TECHNICAL REPORT 3:
REVIEW OF PROMOTIONAL PLANNING STRATEGIES

Brisbane Valley Rail Trail Marketing & Community Engagement Strategy February 2012

<u>Disclaimer</u>

The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed within this document are a review of promotional planning strategies and do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs or viewpoints of any other persons or organisations, including the Department of Local Government and Planning, the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail Steering Committee, or QORF.

QORF
Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation Inc.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND CONTEXT

QORF was appointed by the Department of Local Government and Planning (DLGP) (formerly Department of Infrastructure and Planning - DIP) and the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail (BVRT) Steering Committee to prepare a Marketing and Community Engagement Strategy for the BVRT.

The Strategy development was informed through a series of phases undertaken by QORF to gather 1) existing information on the BVRT, 2) information on similar trails in Australia and New Zealand and 3) insights from the local communities along the BVRT.

As the project brief was to develop a clear and concise Strategy, much of the background and context of the BVRT and its stakeholders have not been included in the Strategy document. Rather, this background and context constitutes three Technical Reports which act as implementation reference documents. The following report is the BVRT Technical Report 3: Review of Promotional Planning Strategies, and can be read in conjunction with:
- BVRT Technical Report 1: Information Review; and
- BVRT Technical Report 2: Community Workshops and Community Survey.

The findings from these Technical Reports have informed the Strategy development and QORF recommends that readers wishing to understand the context and scope of the research process used access the Technical Reports for further information. These can be obtained from the owners of the strategy, namely DLGP and the BVRT Steering Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of Technical Report 3 is to provide a review of successful promotional strategies by notable rail trails in Australia and New Zealand and subsequent suggestions for promotional strategies for the BVRT. To address this aim, a review of promotional strategies was undertaken using websites as the main reference point and included a review of websites for: the Riesling Trail; Railway Reserves Heritage Trail; Murray to the Mountains; Gippsland Rail Trail; Otago Central Rail Trail; and the Munda Biddi Trail.

This Technical Report highlights that trails with robust governance structures and access to adequate resources (see Technical Report 1: Information Review for more detail on governance structures), have also been able to implement and maintain high quality web promotion, which has been complemented with a comprehensive social media marketing strategy.

Based on a review of these rail trail websites and a consideration of the existing promotional strategies already in place for the BVRT, this report provides recommendations for promotional planning, including:

- establishing the BVRT website as the official website for all matters relating to the BVRT;
- drafting a revised BVRT website with specific information pages (including Home; About; On the BVRT; Planning Your Trip; BVRT Shop; BVRT Partners; Events; News; Contacts);
- providing whole-of-trail maps for free download and inclusion in a BVRT Guide Book;
- implementing a planned social media marketing strategy to disseminate information and news available on the official BVRT website; and
- developing a functional and attractive website to engage locals and visitors.

Section 4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations should be referred to for detailed concept and methods to carry out these recommendations.

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Department of Local Government and Planning (DLGP), and the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail (BVRT) Steering Committee commissioned Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF) to research and develop a Marketing and Community Engagement Strategy for the BVRT. To provide a background to the Strategy development, a review of promotional strategies for rail trails in Australia and New Zealand was undertaken.

The purpose of Technical Report 3 is to provide:
- A review of successful promotional strategies by notable rail trails in Australia and New Zealand; and
- Suggestions for promotional strategies for the BVRT.

Technical Report 3 details the methodology used to carry out the review and presents key information that emerged from the review. The Technical Report concludes with final comments and identifies several key priorities that were considered in the development of the Marketing and Community Engagement Strategy.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

A systematic process was implemented to review possible promotional strategies for the BVRT. These are outlined below.

2.1 REVIEW OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

The review of promotional strategies was undertaken using websites as the main reference point for two reasons:
- the shopfront nature of trail websites due to the virtual nature of trail management committees; and
- the cost-effectiveness of replicating web-based promotions for the BVRT.

The trails were selected for their geographical dispersion and general similarity to the BVRT – e.g. rail trail, long distance, and/or multi-use.

The sample of websites was based on the six rail trails reviewed in Technical Report 3, including:
- the Riesling Trail;
- Railway Reserves Heritage Trail;
- Murray to the Mountains;
- Gippsland Rail Trail;
- Otago Central Rail Trail; and
- Munda Biddi Trail.

Each of the websites was assessed against a list of information requirements, including:

- the presence of a website, or a webpage embedded in another website;
- the kind of information pages included on the website;
- the kind of maps that were available for download or to purchase;
- whether there were maps available for the whole length of the trail;
- whether there were maps available for the sections of the trail;
- whether there was a profile of the trail gradient available;
- whether there was a mailing list to subscribe to;
- the types of social media channels utilised to complement the website; and
- a qualitative assessment of the webpage functionality.

3.0 Findings

3.1 Promotional Strategies by Rail Trails in Australia & New Zealand

The findings of this review of promotional strategies are detailed in Table 1 over the page. Each of the key points from the review is discussed in detail below.

3.1.1 Official Websites

The findings show that the majority of the trails investigated have a dedicated website, and in most cases these are managed by the relevant committee of management or designated trail manager. The review revealed that the legitimacy of the official websites is sometimes challenged. For instance there is a competing website for the Otago Central Rail Trail (http://www.otagorailtrail.co.nz). This competing site is more aesthetic and user friendly than the official site, and comes up higher in Google searches than the official site. The problem with this is that the background to the Otago Central Rail Trail, including the Trust and the Friends of the Trail, is not given any coverage on the competing website, so users do not gain a full appreciation of the trail.

Further, information on the trails is not exclusive to the official websites as there are several websites that provide information on a number of rail trails in Australia and New Zealand (www.railtrails.org.au and http://www.railtrails.net.au/). In some cases these sites link back to the relevant websites, but not always, and the links are not always updated regularly. These websites feature online user forums where users can rate trails and provide opinions and advice to other potential users. The major challenge associated with these websites is that the information is user-generated meaning that while content may be recent, it is not always accurate and it relies on personal opinion and evaluation. A further challenge is that these sites show very high on Google searches, so people researching the trails are likely to look through the content on these unofficial pages before coming to an official website for the trail.

3.1.2 Information Pages

The websites mostly include several information pages. The webpages for each trail differ across the trails, but commonly include:

- Home page;

- About/On the trail/Explore the trail/Plan you trip page;
- Shop or Merchandise page
- Partners/Friends of the Trail/Volunteers page
- Events
- News/Images/Resources page
- Contact us

3.1.3 TRAIL MAPPING

In terms of the types of maps that were available, the majority of the trails provided downloadable maps through the website. Munda Biddi was the only page that did not provide downloadable maps; instead maps must be purchased through their online shop. The types of maps available were predominantly maps depicting the trails in their entirety and included profiles of the trail gradient. Copies of the five freely available maps are included in Appendix 1.

Very few trails had maps specific to each section. Those that did had a history of the trail being completed in sections, or in the case of Munda Biddi where the distances of each section are so expansive, section mapping is required. Information that was most useful for preparing trail users is the trail notes available on the East Gippsland Rail Trail website. This provides a detailed description of each of the sections, what to expect, guidelines on trail use and local advice which are updated regularly and available free for download. These trail notes were able to provide necessary information that is too detailed to be communicated through any kind of map. An example of the East Gippsland Rail Trail notes is available in Appendix 2.

3.1.4 USER INTERACTION: MAILING LISTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Most of the trails incorporated some kind of mailing list to distribute a newsletter, and in some cases made a newsletter available on the website for people to download. Most of the trails had a level of presence on a social media channel, but the effectiveness of the social media was variable. Examples where the social media channels were not effectively integrated into the overarching promotional strategy included:
- The Riesling Trail - the Facebook page seems to have been created by local groups and as such there is no link from the webpage to the Facebook page; and
- The Railway Reserves Heritage Trail – this was not present on Facebook, but the annual Trek the Trails event is. There is no link to the Facebook page from the website.

The Murray to the Mountains and East Gippsland Rail Trail have links from their website to their Facebook page and are operating this social media channel moderately, where the Facebook page provides a basis to share information with the community and users can post their experiences and feedback.

The Central Otago Rail Trail and Munda Biddi Rail Trail have far more comprehensive social media strategies in place using Facebook as one of many social media channels. The ability to operate so many channels effectively is based on the organisations supporting the trails and their ability to constantly generate web-based content to share through the social media channels.

3.1.5 WEBSITE FUNCTIONALITY

In terms of the overall assessment of website functionality, results were variable, with most feedback centring on the limited amount of information available on some of the sites and the limited logical presentation of information on other sites. The two websites that were considered the most functional were the East Gippsland Rail Trail and the Munda Biddi trail. These websites provide adequate information for someone to research and plan a trip along the trails (refer to Table 1 for further detail). The Munda Biddi website was far more advanced in terms of aesthetic presentation and general layout of the site.

TABLE 1: REVIEW OF WEBSITES

Website Detail	Riesling Trail	Railway Reserves Heritage Trail	Murray to the Mountains	East Gippsland Rail Trail	Otago Central Rail Trail	Munda Biddi Trail
Website?	Page only (Office of Recreation & Sport, 2011)	Yes (Shire of Mundaring, 2011)	Yes (Murray to Mountains, 2008)	Yes (Committee of Management, 2010)	Yes – Official (Otago Central Rail Trail Charitable Trust, 2009)	Yes (The Munda Biddi Trail Foundation, 2011)
Information Pages	**Single page** – Riesling (includes brief information about the trail location; state map indicating trail; download guide; download map)	**Home** (brief outline of trail, history, location and experience) **On The Trail** (more specific trail information on trail, download brochure map, transport contact details, places to visit in the area, maps, safety and etiquette) **Trek The Trail** (brief information on annual trail event, including previous treks, volunteers and supporters) **Image Gallery** **Supporters** (links to supporters web pages) **News** (chronological news page) **Contacts** (contacts for Perth Hills, Trail matters, Trek the Trail)	**Home** (rolling images and commentary on trail, links to recent news/resources) **Rail Trail** (brief background, links to location, ride guides, guide map, trail notes, guide for users, trail user checklist) **Mountain Biking** (links to specific mountain bike facilities in the area) **Road Riding** (suggested road rides in the area) **Holiday Packages** (advertisements for local accommodation/tour providers packages) **Places to Visit** (links to information on towns along the rail trail and in the area) **Resources** (links to testimonials, government and tourism websites, trail notes again) **Media** (links to recent news and resources, photos, videos)	**Home** (links to recent news, download Trail Mail Newsletter, side bar with links to services, attractions and local businesses) **Trail in a Day Event** (brief information on annual trail event) **Trail Notes** (download trail notes for each section of trail) **Contact Us** (Contact form) **About Us** (brief information on trail, maps, on-trail signage, trail plants and animals) **Trail Map** (link to download map) **Friends Info** (information on Friends of the EGRT Association Inc., registration includes newsletter)	**Rail Trail Interactive Map** (brief information on trail, lots of links) **Blogs, Videos, News** (links to trail user blogs and social media) **About the Rail Trail** (history, information on trust, government department, operators group) Clothing, Weather, **Water, Mobile Phone Coverage, Other Important Info** (things you should know and trail user safety information) **Accommodation** (links to providers along trail) **Food & Refreshments** (links to providers along trail) **Tour Operators** (summary and links) **Do-it-yourself Tour Planning** (recommendations and suggested itineraries) **Bike Hire & Transport** (summary and links) **Rail Trail Passport** (stamp collecting booklet for purchase) **Official Leaflet** (register to receive leaflet and newsletter) **FAQ** **Visitor Feedback** **Photo Galleries** **Official Rail Trail Online Shop** (various merchandise to purchase online) **Rail Trail Map Download** **Calendar of events** (events on the trail and in the region) **Web links** (towns and local government links) **Contact Us** (online form) **Friends of the Rail Trail** (brief info on Friends, summary of member initiatives) **Site Map** **Advertise with us** (advertising packages)	**Home** (rolling images and commentary on the trail, links) **Explore the Trail** (drop down menu to About the trail, Trail Towns, Planning your trip, Trail Facilities, Image Gallery, Groups Using the Trail, History of the Trail, WA Weather, Tales from the Trail, The Foundation) **Trip Planning** (drop down menu to Getting to the Trail, Trail Conditions, Daily Ride Guide, Health and Safety, Accommodation, Group Cycling, Leave No Trace, Meeting Other Riders, Trail Services Directory, Equipment Hire) **Events** (Event Calendar, including trip planning workshops, event registration) **Volunteers** (register and access to volunteer page) **Shop** (download maps and merchandise order form) **Partnerships** (Listing and description of corporate partners, links to Working Together and Community Development Workshops)

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED): REVIEW OF WEBSITES

Website Detail	Riesling Trail	Railway Reserves Heritage Trail	Murray to the Mountains	East Gippsland Rail Trail	Otago Central Rail Trail	Munda Biddi Trail
Maps?	Download Riesling Trail Guide free Download Riesling Trail Map free	Download trail brochure map free, download locality map free, download elevation, distance and time charts free, Kml Google Earth map free	Download Ride Guide free, download full map free,	Download rail trail map free	Download rail trail map free,	Purchase maps online
Full trail Map?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, purchase online
Section Map?	Yes	No	Yes	No (Trail notes by section)	No	Yes
Profile of Trail Gradient?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mailing list?	No	No	Yes	Newsletter part of Friends of the EGRT Association Inc. membership	Yes	Yes
Social Media	Facebook page – not connected to website	Facebook available for the Trek the Trail event only – no link from website	Facebook link from website	Facebook link from website	Facebook link from web page, also using twitter, YouTube and DIGG with link from website	Facebook link from website, also using Twitter, Linkedin and Google + with link and shares from website and pages
Overall Assessment of Website Functionality	Very basic, limited information	Good basis of information for visitors, strong layout	Good basis of information for visitors, some confusing/redundant links	Good basis of information for visitors, potential to have clearer trail product information, basic graphic design	Too many links, information needs to be packaged more efficiently	Lots of information organised efficiently and presented logically

3.2 PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES BY THE BVRT

3.2.1 OFFICIAL WEBSITE

There is currently an official BVRT website, which was set up by the Department of Local Government and Planning predominantly as a communication tool for the development of the rail trail (www.brisbanevalleyrailtrail.org.au). There are also several other websites which feature information on the BVRT. These are listed in Table 2 below. These are presented in the order which they appear in a Google search with the key words "Brisbane valley rail trail" (any links to media releases have not been included).

TABLE 2: WEBSITES FEATURING INFORMATION ON THE BVRT

Website and URL	Purpose of Website	Type of Information	Link to BVRT website?
Rail Trails Australia (http://www.railtrails.org.au/states/trails.php3?action=trail&trail=91)	Rail Trails Australia is a national organisation promoting and advocating the preservation of old rail corridors for recreation. They publish magazines, books, brochures and maps and house forums for trail users to discuss issues on various rail trails.	- Trail Description of the BVRT - Images - Links to BVRT website - User Forum for the BVRT	Yes – bottom of page
Department of Local Government and Planning (http://www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/regional-planning/brisbane-valley-rail-trail.html)	Department of Local Government and Planning is responsible for the development of the BVRT.	- Flood damage and sections of the BVRT that are officially open - Trail Description, including a copy of the rail trail plan - Media release - Trail benefits - Brochures - BVRT Ambassadors - Trail extension - Further information links to BVRT website or local VICs	Yes – bottom of page
RailTrails of Australia (http://www.railtrails.net.au/qld/brisbane_valley/index.htm and http://www.railtrail.com/qld/bvrt_linville_blackbutt.htm)	This site is provided by a rail trail enthusiast and brings together links to websites and incorporates this user's assessment of the various rail trails in Australia and New Zealand.	- Overview details and assessment - Images - Map	No
Bike Qld Wiki (http://www.bikeqld.org.au/wiki/Brisbane_Valley_Rail_Trail)	Bike Qld is an information repository for cyclists in Queensland. It is NOT affiliated with Bicycle Queensland.	- Brief background - Development process and links - Link to old draft plan - Links to Railtrails Australia, Office of Urban Management - Information needs urgent updating	No
South Burnett Regional Council (http://www.southburnett.qld.gov.au/web/guest/brisbane-valley-rail-trail)	This page is provided as part of the resources to 'Visitors' to South Burnett region.	- Background on history and nature of Moore to Blackbutt - History and Section Distances - Link to section brochure -Links to 'Blackbutt to Linville' Newsletter	No

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TABLE 2 (CONTINUED): WEBSITES FEATURING INFORMATION ON THE BVRT

Website and URL	Purpose of Website	Type of Information	Link to BVRT website ?
Weekend Notes (http://www.weekendnotes.com/brisbane-valley-rail-trail/)	Provides a list of things to do in Brisbane	- Brief background - Link to BVRT website - Information needs urgent updating	Yes
Visit Brisbane (http://www.visitbrisbane.com.au/Travel/Products/ProductView.aspx?id=24066)	Visit Brisbane is a marketing platform run by Brisbane Marketing providing information on things to do and see in the city and country valleys.	- Brief background - Inaccurate map - Link to webpage - Needs urgent updating	Yes
Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brisbane_Valley_Rail_Trail)	User generated information on a variety of topics	- Moore to Blackbutt focus - Activity types -Comprehensive information on plants and animals - Link to South Burnett RC - Links to Moore to Blackbutt page of the BVRT website	Yes
Walk the Line Brisbane Valley Rail Trail Shuttle Service (http://www.walkthelineshuttle.com.au/)	Providers of shuttle service for the BVRT	- Brief background - Images - Focus mainly on Moore to Blackbutt section - Links to BVRT website and RailTrails.net.au	Yes
Brisbane Valley Heritage Trails[1] (http://www.brisbanevalleyheritage.org.au/Rail-Trail)	Membership group focused on preserving and promoting the history of the Brisbane Valley and its many types of trails	- Brief background	No

3.2.2 INFORMATION PAGES

The BVRT page currently includes the following information pages:

- Home – running news feed
- The Trail – brief background to trail and trail sections, links to section brochures, image of whole trail and code of conduct
- Photo Gallery – images along the various trail sections
- FAQ – information originating from community consultation surrounding the BVRT
- The Community – trail user stories
- Links – State and Local government links and other websites
- Contact Us – details for local member and Steering Committee Chair, group bookings for South Burnett RC and Somerset RC, Department of Infrastructure and Planning, Ambassadors.

The BVRT website is in need of converting from a communication tool of DLGP to a more engaging site where potential users, local and visitors, can become inspired to engage in the experiences available on the BVRT. Information needs updating the site would benefit from becoming more

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[1] Website did not show up in first 3 pages of Google Search, but included due to BVHT support of the BVRT

relevant to local businesses, demonstrating how they can effectively engage with the economic opportunities of the BVRT.

3.2.3 TRAIL MAPPING

There is a whole of trail map available on the BVRT website; however, this does not provide enough for potential trail users to plan for a trip. Other maps available for download are included in the trail section brochures. These section brochures provide a basic level of information for trail users intending to travel along specific sections, however, none of the section brochures emphasise where each of the sections exist with regard to the whole of the BVRT.

3.2.4 USER INTERACTION: MAILING LISTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The BVRT does not currently have a mailing list in place but this is not seen to be detrimental to the ongoing support of the trail. The BVRT does have in place an "official" Community Facebook Page (http://www.facebook.com/BrisbaneValleyRailTrail) which is used to promote events along the BVRT and share information related to the BVRT.

However, the Community Facebook Page is ad hoc and is not currently being used to complement the BVRT website. Content available on the Facebook page has been posted without being featured on the BVRT website, meaning only those people visiting the Community Facebook Page are aware of the news and events. The Facebook Page includes links back to the BVRT website yet the BVRT website does not provide links to the Facebook page. This means that the two tools are not being used effectively to generate hits and links for Search Engine Optimisation outcomes.

3.2.5 WEBSITE FUNCTIONALITY

As outlined above, the BVRT website was set up by the Department of Local Government and Planning predominantly as a communication tool for the development of the rail trail. As a specific and functional site it was designed to achieve a purpose of information dissemination. As such, there is limited infrastructure or resources available on the page to encourage locals to use the trail, or help visitors research and plan their trip along the trail. In the next phase of trail and promotional development, this gap needs to be addressed.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This review has highlighted that those trails with robust governance structures and adequate resources have been able to implement and maintain high quality web promotion, which has been complemented with a comprehensive social media marketing strategy. This section provides recommendations for:

- establishing the BVRT website as the official website for all matters relating to the BVRT;
- drafting a revised BVRT website with specific information pages included;
- providing whole-of-trail maps for free download;
- implementing a planned social media marketing strategy to disseminate information and news available on the official BVRT website; and
- developing a functional and attractive website to engage locals and visitors.

4.1 OFFICIAL BVRT WEBSITE

It is critical that the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail official website evolve from being a communication tool for the Department to being an information source for trail users, both locals and visitors to the area. As such, a review and rebuild of the website is recommended. The BVRT website should be the first point of call for potential users researching the trail, as well as for other websites wanting to publish information on the BVRT.

There is certainly a place for the other websites identified in this review, but relationships with authors and editors should be established to ensure that information is up-to-date and accurate and that each of these websites provides a link back to the official BVRT website. This may be facilitated by developing a wiki tool so web developers can embed a BVRT logo in their pages that links directly back to the BVRT home page. This relationship with other websites should be viewed as being reciprocal, by ensuring that the feedback provided on these forums is acknowledged and addressed by the BVRT managers.

A further development recommended here is to utilise the newly established Trip Advisor page that has been established for the BVRT, as this will help promote the BVRT as one of the many activities to engage in while visiting Brisbane. Trip Advisor is recommended by Tourism Queensland as a robust testimony website that is user-moderated. A further advantage of Trip Advisor is that the local businesses along the BVRT can establish their own sites and cross promote the region; this opportunity is not available through the rail trail forums. A link to Trip Advisor can be embedded in the BVRT website to encourage trail users to share their experiences on the trail. Again, feedback on the Trip Advisor site should be acknowledged and addressed by BVRT managers.

4.2 TRAIL MAPPING

It is recommended that a whole of trail map be developed with detail of towns along the BVRT, distances between towns and gradients of trail sections. This map should be available free for download from the website as two A4 size pages that can be printed back to back for trail user reference. This map should also feature in a BVRT Guide Book which provides much more detailed information on each of the sections, similar to the rail trail notes available for the East Gippsland Rail Trail (See Appendix 2).

4.3 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

It is recommended that the BVRT establish a Twitter account to be used alongside the Community Facebook Page. A planned social media marketing strategy can then be used to disseminate information and news items available on the Official BVRT website. As social media marketing can be time consuming to operate effectively, it is recommended that Twitter be used as the main platform, and an interface be set up to enable Tweets to be automatically shared on the Facebook page.

While social media platforms are acknowledged as being self-regulating and subject to limited negative behaviour, the organization responsible for implementing the Strategy should be conscious

of reviewing Twitter and Facebook content at least once per month, to monitor activity and edit unfavourable comments.

By using these social media tools, the social media communities of the BVRT are able to connect and grow; find out about events and share experiences. It is important to note that social media marketing should not occur in isolation, and that any information disseminated through these tools is driven by website content. In this way, the first priority for information should always be the website, and social media tools should merely be used to share this information and promote social media conversation.

4.4 WEBSITE FUNCTIONALITY

The revised BVRT website should address layout, information and resources to be included on the site to appeal to potential rail trail users, including locals and visitors. Importantly, the website must be structured logically and provide enough information for a trail user to research and plan their trip without leaving the BVRT website.

References

Committee of Management Inc. (2010). East Gippsland Rail Trail.   Retrieved 15 November, 2011, from http://eastgippslandrailtrail.com/

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APPENDIX 1: RAIL TRAIL MAPS AVAILABLE ON WEBSITES

A. RIESLING TRAIL MAP

Original size A4

B. HERITAGE RESERVES RAIL TRAIL

Original size twice A4 lengthwise, back to back

C. Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail

Original size A4, back to back

PARKERPIES
RUTHERGLEN
AUSTRALIA
Established 1996

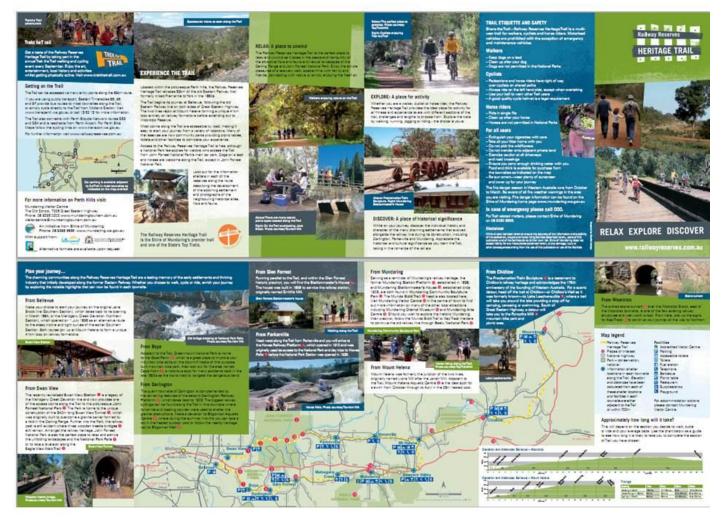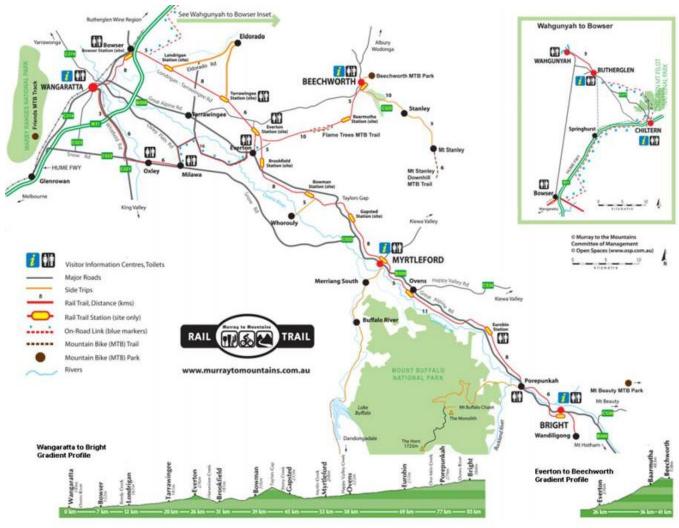Parker Pies is an Award Winning, family run business in Rutherglen. All of the pies are hand crafted and make use of fresh local produce when available.

After riding the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail make sure you stop in for a coffee, cool drink and a pie. There are plenty of places to park your bike while you sit and enjoy the historic town of Rutherglen.

02 6032 9605
www.parkerpies.com.au

106 Kms of off-road sealed trail

WARBY - OVENS NATIONAL PARK
Warby-Ovens National Park is 240km north east of Melbourne and 10km west of Wangaratta. It is best accessed from Wangaratta via Wangandary and Yarrawonga Roads.

Bike riding is permitted on open vehicle roads tracks and some management tracks including Pangarang Lookout Walk and Ridge Track to Mount Glenrowan. Bike riders must give way to walkers and remain on the tracks at all times.

MT PILOT NATIONAL PARK
Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park is 275 km north-east of Melbourne, beyond Wangaratta (Mel Ref: 622 E6) Follow the Hume Freeway to the Chiltern turn-off.

Cycle on forest tracks at Donchi Hill in the west, Frogs Hollow and Magenta Mine and at Cyanide Dam. Cycle through the park in spring to view the wildflower wonderland.

Parks
VICTORIA

Healthy Parks Healthy People

RAIL TRAIL
Murray to Mountains

Australia's Premier Rail Trail

murraytomountains.com.au

MYRTLEFORD TO BRIGHT
Distance: 30 km
Time: 2 hours (one way)

This section of the trail that takes you from Myrtleford to Bright and is a relatively easy ride that meanders its way through the Ovens Valley, with spectacular views of the Mt Buffalo National Park and the destination, the picturesque township of Bright.

Enjoy breakfast at the Myrtleford Butter Factory before you leave. 5kms down the trail you will find the Happy Valley Hotel in Ovens, a great place for a drink, meal or accommodation. Located close to halfway is Eurobin Station with toilets, water, shelter and parking.

Porepunkah is a gorgeous village just 6kms from Bright where you will find the Rail Trail Cafe, a riverside picnic and playground area, toilets and water.

Caution
- The gradient increases noticeably as you make your way up to Taylors Gap
- Take extreme care when crossing the Great Alpine Rd
- Give way to stock (farm animals) at all times

GIVE WAY TO STOCK

WANGARATTA TO MYRTLEFORD
Distance: 53 km
Time: 4 hours (one way)

Beginning riverside at Apex Park Wangaratta, this scenic ride has something for everyone, with beautiful native bushland, spectacular views of the Ovens Valley from Taylors Gap and a colourful history you can literally taste.

Take a side trip off the trail to Everton (500 metres one way) or Whorouly (5km one way) or the very popular Milawa Gourmet Region (16km one way).

BOWSER TO WANGUNYAH
Distance: 67km on trail & road
Time: 5 hours (one way)

Starting at the old Bowser Railway Station site, follow the blue marker posts to Chiltern and then onto Rutherglen where you can rejoin the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail at the Rutherglen Wine Experience. Discover wineries in and around Rutherglen and Wahgunyah, the gold history of Chiltern and the mighty Murray River.

Visitors to Chiltern will experience the nostalgia of the past with all the benefits of good, old-fashioned hospitality and warmth. Surrounded by quiet country roads to explore on your bike.

Caution
- There is a small section of dirt road surface on this ride.

BEECHWORTH TO EVERTON
Distance: 15 km
Time: 1 hour (one way)

Enjoy views of open farmland, rail cuttings through native bushland and high above the King Valley. After an easy downhill ride of 15kms you will reach a junction giving you the options of continuing on the trail to Wangaratta(26kms), Myrtleford(27kms), Bright(57kms) or take a detour off the trail to Milawa(16kms). If you are not keen to ride back up the hill, make sure you arrange a lift back up to Beechworth. (see Bike Services)
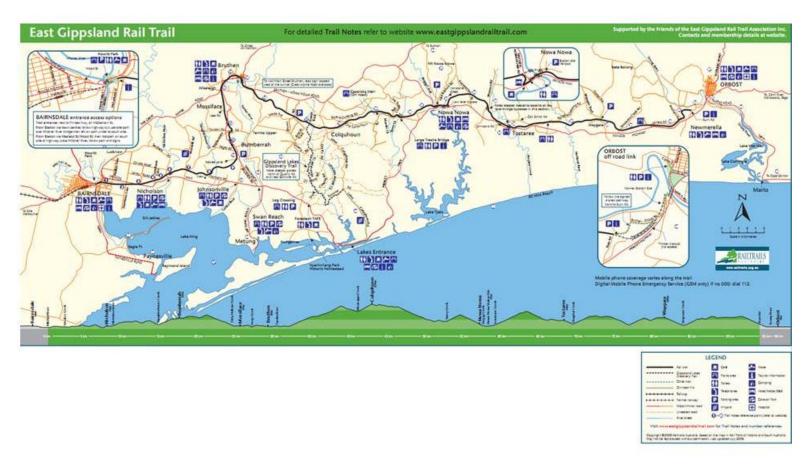
If you prefer rolling to riding, or haven't ridden in a long time, then this is a great ride for you!

Caution
- The gradient increases noticeably as you make your way up to Taylors Gap if returning back from Everton
- Take extreme care when crossing the Great Alpine Rd
- Give way to stock (farm animals) at all times

D. EAST GIPPSLAND RAIL TRAIL

Original size A4

E. Otago Central Rail Trail

Original size A4

APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLE OF EAST GIPPSLAND RAIL TRAIL NOTES

East Gippsland Rail Trail - Trail Notes
EGRT/Section 2: 7-15   (Nicholson to Bruthen)   (v.12012009)

Trail Notes are a supplement to the printed information and map brochure and are a 'work in progress'.
As new material becomes available the Notes files will be amended and replace the current version.
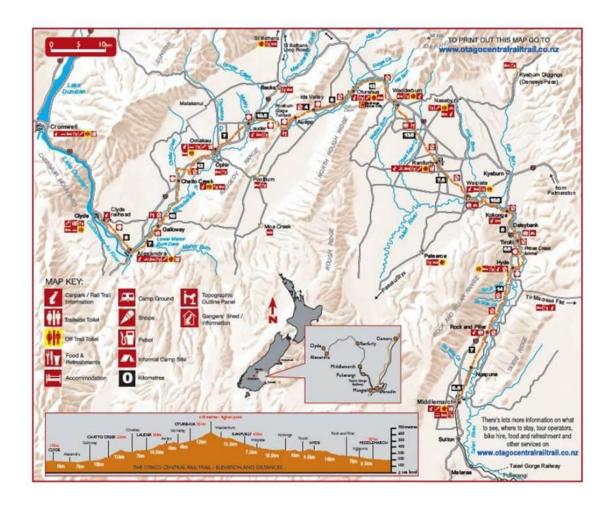These Notes are only available as PDFs from this web site. Download and print as required.
Because these files are updated from time to time please check the version and production date.
There may be a later version if you have previously downloaded one of these files.

Trail Notes are referenced by the black numbers shown on the map included in the Trail brochure. Copies of the
brochure are available at Visitor Information Centres (Federation Square and Southern Cross Station in Melbourne,
Traralgon, Sale, Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Orbost) and from other locations in East Gippsland, or by request by post
via the web site email Comments facility.

The PDFs have been prepared as 5 files with the Location reference numbers grouped as Sections of the Rail Trail plus
the SIDE TRIPS. The numbers follow the map sequence, west to east.

EGRT/Section 1: 1- 6	(Bairnsdale to Nicholson)	
EGRT/Section 2: 7-15	(Nicholson to Bruthen)	This set.
EGRT/Section 3:16 - 22	(Bruthen to Nowa Nowa)	
EGRT/Section 4:23 - 3 1	(Nowa Nowa to Burn Road)	
EGRT/Section 5:32 - 3 3	(Burn Road to Orbost : off-road link path)	
EGRT/SIDE TRIPS: 34 - 40		

Visitors are invited to contribute notes, comments, etc on their observations about any of the areas references
by these Trail Notes. Please use the Comments facility provided on the Trail web site.
Photos are also welcome but the files need to be kept small. If you would like to provide digital photos please
tell us about that in your message and an arrangement will be made for getting them delivered to the Trail Notes
editor.   Repeat: please DO NOT email photo files.

NOTES. This Rail Trail is a Crown Land Reserve. It is open 24/7 and no charge applies. HOWEVER -
user onus applies. If you are not prepared to accept that there can be from time to time rapid and
unexpected changes to conditions (Trail surface variations, effects of wind, fire, flooding etc), DO
NOT enter the Trail Reserve. Bicycle and horse riders entering the Trail Reserve must have a
sufficient level of competence and be equipped to be independent during their visit.
The Trail may be subject to closure in part or whole at very short notice. Check weather conditions before travel.
Kilometre marker posts are being installed within 5 Kms of towns and at some other points.
ALWAYS CARRY SUFFICIENT WATER FOR YOUR TRIP. Check the Trail web site for late breaking information.

EGRT/Section 2: map reference numbers 7-15   (Nicholson to Bruthen)
(includes: Stephenson Rd, Hardings Cr, Harmans Rd, Slaughterhouse Cr, Kettles Lane, Pages Rd,
Swan Reach Rd tunnels, Bruthen Rd, Lees Rd, Dirty Hollow Cr, former Mossiface Station).

Map reference 7.   A winery diversion
After leaving the Nicholson River Bridge the Trail climbs through a shallow cutting before veering to the right.
River views over your right shoulder. From here on the farm holdings on each side are more obvious.
Waddells Road on the left offers a diversion to the Nicholson River Winery. Follow the signed turn off but be
aware of the final steep descent (climb on the return) to the winery. It is about 2 kilometres off the Trail.
(Check their web site). A few metres further on is the Stephensons Road crossing.
A new steel gate and chicane has been installed on the east side (Feb 2008), replacing the former 'farm
gate'/chicane type you have been passing through up to this point. The older badly damaged gate was
smashed several years ago by an illegal vehicle on the Trail. (to be replaced, finances allowing)
The side road is a popular parking spot for Trail visitors.
CAUTION. Be very careful at this road crossing. It is a 100 KPH zone.
The Princes Highway (to Lakes Entrance etc) is to the right.

Map reference 8.   Farms and Lakes views
A long straight and slowly rising climb leads to an interesting and bushy section leading through to a small
cutting. Verge vegetation provides plenty of small birds habitat. The Trail crosses Hardings Creek on a high
embankment. A large new house on the left looks out to the Lakes, and at Harmans Road you too can
capture that view. The steel gates/chicanes were added in February 2008.
A donated seat (*Serenity Seat*, donated by the Steedman family, installed May 2008) provides a rest and re-
fuel (BYO!) stop. If you carry a binocular you can check out the south side of the Silt Jetties formation and
the buildings of parts of Eagle Point.
Unfortunately the old Harmans Road Bridge was demolished and the cutting below filled in. The diversion by-
passes a quite long cutting. Princes Highway is to the right via Harmans Road (very rough in parts).

Map reference 9.   High embankments and more farmland

The next section was badly damaged in 2007 from a combination of fire prevention works and then major floods. Repair works restored the surface and many sections of drainage were re-constructed. Verge clearing is being followed up with replanting.

A significant feature is the huge embankment which spans Salt Creek. This was a pick and shovel, horse and dray effort as the railway push eastwards. Vegetation includes some very big Eucalyptus trees.

The Trail continues to climb and comes out into open farm land. On the east side you will be passing yet another former railway pick up point. Local dairy produce was loaded at Claybank. Another few Kms and you reach Kettles Lane. The steel gate/chicane was installed in January 2008 as part of an upgrade program. Locked gates have been necessary to try and restrict illegal vehicle use of the Trail.

To this point the trail has been following a wide arc east then heads northwards, to meet up with the sealed Johnsonville / Bruthen Road off to your right. Ahead is one of the most interesting of the former station grounds on the Trail. The Prince Highway is to the south, accessible via Harmans Road (gravel).

Map reference 10.   Bumberrah station ground, grasses and big trees

It is a great regret that when the line was closed and decommissioned virtually every piece of infrastructure was removed. This site boasted several buildings and a small marshalling / loading yard to meet the needs of a nearby farms. All that is left are remnants of the Station platform and scattered around the area other signs of building foundations. The small shelter and information point is a popular stopping place. A few metres further on there is an entry point on the RHS with **vehicle parking space**. Remnant native grasses are an important feature of this location, plus a number of very large trees. Read the grasslands information displayed at the shelter. The Trail Friends are working on native grass re-vegetation at this location.

Visitors are reminded that camping is not permitted on the Rail Trail Reserve.

The next section into Bruthen will include a number of highlights.

Near the side access point noted above is where the Bruthen / Swan Reach Rising Main (sewer line) joins the Trail. You will notice vent pipe outlets and other signs at several points.

Map reference 11.   The Tunnels (Swan Reach Road underpasses)

Over the next few kilometres you will pass several farm houses and cross several minor service roads and pass through two corrugated steel tunnels underneath the Bruthen / Swan Reach Road. There are several short cuttings, quite a lot of dense Trail side vegetation, and service (and emergency) vehicle turning points before the Trail deviates to cross the Johnsonville / Mossiface Road at Tambo Upper where another timber bridge has been removed (Map reference point 13 - details below).

Map reference 12.   Lees Road (timber road bridge)

Back on the old easement the Trail runs straight to the Lees Road (timber) bridge. The right hand side was heavily cleared during the 2007 works to rebuild collapsed embankments near Lees Road (which will be obvious on the LHS). A replanting program was completed in October 2008 but due to some unfortunate factors (including a long dry spell) many of that planting did not survive. The plants which have in time will gradually restore some of the trees and ground cover. Hundreds of tonnes of the old ballast stone was recovered from this section and recycled to rebuild the collapsed embankments near Lees Road.

This section is on the back of an ancient sand dune, and in recent years has suffered extensive damage from flooding and the collapse of embankments, due in part to tunnelling by wombats, signs of their renewed activity quite obvious on both side.

On the left hand side just before the bridge are 3 re-generation areas up on top of the re-constructed embankment. The replanting has been done by Friends of the Rail Trail in 2007 and 2008.

The story behind the first collapse in 2003 is that a wombat had dug a burrow into the left hand embankment. Flooding water flowing along the west side fence line on top of the cutting broke through into the burrow and the resulting torrent blew out the embankment dumping hundreds of cubic metres of sand onto the Trail. The 2007 flood repeated the damage and then on the way down to Dirty Hollow Creek the water tore open the surface of the Trail. Who said that managing a rail trail was easy?

During the lifetime of the former railway it was the Dirty Hollow Bridge which seemed to suffer most from bush fire. No surprise then that just past Lees Road the Trail turns down hill to a low level crossing over the Dirty Hollow Creek. The timber bridge has been long gone.

A notable detail here also is that the underground gas pipeline to Sydney crosses the Trail. It meets and then follows the Trail through the Colquhoun Forest near Bruces Track a few kilometres past Bruthen.

Map reference 13.   Mossiface to the Omeo Highway Crossing.

Climbing out of the Dirty Hollow Creek valley back onto the old easement) brings you into a short shallow cutting before you crossing an access road (Station Road) and reveals the spread of the Tambo River Valley.

Remnant reminders of former agricultural activity can be seen off to the right hand side. A picturesque red brick building and old timber framed tobacco leaf and hops drying frames, gradually falling to pieces.
Swan Reach Road runs parallel on the right, past the Mossiface CFA shed and several local houses before crossing the Trail a few metres from the Omeo Highway.
Our route however skirts around the valley on a wide semi-circle past Wiseleigh before crossing Gibb Street then turning off the embankment which once carried the line onto a quite long, curved bridge not far from Bruthen Station. The path turns sharply at the bottom of the slope beside the former bridge abutment. (This pathway was rebuilt in 2008 as part of a major upgrade of the two highway crossings, each side of Bruthen.)

Please be very careful at this crossing. Take time to check that there is no approaching traffic before crossing. 100 KPH highway.

Most of the timber bridge has been demolished to make way for the big truck traffic on the highway. Once across the highway, follow the track to your right, passing between the old bridge piers and over the creek, then swing slightly left on the track rising back onto the Trail easement. A few more metres and the Trail crosses Station Road.

Map reference 14. Bruthen Station ground

You will now be entering the former Bruthen Station ground area. Part of the Reserve has been fenced off (RHS) for farming purposes under licence. As with Orbost, the railway station at Bruthen was located on level ground some distance from the township centre. Bruthen was a very busy rail yard with additional lines and loading ramp facilities. On the town end of the former platform can be seen a shallow cutting in which a spur line provided a special loading area for the tens of thousands of timber railway 'sleepers' which were moved from this area to build and maintain the lines across the State.
The old platform still stands, and plans are to clean up the area and add a shelter, with appropriate planting. Your path re-crosses Station Road on the way to Bruthen township a few hundred metres further on. The Trail is on an embankment. Several old fruit trees still bear a crop in season.
As the Trail passes a house on the RHS there is an exit point onto a side pathway which will lead you back over the top of the Trail (access to Main Street) near the entrance to the large diameter corrugated steel train tunnel (seen straight ahead). The pedestrian bridge is one of a pair which were once derelict but have been restored for public access. Welcome to Bruthen.

Map reference 15. Bruthen and the Tambo River

Access into the town. After crossing the small foot bridge you are at the start of the Main Street of picturesque Bruthen. The PO and Police Station are to your left. Straight ahead to the shops, toilet block and other attractions of this notable and interesting town, a hub on two major roads, and notably the southern end of the Great Alpine Road. The Main Street road exits to cross the Tambo River and on to Nowa Nowa.

Note that you can return to the Trail by the same route that you left it to get into Bruthen.
You will then proceed through the tunnel and on to the former railway bridge now set up as the Rail Trail crossing of the Tambo River.

Boasting one of the most attractive and relaxing 'main streets' in any town, this one is a significant stopping point on a multi day visit to the Trail. Apart from a notable bakery the town offers a variety of eating options. A local initiative is the Bruthen Walks project, a series of short walking loops which explore the immediate surrounding area. The information and map brochure is available from local shops. An exciting and really major street-scape upgrade is planned to rejuvenate the main street and nearby public spaces. The area has a growing reputation for arts and crafts, has a monthly street market and several music events each year. Bruthen is also a major cross road being at the southern end of the Alpine Way, now a famous route very popular with motor cyclists. Going east the highway heads for NSW. The Bairnsdale - Bruthen - Nowa Nowa road provides a heavy vehicle bypass of the coastal Princes Highway which goes through Lakes Entrance.

Before leaving Bruthen make sure you refill your water bottles.

There are two ways of proceeding to Nowa Nowa. The first is to re-trace your route as noted above, and go through the large corrugated steel lined tunnel and cross the Tambo River; well worth doing.
The second is to follow the road eastward past the Hotel, taking the path on the RHS to cross the river then past the football ground (and caravan park) to meet the Trail again. A new concrete path leads to the highway (cross with care) and then a short straight section which again crosses the highway before you re-enter the Trail through a steel chicane and begin the long climb to the Colquhoun Forest section.
END.