and active by design principles are being considered and met where deemed practical. (see Chapter 11 for more detail)
4. The Council local laws currently regulate footpath dining areas and signage requirements and this should be coupled with an awareness program for shop owners.
5. There may also be opportunity for Council staff to be involved in supporting interpretative walks in bushland or botanical garden areas as part of a walking program over the summer or spring periods.
6. Provision of training for staff in various key roles such as statutory planning, strategic planning, road design, recreation etc. should be undertaken to understand best practice and to coordinate roles and responsibilities of each officer across Council.

#### Recommendations:

1. Council to invest in two bikes for commuting between offices and meetings within Daylesford.
2. Provide bike racks at each Council office and look to implement shower facilities as practical.
3. Develop an Awareness Program for dining area and signage that encroach on footpaths or other thoroughfares to ensure compliance and education regarding Council local laws.
4. Provide Active Design Principles for inclusion or interpretation as part of the MSS to assist Council planners in considering cycling and walking.
5. Provide training opportunities for staff from roads and infrastructure and planning with regard to best practice delivery of cycling and walking infrastructure.



### 6.4 Promoting the Network

A number of excellent brochures have previously been developed either by interested locals or Council, promoting a variety of trails and walks both through bush and urban landscapes.

It is important to continue providing a themed and coordinated approach to the development of good mapping and signage for the easy navigation of a range of trails.

The development of mapping and signage should be done in conjunction with partners such as:

- Council officers based in recreation, transport, sustainability, tourism and other areas
- Local community groups with an interest (e.g. bushwalking groups, historical society etc.)
- Parks Victoria
- Victorian Mineral Water Committee
- Department of Planning and Community Development

Themes noted as raised throughout consultation include;

- Accessible 20-30 minute loop for those with mobility issues
- Accessible 20-30 min loop walks
- Mountain biking
- Historical Walks
- Natural Feature/Mineral Spring Walks

Consultation with communities indicated that walking and cycling loops are important to inform people of how long and how far a walk or ride to and from a destination may be.

One of the key trends for leisure participation is the preference for people to be able to walk around their local area for a 20-30 minute period and end up at their starting point in order to provide an enjoyable exercise option. This was reflected in the community consultation undertaken.



A variety of walking or riding brochures exist, generated by a range of stakeholders. Simple, low cost brochures with a consistent theme should be supported and encouraged by Council, in conjunction with other key partners.

# economic prosperity

## iconic trails

The Shire of Hepburn is well serviced with an extensive trail network, providing access to excellent bushland areas and magnificent historical and geographical assets. The key message from both inspection and consultation is that the *number* of trails is very high and users appreciate the natural beauty and recreation value of the assets provided however maintenance, signage and promotion are crucial in providing a great end product for both locals and visitors to the Shire.

This section provides a specific description of some suggested iconic trails, what exists and what may be required to improve the trail. Two of the trails discussed in this section represent new opportunities which currently only partially exist.

The trails discussed provide a mix of walking and mountain biking experiences and are generally expected to cater for users at a variety of fitness levels.

### 7.1 The Goldfields Track (Great Dividing Trail)

The Goldfields Trail, previously named The Great Dividing Trail, provides 300km of mapped and signed trails from Ballarat to Bendigo via Creswick & Daylesford, including the Lerderderg Track (Bacchus Marsh to Daylesford).

The track was originally designed for hiking although it is becoming increasingly popular as the links from village to village provide easy day or half day trips for competent cyclists.



Promotion of the track is occurring at present. This is an excellent opportunity for Council to consider (in conjunction with Parks Victoria and Tourism Victoria) the development of a feasibility study and business plan focussed on mountain bike trails in the Hepburn Shire.

With train stations available at Creswick, Castlemaine and Bendigo, the development of The Goldfields Track as a mountain bike destination that is easily accessible from Melbourne, should be explored. The capacity for V-Line to transport bikes on trains should be confirmed and promoted as part of the Goldfields Track website.

The development of loop trails for mountain bikes in Creswick is already being investigated through the School of Parks and Forestry. Use of trails in this area for mountain biking need to be formally approved through Parks Victoria or DSE as land managers. Further consideration of other loop trails in Daylesford should also be considered as part of developing a package that value adds to the existing marketing and development occurring for The Goldfields Trail.

The Goldfields Trail could be further enhanced by a link to Jubilee Lake – partially complete from Daylesford via East St, Italian Hill, Jubilee Lake to link at Sailors Falls, or return via Jubilee Lake Rd & King St to Daylesford. (Refer Attachment 1)

Key actions with regard to the Goldfields Track include;

- Cross promotion of other trails in and around the area as developed (e.g. Daylesford and Creswick mountain biking trail loops)
- Links to retail and local goods and services (e.g. Hepburn Spa, local traders, Lavandula etc.)
- Link with any local events (both cycling and other interests)
- Link other sites to the Goldfields Track site.
- Provide links to other organisations such as MTB Australia etc.



The Goldfields Track website (screenshot)

### Goldfields Track collaborative opportunities;

Cross promotion of local trails and events

Links to local produce, retail and lifestyle products and businesses

Link local and other websites to Goldfields Track website

Create physical connection between Goldfields Track and Daylesford, Jubilee Lake and Sailors Falls

Work with V-line to ensure and promote bikes being able to be transported on trains to key destinations

### The Domino Trail

The Domino Trail provides a gentle walk of around 10 kilometres from the now converted Trentham Railway Station to Domino Creek (and back). The trail is managed in partnership between local community and DSE.

The Trentham Railway Station is now the Visitor Information Centre for Trentham. It provides an excellent starting point for a number of potential trails that can provide walkers with both bushland and historical experiences in the area. The Domino Trail is the only well signed and promoted trail currently however potential exists for a trail network as noted in Attachment 2 of this strategy under the Trentham work plan.

The Domino Trail follows the old railway line that linked Daylesford to Carlsruhe. It represents the beginning of a potential rail trail that could link Trentham through to Lyonville and on to Daylesford. The possibilities and issues related to this much larger development are detailed in Section 7.4 of this study.

Small sections of the Domino Trail can be used to create walks to Trentham Falls and provide access to other trails through town (this requires approval from Parks Victoria).

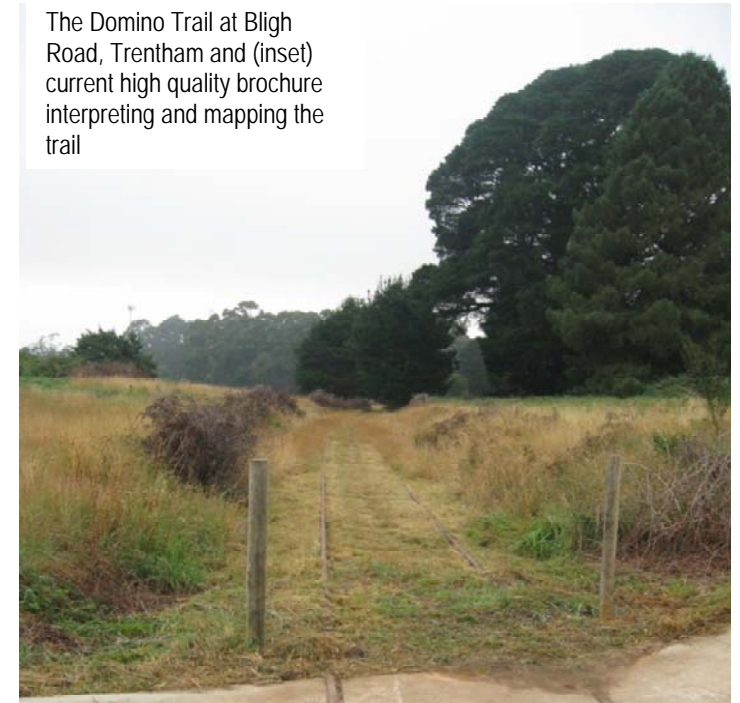
Council may play an ongoing role in assisting with maintenance of the Domino Trail however community involvement and enthusiasm is responsible for driving the development of the trail and this should be continued and supported in practical ways.

The supply of materials, consideration of funding submissions, support to undertake maintenance and communication from Council on funding options are all recommended.

The Trentham community have also proposed the development of The Wombat Trail, which would use part of The Domino Trail as a common starting point and then branch off creating a loop around Trentham, through recreation reserves and local bushland before ending back at the Visitor Information Centre, a common starting point with The Domino Trail.

This provides opportunity to create a loop trail series in Trentham which can develop as a tourist 'package' of relatively easy walks that could be completed over a day, each leading back to the Visitor Information Centre.

The Domino Trail at Bligh Road, Trentham and (inset) current high quality brochure interpreting and mapping the trail



#### Looking after our forests

- All wildlife and native plants are protected by law. Please do not disturb them in any way.
- Please don't feed the animals.
- All dogs must be on a leash. Cats are not permitted.
- Firearms are not permitted.
- You must carry out all your rubbish. Including those easy-to-forget items like silver paper, plastic wrappers and orange peel, which won't easily decompose.
- Let someone know before you go bushwalking. Tell them about your party, your route, when you plan to return and the equipment your party is carrying. Remember to contact them when you get back.



THE **Dominotrail**  
TRENTHAM

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## 7.2 Mineral Springs Walk (Hepburn and Daylesford)

The Mineral Springs Walks provide excellent access to the unique mineral springs areas around the municipality, particularly located near Lake Daylesford, Jubilee Lake and Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserves (HMSR).

The Mineral Springs themselves are managed and maintained by the Victorian Mineral Water Committee. A number of the Mineral Springs have been improved in recent years and represent a significant tourism attraction.

Good access to these areas should be supported and developed. Each of the three key areas listed above has some level of supporting trail network however the access to these trails and springs could be further improved in the following ways;

### 1. Improved signage

Further wayfinding signage should be installed at the Lake Daylesford loop walk which effectively marks the beginning of the Mineral Springs Walk at this location. Signage from the centre of Hepburn, clearly indicating access into the Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve should be located at strategic street corners.

### 2. Themed mapping and brochures

A single combined brochure, with mapping to locate the mineral springs should be developed in conjunction with the Victorian Mineral Springs Committee.

### 3. Improved linkage from townships of Daylesford and Hepburn

Each of the main mineral spring areas is close to tourist townships and further linkages that are as direct as possible from the town centres should be developed. Opportunity exists to develop a footbridge across Spring Creek to provide access directly into the path network in Hepburn Mineral Springs.



*Possible Spring Creek Crossing in the northern section of the Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve (HMSR)*

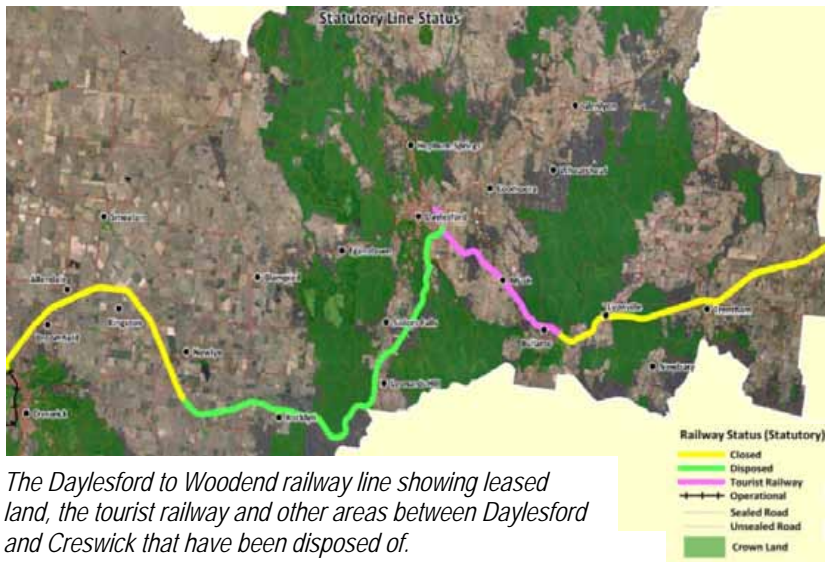


*Possible Hepburn Road crossing to provide access across to the HMSR*



#### Embankment at Wallaby Creek.

*These areas provide issues with locating a trail next to steep embankments with undulating geography. Detailed feasibility investigation is required.*



*The Daylesford to Woodend railway line showing leased land, the tourist railway and other areas between Daylesford and Creswick that have been disposed of.*

### 7.3 The Daylesford Woodend Rail Trail Proposal

The development of Rail Trails throughout Australia has seen redundant railway easements converted into relatively easily accessible walking and riding trails in many locations. Disused rail lines provide an ideal asset for a trail given they are constructed with low gradients, direct routes and often have structurally sound bridge infrastructure still in place.

The railway line from Daylesford through to Woodend is, for the most part, not used as a functional rail line. The only section currently used for rail is between Daylesford and Musk (with a further expected extension to Bullarto) by the Daylesford Spa Country Railway. This is a tourism focussed service with the aim of conserving the heritage values of the railway.

A proposal has been developed by the Central Highlands Rail Trail Working Group to investigate the conversion of this railway easement to a Rail Trail. At a distance of 44 kilometres it is expected that the capital investment may be up to \$5million (inclusive of state and federal funding opportunities).

Furthermore, a range of leases are in place over sections of the track and other uses (such as grazing, abovementioned tourist railway etc.) are currently underway.

In addition to this, there are an unknown number of bridges or embankments which may require repair or additional work in order to develop a fully accessible trail or readily suitable for a tourist market.

#### Benefits of a Rail Trail

The overwhelming driver for the development of rail trails is the economic impact that can be created at a very local level. A 2009 study showed that riders on the Murray to

Mountain Rail Trail in north-eastern Victoria are spending an average \$244 a day compared to the \$159 average spend of other travellers in the region.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.bv.com.au/general/bike-futures/92300/> Accessed 23-3-2011

The study provides strong evidence that recreational cyclists are a high yield, high spending market and provide numerous economic and social opportunities for regions. More than 70 per cent of riders in the study held professional and administrative positions, indicating comparatively high discretionary income. About 15 per cent were retired from the workforce.

A Rail Trail as envisaged between Daylesford and Macedon Ranges would provide opportunity for many smaller towns to develop economic activity through increased visitation and higher spend levels.

Rail trails have also increased in frequency and popularity given the following key factors;

- A safe, often direct path for people to walk or cycle to key destinations, or just to enjoy for the natural environment and .
- A measurable benefit to tourism and economic stimulus
- a pleasant experience even in hilly country given train lines the train lines required very low gradients.
- A long continuous natural heritage corridor (native vegetation rehabilitation is a major activity of committees of management or friends of groups).

Numerous towns are seeing an increase in demand for accommodation with trail visitors wanting accommodation ranging from camping to luxury B&Bs. Some businesses in towns are also beginning to cater in other ways such as offering bicycle hire and even pick-up services for those that only want to go one way. One of the most established and promotion oriented trails, the Murray to the Mountains connecting Wangaratta, Beechworth and Bright, is now offering visitor packages.<sup>11</sup>

### Investigating the feasibility of the Rail Trail

The development of a Rail Trail and the ongoing management and maintenance of the developed asset are complex and costly. A level of certainty and resolution are required in relation to such a development and agreement is required between numerous stakeholders in order to progress.

Issues that specifically need resolution in relation to the Daylesford-Woodend Rail Trail include the following;

1. Leasing arrangements and conflicts with current use
2. Funding and potential staging of the project
3. Ongoing management, risk mitigation and maintenance
4. Shared use with Daylesford Spa Country Railway

Discussion with VicTrack (landowners) provided the following key points of information;

- With regard to Rail Trails, all new agreement are being entered into are with Councils, given local community based Committees of Management are not proving sustainable with regard to funding and maintenance regimes
- Leasing arrangement pass the asset over to lessees who take complete responsibility for use and therefore take responsibility for managing all risks
- Risk mitigation plans are generally required for Rail Trails however this is no guarantee that individuals will not pursue compensation under common law.

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.railtrails.org.au/documents/Rail\\_Trail\\_Establishment\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.railtrails.org.au/documents/Rail_Trail_Establishment_Guidelines.pdf) Accessed 23-3- 2011

Discussions were also held with the Department of Transport regarding the management of existing rail services in conjunction with Rail Trails. Key points from this discussion include the following;

- Operations of the Daylesford Spa Country Railway are governed by the Tourist and Heritage Railway Act 2010 and the Rail Safety Act. The Daylesford Sap Country Railway must be accredited on a 26 point assessment which covers aspects such as risk mitigation, management planning and track inspections.
- Rail corridors can be made available for other uses and examples exist in Victoria of trails running alongside tourist railways (e.g. Bellarine Peninsula Rail Trail) and commuting railways in metropolitan and urban areas.
- Trail developments must be provided generally to reach Australian Standards for Trail Development and any rail or road crossing should meet Part 6 of the Austroads manual.
- Generally a 3 meter minimum buffer is required between a railway line and the edge of any proposed trail. Railway easements are generally 20 metres in width, thus providing opportunity to develop a trail.
- Embankments can create issues where the rail line runs along a steep embankment, potentially requiring boardwalks or other treatments to develop a trail along the same area.

This synopsis describes the benefits, opportunities and potential issues that require further clarification and detailing for this proposed project. It is recommended that a detailed feasibility study be undertaken in order to more fully explore and quantify the details of this particular project.

#### **Leasing arrangement and conflict with current uses**

*Over 20 separate leases are held along the rail line within Hepburn Shire boundaries and more exist as the line moves into Macedon Ranges Shire. These leases provide partly for tourist activity but also for grazing and commercial operations. A comprehensive investigation into the likelihood of ending these leases is required.*

#### **Funding and potential staging of the project**

*Both in terms of funding and the negotiation of leases, the staging of the project needs to be considered to provide options for development. Staging between Trentham - Lyonville, Lyonville - Daylesford, Trentham - Tylden and on to Woodend need to be considered with regard to their cost and complexity. An understanding of works required and resultant capital works needs to be undertaken. (i.e. where are bridges, crossings, diversions, boardwalks required)*

#### **Ongoing management, risk mitigation and maintenance**

*Historically, substantial funding opportunities have been made available (through RDV) for the construction of Rail Trails. Management and maintenance costs have then most commonly fallen to Councils. In this case VicTrack have indicated that all risk and liability would rest with the lessee.*

#### **Shared use with the Daylesford Spa Country Railway**

*The DSCR currently lease and use the railway line to run a weekend tourist based rail service from Daylesford to Musk, with definite plans to extend back to Bullarto. Provision of any rail trail in conjunction with the railway would need to meet stringent safety guidelines set out by VicTrack. This is achievable however the cost to do so is unknown, given some areas of the trail has challenging geography with steep embankments and gullies.*



#### 7.4 The Peace Mile Walk (Daylesford)

The Peace Mile is a short, well used loop trail around picturesque Lake Daylesford. Key requirements for improvements to the Peace Mile can be summarised as;

1. Provision of better access and signage from town centre with the completion of footpaths and bike lanes as well as signage to the trail.
2. Development of a separated pedestrian bridge at Bleakely Street
3. Development of a crossing at Bleakely Street to further trails to the south.

#### 7.5 Creswick Mountain Bike Trails Proposal

Initiated through the University Of Melbourne School Of Forestry, the Creswick Forest Trails concept aims to utilise existing trails to develop a series of loops aimed at local residents and mountain bike users of varying competency levels. Any development will need to involve sign off from land managers, PV and DSE.

At present the project is in a broad planning stage however it is proposed that further feasibility work and planning be undertaken to expand the concept. This provides the opportunity to develop mountain bike events utilising the proposed trails and developing partnerships with peak associations such as MTB Australia.

Given interest by mountain biking groups in areas of The Goldfields Track, it is recommended that a broader study be undertaken investigating the potential to create loop trails for mountain biking in Creswick and Daylesford with the linkage between the two townships of the Goldfields Track being promoted.

#### Creswick Mountain Bike Trail Proposal

Key Stakeholders:

- University of Melbourne
- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Parks Victoria
- Hancocks Victorian Plantations
- Shire of Hepburn
- City of Ballarat
- Novotel Forest Resort
- International Mountain Bike Association
- Community Organisations

Conceptual structure of trail package:

- Community Connections (10 – 15km – multiple use)
  - Easy trails connecting existing infrastructure
  - Opportunities for other passive activities
- Event Central (20-25km – multiple and single use)
  - Easy to hard trails for Running and Mountain Bike Events (partner opportunities with likes of MTB Australia, Orienteering etc.)
- Forest Adventures (80-120km – multiple and single use)
  - Easy to hard trails for Mountain Biking and Hiking
- Sustaining Trails (2-5km)
  - Trails to educate on good trail design in natural settings.

## 7.6 Other Regional Trails and Partnerships

Other regionally significant trail opportunities exist. The Cobb and Co Trail<sup>12</sup> for example is proposed between Ballarat and Maryborough, taking in the historic township of Clunes and travelling to the west of Creswick.

This type of opportunity should be pursued in order to develop trails with cross municipal linkages that;

- provide opportunity to develop greater tourism benefit
- develop infrastructure in a shared network
- create more collaboration between major townships, benefitting key towns and rural villages in between
- create opportunity to promote local good, culture and heritage to trail users.

Key partnerships should be pursued with the following municipalities;

Macedon Ranges Shire (Daylesford-Woodend Rail Trail)  
Mount Alexander Shire (Goldfields Track)  
City of Ballarat (Goldfields Track, Events, Cobb and Co Trail)  
Central Goldfields Shire (Cobb and Co Trail)

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<sup>12</sup> Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Trails Strategy, Loddon Mallee Trails Network, August 2010, p.96-97.

# economic prosperity tourism and marketing

## 8.1 Wellbeing and Trails

Tourism is a major contributor to the economic activity in the Hepburn Shire. Daylesford and Hepburn Springs are major destinations marketed at a state level as “a village dedicated to wellbeing that provides nourishment for the mind, body and soul...”<sup>13</sup>

Access to the mineral springs along well maintained and accessible paths is a crucial ingredient in this product mix.

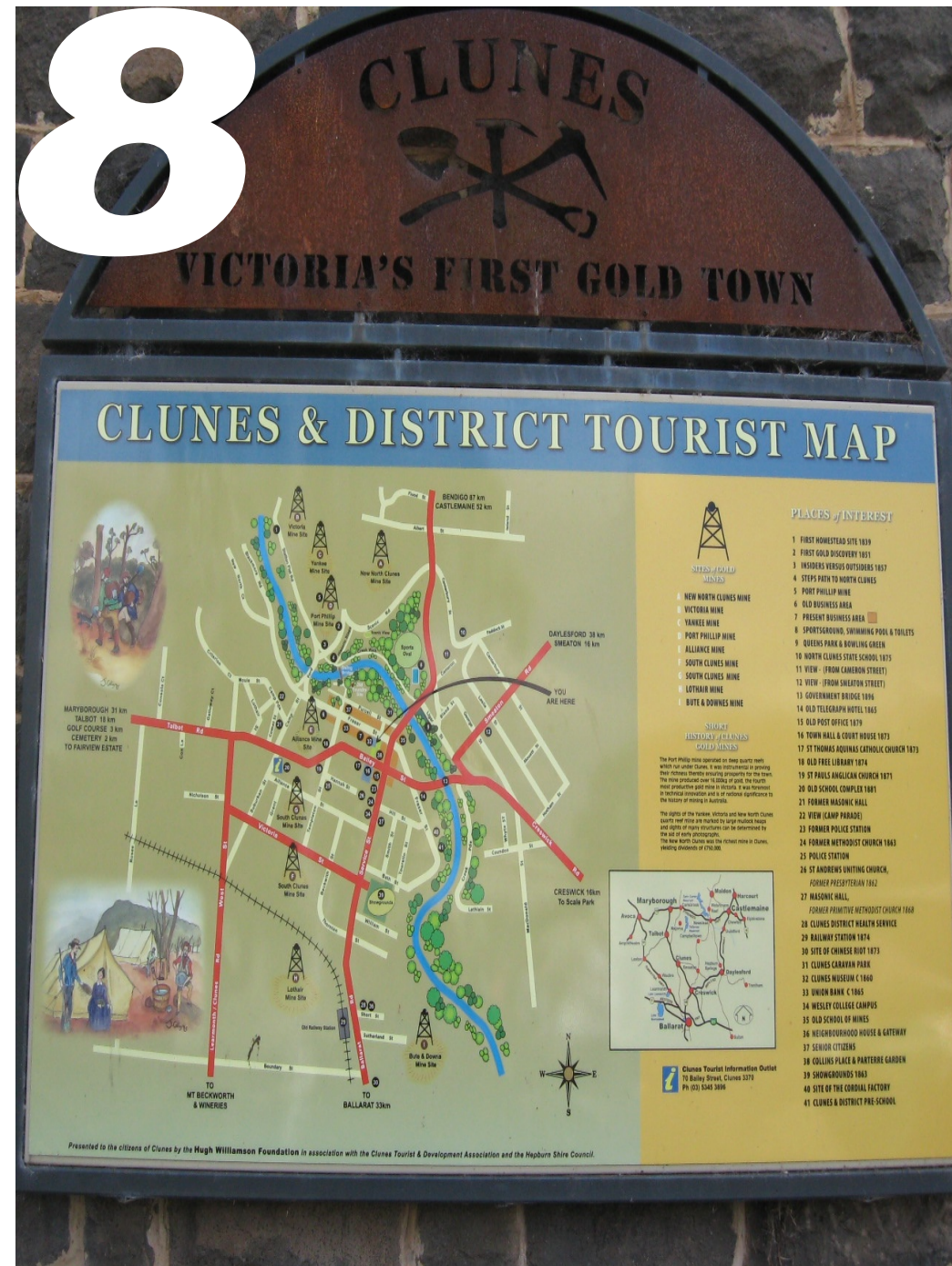
Marketing provided through Tourism Victoria contrasts purifying natural springs and geothermal waters with decadent local produce and luxury accommodation.

*The image is one of escaping (nearby) Melbourne to slow down, relax and participate in gentle activities that rejuvenate the mind and body.*

This is particularly relevant to the Daylesford and Hepburn regions and has a strong connection to quality footpaths and trails that ensure pedestrians are considered a priority.

In this sense, the trails and footpaths are a means to an end, providing access to natural settings, scenic vistas and key spa destinations. They provide a relaxing and peaceful experience for users in keeping with the rejuvenation image being supported and promoted as part of the Victoria marketing campaign.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.tourism.vic.gov.au/marketing/marketing/daylesford-and-the-macedon-ranges/>



### 8.2 New Trail Opportunities

Seemingly at the other end of the spectrum, the development of a mountain biking package is also of considerable value. Broad planning has been undertaken by the Victorian School of Forestry (Creswick) into an exciting opportunity to develop a series of Mountain Bike Forest Trails using existing trail assets in the Creswick Regional Park and State Forest. Recent articles in the nationally distributed Australian Mountain Bike magazine have highlighted the unique nature of the Hepburn Shire area highlighting connections to the much larger Goldfields Track.

A recent state government grant of \$500,000 has assisted in resigning and website development for the Goldfields Track and this should be capitalised upon with a renewed interest in this asset and the unique qualities of both loop trails and inter-town trail opportunities.

### 8.3 Events

The development of a MTB Australia endorsed mountain biking event is expected to be a great opportunity arising from the development of these tracks and Council should support this development with resources and business planning. Securing a major event in Creswick that may also involve Daylesford would be a logical step forward with the proposed Creswick trail development.

Other events such as road races or time trials may also be an option. Hosting a leg of a tour may be an option worth considering as much support can be provided by event organisers in the first instance. Lower level, accessible 'fun rides' or walks can also be developed to support these key events.

Daylesford and Macedon Ranges Tourism Inc. provides an excellent avenue for the promotion and marketing of trails as well as businesses related to walking and cycling. Advocacy to both Tourism Victoria and Parks Victoria in a coordinated manner should be a priority.

#### Recommendations:

1. Test the feasibility of the Daylesford to Woodend Rail Trail with a proposed first stage from Trentham to Lyonville (includes repairs to the Coliban Bridge)
2. Council to provide support to a feasibility study/business plan for the development of a Mountain Bike Trails package incorporating The Goldfields Track, Creswick loop trails and Daylesford loop trails.
3. Coordinate funding opportunities sought by partnering land managers and tourism agencies.
4. Consistently theme mapping material and signage to support trails
5. Advocate and drive the coordinated marketing and development of existing trail network between agencies (Parks Victoria, Tourism Victoria)
6. With DSE and Parks Victoria, Council will develop a coordinated set of maps that define geographical extent of maintenance responsibilities for each land manager.
7. Undertake business planning exercise to analyse 'best prospects' for cycling or running events (Mountain Bike or road cycling)
8. Build relationships and collaborative partnerships with peak organisations such as MTB Australia to capitalise on potential event development.
9. Land Managers to discuss and develop a broad set of maintenance guidelines and standards that are applicable to the trails under their management control
10. Investigate funding opportunities for innovative online solutions such as mapping, GPS applications, websites and podcasts.

### Regional Tourism Partnerships

As noted in the previous section, the value of collaborating with neighbouring Councils to develop a regional approach to trail development, management and promotion is crucial.

It is recommended that neighbouring municipalities and tourism bodies be engaged through this and other key strategic documents relating to trail development and it's link to tourism and marketing of the region as a whole.

Key actions that should be noted as being of regional significance include;

- Feasibility study for Daylesford to Woodend Rail Trail (and potential to extend to Creswick and Ballarat)
- Creswick Mountain Bike Trails Feasibility Study and how this links in to the wider region
- Creating a collaborative approach to the Goldfields Track marketing
- Daylesford Mountain Bike Trails and opportunity to link to the Goldfields Track
- Cobb and Co Trail development from Ballarat to Maryborough, taking in Clunes and potentially Creswick

These key actions form the basis for the development of partnerships with a number of neighbouring Councils as noted in the previous section.

The development of a representative group to manage the strategic marketing and development of cross regional trails should be strongly supported as a sustainable management model. This should include local government, state government and tourism industry representatives.



The Goldfields Track, providing regional linkage and benefits. Other regional cycling and walking assets need to be planned developed and managed by an appropriate, representative management group.

(Goldfields Track website screenshot)