

Active Trails



A Strategy for Regional Trails in South East Queensland



Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation Inc
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Overview

Recreation trails range from urban bicycle paths to canoe trails on rivers to rugged hinterland trails which, when combined, can provide for activities including walking, horse riding, cycling, driving, canoeing/kayaking and trail bike riding. Use of recreation trails by residents and visitors has quantifiable benefits in physical and psychological health, social and environmental terms. Research from Australia and overseas shows significant tourism and economic benefits derived from recreation on trails. These benefits include expenditure in rural and regional areas, return visits and increased overnight stays by domestic and international tourists.

Historical Context

The South East Queensland Regional Trails Strategy (SEQRTS) project developed following a long period of consideration by State and local governments of the implications of rapid population growth in south-east Queensland (SEQ). As a consequence, the Regional Landscape Strategy Advisory Committee (RLSAC) commissioned a regional recreation trails study, a Regional Trails Forum and, subsequently a Regional Trails Working Group for SEQ resulting in the publication in 2001 of the Regional Trails Discussion Paper. The RLSAC endorsed further action to facilitate the development of a SEQ Regional Trails Strategy.

A considerable amount of trails planning and construction has been undertaken in SEQ with more than \$12 million expenditure on trails planning and development since 2002. As a consequence there are more than 600 regional and district trails, with a total length of some 3000 kilometres, which offer a great variety of opportunities. However, these trails do not form a cohesive integrated network. Trails within SEQ have been developed across single or multiple tenures, including those managed by State and local government agencies and private freehold landowners. Regardless of the public or private nature of the land ownership and/or trail operation, the planning, construction and management of trails and the regulation of trail-users is subject to a complex combination of laws, policies, approval processes and planning and management responsibilities involving all three levels of government.

However, at present, there is no effective co-ordination of recreation trails legislation, policy, planning, development or management. No State government agency has sole responsibility for outdoor recreation generally or for co-ordinating recreation trails planning, development and/or management. There is no effective regional level co-ordination between the State government agencies and/or local governments involved in recreation trail planning, construction, activity regulation and management. Each State government agency and each local government has developed a unique approach to



each of these matters. Because there is no effective co-ordination between agencies, inconsistencies exist across a number of areas which impact upon trails planning, development and management.

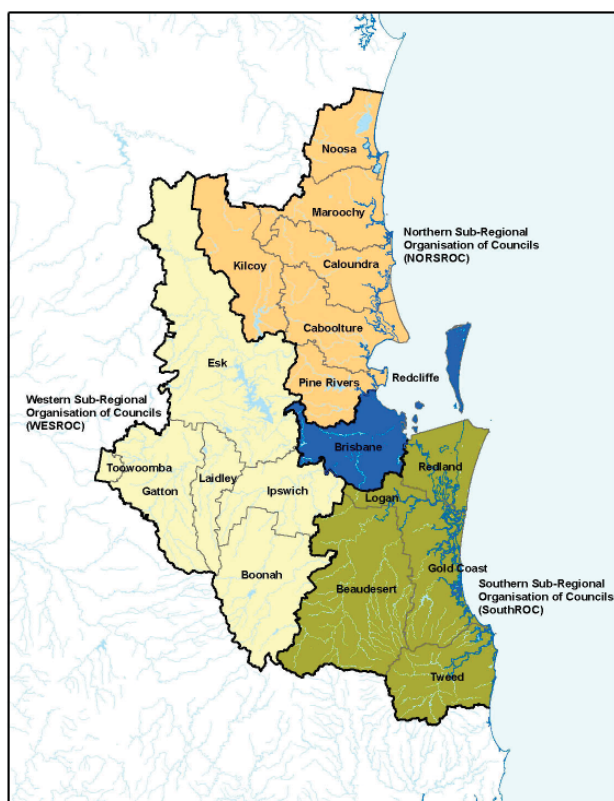
Strategy Purpose, Scope and Outcomes

Purpose

The Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF), as Project Managers, has developed the SEQRTS for the Council of Mayors (SEQ), (formerly the South East Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils) and four Queensland Government agencies (Health, Sport and Recreation Queensland, Natural Resources, Mines and Water and the Environmental Protection Agency). The purpose of the SEQRTS is to inform and guide future investment in recreation trail planning, development and management. The desired long-term outcome of the SEQRTS project is to facilitate the development of a network of regional and district trails for all trail-dependant recreational uses - built, managed and promoted as a high quality regional network providing an outstanding and appropriate diversity of opportunities for trail users.

Scope

The focal area for the SEQRTS is the 18 local governments that constitute the Council of Mayors (SEQ) together with the Tweed Shire in northern New South Wales as this area provides recreation trail links to SEQ. In addition, the regional recreation trail opportunities and developments in adjacent local authority areas (in both Queensland and northern New South Wales) were considered.





The SEQRTS project:

- focused on recreation trails planning and management across urban, rural production landscapes and natural landscapes;
- addressed a broad range of trails-related recreational activities;
- had an emphasis on the benefits to the outdoor recreation participants (rather than commercial enterprises and tourists); and
- focused on identifying the regionally significant recreation trails, and the long-term institutional arrangements for planning, developing and managing a regional network of existing and future trails.

For the SEQRTS, a recreation trail is any clearly defined track, trail, corridor, route or path, which can be used by persons with the appropriate knowledge, fitness and skills held or rapidly attainable by most people.

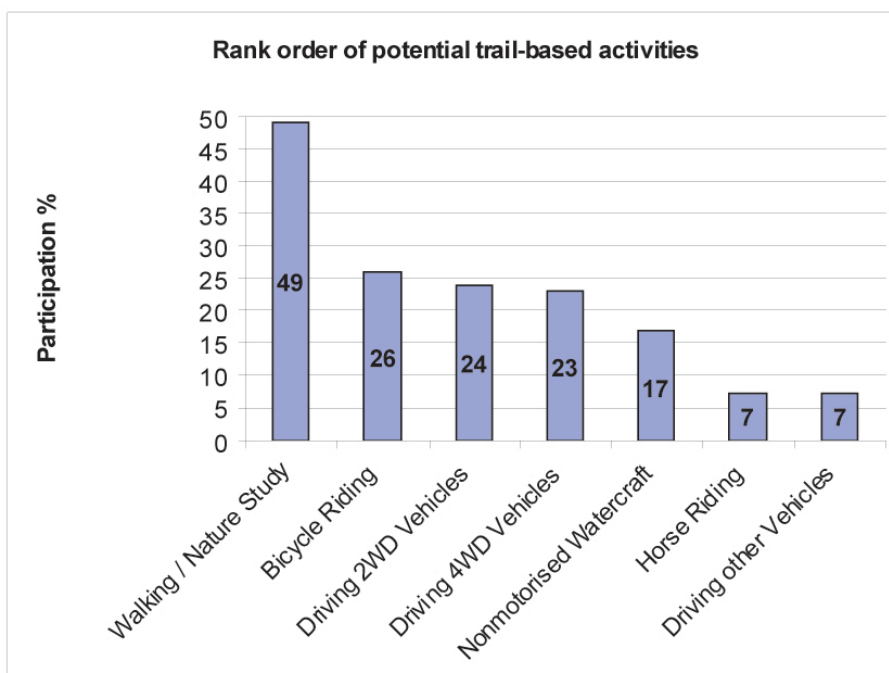
The scope of the SEQRTS project was on the identification of possible trail alignments external to protected areas such as national parks and conservation parks. The SEQRTS identifies potential trails on publicly accessible land, not private land (except where trails on private land have been identified in endorsed local government trail plans).

The SEQRTS does not specifically address:

- the development of alternative horse trails where State forests are being transferred to national parks as part of the SEQ Forests Agreement;
- sites for trail bike riding in SEQ, as joint State and local government funded projects have been investigating the complex issues associated with the planning of suitable new sites for the variety of trail bike disciplines;
- the approximate 10,600 km of continuous roads and tracks within plantation areas in State forests, due to uncertainties about recreation management arrangements to apply in these areas under the proposed commercialisation of plantation forests.

The identification of new trails within the SEQRTS was demand driven, based on the participation rates within the various trail-based outdoor activities¹ (walking, cycling, horse riding, canoeing/kayaking, driving cars, driving four-wheel drive vehicles and riding trail bikes).

¹ Based on the further analysis of the South East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Demand Study 2001 data



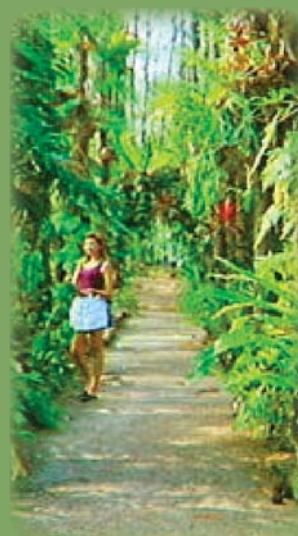
Research and activities² undertaken in the preparation of the SEQRTS included:

- a comprehensive analysis of trail supply, consumption and demand based on demographic data and projections for 2021 populations of SEQ at sub-regional level;
- development of a regional Recreation Trails Inventory for SEQ;
- identification of potential new regionally significant trails;
- identification of impediments to the development of trails;
- identification of practical and innovative administrative, legislative and operational mechanisms to expand the range of lands available for recreational trails, and to facilitate the co-operative management of trails; and
- development of options for the institutional arrangements to deliver, maintain and promote the network of multi-jurisdictional regional recreation trails.

Outcomes

The concept of regional trails is now enshrined within SEQ regional planning processes through Principle 3.4 of the SEQ Regional Plan to “Provide a range of enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities to meet the diverse needs of the community and enhance the livability of the region” and within Policy 3.4.1 to “Establish and maintain a network of accessible outdoor recreation areas, including regional parks, trails and waterways, as well as private lands with the voluntary agreement of landowners” (Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation 2005, p.40). The

² Data collated as part of this research is available in four SEQRTS Technical Reports (QORF 2006)





SEQRTS details how the SEQ Regional Plan policy for recreation trails could be achieved but raises issues for State and local government, which need to be addressed. The SEQRTS will complement other initiatives of the SEQ Regional Plan such as the proposed Regional Outdoor Recreation Strategy referred to in Policy 3.4.3 (scheduled for development during 2006) and the Regional Open Space Network (Principle 3.5).

The SEQRTS detailed on the following pages includes an outline of key issues and some recommendations relevant to:

- population growth and future demand for trails;
- a Recreation Trails Inventory and trail supply;
- new regional trail proposals;
- impediments to trails development in SEQ; and
- institutional arrangements for regional trails in SEQ.

There are also a number of strategic conclusions and directions from the SEQRTS project as a whole.

This Strategy is accompanied by a Project Report and four supporting Technical Reports:

- *Review of Recreation Participation and Demand Studies for Trail-based Recreation Activities*: Technical Report No 1 to the SEQ Regional Trails Strategy;
- *Inventory of Recreation Trails in and around SEQ and a Summary of Trail Availability in SEQ*: Technical Report No 2 to the SEQ Regional Trails Strategy;
- *Development of a Strategic Trail Assessment Methodology*: Technical Report No 3 to the SEQ Regional Trails Strategy;
- *Review of Considerations Applicable to Recreational Trails Planning, Development and Management in SEQ*: Technical Report No 4 to the SEQ Regional Trails Strategy.

Further information on the SEQRTS project is available from:

- The Office of Urban Management
Telephone: 1800 021 818
or email your enquiry to enquiry@oum.qld.gov.au
- The Council of Mayors (SEQ) website
www.councilofmayorsseq.qld.gov.au

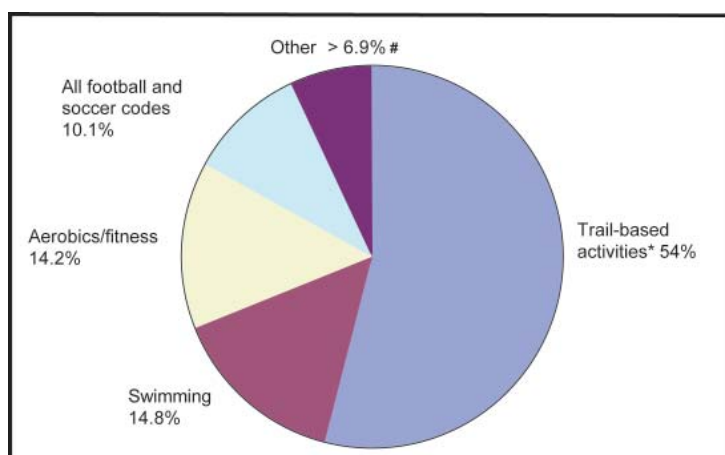
Population Growth and Future Demand for Trails

The population of SEQ is predicted to rise from 2,464,640 in 2001 to 3,709,174 in 2026³, an increase of 151% while the number of outdoor recreation activity-events⁴ in SEQ will rise from 53 million in 2001 to 90 million in 2026, an increase of 171% (based on the 2001 age class patterns of activity preference, participation and frequency)⁵. Thus, in the next 25 years, growth in recreational demand is conservatively predicted to be 10% greater than population growth due to the ageing of the population.

Trails create places for the community to exercise at low cost to participants. Participating in physical activity can help alleviate stress and anxiety, contributing to people's sense of wellness, and, ultimately, reduce demands on the health budget.

The change in percentages of each age class within each local government authority between 2001 and 2026, coupled with the recreation preferences of those different age classes (and the possibility of new preference patterns emerging) as well as an increasing emphasis on a "fit and active lifestyle" suggests that considerable planning effort needs to be expended on the provision of trails in SEQ to meet the demands of the future residents.

A comparison of the 2004 Queensland participation rates for trail-based activities with those of the next highest participation rates.



Participation in multiple activities results in a total participation rate of >100%.

* Includes walking for exercise, cycling (including BMX and mountain bikes), bushwalking, horse riding

Source: Australian Sports Commission (2004) ⁶

³ Planning Information Forecasting Unit, 2003

⁴ Recreation activity events include non trail-based outdoor activities such as water activities, abseiling, rockclimbing and picnicking

⁵ Based on the further-analysis of the South East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Demand Study 2001 data and the Planning Information Forecasting Unit data

⁶ Australian Sports Commission (2004). *Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) Annual Report*. Australian Sports Commission





Walking is dominant in the older age classes and cycling ranks as the second most common activity involving moderate or higher physical exertion. These data suggest the highest investments in trails should be made for cycling and walking in urban, rural and natural areas. In particular, the emerging needs of mountain bike riders should be addressed as a matter of priority with the rapidly increasing mountain bike sales and usage.

To optimise the benefits of such investment, multi-use trails that cater for activities which are usually compatible with walking and cycling (eg. horse riding) can be developed. A strategic approach to recreation trail development and management across the region will also help address problems in supplying opportunities for trail bike riding and horse riding. This need is particularly pressing in SEQ due to rapid population growth, consequent urban expansion, lack of sufficient publicly accessible land and the SEQ Forests Agreement and the resultant displacement of some recreation activities from the newly created national parks brought about by tenure changes.

Completion of the SEQRTS highlighted the need for another SEQ Outdoor Recreation Demand Study in 2006. It is particularly important that all aspects of demand (effective, latent, induced, diverted, substituted) be investigated. Furthermore, it would be beneficial if there was greater consistency in definitions associated with the collection of outdoor recreation demand and participation data. Greater consistency could be achieved with:

- an agreed definition of outdoor recreation activities (including variations/disciplines within activities);
- consistent definitions of outdoor recreation “participation”; and
- a uniform definition of age classes (based on those used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and/or the Planning Information and Forecasting Unit).

Preferably, consistency should be achieved through a national approach for example, through the Sport and Recreation Ministers’ Council (SRMC) and the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport Research Group. Nationally, lobbying should be undertaken to recommend the collection of data by the ABS in sub-categories of classifications to enable aggregation and disaggregation to specific outdoor recreation activity and discipline levels.

Future outdoor recreation participation, demand and/or user surveys could be further enhanced through:

- differentiation of data from Australian, Queensland and local residents as well as Australian and international tourists;
- investigation of the concept of “recreation succession” as it applies to trails used by both residents and tourists;
- inclusion of the concept of Scenic Preference, as well as the utilised and preferred settings (urban to wilderness);
- investigation of trail usage preferences (eg. short walks, day

walks, overnight walks);

- focused surveys of participants in outdoor recreation specific activities as well as random polls to obtain comprehensive data on participation and demand; and
- improved consistency via a reduction in sampling errors caused by factors such as specific precincts, seasonal/weekend participation, participation by individuals under 15 year of age, etc. not currently taken into consideration.

Funding programs (eg. Sport and Recreation Queensland's Local Government Development Program) should encourage trails planning and development in the context of local, district and regional supply and demand and the benefits of connecting trails.



Recreation Trails Inventory and Supply

Prior to the SEQRTS project, no comprehensive compilation of recreation trails in SEQ was available. Trails within the project study area are located on a variety of lands and tenures, including:

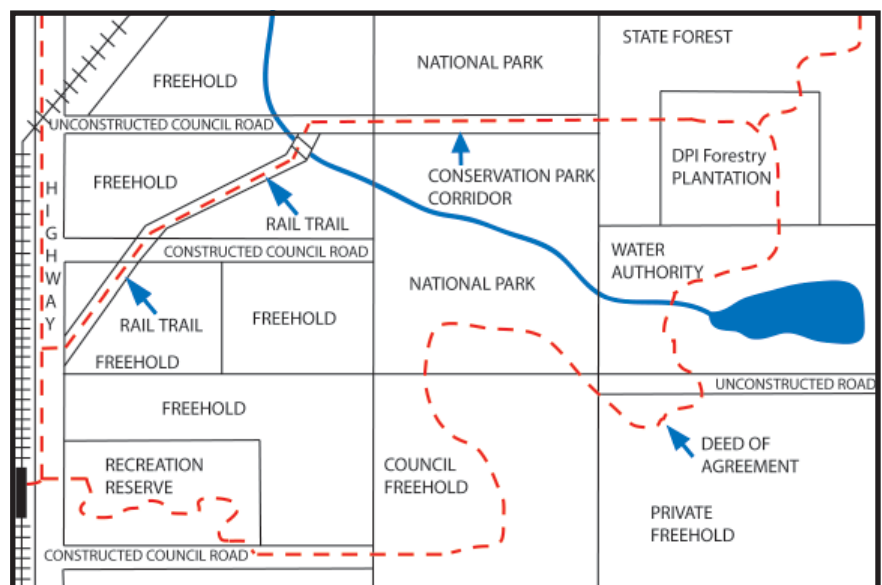
- roads
- rivers and creeks
- various reserves for community purposes
- national parks
- conservation parks
- forest reserves
- State forests
- other State lands (eg. non-rail transport corridor).

These trails are managed in whole or in part by a number of different government agencies, including:

- 19 local government authorities (LGAs)
- Queensland Environmental Protection Agency (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service)
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
- DPI Forestry business unit of the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries

The number of different State government agencies and local governments responsible for trails planning, development and management meant that collation of recreation trail data within the SEQRTS project was problematic with many inconsistencies in regard to naming conventions, classification, signage, marketing and promotional material.

Diagrammatic representation of a possible regional trail, indicating the diversity of land managers



In total, 3100 kilometres of existing trails (in the district to regional categories) are itemised in the Inventory, including:

- 2550 kilometres of walking trails
- 680 kilometres of shared pathways (recreational cycleways)
- 957 kilometres of mountain bike trails
- 800 kilometres of horse trails
- 50 kilometres of two wheel drive trails
- 340 kilometres of four wheel drive trails
- 320 kilometres of trail bike trails
- 83 kilometres of canoe trails
- 1600 kilometres of shared/multi-use trails⁷

Information was gathered and collated from State and local government websites, various leaflets and booklets, trails planning reports and from publications on outdoor recreation in and around SEQ and northern NSW. Some trails were ground-truthed or described during fieldwork.

The Recreation Trails Inventory that has been developed as part of the SEQRTS should be incorporated into the data collection associated with the Regional Outdoor Recreation Strategy and the Regional Open Space Network. Consideration must be given to key aspects such as:

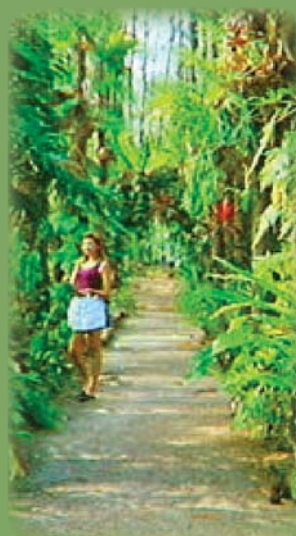
- the type and format of Inventory most suited to the needs of government and non-government stakeholders and outdoor recreation participants;
- the location of the Inventory data;
- rights to control and have access to the Inventory data; and
- the validity, accuracy and responsibility for maintaining currency of data.

The Recreation Trails Inventory currently lists predominantly district and regional trails. In the future, it would be beneficial to incorporate data on all categories of SEQ recreation trails (local, district and regional) in the Recreation Trails Inventory to enable more effective and efficient recreation trail planning and development and physical activity planning.

In order to develop and maintain such an Inventory, it would be essential for SEQ local governments, in consultation with relevant State agencies, to develop consistent trails-related terminology, cognisant of systems used throughout Australia for trails planning and development and national standards, where they exist.

Other strategies that would greatly assist in the preparation of

⁷ Length of trail for each activity includes both single-use and multi-use trails. Total length of multi-use trails (1555km) is the total length of trails available for two or more activities.





consistent, comprehensive and accurate data concerning trails supply in SEQ include:

- future preparation/collation of trails-related data in a consistent manner to enable application of the concept of travel time extent data and the spatial representation of trail locations;
- provision of a clear indication of the status of the included trails (eg. existing, scheduled, proposed but unscheduled, conceptual, shared vs. separated [exclusive] use) in future trails strategies/ plans developed by all local government authorities and Queensland Government agencies; and
- development of consistent representations of infrastructure terminology (eg. footpaths, pathways, shared pathways, cyclepaths) and how these are represented spatially in terms of geometric forms (eg. lines, polygons, buffered strips) to enable easier compilation of Geographic Information System (GIS) data across the region.

Specifically, future trails developed by local governments and Queensland Government agencies should require trail descriptions using consistent terminology describing:

- trail classification and trail surface;
- trail user catchment/significance or category (local, district, regional);
- type of trail – return, one-way, loop circuit; class of trail;
- level of difficulty/skill requirements and significant hazards;
- uses (eg. single/multi use, cycling and/or mountain biking);
- recreation setting (eg. using landscape classification and scenic amenity preference classes).

New Regional Trails Proposals

The Trails Assessment process developed as part of the SEQRTS project offers a methodology to assess a potential regional trail's suitability against the following four principles and their associated criteria:

- protection of environmental, scenic, cultural and recreational amenity values during trail development and use;
- feasibility of trail development, management and use;
- provision of high quality recreation opportunities; and
- provision of net community benefits.

It is recommended that the SEQRTS Trail Assessment criteria and methodology be adopted for use in all future regional trails development in SEQ and be used to guide identification of additional regionally significant trails⁸.

The development and promotion of a network of regionally significant recreation trails in SEQ can only be achieved if consistent terminology is adopted. It is proposed that the definitions of non-motorised trail categories and criteria developed through the SEQRTS project be adopted for use in all future trails related projects conducted by both State and local government. One way in which consistency could be achieved is for all relevant State government agencies and local governments to commit to the adoption of the trail definitions and trail assessment criteria and methodology and the use of Australian or international Standard Trail/Track Classification systems (where they exist).

Proposed New Highly Ranked Priority Regional Trails

Within the trail identification processes used for the SEQRTS, the Trail Assessment methodology enables the identification and evaluation of short and medium term trail possibilities as well as future long-term trail development opportunities. In the identification of potential new regionally significant trails, the following types of opportunities were recognised:

- SEQRTS Proposed New Priority Regional Trail
- SEQRTS Potential Trail Alignment
- SEQRTS Future Option Trail Alignment
- SEQRTS Potential link or re-alignment for the Bicentennial National Trail

The development of the SEQRTS has led to the identification of a number of potential new regional and district trails within SEQ. Using the Trail Assessment process and the criteria mentioned above, nine of these proposed trails have been highly ranked and are considered

⁸ Refer *Development of a Strategic Trail Assessment Methodology*: Technical Report No 3 to the SEQ Regional Trails Strategy (QORF 2006)

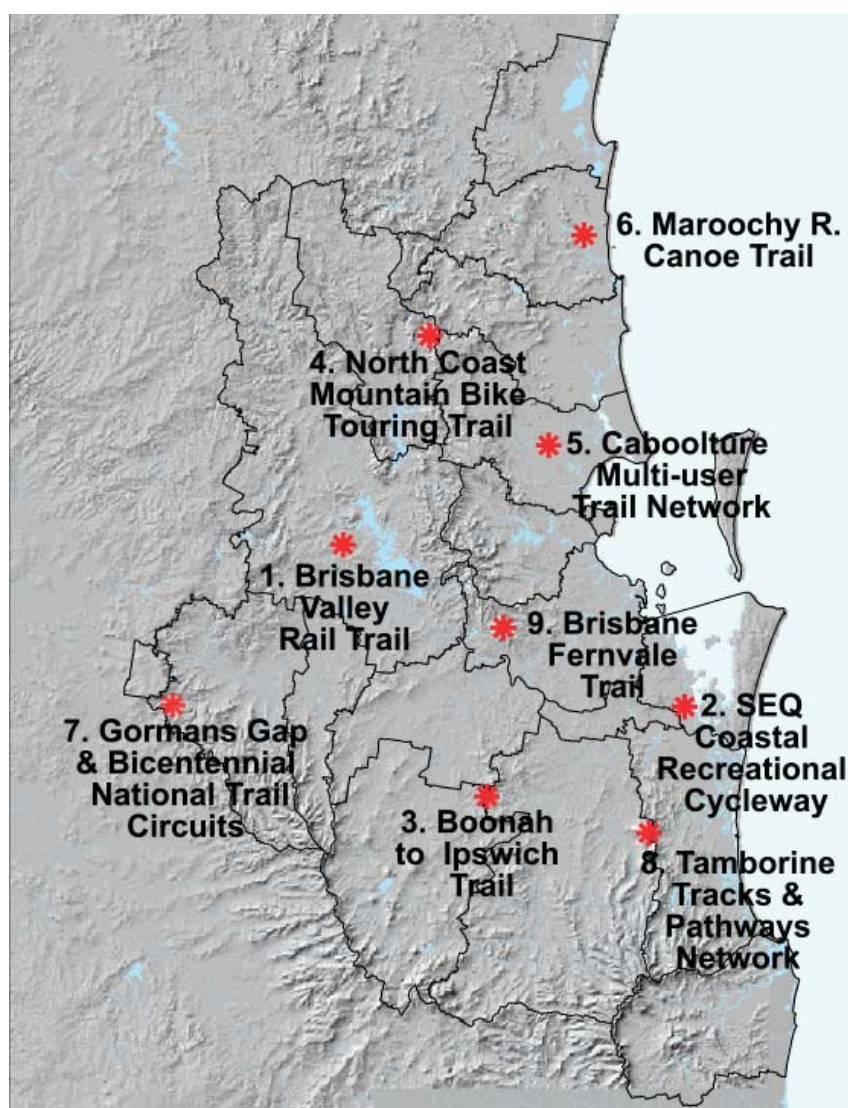




to have the potential to be regionally significant. These trails are:

- Brisbane Valley Rail Trail;
- South East Queensland Coastal Recreational Cycleway (Bribie Island to NSW);
- Boonah to Ipswich Multi-User Recreation Trail;
- North Coast Mountain Bike Touring Trail;
- Caboolture Multi-User Trail Network;
- Maroochy River Canoe Trail;
- Gormans Gap Track and Bicentennial National Trail Circuits;
- Tamborine Tracks and Pathways Network; and
- Brisbane City to Fernvale Recreation Trail.

The nine proposed priority regional trails provide opportunities within all SEQ local government areas except Laidley and Noosa Shires. The proposed trails offer recreational opportunities for walkers, cyclists, mountain bikers, horse trail riders, canoeists and include multi-use trails as well as trails with universal mobility access (refer Appendix 1 for detailed descriptions of each proposed trail).



The first five trails could be developed over the next five years provided that adequate resources can be allocated. The remaining four trails with the potential to become 'regionally significant' meet a more limited recreational user demand and/or are feasible but not ready for immediate commencement, although it is essential that the trail corridors be secured and retained to maintain the option for future development.

Other Potential New Trail Alignments

The SEQRTS Trail Assessment methodology enables the identification and evaluation of future opportunities. A number of potential new regional trails (in addition to the nine described above) have been identified and proposed. Detailed descriptions and maps of these alignments are provided in the *Inventory of Recreation Trails in and around SEQ* and a *Summary of Trail Availability in SEQ*: Technical Report No 2 to the SEQ Regional Trails Strategy (QORF 2006). These proposed trails are indicative future alignments and future options and may not be feasible for construction in the immediate future, either because of current restricted demand or because of land access issues. Each potential trail corridor has been highlighted for consideration in local and regional planning to encourage preservation of the alignment. An example of a Potential Trail Alignment is the Boonah to Maroon link to the Bicentennial National Trail. An example of a Future Option Trail Alignment is the Helidon to Toowoomba rail trail, contingent on relocation of the existing rail line into a new tunnel as proposed in the SEQ Infrastructure Plan and Program 2005-2026.

A number of proposed new trails throughout the study area linking to the Bicentennial National Trail have also been investigated in the SEQRTS.

New Trail Concepts: Rural Landscape Treks and Rambles

To date in SEQ there has been limited consideration of the values and application of the European and United Kingdom models of the use of mosaics of rural, cultural and forested landscapes as well as urban and natural areas for recreation trails. Some of the key requirements for such a 'whole of landscape' recreational experience may include:

- recreational benefits based on enjoyment, rewards and achievements associated with the trip (scenic values of the wider rural, natural and 'mixed' landscapes, European and Indigenous cultural history, industrial and architectural heritage, natural history, and varying degrees of physical challenges);
- a defined but flexible route with alternative sections and access to 'trip support' options, such as public transport or commercial operators associated with the route;
- appropriate and rewarding recreational settings (eg. not immediately adjacent to motorways, reasonable track surface





- such as mown grass);
- appropriate facilities (including track marking, accommodation options, toilets, water);
- a range of user options (backpack campers to carried-luggage, catered walkers); and
- broad community support (flexible land use zoning, neighbour tolerance, in-kind contributions, potential for local economic benefits).

In SEQ, there are several districts with potential recreational rewards for the development of 'Rural Landscape Treks' extending over several days between locations that, in general, are easily accessible by public transport [eg. the SEQ Great Escarpment (northern - Yandina, Cooloolabin, Palmwoods link, Mapleton, Maleny, Landsborough link, Peachester, Woodford)]. Many potential day-trips offering similar rewarding experiences, in the mixed range of rural, developed and natural settings that comprise the 'Rural Landscape Ramble' concept are also available based around public transport (eg. from Grandchester to Laidley via Cunninghams Lookout and the unconstructed section of Ryan Road immediately adjacent to the historic Victoria Tunnel through the Little Liverpool Range)⁹.

⁹ Further examples and maps are provided in the Technical Report No 2 to the SEQRTS entitled *Inventory of Recreation Trails in and around SEQ and a Summary of Trail Availability in SEQ* (QORF 2006).

Impediments to Trails Development in SEQ

A number of constraints and impediments to the development of a network of regional trails have been identified which impact upon one or several of the following:

- access to trails and access to land for trails;
- trails planning;
- co-ordination of trails planning;
- land use planning;
- identification and security (protection from other uses) of regional trail corridors;
- trails construction;
- maintenance of trails (both within a tenure and across different tenures and/or different land managers);
- management of trails (both within a tenure and across different tenures and/or different land managers);
- funding for trails and associated infrastructure and services (both for development and management/ maintenance); and
- marketing and promotion of trails.

These issues and constraints have been brought about by a range of different factors including:

- SEQ's historical context resulting in the limited amount of land available to meet the increasing demand for trails;
- limited political support combined with co-operative efforts between community and all levels of government;
- public liability concerns which limit volunteer-based trail development and maintenance and public access to freehold land;
- lack of legislative, institutional and administrative frameworks for planning, developing and managing trails that span multiple landholdings/properties, multiple land tenures or multiple Queensland Government and local government jurisdictions;
- competition between different recreation user groups and incompatibility between some trail-based activities; and
- regional growth coupled with increasing demands for outdoor recreation.

Trails planning, development and management in SEQ and elsewhere in Queensland is a complex task. On any single trail-related issue for any one recreation activity there may need to be interaction between the range of community, political and government institutions. For example, inadequate provision of trail bike riding opportunities has resulted in issues associated with illegal trail bike riding on public and private lands. This has already mobilized both State and local politicians, State and local government officers and the community to try to resolve the issue via a variety of statutory and non-statutory mechanisms.

The impact of a number of constraints and impediments on trails planning, development and management is addressed below, along



with a discussion of the manner in which these constraints and impediments could be minimised, removed or addressed.

Trails Planning

State government trails planning has previously focused on state lands (eg. national parks and State forests) whilst planning by some local governments has tended to focus on issues at the local and district level, with only minimal consideration of regional-level trail opportunities. Trails planning using different methodologies has resulted in a variety of inconsistent outcomes. Resolution of these trails planning issues will require a variety of solutions including:

- partnerships between local councils and State government agencies to address trails planning, development and management at a regional level;
- a consistent approach and methodology to demand assessment, trails plans and trails descriptions;
- consistent spatial representation of digital trails data;
- routine provision for trails within Priority Infrastructure Plans by all local governments in SEQ; and
- strong emphasis on connections between adjoining local governments at the sub-regional and regional planning levels in future trails planning, possibly facilitated in partnership with the State government.

Less clearly defined impediments to trails planning which are more difficult to resolve, are based on individual or public opinion, societal trends or government policies and include:

- opposition to trails in specific areas, such as conservation estates, along unconstructed roads and in rivers and streams;
- opposition from some residents within rural communities to the acquisition and use of rural land for public recreation purposes; and
- loss of recreation opportunities that may arise from corporatisation, privatisation and sale of public lands previously held by the State.

Public Liability and Access

There has long been a concern that problems associated with public liability possibly represent the single largest restriction on trail development and public access to public lands. Public liability concerns also impact upon the availability of, and access to, private land for public recreation. However, the SEQRTS project found that there were discrete issues associated with either access or public liability, as well as situations in which the two were linked.

From the review of existing international and Australian legislative and administrative approaches to provision of secure public access on recreation trails (including appropriate controls, liability cover and damage compensation arrangements), five general requirements



were identified for the effective development of regional recreation trails across urban and non-urban areas of SEQ and for Queensland generally:

- new land tenure and laws for recreation land and trails (eg. regional recreation park);
- extension of easements and statutory covenant provisions to include public access and recreation trails;
- introduction of appropriate policies to enable wider application of the *Recreation Areas Management Act 1988* to linear recreation areas (eg. riverside parks, long distance rail trails) to facilitate management of multi-land tenure trails under existing legislation;
- provision of incentives to encourage and reward landowners providing public access for recreation; and
- State and/or local government political acceptance of new responsibilities for recreational liability when private landholders provide public recreation trail opportunities on their private land.

Irrespective of whether new laws relating to recreation land are developed, there is a need for a variety of mechanisms to enable liability protection for non-government, community-based organisations to plan, develop, manage and/or maintain trails. Any legislation should enable different management options (eg. trusts, local government, State government, not-for-profit organisations or combinations of some or all of these), depending on the trail location and the trail activities.

Provision of solutions to the complex issue of liability (whether for users, land owners, trail managers or adjacent property holders) is a key aspect common to each of the suggested solutions.

Trails Development and Management

Any inconsistencies in standards and systems affect trails management and user satisfaction across the region. There is a need for agreement on common standards and definitions for the management, monitoring and recording of recreational activities, infrastructure, settings and impacts (both biophysical and social) amongst the various entities charged with provision and management of recreation. Standardised trails construction and descriptive standards and safety audit procedures would also assist trail managers in consistent risk management of trails.

Additionally, trail identification and signage (directional, cautionary, regulatory, interpretive, objective signage) should be improved and consistent types of signs should be used. This would increase understanding and user satisfaction and minimise risk associated with lack of user awareness by identifying participant fitness or skill levels required.

Key challenges are in the development and acceptance of common or translatable standards for activities (types and occurrence), data





storage and data presentation for input into GIS and associated databases and infrastructure management systems. Even if acceptance of common or translatable standards for activities (types and occurrence), data storage and data presentation is achieved, the accuracy and currency of data needs to be addressed.

Overseas and interstate trails management models provide examples that would suit circumstances which exist or could exist in SEQ, including:

- management of a single trail which crosses a variety of tenures; and
- management of a number of trails within different areas and/or different tenures.

Models include the Countryside Agency in the United Kingdom and Trails Trusts in New Zealand.

Funding for Trails

A range of existing and new options is available for:

- the funding of trails planning;
- securing land for trails; and
- trails construction and/or management.

Current options include infrastructure charging and State government programs (eg. Local Government Development Program, Major Facilities Program). In some instances, existing options are not being used whilst in other cases, clarification is required to ensure that there is general understanding that the funding can be applied to regional recreation trails. Clear mechanisms could be developed in the Integrated Planning Act 1997 (IPA) to enable local governments to levy infrastructure charges for securing and developing land for trails. There are currently no provisions within the IPA to fund the acquisition of land and development of trails within a local government area which “fulfil a regional function or are provided with the intention of serving external residents”. There are also no existing incentive schemes in SEQ to encourage private landholders to provide public access for recreation.

A number of funding options used interstate and overseas could be applied in the SEQ context. These include lottery funds, incentives, recreation land trusts, co-operative partnerships, various types of government funded programs and greater use of infrastructure charging mechanisms.

Institutional Arrangements

There is a strong requirement for development of new regional institutional arrangements for planning, funding, construction and on-going management of regional and district recreational trails. This development was envisaged as one of the key outcomes of the SEQRTS. Key reasons the new regional arrangements are required

include:

- the lack of effective co-ordination between agencies involved in trails planning, development and management;
- the differences in availability of recreational trail opportunities (both existing and potential) between local authorities in SEQ;
- varying capacity of local governments to finance trail planning, development and management;
- the variable commitment by different local governments to the “trails agenda” and vision;
- potential for less enthusiastic local governments to focus on short-term costs and view “regional trail” proposals as future financial, social and environmental millstones that will burden already over-committed rate payers rather than recognising and embracing long-term opportunities;
- the strong differences in regional and district demand and mobility among the recreation user groups; and
- the highly variable capability of local populations to sustain trail support groups (eg. “Friends of the Trail” support groups).

The SEQRTS identifies a variety of models of institutional arrangements. These options address a range of issues, both strategic and operational, and cover situations varying from a single trail on one tenure to multiple trails across multi-jurisdictions. In these examples, the various agencies, trusts, committees, etc conduct a variety of functions, from trails co-ordination to trails development, trails management, marketing and/or funding. In nearly all of the examples, **a single, co-ordinating agency accepted responsibility for trails as a core function**. However, it was noted that the scope of this responsibility varied.

The following would be required to address the main trails-related issues identified in the research during the development of the SEQRTS:

- the capacity to co-ordinate trails planning across multi-jurisdictions, including both private and public lands (including roads);
- the ability to develop strategic plans for trails, cognisant of the local, regional and state context and issues;
- the ability to address complex legislative or strategic issues requiring cross-government agency collaboration;
- the ability to act as a trails advocate, or to work closely with a trails advocate, preferably a prominent public figure;
- the ability to provide trails funding and/or to influence the disbursement of funding in accordance with an overall Strategic Plan;
- the capacity to work with and influence both State agencies and local governments to achieve consistency in standards and management practices, where appropriate;
- a sufficient resource base and degree of security to endure changes in government administration, changes in political



leadership, etc;

- the capacity to work with a broad network of stakeholders, from government, industry and the community; and
- broad membership/representation to ensure adequate representation of non-government interests and provision of independent advice.

In successful models (eg. in Victoria and South Australia), a State government agency has accepted financial responsibility for the administrative support to the co-ordinating organisation. It appears that the co-ordination of regional trails in SEQ could best be achieved with:

- appointment of a lead agency for regional trails (eg. a State government department or agency);
- establishment of a co-ordinating committee incorporating representation from State government, local government (on a sub-regional level), and the community; and
- provision of financial support to fulfill the responsibilities and achieve the outcomes established by the co-ordinating committee, including:
 - setting direction and priorities;
 - co-ordinating individual agency activities;
 - communication with relevant stakeholders (government and community); and
 - monitoring and reviewing.



Strategic Conclusions and Directions

Many of the constraints and issues identified above are not new; they have been constant sources of frustration to trails planners and recreational trail users for many years. The major consideration is how best to resolve each of these issues. Many of the issues are inter-related: for example, there are inconsistent standards as a result of insufficient communication because there is no trails co-ordinating agency.

Resolution of the issues will require involvement on a number of different levels:

- *National co-ordination* to achieve suitable research, adequate and suitable data collection and establish consistency in construction standards;
- *Political will* at both the State and local government levels to achieve a regional trails network;
- *Co-ordinated actions at a State level* to:
 - achieve improved State government - local government co-operation on trails planning, development and management;
 - establish mechanisms to resolve legal complexities associated with rights of public access (eg. to water courses, unconstructed roads, reserves);
 - clarify the suite of mechanisms currently available to access and manage publicly accessible land for trails;
 - address multiple constraints associated with the use and administration of roads for trails and road closures;
 - ensure that processes are implemented for the identification and notification to relevant agencies of sale of public land suitable for recreation trails;
 - investigate the potential for specific legislation (or the modification of existing legislation), for the purpose of recreation (or trails specific) planning, development and management, rather than attempting to apply legislation developed for other primary purposes (eg. nature conservation, transport, forestry production);
 - investigate the potential of incentives to encourage landholders to commit freehold land to public recreation use;
 - address public liability and property damage concerns of both public and private land managers.
- *Local government* commitment to:
 - co-ordinated trails planning (intra and inter-agency);
 - improving the economic viability of the local government area through trails usage and promotion; and
 - investigate mechanisms to provide trails at minimal cost.
- *Community involvement* to:
 - continue lobbying for better trails planning, management and co-ordination;
 - participate in trails planning and management.



As a consequence of the SEQRTS project and the research undertaken, a number of options to facilitate and improve regional trails planning, development and/or maintenance have been identified. These options range from strategic to operational matters and may require involvement at all three levels of government. Acceptance and implementation of any of the following six strategic recommendations and the associated options within the supporting SEQRTS Technical Reports will significantly advance trails planning, development and management in SEQ.



Recommendation 1:

That a co-ordinating committee incorporating representation from State government, local government (on a Regional Organisation of Councils level), and the community be established with the appropriate personnel, resources and mandate to address the identified trails-related issues in SEQ.

Recommendation 2:

That a mechanism be established in SEQ to ensure administrative and financial support for a co-ordinating committee to enable it to fulfill its responsibilities and achieve the desired outcomes.

Recommendation 3:

That a single lead agency with a legislated mandate be appointed to co-ordinate the provision and management of regional recreation trails in SEQ in a diversity of settings (urban, rural, natural) as part of its core function.

Recommendation 4:

That new types of land tenure specifically focused on use for recreation purposes and mechanisms to enable the management of defined recreation lands and trails be established.

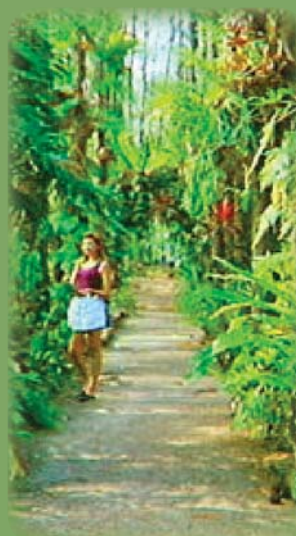
Recommendation 5:

That co-ordinated action be undertaken to achieve consistent information to assist regional trails planning and management including:

- development of consistency in definitions and methodology associated with the collection of outdoor recreation demand and participation data
- development of consistent trails-related terminology and guidelines for spatial representation of digital trails data;
- use of the SEQRTS Trail Assessment criteria and methodology.

Recommendation 6:

That the potential trail alignments and future trail alignment corridors identified within the SEQRTS be secured.



Acknowledgements

A large number of individuals and organisations have contributed to the preparation of the SEQ Regional Trails Strategy and its supporting Technical Reports. Although it is not possible to list all of these separately, their contributions are acknowledged and appreciated. The Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation wishes to acknowledge and specially thank the following individuals and organisations for their assistance in the preparation of the SEQ Regional Trails Strategy:

- Staff and Councillors from each of the SEQ local government authorities
- Staff from the Council of Mayors (SEQ)
- Staff from local government authorities adjacent to SEQ
- Staff from the following State government departments and agencies:
 - Queensland Health
 - Environmental Protection Agency
 - Department of Local Government and Planning, Sport and Recreation
 - Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water
 - Queensland Transport
- Members of the Regional Landscape and Open Space Advisory Committee (and the members of the previous Regional Landscape Strategy Advisory Committee)
- Representatives from recreation organisations
- Representatives from tourism organisations
- SEQ Regional Trails Strategy Project Management Group members and their proxies¹⁰
 - Dave Batt, Sport and Recreation Queensland (Chair)
 - Megan Bayntun, Sport and Recreation Queensland
 - Jon Black, Council of Mayors (SEQ)
 - Linda Bradby, Environmental Protection Agency
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- Members of the mountain bike community

Finally, special thanks are also extended to the SEQ Regional Trails Strategy Project Officer, Andrew Graham, for his dedication, professionalism, patience and hard work in bringing this project to completion.

¹⁰ The listed representatives are those persons on the Project Management Group as at January 2006. In some instances, there has been a change in nominated representatives from the project funding partners throughout the project.

Appendix 1: Proposed New Highly Ranked Priority Regional Trails

Brisbane Valley Rail Trail

Ipswich to Blackbutt

Wulkuraka - Fernvale – Lowood - Coominya – Esk – Toogoolawah – Harlin – Moore – Linville – Blackbutt
with multiple links to the Bicentennial National Trail and connections to Brisbane Forest Park

A rail trail for recreational and touring cyclists, horse riders and walkers

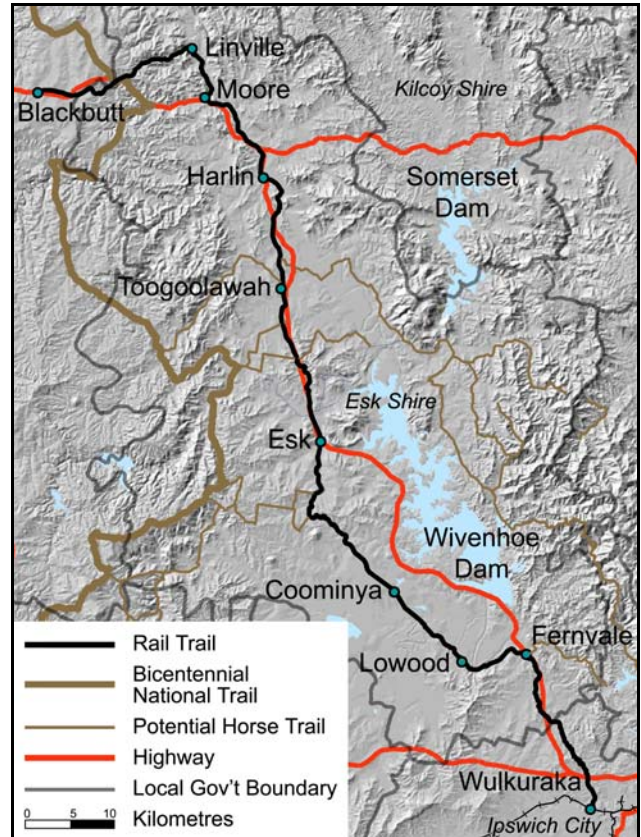
Concept. The Brisbane Valley Rail Trail proposal will provide an outstanding 140 km regional trail for walking, cycling & horse riding serving both the local and regional communities of SEQ. It builds on the existing 10 km Fernvale to Lowood Rail Trail established and managed by Esk Shire. The route gives opportunities for future recreational links, at both district and regional levels, to the Bicentennial National Trail, the Southern Caboolture Loop Horse Trail and to the Brisbane Forest Park.

With regular electric City Train services to Wulkuraka and bus services as far north as Toogoolawah, the trail has easy access for all potential users, whether rural residents, urban visitors or traveling tourists. The existing range of services, accommodation and facilities in towns along the route will ensure that all types of approved trail users, (cyclists, walkers, horse riders or mobility vehicles) will be catered for as soon as the trail is opened. Based on well documented rail trail developments in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA, the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail will become the premier rural recreational cycling experience in SEQ.

Description. The route follows the old Brisbane Valley railway line along the western side of the Brisbane River through attractive rural river valley landscapes, native and plantation forests, rural residential and country town settings. The trail commences in western Ipswich at the Wulkuraka railway station, providing regular electric train links to Brisbane and beyond. Wulkuraka station is linked to Central Ipswich by a shared pathway (for cyclists and pedestrians) and to northern Ipswich by the public pathway on the Bremmer River railway bridge. After passing through suburban Ipswich, forest and rural land, the trail reaches Fernvale (22.5 km), a well known tourist stop on the Brisbane Valley highway and a focal centre for the recreational horse community. The existing rail trail extends to Lowood (31 km) in mixed rural settings.

The route north lies through Coominya (43 km) before again meeting the Brisbane Valley highway at Esk (66.4 km) where a range of accommodation is available. More accommodation is available in Toogoolawah (85 km) and Harlin (100 km). Twenty kilometers further on, the historic Linville Hotel offers meals and rooms before the long climb up the Balfour Range to cross the Bicentennial National Trail at Commissioners View outside Benarkin (137 km), and on to Blackbutt (142 km) where meals and rooms are available.

Community benefits. The trail will deliver recreation, social and health benefits to urban users across the region as well as for the adjacent rural and rural residential communities. This trail offers high recreational rewards to a number of distinctly different recreational user groups, including family recreation groups, bicycle tourists, mountain bike riders (hilly sections), historical enthusiasts, horse riders (of a number of disciplines), walkers and for users of mobility vehicles.



As well as functioning as a safe connecting 'spine' for horse trails along the lower Brisbane Valley, it gives a safe alternative route to the very challenging section of the Bicentennial National Trail through Emu Creek Gorge south of Benarkin. Through service industry opportunities such as refreshments, meals, accommodation, camping supplies and group transport, it will bring focused economic benefits to the communities 'along the line'.



The first old level crossing near Wulkuraka station



The existing rail trail southeast of Lowood.

Administration and management. Because of the extent of the trail, new styles of administrative and operational arrangements will be required. It will be essential that the sources for funding of initial development and ongoing management are consistent with the regional significance of this trail to the urban populations of SEQ and that no financial burden is imposed on the small population of rural Esk Shire. Based on data from the Office of Urban Management for the desired 2026 populations in SEQ, Esk Shire will hold only 1.25% of the combined populations of the cities of Ipswich and Brisbane from where the majority of trail users will come from.

In the multi-jurisdictional setting of this trail, on-going concerns about public liability and property insurance issues amongst land managers and landowners will need to be addressed at a State Government level, as is current practice for major trails in New South Wales and South Australia.

The tenure setting of this proposal is relatively simple. The great majority of the alignment is state land under the control of Queensland Transport. Road crossings are controlled by the relevant road manager (local authority or state) while stream crossings fall under the jurisdiction of Natural Resources and Mines.



Many historic railway buildings remain on the route

Recent development examples. In New Zealand, the 150 km Central Otago Rail trail runs from Middlemarch to Clyde (<http://www.centralotagorailtrail.co.nz/>) through high grazing country. It is operated by the Otago Central Rail Trail Charitable Trust. Based on an old 3' 6" gauge line, it opened in February 2000 after six years of development, including redecking the trail's 68 bridges and furnishing them with hand rails.

Internationally, much of the focus of rail trail development has been in the United States of America where more than 10,000 miles of rail trails have been developed. The USA-based Rail Trails website (<http://www.railtrails.org/>) provides extensive resources for establishment and operation of Rail Trails.

In the United Kingdom, the premier rail trail is the Crab and Winkle Line that forms part of Route 1 of the National Cycle Network. It was developed with the support of private landowners and a range of supporting groups including The Countryside Agency, The Forestry Commission, Canterbury City Council, Kent County Council, Chestfield Parish Council, South East Arts and the European Regional Development Fund.

In Australia, support, national assistance and publicity for such developments are provided by RailTrails Australia (<http://www.railtrails.org.au/>) and by BicycleVictoria (<http://www.bv.com.au/inform.php?a=7&b=175&c=185>).



An attractive scene on the alignment near Linville

In Victoria, the 97 km Murray Valley Rail Trail is fully sealed and provides outstanding recreational opportunities as well as significant economic benefits to the adjacent rural communities through provision of accommodation, facilities and meals. In the Otway Ranges of Victoria, the 42 km Old Beechy Rail Trail opened in June 2005 with Victorian Government support and funding as a sustainable tourism project associated with the Regional Forest Agreement process.



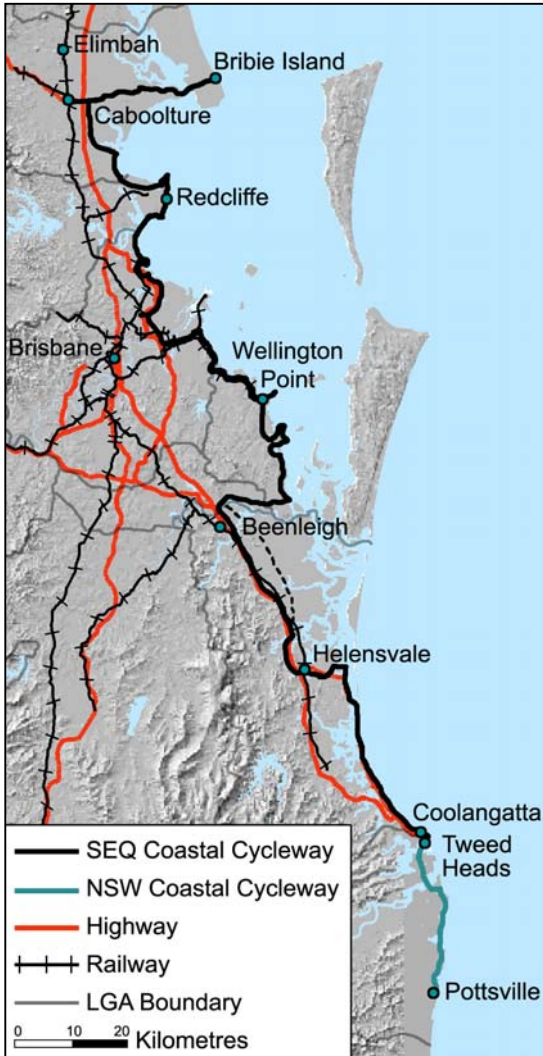
Family recreation on the Lowood to Fernvale Rail Trail.

South East Queensland Coastal Recreational Cycleway

Tweed Heads to Bribie Island

Tweed Heads - Point Danger - Gold Coast Ocean Way - Beenleigh - Moreton Bay foreshore from Victoria Point to Deception Bay – Caboolture - Bribie Island

A coastal route for recreational and touring cyclists and walkers



Concept. The SEQ Coastal Cycleway proposal links existing and developing recreational cycleways and shared pathways to create a 200 km long extended Regional Trail that will rapidly attain national status. A key aspect of the SEQ Coastal Cycleway is connectivity with the City Rail network, allowing easy access from across SEQ. With panoramic coastal landscapes in a subtropical climate, this proposal will rival existing recreational cycling trails in Victoria and South Australia. It will complement and connect to the NSW Coastal Cycleway that is under development from Tweed Heads to Sydney with future extensions to the Victorian border. The NSW Coastal Cycleway already runs along the Tweed Shire coastline for about 40 km south to Pottsville.

Description.

The Gold Coast Oceanway, a shared pathway for pedestrians and cyclists, leads north from Tweed Heads and Point Danger beside the Gold Coast beaches with links to the walking tracks in Burleigh Heads National Park and The Spit pathway complex. The Oceanway extends north to Biggera Waters where it links with the Coombabah Wetlands Shared Pathway running west to Helensvale Railway Station.

Between Helensvale Railway Station and Beenleigh, confident 'on-road' cyclists can use the cyclelanes of the existing V1 Cycleway while recreational riders may choose the City Rail connection option for this link. In the future, a separated shared pathway option (for cycling and walking) should be possible with the development of the Intra Regional Transport Corridor from Coomera to the Logan River.

At Coomera, there will be rewarding opportunities to explore the planned 'foreshoreways' and pathways complexes in the parklands and developments along the Coomera River.

North of Beenleigh, in Logan City, a new shared pathway link eastwards and then northwards along the southern Redlands coast is proposed. From Victoria Point north, the route follows the developing Moreton Bay Cycleway with a potential link to the 13 km long Bulimba Creek Recreational Cycleway.

The route then leads over the Gateway II Bridge shared pathway (scheduled to open in 2010) to link with the 17 km Kedron Brook Recreational Cycleway at Toombul before passing through the Boondall Wetlands and rejoining the coast at Shorncliffe.

The scheduled duplication of the Houghton Highway will ensure safe cycling and pedestrian access from Shorncliffe across Bramble Bay to Redcliffe's outstanding foreshore pathways that will soon be connected to similar shared pathways at Deception Bay in Caboolture Shire. Pedestrian and cycling links to the extensive new network of shared pathways at North Lakes are planned by Pine Rivers Shire. Caboolture Shire plans significant pathway developments along the Deception Bay coastline and in adjacent inland areas. The network of shared pathways on Bribie Island is already considered to be of regional significance.

Benefits of cycling. Recreational cycling brings numerous benefits to the riders and to society through improved health and fitness, social interaction, and in a wide range of associated economic activities, from local café and cycling support businesses to new tourism enterprises. In each of the last three years in Australia, more new bicycles were sold than new motor vehicles.

Focal market. Research by the SEQ Regional Trails project shows that cycling is now the main recreational activity for adults aged 15 to 45 years old in SEQ, and the proportion of cyclists aged 45 years and above is expected to increase dramatically in the next two decades. The SEQ Coastal Cycleway proposal mainly is based upon existing and planned shared pathways or exclusive-use cycleways (rather than on-road cycle lanes) to cater for family and recreational cyclists

rather than for competitive or commuting cyclists. It also will cater for mobility vehicles and compatible recreation activities such as walking and roller blading.

Funding and regional planning. Much of the proposal can be funded with conventional grants but some key sections will require new project-specific funding to give connectivity in less populated or extra-urban areas or to cover expensive items (eg. bridges or underpasses).

Planning and development issues

Tweed Heads to Biggera Waters and Helensvale. The shared pathway linkages for this section (the Gold Coast Oceanway and Coombabah) are nearly completed. The shared pathway to the west of Burleigh Heads National Park (Tweed St) will need to be completed to provide continuity for recreational cyclists.

Development of linkages to the west from Burleigh Heads / Miami will provide high quality recreational access to the significant complex of 'foreshoreways', shared pathways and park trails in the Robina - Varsity Lakes – Mudgeeraba district.

Helensvale to Coomera, Beenleigh and the Logan River. The options for this section (detailed above) are the V1 Cycleway, the City Rail connection, or a future separated pathway option within the Intra Regional Transport Corridor.



Wide cycle lanes on the V1 Cycleway, Beenleigh Cemetery

Logan River to Victoria Point. Project research indicated that there are no current plans to complete the link east from Logan City through Carbrook to Redland Shire. However, development of a shared pathway in Logan City along the Beenleigh Redland Bay Road is feasible (within the wide road casement) and would also serve both educational and aged residential communities. Redland Shire is planning shared pathway links on the foreshores as far south as Scenic Road.



The Moreton Bay Cycleway at Bells Beach, Redcliffe

The Moreton Bay Cycleway (Victoria Point to Deception Bay). This section of the proposal is being developed through a memorandum of understanding between the relevant local authorities and with the cooperation of Queensland Transport.



A key community role of shared pathways on Bribie Island

Caboolture / Bribie Island to Deception Bay. South of Bribie Island, the Caboolture River and Burpengary Creek restrict coastal route options to some degree. However, current land developments and highway upgrading may soon provide a relatively rewarding route to overcome these problems.

Important decisions on the alignment for the Caboolture link section will be determined primarily by the need for a safe crossing of the Bruce Highway (M1) for recreational cyclists and pedestrians.

Boonah to Ipswich Multi-user Recreation Trail

Boonah to Ipswich

Boonah – Teviot Brook – Wyaralong Dam – Flinders Peak – Grampian Hills - Bundamba Lagoon - Ipswich

An inland range route for walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders

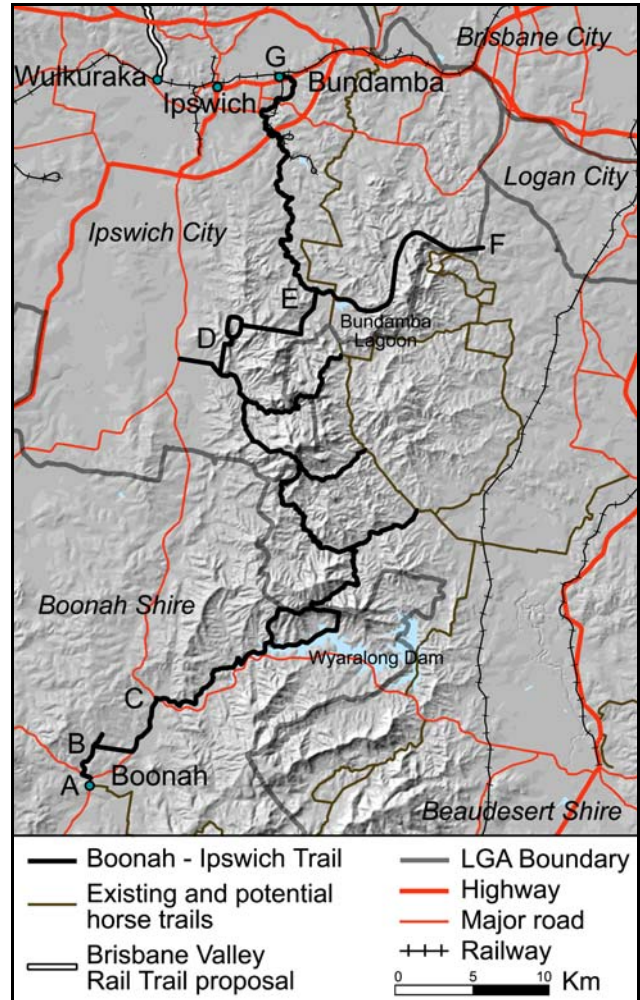
Concept. The Boonah to Ipswich Multi-user Recreation Trail (Boonah Ipswich Trail or BIT) is an important 76 km long regional trail proposal for the current and future populations of southern inland SEQ, including Greater Ipswich and the Western Corridor, the planned Ripley Valley development, southern Logan City, Boonah, Beaudesert and the recently proposed urban centres of Greenbank Central, New Beith, Flagstone and Undullah. The BIT will provide recreational links for all these communities to an extensive rugged and scenic area where more than ten named peaks rise above 330 m in a landscape that remains dominated by native vegetation. At present there are only limited formal recreation trails in this area.

This trail was suggested during consultation undertaken for Boonah Shire for the SEQ Regional Trails Strategy. The northern end of the BIT is based on strategic trail alignments planned by Ipswich City Council, the 'Bundamba Creek Walking Trail' and the Ipswich Horse Trail' (connecting to Greenbank). The northern and southern trailheads are served by public transport.

Recreation and infrastructure planning. At a regional scale, the BIT forms a link between the proposed recreational trails of the Brisbane Valley - southern D'Aguilar Range area and other proposed and existing trails south of Boonah leading to the Mt Barney - Mt Maroon district, to developing rural trail networks in Northern NSW, and to the southern Main Range section of the Bicentennial National Trail.

Recognition of the importance of this trail at this time is essential because of land use changes and Queensland Government planning associated with development of the Wyaralong Dam on Teviot Brook near Boonah. In these processes, it is essential that the existing public access be maintained from Old Beaudesert Road (beside Teviot Brook) north to the hills and peaks.

Description. From Boonah, the route lies on the Boonah Rail Trail (A-B), based on the old Fassifern Valley Branch Railway, and then a quiet road and a roadside trail beside the Ipswich – Boonah Road as far as the Boonah – Beaudesert Road intersection (C) near Coulson. The climb to the Teviot Brook watershed starts from Old Beaudesert Road on low order and unformed roads.



Apart from two gaps of 150 and 200 metres, there is a surveyed road alignment available for the southern 43 km of the BIT as far as Sandy Creek (D), west of Ivorys Rock. Three or four likely side-link trails on low use roads (totaling over 20 km) lead east to the Undullah Creek valley and the 'Brisbane Loop' horse trail. To the west, north and east of the Grampian Hills area (between Purga and Ripley) the route lies on strategic recreation trails proposed by Ipswich City Council (DE, EF, EG).



The route of southern half of the Boonah to Ipswich Trail lies amongst the peaks of the distant ridge line, as seen in this view eastwards from the Ipswich – Boonah Road. Four of the peaks are over 450 m in height.



A section of the proposed Rail Trail near Boonah

Administration and management. In Queensland, there are no models for administration and management of a long recreation trail which crosses local government boundaries. Because of the length of the BIT, and the various different urban and rural communities it will serve (potentially from at least four local government areas), new styles of administrative and operational arrangements will be required.

Successful development of the trail will require collaborative planning. From the outset, it should be established that the sources for funding of initial planning, development and ongoing management of this trail are consistent with its regional significance to the populations who benefit, and that no financial burden is imposed on the small population of Boonah Shire.

In the multi-jurisdictional and extended rural settings of this trail, it is likely that there will be some concerns about public liability and property insurance issues amongst landowners and land managers. Resolution of these concerns will be a key task for successful establishment of regional rural recreation trails and may require State Government support, as is current practice for major trails in New South Wales and South Australia.



The route along Old Beaudesert Road beside Teviot Brook



The trail climbs onto the hills through rural scenery

Recreation infrastructure requirements. An extended recreation trail through rural settings and adjacent to private land will require some essential support infrastructure, particularly sanitation facilities, reliable and safe water supplies, basic rest shelter or shade facilities (particularly in open areas) and arrangements for accommodation for long distance travellers.

At two existing trail heads in the northern section of the trail, these facilities have been built by Ipswich City Council.

Establishment and maintenance of route marking along the trail will be a priority task because of the multiple options for joining or leaving the main north-south alignment.



Volcanic peaks along the trail adjacent to rural landscapes

Local economic benefits of the trail

Unlike most national park walking tracks in SEQ, the layout of this trail provides for multiple access points from quiet rural roads. This design is ideal for the development of private accommodation facilities such as Bed and Breakfast enterprises, Farmstays or private camping spots to support the trail users.

North Coast Mountain Bike Touring Trail

Sunshine Coast Hinterland to Western Brisbane

Yandina – Cooloolabin Dam – Mapleton – Kenilworth – D'Aguilar Range – Mt Nebo – The Gap – Brisbane
with links to the Mapleton Mountain Bike Tracks, the Caboolture Trails Network and the Gap Trails Network

An extended scenic challenge for mountain bike riders

Concept. The North Coast Mountain Bike Touring Trail proposal provides a 200 km long regional trail (with multiple access/egress points) that will cater for the most rapidly developing section of the outdoor recreation trail-user community. The trail is for use by mountain bikes (MTBs) or sturdy touring bikes (hybrids) but not road bikes. Most of the route lies through the scenic Sunshine Coast Hinterland and offers the enjoyment and challenges of extended riding in forested settings along the coastal ranges. The format offers options of varying durations, difficulty, self-reliance, access styles and accommodation arrangements.

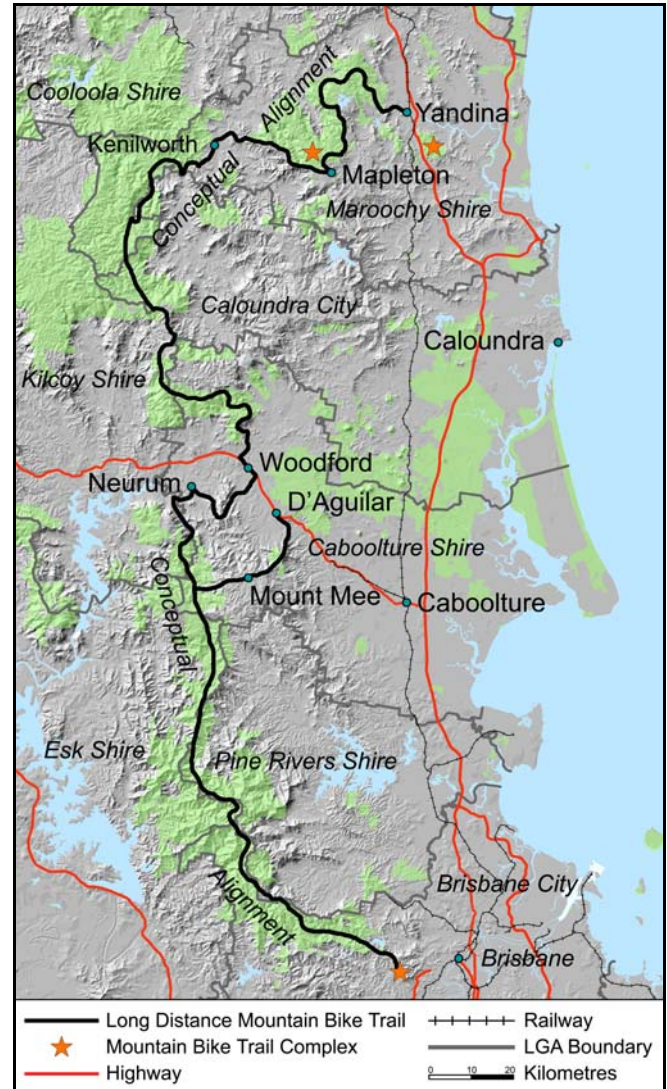
Short sections of the trail are on regional roads without cycle lanes. However, the level of skills and experience of touring MTB cyclists mean short sections of road-based cycling can be appropriate. However, in planning the off-bitumen sections of the alignment, interaction with motorised recreation should be kept to a minimum for reasons of safety and to maintain high levels of recreational rewards.

Comparable trails. In both Western Australia and South Australia land managers have developed long distance trails primarily designed for (MTB) use. Designed for MTB enthusiasts and recreational cyclists who are seeking a bush cycling experience, the Munda Biddi Trail in WA winds its way for hundreds of kilometers through national parks, state forests and scenic landscapes. In SA, the 900 km long Mawson Trail passes through rural areas and conservation estates with specialised MTB facilities located adjacent on a Mawson Loop Trail at Cudlee Park. These SA facilities are funded and managed by the Office for Recreation and Sport with numerous key partners.

In Victoria, the Department of Sustainability and Environment is developing new mountain bike trails as part of the 'New Future for the Otways' Tourism Initiative. Planning for this development has been greatly influenced by recent developments in Wales. In Scotland the Forestry Commission has developed MTB sites adjacent to major MTB / hybrid cycle touring routes. (see <http://www.7stanes.gov.uk/>). Cycling tourism is now important in some rural economies.



© Keith Jarrott
Social rides on forest management roads are popular



Description. Commencing on the mid-northern Sunshine Coast, the conceptual alignment for this route runs west from Yandina railway station into the Mapleton Forest Reserve to vantage points on peaks and along the eastern escarpment of the Blackall Range.

For highest standards of recreational rewards, management tracks should be used as far as possible rather than the Mapleton Forest Drive. The route would give access to endorsed mountain bike trails currently operating in the Mapleton Forest Reserve but would not approach the forested alignment of the Great Walk.

There are several options for descending the western escarpment into the Mary Valley to Kenilworth. The route then traverses the Conondale Range and Bellthorpe forests (again preferably using management tracks rather than roads) and eventually leaves the

Description (cont.). forests and heads to Woodford town, about 100 trail kilometres from Yandina.

South from the D'Aguilar Highway, there are several potential links to the proposed alignments of the Caboolture Regional Trail Network. Various routes could be chosen to enter the Mt Mee Forest Reserve, subject to the recently commenced planning program for the D'Aguilar Range conservation estates that is being undertaken by EPA staff. The second leg, of the touring trail is also 100 km long and finishes in Brisbane's western suburbs.

Administrative arrangements. Present administrative arrangements by various government land managers are not suited to such an extended trail that may span a number of administrative units of one managing department. High degrees of coordination for all facets of planning and operation of this North Coast MTB Touring Trail will be required.

New provisions will need to be developed for long distance travellers in relations to camping permits. For example, delays may be incurred due to weather conditions or fitness problems, resulting in unexpected interruptions to the trip. Amendment of schedules by website bookings is just not possible from deep in the forest.

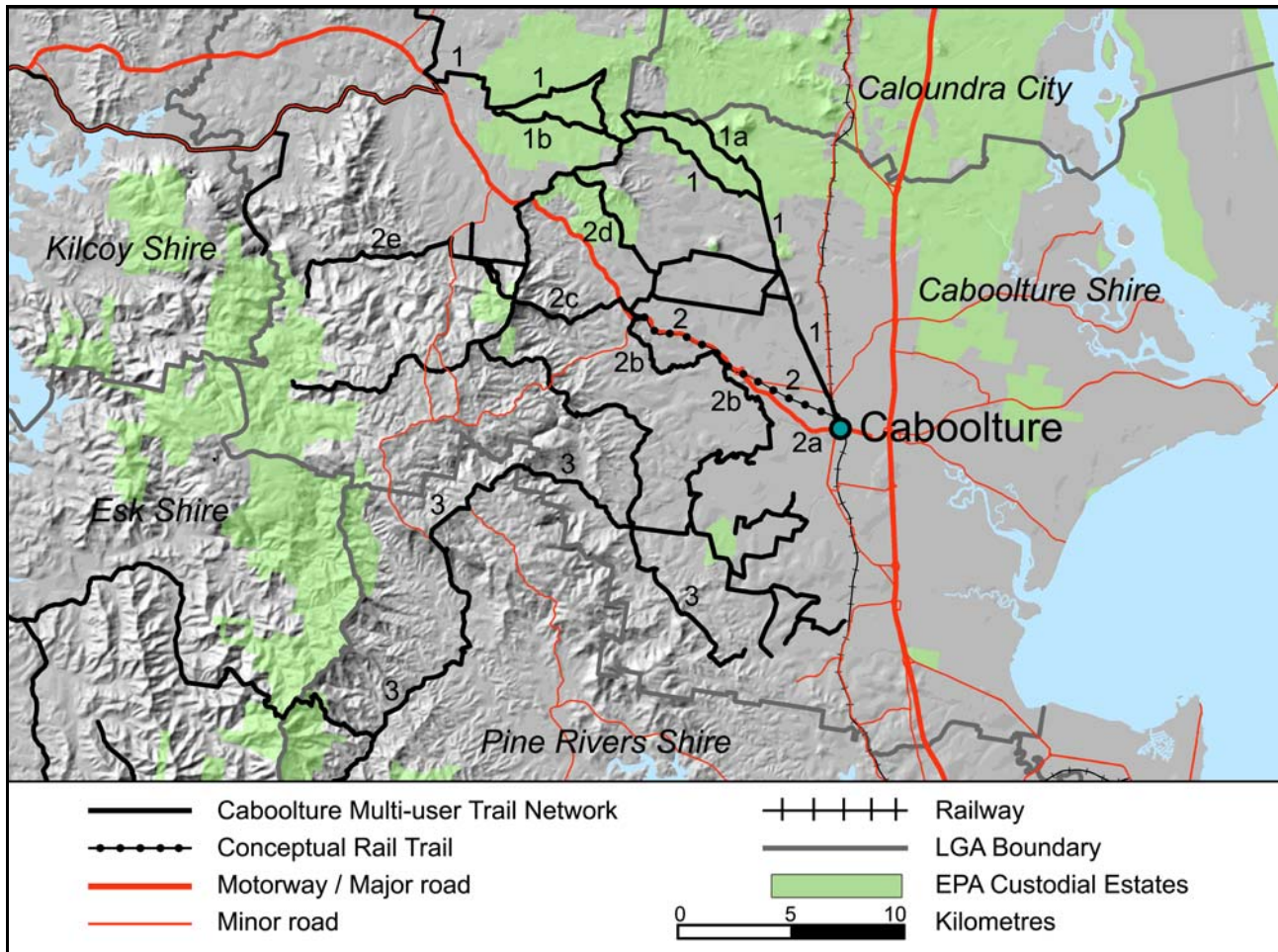


A track suited to mountain bike touring

Caboolture Multi-user Trail Network

Central and Western Caboolture Shire
Caboolture - Beerburrum - Wamuran – Mt Mee with inter-shire links

A set of peri-urban regional trails to form the framework of an integrated network



Background and Concept. The Caboolture Shire is fast growing region and a highly accessible and focal area for recreation and tourism. Trails and trail-based tourism have the potential to make significant contributions to the health and economy of the region. **However, there is a real danger that rapid development will jeopardise future establishment of regional recreation trails unless the opportunities are recognised and protected now.**

Around Caboolture, the main constraint on future trail establishment appears to be a lack of formal trail planning rather than feasibility problems associated with topography or land tenure. The projected population growth of about 60% to 2025 and the present relative deficiencies in recreation trail facilities make such planning for trails a priority task.

In the 1990s, five multi-user trails were identified through extensive community consultation. Although one of these trails was formally developed, there were

subsequent inter-agency administration problems and little ongoing support. These alignments were reviewed by the SEQ Regional Trails project in 2004. After consultation with the Caboolture Shire Council and the SEQ Regional Trails project during 2005, the Caboolture Trail Horse Club proposed new multi-use trails to provide greater trail connectivity, particularly to key recreation sites. Earlier proposals were modified to bypass some State Forests scheduled for conversion to national park tenure.

Based on these various investigations, this SEQ Regional Trails proposal identifies three regional trails (30 km, 35 km and 45 km in length) that will form the framework for an integrated network of regional, district and local trails for the Caboolture region west of the Bruce Highway.

However, this SEQ Regional Trails project proposal does not address either the specific trail requirements of motorised recreation groups (eg. trail bike riders) or the specialised facilities required by focussed active recreation disciplines (eg. single track or downhill mountain bike riders).

Caboolture Regional Trail Descriptions

1. The Caboolture – Woodford Regional Trail (previously referred to as the Northern Loop to the Bicentennial Trail). Originally, this trail was intended to provide a link to the Bicentennial National Trail for horse riders. Now it has far greater value for the wider recreational and sporting communities because of its linkages with the district and local trails of the forested landscapes along the northern border of Caboolture Shire. It could serve as a key link for a promising proposal for a 'Rural Trek' (a long distance countryside walk, potentially with catered accommodation) up the Stanley River valley towards Maleny. The route also connects the proposed North Coast Mountain Bike Touring Trail and to a potential recreation trail route to Kilcoy via Neurum.

The main alignment is road-based. Two more attractive options (1a, 1b) are suggested but as these may be periodically unavailable due to forestry operations, protection of the road-based route is essential.

The key partners for development of this proposal are the Caboolture Shire Council, the Environmental Protection Agency together with DPI Forestry in relation to the plantation forests and the Department of Main Roads for crossing the Kilcoy Beerwah Road (Regional Road 492).

2. The Caboolture – Wamuran – Delaneys Creek Regional Trail (incorporating a section of the constructed Wamuran D'Aguilar Loop Trail). This proposal meets the diverse recreational requirements of urban and semi-rural residents by providing connectivity to and from central Caboolture (including the railway station) westwards to the D'Aguilar Range at Delaneys Creek. It also will serve as another connection from the proposed North Coast Mountain Bike Trail.

Commencing from central Caboolture, the best option (2) would be establishment of a formal rail trail (or alternatively a rail-with-trail arrangement in the very wide corridor) west to Wamuran (subject to planning decisions involving Queensland Rail).



The disused wide rail corridor at County Drive, Moodlo

Alternatives include extension of the existing shared pathways of King Street (2a) or development of a pathway along Wararaba Creek (2b) once trail connections through existing linear parks are achieved. The connection from Wamuran to Delaneys Creek can be made most directly on the southern section of the

Wamuran D'Aguilar Loop Trail along Williams and Dwane Roads (2c) or on the more scenic northern trail route through Beerburum West State Forest and Beerburum Forest Reserve No.1 (2d).



View north over the Calvert, Bungo and Delaney Creek valleys

From the Mt Mee - Woodford Rd, the route heads generally west (2e) to the boundary of the DPI Forestry plantations adjacent to the Mt Mee Forest Reserve. North from Delaney Creek Rd, road-based options give access to the Mt Neurum Park (Caboolture Shire) and the Neurum Creek Conservation Park. The key development partners are those for the Caboolture - Woodford Regional Trail.

3. The Burpengary – Dayboro - D'Aguilar Range Regional Trail (previously referred to as the Southern Loop to the Bicentennial Trail). The original concept of this trail was to provide long-distance connectivity to the Bicentennial National Trail west of Esk. While the importance of that link for horse riding remains, this Regional Trail now holds greater significance for the wider trail user community because of the connections it provides with Brisbane Forest Park.

The alignment is road-based with minor sections being unconstructed. In general, trail development beside the road is feasible. However, the two kilometre section along the Mt Mee Road presents a significant safety challenge for horse riders unaccustomed to being in close proximity to high speed road traffic.

Collaborative planning will be essential to ensure the preservation of the present opportunity to develop this trail, and to maintain key linkages (eg. to Sheep Station Creek Conservation Park) with the key partners being the Caboolture and Pine Rivers Shire Councils, the Department of Main Roads (Mt Mee Road, District Road 401) and the Environmental Protection Agency (in relation to Brisbane Forest Park access and Sheep Station Creek Conservation Park).

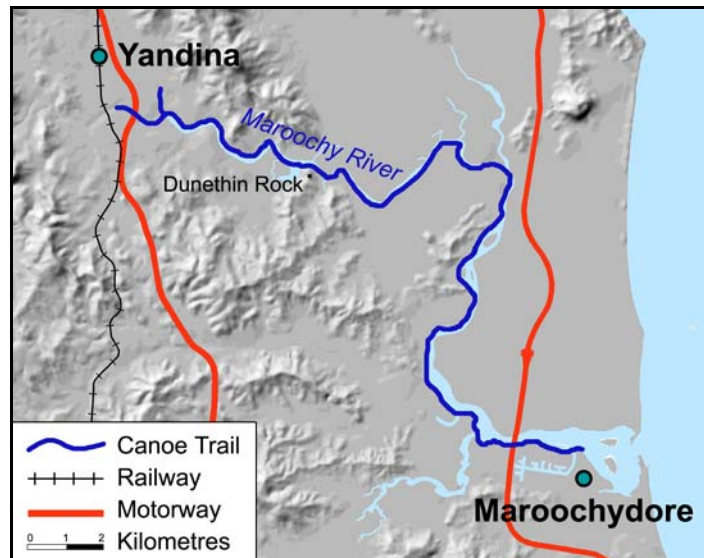
Infrastructure constraints. The development of essential support infrastructure along regional recreation trails through semi-rural and rural settings will be a new challenge for trail managers. Provision of toilets as well as reliable and safe water supplies will be essential to make proposals acceptable to the local rural communities. In some cases, joint use of existing public or private facilities may be possible with innovative management strategies. This will help to avoid vandalism that is more likely to originate from casual passers-by than from dedicated trail users. On the longer trails, provision of suitable accommodation options (at reasonable prices) will be an important consideration.

Maroochy River Canoe Trail

Yandina to Maroochydore

Yandina, Wharf Rd – Coulsons Wharf Park – Ashtons Wharf Rd – Dunethin Rock – Muller Park - Maroochydore

A recreational canoe trail down the most scenic tidal estuary in south east Queensland



Concept. Of all the tidal river estuaries in SEQ, the Maroochy River offers the most rewarding opportunity for development of a new formal canoe trail that will be of regional significance. The trail proposal is 28 km long, with several shorter options, and its outstanding scenic and historic settings are located along a river that already has numerous access points (developed and undeveloped) on public land on the river banks.

Description. The canoe trail starts on the South Maroochy River in Yandina just west of the Bruce Highway, turns briefly into the North Maroochy River, and then heads east through the varied natural and agricultural landscapes of the Ninderry and Dunethin Rock districts before passing the mouth of Coolum Creek on the reach south through Marcoola, Pacific Paradise, Bli Bli and east into Maroochydore.

The riverside access points offer cost-effective development and the location of the trail in a region of rapid residential and tourist growth will ensure appropriate social and economic returns on the initial investment and subsequent maintenance costs. There will be minimal conflict between local recreational users, recreational tourists, local residents and local anglers and boating enthusiasts.

Several proposals for development of the Maroochy River Canoe Trail have been presented recently, in the Maroochy Shire Council Recreation Trails Strategy, by the SUNROC Tracks and Trails Project Committee and in the Canelands Future study. The research carried out for the SEQ Regional Trails Strategy supports the previous proposals and confirms the high potential of this river for a regional canoe trail.



The Maroochy River valley upstream from Dunethin Rock



View upstream from the bridge at Coulsons Wharf Park

Western Trailhead Options. Just south of Yandina town there are two potential trailheads on the South Maroochy River, either at the Vee Rd causeway (UBD SC 46 E8) at the head of the tide, or on the old wharf site (right bank looking downstream) at the end of Wharf Rd (UBD SC 46 F9). The road casement at the Vee Road causeway is very wide with room for carpark development and requires minimal development for a safe shallow-water launching site for canoes. However, here the water is quite shallow during low tide.

About 300 m downstream from the causeway, at the limit of navigation for larger boats, the Wharf Rd site is more extensive with reliable deep water access. Presently there is no formally designated or currently developed launching position. However, this site is sufficiently large to accommodate a car park and trailhead facilities and would be most suited to development of pontoon or mini-ramp access facilitating use by the widest sections of the community.



Proposed access site, Wharf Rd, South Maroochy River

Riverside Access Locations. About 1.75 km to the east, the next access is at Coulsons Wharf Park (UBD SC 46 K9) on the North Maroochy River (west bank) beside the Yandina to Coolum Rd bridge, about 200 metres upstream from the junction with the South Maroochy River. Although there is developed public access to the riverside parkland at this spot, there are no toilet or water facilities. A formally developed and designated canoe launching location would be highly desirable for safe river access because of the riverside relicts of old jetties and slipways in the muddy banks.



View downstream at Ashtons Wharf Rd, Maroochy River

The next public access is 4.6 km downstream at Ashtons Wharf Road (left bank, UBD SC 47 F13). Here the existing informal jetty is too high for boarding canoes, but suitable access to the river can be gained easily at the creek inlet where a graded ramp down the high bank has been provided recently during removal of the disused cane tramway bridge. This site is regularly used for riverbank fishing but there are no facilities.

Further east and 0.8 km downstream, the Lake Dunethin Rd boat ramp is located on the south bank (UBD SC 47 H15). This area is heavily used for launching powerboats. There are riverbank toilet facilities about 300 m downstream a little inland from the small formal jetty. A short walk south from the ramp, the track up Dunethin Rock gives access to the panoramic view over this section of the coastal plain.



View downstream from Dunethin Rock, Maroochy River

After the Lake Dunethin Rd ramp, the next publicly accessible location with developed facilities is at Muller Park, 13.7 km downstream (three to four hours paddling time). About 2.2 km downstream from the Dunethin ramp, the historic cane railway lift bridge is located at the end of River Store Rd but the steep river banks preclude easy access without construction of facilities.

Five kilometres downstream from the Dunethin ramp, there is technical public access at the end of Burtons Rd (opposite Small Ck) but there are no facilities. After passing the mouth of Coolum Ck (7.4 km from Dunethin ramp), there is existing public access at Stoney Wharf Rd, Bli Bli (UBD SC 58 L4, no facilities, 10 km from the Dunethin ramp). Then the route passes the Bli Bli Wetlands Sanctuary (west bank) and leads under the David Low Way bridge to the Muller Park ramp with full facilities (UBD SC 58 F16). Downstream from this point, canoeists will encounter many more recreational boats on the river.

Eastern Trailhead Options. There are three options for defining the eastern end of the trail. About 3 km downstream from Muller Park is the Fishermans Rd ramp and canoe access area at the mouth of Eudlo Ck near the canoe club boatshed (UBD SC 68 K5). One kilometre downstream from Fishermans Rd is the Bradman Ave boatramp (UBD SC 68 M4). About 2.5 km further downstream is the Picnic Point Esplanade ramp (UBD SC 69 F5). All three options have full facilities located close to the ramps.

Gormans Gap Track and Bicentennial National Trail Circuits

Preston Boundary Road to Flagstone Creek

Gormans Gap Track – Glen Lomond Creek – Flagstone Creek Conservation Park - Hellhole Creek Road - BNT

Trails with history and challenge for walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders

Setting and Concept. The Darling Downs area has many attractions for residents and visitors alike. The relatively mild climate is well suited to outdoor recreation. Beautiful Toowoomba city, the nearby attractive rural scenery and rugged landscapes are well known to tourists, and there is a wide range of accommodation available. However, Toowoomba is a 'land-locked' city with limited opportunities for development of new highly rewarding recreation trails within the city boundary.

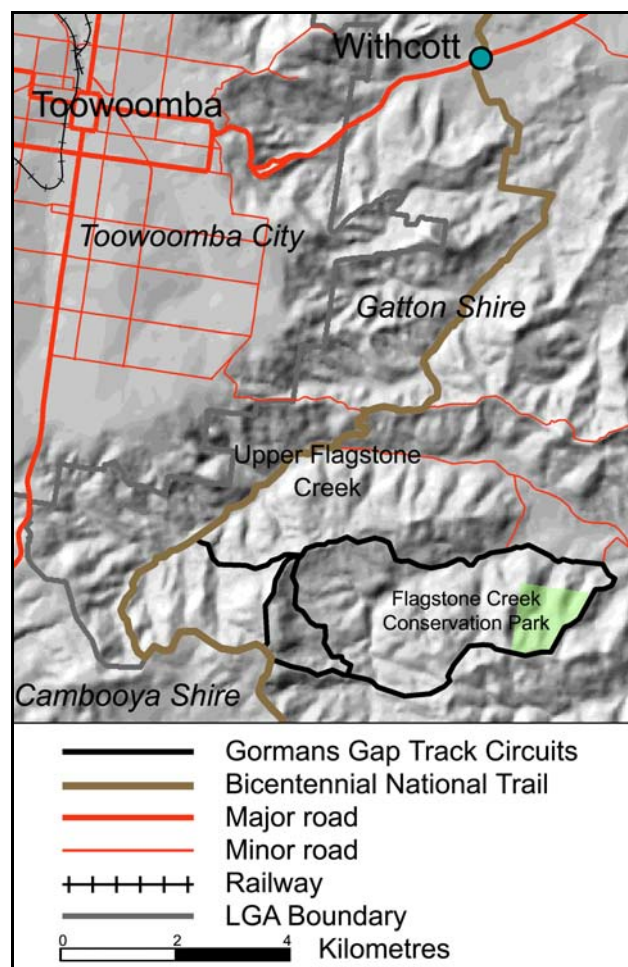
This 24 km long regional trail circuit complex is located immediately southeast of Toowoomba in the Upper Flagstone Creek district in Gatton Shire. It is based on Preston Boundary Road where a lucky coincidence of the alignments of the Bicentennial National Trail (BNT) and the historic Gormans Gap Track, along with some very low-order and unformed roads, provide circuit trail opportunities. The longest circuit has the added attraction of passing along the boundary of the Flagstone Creek Conservation Park. Although this area is already known to some trail users, it is not formally promoted. During the SEQ Regional Trails project, inspections of the BNT suggest that this section is possibly the most intensively and most frequently used in SEQ.

The steep ridges mean that the route is best suited to trail hikers, mountain bike riders and horse riders.



The final climb on the Gormans Gap track

Conservation and recreation. Gormans Gap Track was the first road entered on the Register of the National Estate. The Gatton Shire Council conservation management plan proposed that non-motorised recreation would be a compatible use of the historic route. All alignments of this regional trail proposal are on surveyed roads.



This proposal offers rewarding access to scenic natural and rural landscapes for a specialized cross-section of Toowoomba residents and visitors and would be a further step in the development of rural recreation as a major tourism industry along the Main Range.



The profile of the 'Camels Hump' section of the upper Gormans Gap Track as viewed from Hell Hole Road

Tamborine Tracks and Pathways Network

Linking the National Parks and Communities of Tamborine Mountain

Eagle Heights – North Tamborine – Mount Tamborine – Gallery Walk - Five National Parks – The Botanical Gardens

A trail and pathway network for recreation, learning, exercise and community development

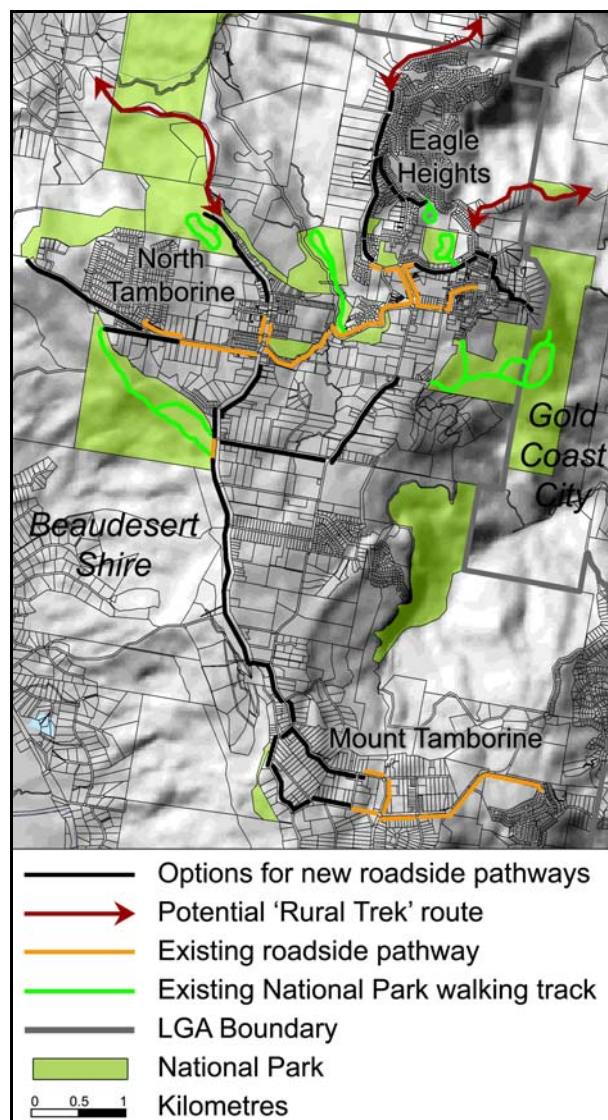
Concept. This proposal is for 15 km of new shared pathways to provide a compact trail network of regional significance based on the existing Tamborine Mountain footpaths, pathways and national park walking tracks, the scenic setting of the western Tamborine Escarpment (including the hang-glider launch site), the Botanical Gardens, the refreshing upland climate and on the evident and latent walking demand from both residents and visitors, the latter being drawn from across south east Queensland.

Tamborine Mountain is the site of the first national park in Queensland. Today five of the scattered sections of national park on the plateau contain a total of 25 km of walking tracks that lead to a variety of forest types, popular lookouts and waterfalls. While there are existing linkages between the main tourist shopping area and North Tamborine (3 km of shared pathway, boardwalk and footpaths) and from the St Bernard Primary School to houses near the Tamborine Golf Club (about 2 km of shared pathway), pathway linkages are poor between the other residential areas and to sites of community or recreation interest. This trail network will provide the local residents with new options for safe exercise, provide better universal access mobility and increase community cohesion through higher social interaction.



The Tamborine Botanical Gardens in Eagle Heights

The network also will support existing and new economic opportunities with easier walking access between accommodation houses, various attractions, restaurants and commercial features as well as reducing the local impacts of vehicle use. In the longer term, the network could function as a focus for a series of 'Rural Treks' (long distance country walking opportunities, typically with catered accommodation) based from the mountain.



Priority trail locations. Initial construction of the 6 km pathway beside Main Western (Tamborine Mountain) Road will give the highest return on investment by simultaneously delivering community, health, recreation, alternative transport and tourism benefits. There are minimal environmental and engineering constraints for an alignment along most of the western side of the roadway thereby giving a more or less continuous view over the escarpment. Appropriate facilities exist along the route.

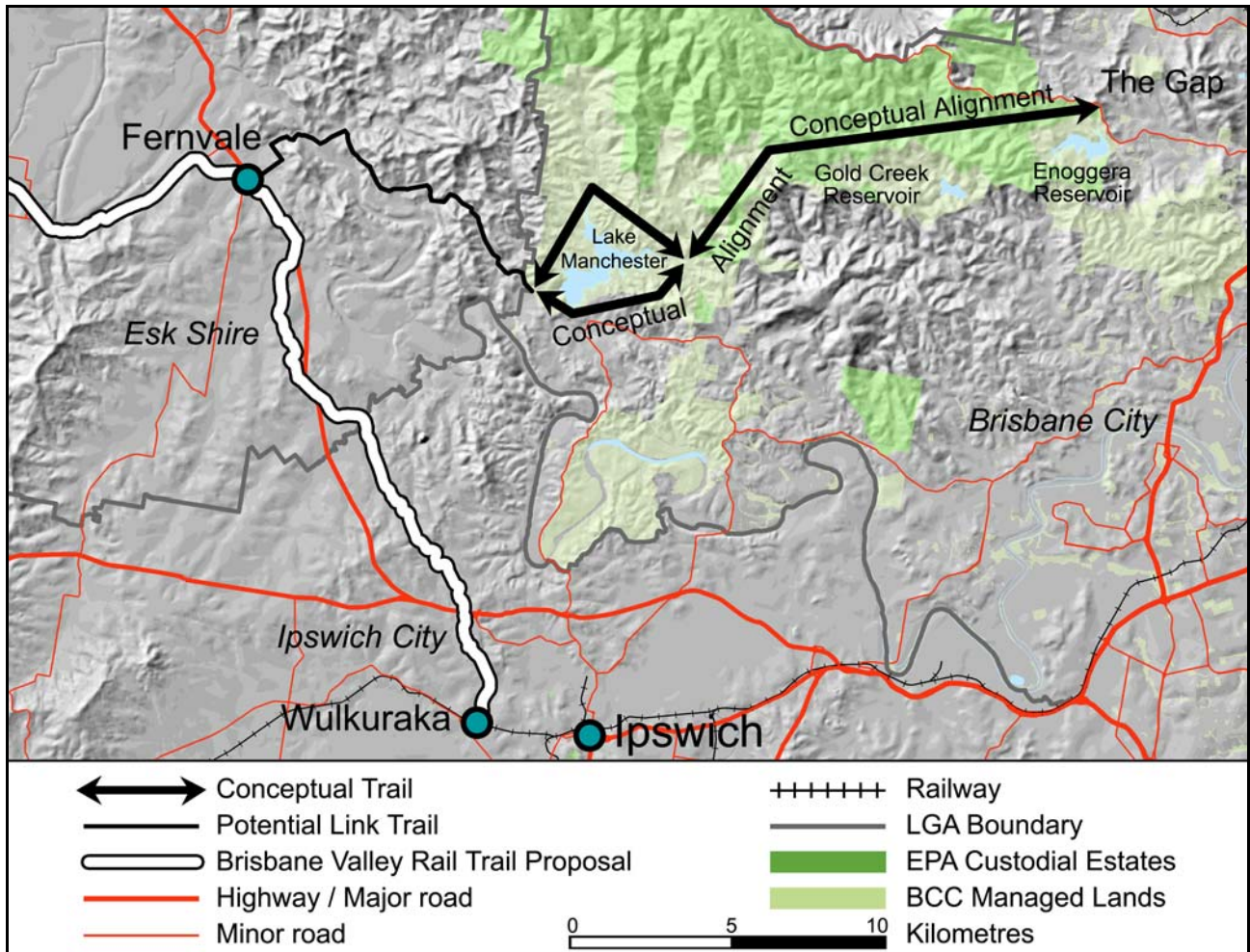
In the steep ridges of Eagle Heights, provision of a pathway from the Botanical Gardens to Gallery Walk via Forsythia Drive, the northern end of Long Road and Macdonnell Road would deliver high community benefits and give links to a local park and small sections of national park. It would also provide the basis for a future circuit walk through Eagle Heights by joining tracks in the Botanical Gardens with those of the adjacent national park.

Brisbane City to Fernvale Recreation Trail

Enoggera Reservoir to Fernvale

The Gap - Southern D'Aguilar Range - Lake Manchester – Brisbane River (Savages Crossing) – Fernvale
with access to Ipswich and Esk on the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail and to the Bicentennial National Trail

A key scenic recreation link from Brisbane City to the Brisbane River Valley



Concept. A recreation trail connection between Brisbane City and Fernvale at the southern end of the D'Aguilar Range would provide a key linkage for Brisbane's residents and visitors to the network of inland regional trails proposed in the SEQ Regional Trails project. This concept has been discussed with senior staff of the Brisbane City Council (BCC) (the dominant landholder along the probable alignment) who gave general support for presentation of this trail proposal at this time based on a 'conceptual alignment'.

West of the BCC lands, the connection to Fernvale is on an unformed surveyed road and beside a gravel road to the Brisbane River at Savages Crossing. This proposal offers a wide range of natural and rural scenery and is accessible at either end by public transport. Sections of the proposed route are currently used by horse riders, mountain bike riders and day-walkers but there are no developed recreation trail facilities in this area.

Planning and management constraints. It is recognised that the value of these southern D'Aguilar Range landscapes as water supply catchments is predominant in land use planning and present management. However, trail based recreation could be a compatible activity if appropriate infrastructure for toilets and camping is provided. The future value of this route in a regional recreation trail network would justify the costs of such essential facilities along the trail.



The southern ridges of the D'Aguilar Range lie along the conceptual route for the Brisbane City to Fernvale trail