



**VOLUME I
THE STRATEGY**

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Peak body representatives, government agencies, members of local community groups and community members also contributed to the development of this document and are thanked for their time and contributions.

This Recreational Trails Strategy was supported by a Community Sports Infrastructure Fund grant from the Victorian Government.



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Executive Summary

Background

West Wimmera Shire (the Shire) is located in the western most part of Victoria, halfway between Melbourne and Adelaide. The geographic landscapes and terrain of the Shire are unique and varied. From the undisturbed desert and wilderness areas in the north, to the stunning wetlands, the Glenelg River and forested regions in the South.

There is a need in the West Wimmera Shire to encourage and support active lifestyles. The resident population of the Shire has high rates of physical inactivity, overweight, obesity and preventable mortality compared to the average across the State and Australians who live in rural and remote areas, such as West Wimmera, often experience worse mental health outcomes than those living in the major cities¹. There is increasing need to provide accessible and affordable physical activity opportunities to encourage regular exercise and healthy lifestyle habits. Local participation data (2015 VicHealth Indicators) show that trail-related activities (i.e. walking, cycling and jogging/running) are popular physical activities for West Wimmera Shire residents

The West Wimmera Shire Council (WWSC) has engaged Tredwell Management to develop a Recreational Trails Strategy to develop a consistent policy framework over a ten year period to guide decisions about the management of, and investment in, trails and to provide a vision of what the trail network across West Wimmera will look like in the future.

Strategic Document Review

The strategic direction for trails is guided by state, regional and local policies and plans. Partnerships and cross-agency collaboration allow planning for trails to support various strategic outcomes such as health, wellbeing, environment, tourism and local economic development.

The development of trails has been referred in to various strategic documents for the region, acknowledging the importance of trails as social infrastructure, facilitators of healthy

lifestyles, important nature-tourism attractions and a way to provide access to natural and cultural heritage.

Benefits of Trails

It is widely documented that trail developments have multidisciplinary benefits, ranging across positive health outcomes, practical transportation corridors, preservation of natural areas, local economic development and access to historical and cultural sites.

A number of studies have strived to quantify the return on investment in trails. Through various quantitative methods, studies have identified the potential for high quality trails to bring significant tourism and public health benefits.

Demographic Profile

The Wimmera region is home to Victoria's oldest and lowest density population. The West Wimmera Shire itself has a resident population of 3,912 people across a geographic area of 9,106 km². 65% of the Shire's population live in either of the two main townships, Edenhope (24%) or Kaniva (21%), while 24% live in the smaller towns of Apsley, Dergholm, Goroke, Harrow or Serviceton and 31% of residents live in areas outside of these townships.

The demographic make-up of these communities needs to be considered when planning for trails.

The communities of the West Wimmera region will increasingly be made up of older adults into the future. Some of these people will use the local trail networks as part of a daily/regular fitness regime to walk, cycle or even travel on a motorised scooter. Some residents may also be keen to volunteer their time to assist with the maintenance of trails in their local area.

Economic Profile

The West Wimmera is primarily an economy driven by agriculture. The *Agricultural, forestry and fishing* industry employs more people in the region than any other industry, with three

times more than the second most vibrant industry: *Health care and social assistance*.

Industries relating to tourism make up a small proportion of jobs in the region. Trail users would likely contribute to the visitor economy. An increase in visitor numbers would likely stimulate growth in the key visitor expenditure industries which are identified as *Accommodation and food services; Transport, Postal and Warehousing; and Retail Trade*.

Participation

The proportion of Australians who go hiking and bushwalking has skyrocketed over recent years. When it comes to regular bushwalking and hiking, two very different age groups stand out for their elevated participation rate: *Young Australians* (aged 20-24 years) and *Older Persons* (aged 60 to 64 years). They are also most likely to be from the wealthier end of the socio-economic spectrum

The *AusPlay Participation Data (October 2015 – September 2016)* outlines that walking (recreational), athletics (including jogging/running), cycling and bushwalking and are among the 10 most popular activities at national and state levels.

Children have higher participation rates in sports clubs/associations and lower participation rates in “self-organised” activities. Athletics (including jogging and running) features as the 10th most popular activity for Victorian children, with a participation rate of 4.3% (2016).

Local data collected through the 2015 VicHealth Indicators Survey generally align with trends noted across the state and the nation, indicating that walking, cycling and jogging/running are popular non-organised physical activities.

Trail User Groups

It is important that recreational trail planning and provision considers the needs, interests and expectations of trail user groups and sub-categories within these groups. These user groups include people who live in the local area as well as visitors to the region.

The long-term sustainability of trails is reliant on user group requirements being met. Existing or potential trail users in the West

Wimmera Shire can broadly be divided into the following user groups:

- Pedestrians
 - The less able
 - Casual walkers
 - Leisure/occasional walkers/hikers
 - Trail runners
 - Bush walkers/hikers
 - Long distance walkers/trekkers
- Cyclists
 - Family/Leisure Cyclists
 - Mountain Bike Riders
 - Fat bike Riders
 - Gravel Riders
 - Road cyclists
- Horse riders
 - Novice Riders
 - Leisure Riders
 - Long Distance / Endurance Riders
 - Canoeists / Kayakers
 - Competition paddlers
 - Tourers/Expeditioners
- Off-road vehicle users
 - Four Wheel Drivers
 - Soft Roaders.
 - Trail Bike Riders

Trail Planning and Governance

The publication *Sustainable Recreation Trails Guidelines* provides guidelines for the planning, design, construction and maintenance of recreational trails. These guidelines currently represent industry best practice in Australia, with information derived from various national and international publications.

It is fundamentally important that recreational trails are accessible and socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

The trail planning principles outlined below are broadly based on the *Sustainable Recreational Trails Guidelines* and have been tailored to guide trail planning in the West Wimmera Shire. These principles will guide the Recreational Trails Strategy and Action Plan.

Trail Planning Principles
1. Ensure socially, economically and environmentally sustainable trail development and management;
2. Provide trails which are readily accessible, provide links between key destinations and promote active lifestyles and participation;
3. Provide a diverse range of trail opportunities relevant to the needs and demands of the community and encourage the broadest possible community participation;
4. Maximise use of existing trails where they are appropriately located and have the capacity to sustain additional use;
5. Manage trails professionally, effectively and equitably;
6. Provide safe trails through adherence to relevant legislative and activity safety requirements;
7. Ensure that universal design principles are embedded into trail design and development
8. Maximise the opportunity to attract trail-related programs and events;
9. Encourage community involvement in the planning and design of trails;
10. Involve local indigenous people in the planning, design and interpretation; of trails which have Aboriginal heritage values;
11. Support, promote and advocate for trail users in relation to relevant issues within the region;
12. Develop and maintain partnerships with the community, the private sector, local businesses, tourism providers and other tiers of government to provide trails and associated facilities.

As trail development, management and maintenance is often a collaborative effort it is important that a clear governance model is established to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the trail and trail network. An important step in this process is to identify the partners involved and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder.

With so many potential partners it is important to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities associated with the trail and to establish and agree upon appropriate service levels.

The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in trail governance could be agreed upon through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), a formal partnership agreement or a trail licensing agreement. A trail licensing agreement could assist land owners to manage risk and public liability.

Victoria's Trail Hierarchy

Victoria's Trails Strategy 2014-2024 recognises that the state requires a network of trails of different levels of significance in order to attract interest from different markets. The hierarchy determined relates to trails that are significant at international, national, state, regional and local community level.

Regional and local trails are of most relevance to the West Wimmera Shire's trail network.

Trail Classification Systems

Trail classifications allow land managers to develop trails that are appropriately designed for the anticipated trail users and to provide suitable levels of facilities and management. While a number of attempts have been made to classify different types of trails for different user groups, there is no single grading system that is applicable to all types of trail.

For example, trails for walking are classified on a difficulty scale from grades one to five, while the canoeing/kayaking scale ranges from *Easy* to *Difficult*.

Existing Trails Audit

Existing trails were audited through a process involving desktop research and on-ground assessments

The trail audit process identified 27 recreational trails across the Shire as well as two on-road cycling event routes and three promoted drive trails. These trails are in varying condition. Some are formalised, defined trails and others are informal routes potentially providing opportunity for further development.

Current Trail Marketing and Promotion

There are various websites and brochures providing information on key visitor destinations and trails in the Shire. The key resources providing information relating to trails and other recreational activities are:

- West Wimmera Shire Maps
- Wimmera Mallee Tourism Website
- West Wimmera Official Visitor Guide
- Australia's First XI Aboriginal Cricket Trail Brochure
- West Wimmera Shire Council Website Page - "Discover"
- Parks Victoria Website

Programs and Events

Programs and events play an important role in promoting active participation, influencing the level of usage for trails and related infrastructure and contributing to the region's economy. The following programs and events have been identified within the West Wimmera Shire Council area which are likely to directly or indirectly impact on trail planning:

- Tour De Frances
- Dergholm Endurance Horse Ride
- Dergholm Pub to Scrub Horse Ride
- Henley on Lake Wallace / Tour De Henley
- Edenhope and District Community Bank Fun Run/Walk for MS
- Lake Charlegrark Country Music Marathon
- Navrun 4WD Amazing Race – Goroke
- McCartney's Ride / Jane Duff 'Lost in the Bush' Horse Ride
- Vinduro - Harrow 100
- Johnny Mullagh Cricket Championship
- National Bush Billycart Championships
- Harrow Fun Run

Online Interactive Platforms

Online interactive fitness platforms are continuing to increase in popularity and diversify, with several specialist apps available. There is a wide range of platforms available which provide the opportunity to increase active participation in local communities by allowing trail users to track their activity, share their experience and compete with other users. Many platforms also provide incentives to get active (and to

use their platform), such as challenges where users compete with others across their local community or across various countries.

For example, the series of MapMyFitness apps encourage users, during the year 2018, to track 1018km of running, walking or jogging to win prizes and Strava promotes May as a month for the Grand Fondo Cycling Challenge.

Access for All

To increase rates of physical activity and the use of trails across the region, it is imperative that all people can access the trails network. If trails are designed inclusively, the benefits of trails will have greater positive impact within the local community.

The *Australian Walking Tracks Grading System* identifies that Grade 1 trails are those which are accessible to people in a wheelchair with assistance. There are plans to upgrade the trail at the Kaniwa Fauna – Wetlands Park to include accessible trail surface and associated facilities. This will be the first trail in the Shire to cater for all abilities, meeting the requirements of a Grade 1 trail. This will be a great place for local residents with access restraints while also providing for visitors to the region.

While other trail classification systems do not account for universally accessible grades, it is recommended universal design practices should be considered in the development of new trails or the enhancement of existing trails where possible.

Trails provide opportunities for physical activity which should be available to all people including both physical and non-physical disabilities. While the development of accessible trail infrastructure is important, it is also vital that trail-related programs and events are accessible for all, regardless of physical or mental barriers. This may include people with hearing impairment, visual impairment or mental health illnesses. Physical activity programs and events which cater for specific groups of people and raise awareness of issues in the wider community can significantly help improve participation rates and connections among the community.

Consultation

The development of the West Wimmera Recreational Trails Strategy has been informed by community consultation and stakeholder engagement.

A series of consultation mechanisms were used to engage with the wider community and key stakeholders. These mechanisms were:

- Community Forum
- Community Survey
- Stakeholder meetings

10 Year Trail Network Vision

The following Vision has been developed, based on the findings of the trail network development process, informed by the issues and opportunities that emerged during the community and key stakeholder consultation process, background research and on-ground assessments:

10-year Trails Network Vision

A cohesive trails network that offers active and challenging recreational experiences, encompassing West Wimmera's diverse and distinctive landscapes, ranging from arid desert wilderness in the north to wetlands, river and forests in the south

The ten-year trails network vision is illustrated on the graphic on the following page.

In order to deliver the Vision, a series of Strategic Outcomes have been developed:

A: Integrated Planning and Management

Underpinning a sustainable, integrated and accessible trails network is a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment

B: Sustainable & Accessible Trail Network

Initial focus on upgrading the existing trails network to deliver sustainable and accessible trails within identified existing trail activity areas. Build upon the improved existing trail network to provide additional recreational trail opportunities, maximising the potential of the region to cater for a wide range of recreational trail users and aiming to deliver outstanding trail experiences

C: Increased Participation through Marketing and Programs

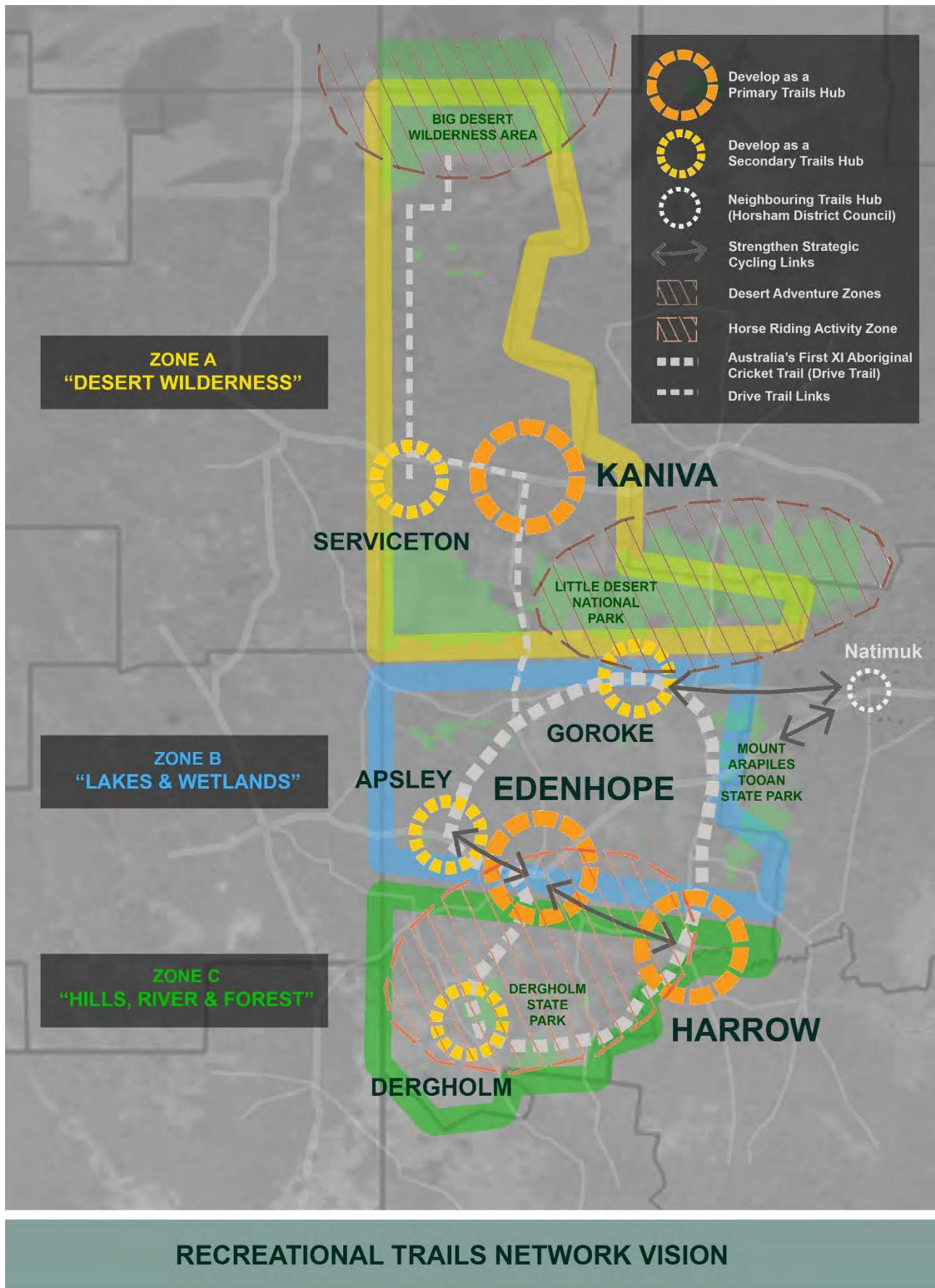
Encourage strong local community and visitor participation in recreational trail activities through effective promotion and marketing of the region's trails and the associated programs and experiences available

D: Development, Management and Maintenance

Underpinning a sustainable, integrated and accessible trails network is a strategic and coordinated approach to trail development, ongoing management and maintenance

E: Community, Tourism and Economic Development Opportunities

Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and transportation/liveability benefits



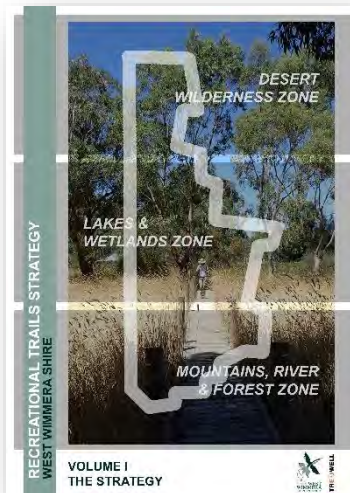
A scenic view of a lake with large trees in the foreground and a clear blue sky. The trees have thick, gnarled trunks and sparse green foliage. The lake is calm with a slight ripple on the surface. The foreground is covered in dry grass and fallen leaves.

1

Background

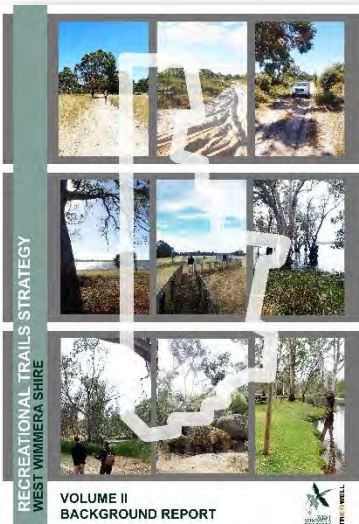
Lake Wallace Perimeter Walk, Edenhope

1.1 Strategy Format



Volume I: The Strategy

The Strategy provides an overview of the project background, scope and strategic context, recreational trail benefits and trends, trail planning principles and includes a summary of existing trail provision and marketing as well as consultation findings. The volume concludes with a detailed strategy and action plan, implementation plan, potential funding opportunities and project benchmarks.



Volume 2: Background Report

The Background Report provides details which have informed the development of the Recreational Trails Strategy. It includes further information collated during the background review, existing trails audit and consultation stages of the project.

1.2 About West Wimmera Shire

West Wimmera Shire (the Shire) is located in the western most part of Victoria, halfway between Melbourne and Adelaide. The Shire is bordered by South Australia to the west, the Glenelg Shire to the south, Rural City of Mildura to the north and the Local Government Areas of Hindmarsh, Horsham and Southern Grampians to the east. The Shire encompasses approximately 9,108 square kilometres of land and has a population of 3,912 people.

As shown in Figure 1, West Wimmera is positioned between a wide range of outdoor adventure and eco-tourism destinations including the great sandstone mountains of the Grampians region, the World Heritage Site at Naracoorte Caves, Ramsar listed wetlands at Bool and Hacks Lagoons, the Kanawincka Geopark and a series of National Parks renowned for a diverse range of landscapes and activities. Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park on the eastern border is of world renown - widely regarded as Australia's top rock climbing area. West Wimmera and the wider region hold great significance to the traditional Aboriginal owners, the Barengi Gadjin and Gunditj Mirring communities with songlines and stories linking across a vast area.

The geographic landscapes and terrain of West Wimmera are unique and varied. From the undisturbed desert and wilderness areas in the north, to the stunning wetlands, the Glenelg River and forested regions in the South.

In the north, Kaniva and Serviceton are close to the undisturbed desert landscapes of the Big Desert Wilderness Area, Red Bluff Flora and Fauna Reserve and the Little Desert National Park. These unique desert landscapes, within 5 hours from both Melbourne and Adelaide, provide great opportunity for adventurous travellers in off road vehicles including four-wheel drives and trail bikes. This area has an interesting history highlighted by the memorabilia displayed at the heritage listed Serviceton Railway Station, providing historical insight into the railway junction built on 'Disputed Territory' between

South Australia and Victoria. Kaniva's location provides the strategic opportunity to promote the Shire's attractions to the large volume of people travelling through the region on the Western Highway, the main road link between Melbourne and Adelaide.

The central areas of the Shire are characterised by the complex and large network of lakes and waterbodies which contribute to 25% of Victoria's individual wetlands. This south-west Wimmera wetland system is recognised to have abundance and diversity like nowhere else in Victoria, supporting a vast array of species and ecosystem functions, as well as recreational, aesthetic and economic value to towns and the wider region. The high levels of biodiversity supported by these water resources includes threatened species and offers outstanding birdwatching opportunities. Water-based recreational activities supported by these environments include canoeing, boating and water-skiing, as well as land-based activities in the associated environments such as walking, driving/touring and photography.

To the south of the Shire, the towns of Harrow and Dergholm are situated along the Glenelg River which is widely recognised for its recreational opportunities downstream, such as houseboats, canoe trails and boating activities. The landscape in this part of the Shire varies significantly from the North, with a green landscape of rolling hills. The Dergholm State Park provides opportunities for camping and bushwalking near the natural formation of ancient giant green granite boulders. The township of Harrow has a unique history involving indigenous, European and sporting themes. The Harrow Discovery Centre is a key attraction to the region, proving insight into the journey of the Australian Aboriginal cricket team that toured England in 1868, Australia's first international cricket team. The town is also located on the Drive Trail which follows the journey of the colonial explorer Major Mitchel across Victoria.

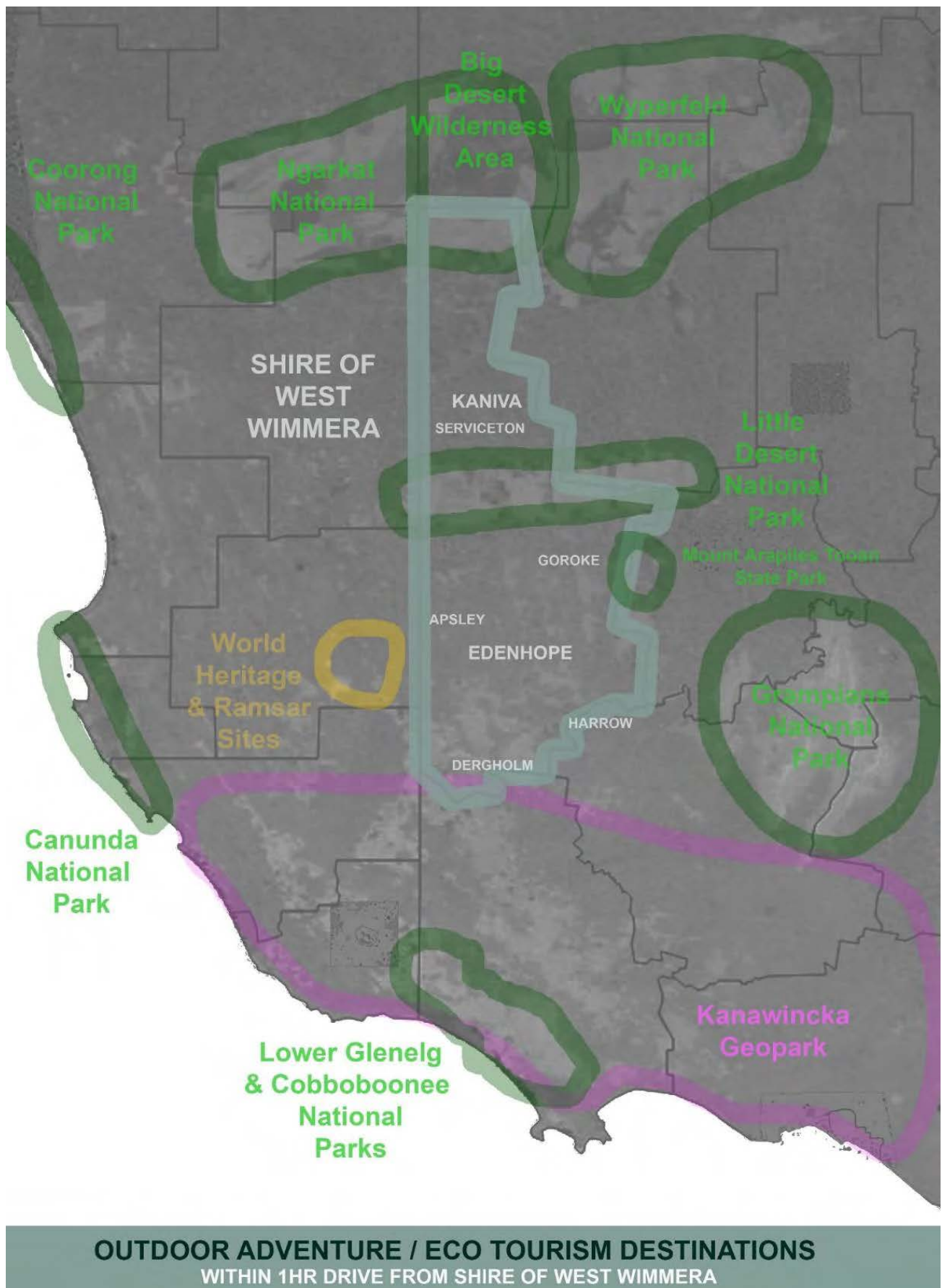


Figure 1: Outdoor adventure / Eco tourism destinations

There is a need in the West Wimmera Shire to encourage and support active lifestyles. The resident population of the Shire has high rates of physical inactivity, overweight, obesity and preventable mortality compared to the average across the State and Australians who live in rural and remote areas, such as West Wimmera, often experience worse mental health outcomes than those living in the major

citiesⁱⁱ. There is increasing need to provide accessible and affordable physical activity opportunities to encourage regular exercise and healthy lifestyle habits. Local participation data (2015 VicHealth Indicators) show that trail-related activities (i.e. walking, cycling and jogging/running) are popular physical activities for West Wimmera Shire residents.

1.3 Project Background and Scope

The West Wimmera Sire Council (WWSC) has engaged Tredwell Management to develop a Recreational Trails Strategy to develop a consistent policy framework over a ten year period to guide decisions about the management of, and investment in, trails and to provide a vision of what the future trail network across West Wimmera will look like.

Ultimately, the West Wimmera Recreational Trails Strategy will form part of a Municipal Sport and Recreation Strategy to guide broader sport and recreation infrastructure development and complement the *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan* with the broad mission, goals and priorities of local government to enable people living in the municipality to achieve maximum health and wellbeing. Achieving strategic alignment of these plans is critical to achieving health and wellbeing outcomes in local communities.

The West Wimmera Recreational Trails Strategy will also look to the tourism and economic benefits that can be realised through a strategic approach to the development of tracks and trails infrastructure.

The term 'trail' for the purpose of this strategy includes all unsealed pathways which are publicly accessible for recreational purposes. It therefore includes fire trails, maintenance tracks, purpose built single and multi-use trails, identifiable trails which have developed over time and sealed recreational paths. This strategy is to include consideration of the following types of trails (but is not limited to):

- All-abilities access
- Walking/ running
- Cycling
- Mountain biking
- Canoeing

While not the focus of the Strategy, some consideration has been given to recreational trails used by motorised vehicles (e.g. driving route trails, 4WD and trail bike areas) which may complement a recreational trails network.

The West Wimmera Recreational Trails Strategy applies to the West Wimmera local government area in its entirety, however, areas of significant interest which are a key focus of this strategy include:

- Locations where the natural environment can be appreciated and leveraged to increase participation
- Locations where physical activity opportunities are limited within townships
- Locations that link users to recognisable sites
- Inter-municipal and cross-border linkages are also considered.



2

Strategic Context

Newlands Lake Nature Trail, Apsley

2.1 Strategic Document Review

The strategic direction for trails is guided by state, regional and local policies and plans. Partnerships and cross-agency collaboration allow planning for trails to support various strategic outcomes such as health, wellbeing, environment, tourism and local economic development. The strategic documents reviewed are outlined below, with details provided in Volume II: Background Report.

State strategic documents:

- *Active Victoria – A Strategic Framework for Sport and Recreation in Victoria (2017-2021)*
- *Victoria's Trails Strategy (2014-2024)*
- *Victoria's 2020 Tourism Strategy (2013)*
- *Victorian Cycling Strategy Increasing cycling for transport (2018-28)*
- *Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy (2016)*
- *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity (2017-2037)*
- *Water for Victoria – Water Plan (2016)*
- *Parks Victoria – Shaping our Future (2014)*

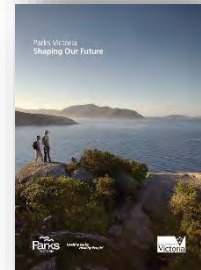


Table 1: Summary of State Strategic Directions

Summary of State Strategic Directions	
Invest in infrastructure that enables active recreation	Make cycling a more inclusive experience
Provide high quality information on trails	Maximise the benefits of events
Forge strong partnerships to conserve Victoria's special places and make them accessible to all.	Build on the potential of regional and rural Victoria with improved branding and marketing
Support effective planning, development and maintenance of trails	Collaboration between the Victorian Government and regions to ensure visitation growth
Support recreation at water storages through infrastructure and better information	Increase opportunities for all Victorians to have daily connections with nature.
Create better trail experiences	Improved experiences for visitors from Asia
Ensure complimentary investment to create collective impact by integrating sport and active recreation with other policy goals	Better care for and showcase Victoria's environmental assets as world-class natural and cultural tourism attractions.

Regional strategic documents:

- *Grampians Region Cycling Masterplan – Discussion Paper* (April 2018)
- *Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Strategy* (2014)
- *Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan* (2014)
- *Grampians and Barwon South-West Region Passenger Services Cost and Feasibility Study* (2017)
- *Wotjobaluk Country (Wimmera and Grampians) Indigenous Tourism Feasibility Study* (2017)
- *Wimmera Southern Mallee: Socio-economic value of Recreational & Environmental Water* (2017)
- *Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara South West Management Plan* (2015)

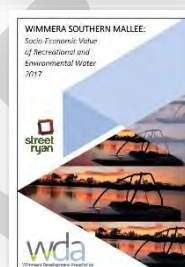
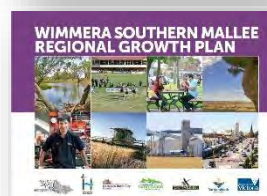
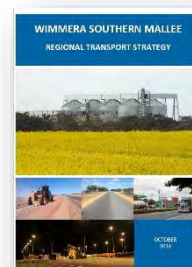


Table 2: Summary of Regional Strategic Directions

Summary of Regional Strategic Directions	
Encourage initiatives that are compatible with heritage conservation to allow residents and visitors to engage with the history of the region	Cycling tourism is extremely consistent with other regional tourism goals; a growing section of the local tourist market is cycle based tourism.
Infrastructure to support tourism opportunities, particularly around key environmental assets	Support infrastructure investment where it will maximise benefits to tourism.
Establish the Grampians Region as a premier tourism destination for cycling and trail related experiences.	Work with transport providers to allow bicycles on publicly accessible transport to and from the region to reduce barriers to increasing cycle tourism
Tourism marketing of packaged tours for daytrips	Investigate renaming trails in Gunditjmara language.
Maintain areas in Dergholm State Park for remote & self-reliant camping with low service levels	Support the development of Indigenous tourism enterprise activities
Western Victorian Iconic Walking Trail (Horsham, Hindmarsh and West Wimmera).	Continue to support volunteer involvement in management of trails.
Acknowledge the importance of recreational water to regional economies.	Maintain existing trails in Dergholm State Park, including signage.

Local strategic documents:

- *West Wimmera Shire Council Plan (2017 – 2021)*
- *West Wimmera Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (2017 – 2021)*
- *West Wimmera Shire Tourism Strategy (2014 – 2018)*
- *West Wimmera Shire Economic Development Strategy (2014)*
- *Connecting Harrow to the Glenelg River (Draft - 2018)*
- *Edenhope and Apsley Social Infrastructure Study (2014)*
- *Kaniva & surrounds Social Infrastructure Study (2014)*
- *Harrow and Goroke Community Precinct Planning (2015)*

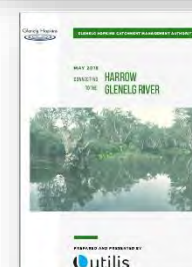


Table 3: Summary of Local Strategic Directions

Summary of Local Strategic Directions	
Increase levels of physical activity & work to address health and wellbeing issues.	Promote the benefits of physical activity and active modes of transport
Promote & provide access to the natural environment.	Implement outcomes of visitor related studies - Indigenous Tourism, recreational water & trails
Map community assets to improve planning and efficiency	Link natural, cultural and historic assets to create a cohesive experience
Upgrade, repair or divest council assets	Foster eco-tourism development
Improve walking / gopher paths in townships	Develop trails combining the region's attractions
Improve recreational access to Lake Wallace	Pursue opportunities to develop multi-use trails
Leverage and encourage the development of new tourism initiatives.	Targeted promotion of West Wimmera as a world-class destination
Ensure provision of community infrastructure meets the needs of residents and visitors in townships, leveraging opportunities for economic development	Undertake ongoing discussions with Parks Victoria to advocate for Walking Track development in the Shire.

2.2 Peak Trail Bodies

In addition to the state, regional and local strategic directions, the following peak trail bodies and their strategic goals can play an important role in determining the priorities and direction for trails.

- Bushwalking Victoria
- Victoria Walks
- Australian Trail Horse Riders Association (ATHRA)
- Canoeing Victoria
- Mountain Bike Australia (MTBA) - Victoria
- Cycling Victoria
- Bicycle Network
- Four Wheel Drive Victoria
- Motorcycling Victoria



Table 4: Summary of Peak Body Strategic Directions

Summary of Peak Trail Body Strategic Directions	
Encourage people to walk whenever & wherever possible	Make it easier for organisers to host races
Encourage more people to bushwalk by providing information on safety, responsible bushwalking and where to walk.	A cross section of Australians - people riding bikes in Australia should be representative of the Australian population.
Advocate for the maintenance of existing bushwalking trails & development of new ones	Make it easier for everyone, regardless of age, gender or background, to ride a bike.
Support the development of appropriate world class bushwalking experiences and facilities	Implement Ride2School programs around the country
Advocate for improved horse riding access at all levels of government in all regions.	Ensure Mountain Bike Australia activities are delivered to a consistent standard
Promote and inform trail users about the trail riding Code of Conduct	Develop and promote mountain biking in Australia for the benefit of all.
Advance four-wheel drive touring as a responsible recreation, promoting conservation and environmental protection	Provide unique cycling event experiences and increase provision of cycling specific facilities
Promote vehicle based dispersed bush camping	Raise the profile of canoeing & promote and provide a range of opportunities to paddle safely
Encourage and foster the development of Four Wheel Drive Clubs	Acquire, preserve and disseminate information relating to the recreation of four wheel driving.



3

Benefits of Trails






Canoe Tree, Harrow

3.1 Benefits

Recreational trails offer a diverse range of benefits to our communities and the environment. These trail benefits are clearly apparent when aligned to the existing trail network.

Table 5 highlights each benefit, the examples associated with the trail network and ultimately how it delivers on the benefit.

Table 5: Benefits of trails – local examples

Benefit		Local Trail Example	Delivers
Health 	Positive health outcomes	The Lake Wallace Perimeter Trail offers residents and visitors the opportunity to engage in physical activity through walking, running/jogging or cycling while enjoying the natural environment and serenity of the lake.	Facilitates both physical and mental health outcomes. such as the recommended 10,000 steps a day (equating to about 8 kilometres or 100 minutes walking).
Transportation 	Practical transportation corridors	The shared-use path in Kaniva encourages active transport, such as walking or cycling, through the township, particularly providing a safe route to school.	Walkers, runners & cyclists can choose to take a safe and quiet route away from roads, linking key destinations.
Conservation 	Preservation of natural areas	The Newlands Wetlands Nature Walk provides an opportunity to for the community to appreciate the conservation value of natural area while having minimal impact on the natural environment.	Defined trails discourage people from deviating into bushland which helps reduce human impacts on sensitive areas. Boardwalks allow trail users to appreciate the sensitive environment with minimal impact.
Economy 	Local economic development	Natural assets, such as Little Desert National Park, attract tourists. Providing and promoting quality recreational trails within these parks encourages visitors to stay longer.	Trail-related tourism contributes positively to the economy by increasing visitation rates and visitor expenditure in surrounding towns.
Cultural identity 	Access to historical and cultural sites	Sites such as the Glenelg River at Harrow, have significant European and Indigenous histories. Some of which is communicated through interpretive signage along the Glenelg River Walk.	Opportunities to embrace the local history of the area, using trails as a mechanism for cultural learning and understanding.

3.2 Return on Investment in Trails

High quality trails and associated activities support public health priorities and the development of nature/adventure-based tourism, having a positive economic impact. A number of studies have strived to quantify the return on investment in trails. Through various quantitative methods, the following studies have identified the potential for high quality trails to bring significant tourism and public health benefits.

The Bibbulman Track, Western Australia

The Bibbulman Track User Survey Reportⁱⁱⁱ (2015) estimated that the average user daily expenditure per person per day is \$38.71, with overnight walkers spending more than day walkers. The average total direct expenditure was estimated at \$13.1 million per year.

The Riesling Trail, Clare Valley, South Australia

A *Trails Research Report*^{iv} (2004) determined that the Riesling Trail (a 35km rail trail) contributed an estimated \$1.08 million per year to the local economy, with an average of \$216 per person per visit to the region. The majority of this economic activity was generated through shopping, accommodation and food/drink expenditure.

Murray to Mountains Rail Trail, north eastern Victoria

A *Longitudinal Study of the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail*^v (2009) found that average direct expenditure was \$244 per person per day on the trail over the Easter period. The majority of this expenditure is on food and beverages at venues such as the café shown in the figure below. These research findings demonstrate that cycle tourists are high yield visitors, regularly exceeding expenditure in regional areas of other visitors

Bike/Pedestrian Trails, Nebraska, United States

A *Cost-Benefit Analysis of Physical Activity Using Bike/Pedestrian Trails*^{vi} (2004) from the United States concluded that trail development is an effective investment to reduce health care costs associated with inactivity. The study found that every US\$1 investment in trails for physical activity led to US\$2.94 in direct public health benefit.



Figure 2: Rail Trail Café along the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail, Porepunkah, north east Victoria

4

Demographic & Participation Trends



Lake Charlegrark

4.1 Demographic Profile

The Wimmera region is home to Victoria's oldest and lowest density population. The West Wimmera Shire itself has a resident population of 3,912 people across a geographic area of 9,106 km². 65% of the Shire's population live in either of the two main townships, Edenhope (24%) or Kaniva (21%), while 24% live in the smaller towns of Apsley, Dergholm, Goroke, Harrow or Serviceton and 31% of residents live in areas outside of these townships.

The demographic make-up of these communities needs to be considered when planning for trails.

The communities of the West Wimmera region will increasingly be made up of older adults into the future. Some of these people will use the local trail networks as part of a daily/regular fitness regime to walk, cycle or even travel on a motorised scooter. Some residents may also be keen to volunteer their time to assist with the maintenance of trails in their local area.

Key social, demographic and economic indicators are outlined below in Table 6.

Table 6: Key social, demographic & economic indicators / trends and implications

Indicator / Trend	Implication for trail planning
High rate of physical inactivity 25.5% of West Wimmera Shire residents were "inactive" (i.e. had not engaged in physical activity during the week) at the time of the 2015 VicHealth Indicators Survey. This is a higher rate of physical inactivity than the average across all of Victoria (18.9%) ^{vii} .	There is increasing need to provide accessible and affordable physical activity opportunities across the Shire to encourage regular exercise and healthy lifestyle habits. As people at work and in general life are becoming increasingly sedentary, it is important that lifestyles adapt to maintain physical health. Trails can contribute to health outcomes through providing both recreational opportunities and active transport routes.
High rate of overweight and obesity Over sixty percent (60%) of the West Wimmera Shire community is overweight or obese and these rates are continuing to increase ^{viii}	
High rate of preventable mortality Preventable mortality rates are higher for the West Wimmera Shire community compared to Victoria in the areas of cancer, lung cancer, respiratory disease, heart disease and circulatory disease ^{ix} .	
Tourism trends and target markets The tourism industry's outlook is positive with opportunities identified to further develop this industry within the Shire. Key opportunities include nature-based tourism, Indigenous heritage and cycle tourism. Caravan and camping is popular among Australia's domestic tourism market. This market is expected to experience significant growth due to Australia's ageing population and a corresponding increase in retirees who travel around Australia, often seeking destination "off the beaten track".	West Wimmera Shire communities can benefit from the income generated from drive tourists. Higher quality and quantity of trails and associated infrastructure across the region can help to capitalise on these opportunities. Provision and promotion of trail networks attract more visitors to regions and encourage travellers to stay in the area for longer.

Indicator / Trend	Implication for trail planning
<p>High rate of volunteerism</p> <p>West Wimmera Shire has one of the highest rates of volunteerism in Victoria with 44.9% of the population reported to have done some form of voluntary work in 2016. This is significantly higher than the average of 34.3% across Regional Victoria^x.</p>	<p>Many trail projects are dependent on local community support and volunteer efforts which are recognised as an invaluable resource to West Wimmera communities. It is imperative that volunteers are effectively supported, recognised and valued in their role.</p>
<p>Low population density</p> <p>The West Wimmera Shire has Victoria's lowest population density with 3,912 people across a geographic area of 9,106 km^{2xi}.</p>	<p>The tyranny of distance can present challenges to residents living significant distances from population centres and facilities. Geographic location of facilities is of high importance to ensure that they are accessible and can be well used by residents and visitors.</p>
<p>Declining and ageing population</p> <p>Between 2006 and 2016 the population of the West Wimmera Shire declined at an average rate of 1.62% per annum and the median age increased from 44 to 48 years^{xii}. Council's <i>Economic Development Strategy</i> (2014) aims to reverse this, with the ambition of reaching 10,000 residents by 2050 including an influx of young people and families.</p>	<p>The trails network must be sustainable. It is essential that levels of investment are appropriate and that trail experiences provided are relevant to current demand and adaptable into the future. Participation trends and preferences vary across age groups and life stages and it is important that recreation opportunities are relevant to the population and target user-groups.</p>
<p>Low-level of cultural diversity</p> <p>The Shire has a relatively homogenous community profile with just 5.8% of the population born overseas. This is significantly lower than the average across Regional Victoria where 11.1% are born overseas, with 6.2% coming from non-English speaking backgrounds. Less than 1% of the Shire's population identify as Indigenous which is also below the average for Regional Victoria (1.7%)^{xiii}.</p>	<p>Despite a low level of cultural diversity among residents, it is important that opportunities offered across the region cater for people from different cultural backgrounds to ensure that the region is welcoming to international visitors and culturally diverse populations in other areas of Victoria and Australia, particularly from Asia.</p>
<p>Varied levels of socio-economic disadvantage</p> <p>The West Wimmera Shire has a SEIFA index score of 985 (2016) which indicates a lower level of disadvantage than other local government areas in the Wimmera Region (968) and the average index score for Regional Victoria (974).</p>	<p>Trails provide free physical activity and recreation opportunities to the community. It is important that trails are promoted and accessible to people across the region, encouraging participation, community involvement and increased levels of physical activity.</p>

4.2 Economic Profile

The West Wimmera is primarily an economy driven by agriculture. As demonstrated in Figure 3, the *Agricultural, forestry and fishing* industry employs more people in the region than any other industry, with three times more than the second most vibrant industry: *Health care and social assistance*.

Industries relating to tourism make up a small proportion of jobs in the region. Trail users would likely contribute to the visitor economy. An increase in visitor numbers would likely stimulate growth in the key visitor expenditure industries which are identified in Figure 4 as *Accommodation and food services*; *Transport, Postal and Warehousing*; and *Retail Trade*.

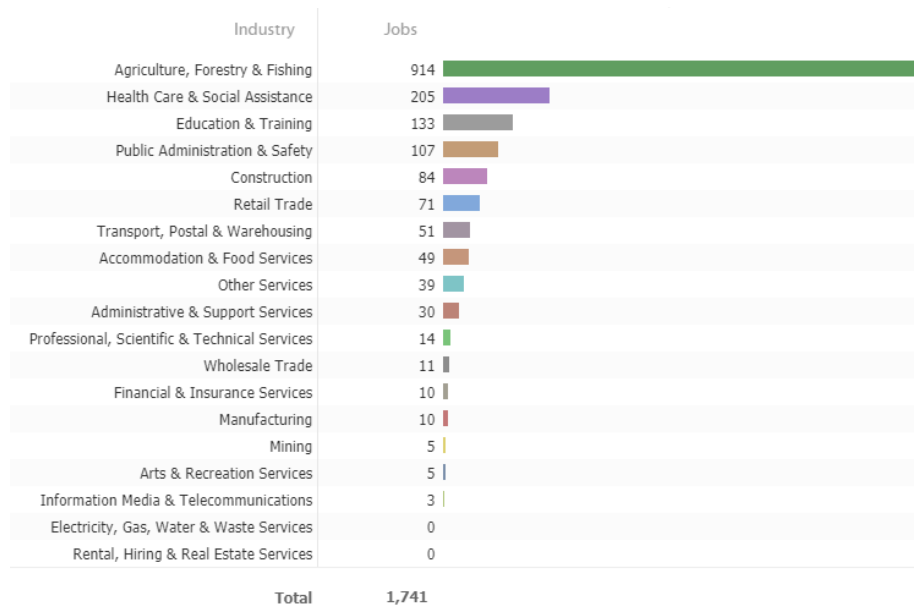


Figure 3: West Wimmera employment by industry^{xiv}



Figure 4: West Wimmera visitor expenditure by dollar^{xv}

4.3 Participation

Australasian Leisure Management Journal has reported that the proportion of Australians who go hiking and bushwalking has skyrocketed over recent years. This study has also noted that when it comes to regular bushwalking and hiking, two very different age groups stand out for their elevated participation rate: *Young Australians* (aged 20-24 years) and *Older Persons* (aged 60 to 64 years). They are also most likely to be from the wealthier end of the socio-economic spectrum^{xvi}.

The *AusPlay Participation Data (October 2015 – September 2016^{xvii})* outlines that walking (recreational), athletics (including jogging/running), cycling and bushwalking and are among the 10 most popular activities at national and state levels, as highlighted in the tables below with corresponding participation rates:

Table 7: 10 most popular sport and recreation activities for Australian adults (2016)

Ranking	Activity	Participation Rate %
1	Walking (recreational)	42.6
2	Fitness/gym	32.1
3	Athletics (including running/jogging)	15.8
4	Swimming	14.5
5	Cycling	11.7
6	Football (soccer)	5.8
7	Bush walking	5.4
8	Golf	5.2
9	Tennis	4.8
10	Yoga	4.4

Table 8: 10 most popular sport and recreation activities for Victorian adults (2016)

Ranking	Activity	Participation Rate %
1	Walking (recreational)	44.5
2	Fitness/gym	31.6
3	Athletics (including running/jogging)	16.3
4	Swimming	13.4
5	Cycling	13.3
6	Football (soccer)	5.3
7	Golf	5.3
8	Bush walking	5.2
9	Tennis	5.2
10	Basketball	4.6

Children have higher participation rates in sports clubs/associations and lower participation rates in “self-organised” activities. Athletics (including jogging and running) features as the 10th most popular activity for Victorian children, with a participation rate of 4.3% (2016).

Local data collected through the 2015 VicHealth Indicators Survey generally align with trends noted across the state and the nation, indicating that walking, cycling and jogging/running are popular non-organised physical activities. The participation rates are outlined below.

Table 9: 3 most popular non-organised physical activities in West Wimmera (2015)

Ranking	Activity	Participation Rate %
1	Walking	46.8
2	Cycling	12.8
3	Running/Jogging	7.2

4.4 Trail User Groups

It is important that recreational trail planning and provision considers the needs, interests and expectations of trail user groups and sub-categories within these groups. These user groups include people who live in the local area as well as visitors to the region.

Table 10: Trail user groups and sub-categories

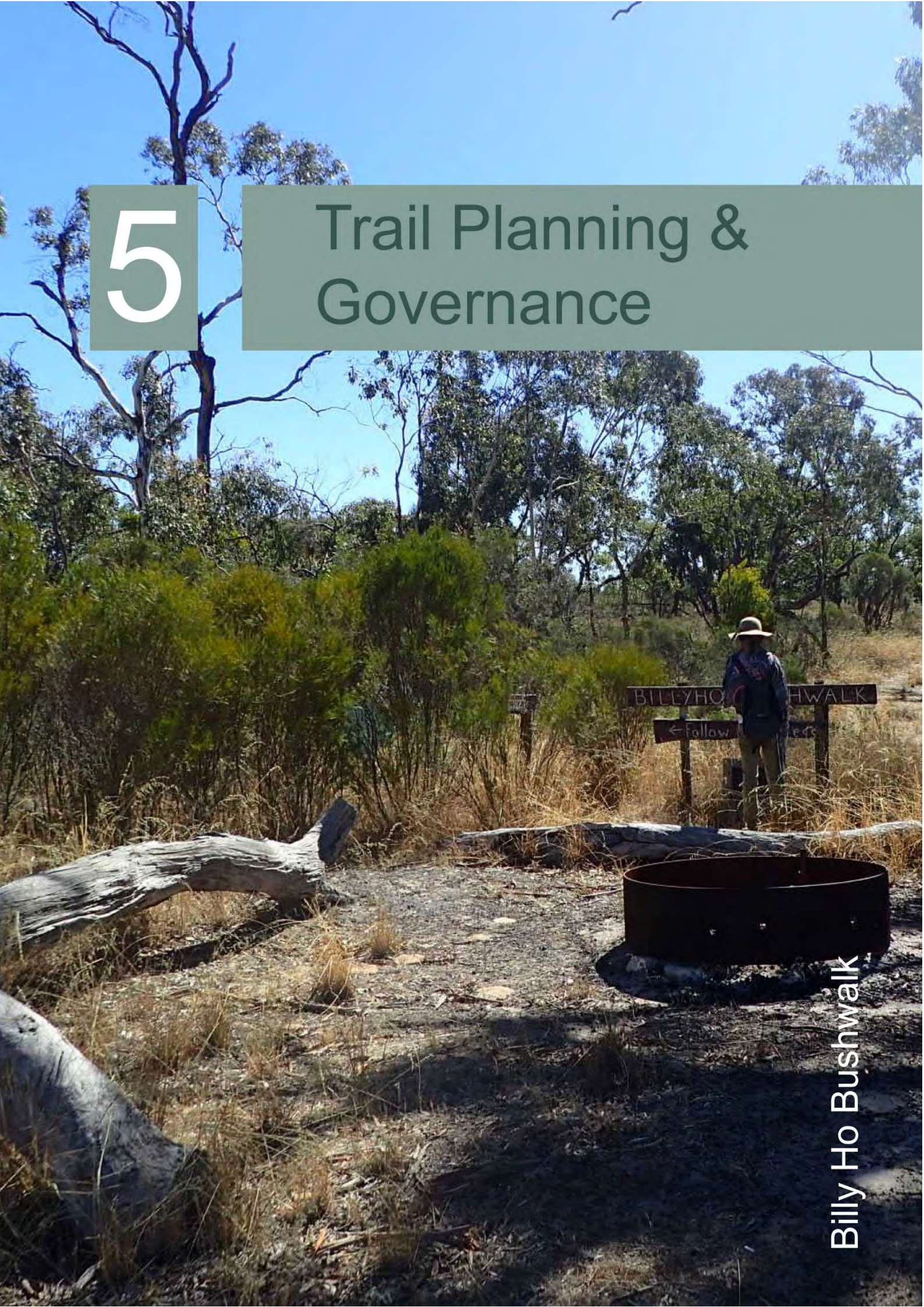
Pedestrians
The less able: People whose access to trails is limited due to constraints such as a physical impairment.
Casual walkers: People of varying ages and physical abilities who uses trails in a casual way for low key informal recreation such as dog walkers and families with young children.
Leisure/occasional walkers/hikers: People who occasionally walk a range of routes in a variety of settings.
Trail runners: Runners using trails for recreation, training and/or for competitive events.
Bush walkers/hikers: Experienced walkers who primarily walk in natural and sometimes remote settings on challenging routes.
Long distance walkers/trekkers: Bush walkers making trips to undertake iconic long-distance routes over multiple days or more.
Cyclists
Family/Leisure Cyclists: Cyclists of all ages and abilities using bicycles for fitness, recreation and/or transport.
Mountain Bike Riders: Enthusiasts who have a specialised bike for riding off-road on varying terrain. Popular disciplines include Downhill, Enduro and Cross country.
Fat bike Riders: Riders with specialized bikes which have been designed to traverse across sand or snow.
Gravel Riders: Riders with specialized bikes which have been designed to traverse across gravel and similar materials.
Road cyclists: Cyclists who use roads rather than off-road trails and are expected to adhere to road rules.

The long-term sustainability of trails is reliant on user group requirements being met. Existing or potential trail users in the West Wimmera Shire can broadly be divided into the user groups and sub-categories identified in Table 10.

Horse riders
Novice Riders: Horse riders who ride at riding schools or trekking centres, or those who own horses but have relatively low levels of confidence and do not ride on a regular basis.
Leisure Riders: Various types of horse riders with a wide variety of skills and expertise, likely to be riding trails that are close to home on routes that are well known to them.
Long Distance / Endurance Riders: Riders who have ability and confidence to ride a very wide range of trails including management tracks and through forests.
Canoeists / Kayakers
Single day recreation paddlers: Paddlers undertaking single day leisure/recreation excursions.
Competition paddlers: Paddlers using specialist craft, using trails during training, exercise or competition.
Tourers/Expeditioners: These can be either self-contained paddlers or guided individuals/groups.
Off-road vehicle users
Four Wheel Drivers: Enthusiasts with specialised vehicles used for recreation and transport - often venturing into areas with varying terrain and opportunities to camp.
Soft Roaders: Vehicle drivers who are looking to explore "off the beaten track" but do not have the experience or specialised vehicles to traverse all terrains. Many caravan travelers fit into this category.
Trail Bike Riders: Enthusiasts who have a specialised motor bike for riding off-road. Riders will often venture into remote areas without formalised trail infrastructure.

5

Trail Planning & Governance



Billy Ho Bushwalk

5.1 Trail Planning Guidelines and Principles

The publication *Sustainable Recreation Trails Guidelines*^{xviii} provides guidelines for the planning, design, construction and maintenance of recreational trails. These guidelines currently represent industry best practice in Australia, with information derived from various national and international publications. Key information relating to sustainable and accessible trails are outlined in Table 11 and Table 12.

Table 11: Sustainable trails

Sustainable Trails
It is fundamentally important that recreational trails are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.
Recreation activities that diminish natural values are generally not acceptable
It is vital that high quality recreational trail experiences are developed in landscapes that can support such activities.
Natural areas can be enhanced through the development of sustainable trails which protect biodiversity and raise environmental awareness.
Community wellbeing can be enhanced through well-designed and managed trails which improve access & support physical activity.

Table 12: Accessible trails

Accessible Trails
Trails which are readily accessible, providing links between communities and landscapes can enhance lifestyles through the promotion of physical activity, improving health & wellbeing and reducing reliance on motorised vehicles.
Accessibility is determined by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proximity to populations / visitor attractions • proximity to transportation facilities (i.e. roads) • existing or proposed linkages to other trails • presence of existing trail support facilities • the nature of the terrain and landform. • access for emergency vehicles.

Volume II: Background Report provides further detail on topics relating to sustainable trail developments:

The trail planning principles outlined in Table 13 are broadly based on the *Sustainable Recreational Trails Guidelines*, and have been tailored to guide trail planning in the West Wimmera Shire. These principles will guide the Recreational Trails Strategy and Action Plan:

Table 13: Trail planning principles

Trail Planning Principles
1. Ensure socially, economically and environmentally sustainable trail development and management;
2. Provide trails which are readily accessible, provide links between key destinations and promote active lifestyles and participation;
3. Provide a diverse range of trail opportunities relevant to the needs and demands of the community and encourage the broadest possible community participation;
4. Maximise use of existing trails where they are appropriately located and have the capacity to sustain additional use;
5. Manage trails professionally, effectively and equitably;
6. Provide safe trails through adherence to relevant legislative and activity safety requirements;
7. Ensure that universal design principles are embedded into trail design and development
8. Maximise the opportunity to attract trail-related programs and events;
9. Encourage community involvement in the planning and design of trails;
10. Involve local indigenous people in the planning, design and interpretation; of trails which have Aboriginal heritage values;
11. Support, promote and advocate for trail users in relation to relevant issues within the region;
12. Develop and maintain partnerships with the community, the private sector, local businesses, tourism providers and other tiers of government to provide trails and associated facilities.

5.2 Governance

As trail development, management and maintenance is often a collaborative effort it is important that a clear governance model is established to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the trail and trail network. An important step in this process is to identify the partners involved and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder.

Key partners for the West Wimmera Recreational Trails Network are likely to include:

- West Wimmera Shire Council
- Parks Victoria
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Committees of Management
- Vic Roads
- Vic Track
- Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV)
- Wimmera Development Association (WDA)
- Peak trail bodies
- Volunteer groups
- Local user groups and clubs
- Health agencies (e.g. Heart Foundation)
- Private and commercial sector including local businesses that could offer trail support services

A complete list of potential partners for the implementation of this Strategy are identified in Section 12.4.

With so many potential partners it is important to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities associated with the trail and to establish and agree upon appropriate service levels.

The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in trail governance could be agreed upon through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), a formal partnership agreement or a trail licensing agreement. A trail licensing agreement could assist land owners to manage risk and public liability. Key considerations for trail governance are identified in Table 14.

Table 14: Key considerations for trail governance

Trail management
Legal responsibility for trail maintenance
Trail user compliance
Management of funds and funding applications
Community consultation
Trail maintenance
Maintenance coordination
Mowing and vegetation management
Conservation and invasive species management
Infrastructure repairs/replacement
Management/maintenance of tools and machinery
Rubbish collection
Maintenance/cleaning of amenities
Risk management
Hazard identification
Maintenance of safety/warning signage
Hazard control measures (e.g. fallen trees, erosion hazards)
Promotion and marketing
Information collation
Map creation
Brochure design and updates
Website design and updates
Social media updates and regular activity
Promotional material approval
Brochure distribution
Contributions to external online platforms

6

Types of Trails

Lake Ratzcastle

6.1 Victoria's Trail Hierarchy

Victoria's Trails Strategy 2014-2024 recognises that the state requires a network of trails of different levels of significance in order to attract interest from different markets. The hierarchy determined relates to trails that are significant at international, national, state, regional and local community level.

Table 15 indicates the characteristics and attributes of international, national and state significant trails, as defined in the State's key strategic trail document.

Table 15: Trail categorisation key indicators – international, national and state significant trails

Characteristics	Attributes	Example
International and national trails		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World-class trail experiences located within the natural and cultural landscapes of Victoria, with the highest standard of management and promotion. Support high yield trail-based tourism products including accommodation. Destinations in their own right, attracting international and interstate visitors. May include major trail hubs that attract high international and interstate use, high level competitions and events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exemplars of the competitive strengths of Victoria and Australia as a trail destination. Uniquely representative of Victoria's natural and cultural landscape values. High priority government support at the State level for trail development and management and listed as a priority within State plans and strategies. Support viable high yield trail-based accommodation and associated products and services. Higher levels of interstate visitation than State significant trails (see description below) and significant international visitation, interest and appeal. Directly and indirectly provide economic benefits to the State. 	<p>Murray to Mountains Rail Trail</p> <p>Great Ocean Walk</p> <p>Grampians Peaks Trail (underway)</p>
State trails		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant trail experiences, representative of Victoria's varied landscapes, with a high standard of management and promotion. Support a range of trail-based products and a motivator for intrastate and interstate visitation. May attract some international visitors. May include some major trail hubs and may attract high level competitions and events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representative of the region's and/or Victoria's natural and cultural landscapes. Government support at a regional level within regional plans and strategies. Support viable trail-based and associated regional tourism products, services and programs. Significant intrastate and interstate visitation, interest and appeal. Directly or indirectly provide economic benefits to a region and/or the State. 	<p>Great South West Walk</p> <p>Great Victorian Rail Trail</p> <p>Surf Coast Walk</p>

Regional and local trails are of most relevance to the West Wimmera Shire's trail network. The characteristics and attributes of these

types of trails have been elaborated from the information provided *Victoria's Trails Strategy 2014-2024* and are provided in Table 16.

Table 16: Trail categorisation key indicators – regionally and locally significant trails







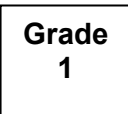
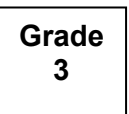


Characteristics	Attributes	Example
Regional trails		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trails and facilities used by people across a wider region, including intrastate visitors, for recreation, transport, health and wellbeing. Generate significant economic benefits to the region May include trail hubs accommodating various trail experiences across a region. Important regional recreational and tourism assets and when combined with other regional scale trail resources they can be seen as state recreation or tourism assets or resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be located within close proximity to residential areas and/or connected to community services and open space areas. Representative of the region's natural and cultural landscapes. Provide access to a diversity of trails of varying difficulty, length and type. Provide opportunities for different trail-user groups for active recreation, health and wellbeing. Be recognised across the region as a popular trail and/ or trail network and frequented by people from the surrounding region. 	<p>Glenelg River Canoe Trail, Dartmoor to Nelson</p> <p>Mount Shank Crater Floor Walk (SA)</p>
Local trails		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trails and facilities used by local residents for recreation, transport, health and wellbeing. Mainly attract local users primarily for independent trail-based recreation activities. Generate economic benefits to the local area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many are located within close proximity to residential areas and are often connected to community services and open space areas. Representative of the local natural and cultural landscapes. Provide access to trails which are generally accessible by users of varying fitness and/or shorter in length Provide opportunities for groups for active recreation, health and wellbeing. Be recognised by local residents as a trail and/ or trail network and frequented by people from the local area. 	<p>Glenelg River Walk, Harrow</p> <p>Newlands Lake Nature Walk, Apsley</p> <p>Lake Wallace Perimeter Walk, Edenhope</p>

6.2 Trail Classification Systems

Trail classifications allow land managers to develop trails that are appropriately designed for the anticipated trail users and to provide suitable levels of facilities and management. A number of attempts have been made to classify different types of trails for different user groups. There is no single grading system that is applicable to all types of trail.

For example, trails for walking are classified on a difficulty scale from grades one to five, while the canoeing/kayaking scale ranges from *Easy* to *Difficult*. **Error! Reference source not found.** provides a summary of the various trail classification systems, with further details on each provided below.

Table 17: Trail classification systems

Trail usage	Classification System Used	Easiest classification	Most difficult classification
Walking	Australian Standards (AS2156.1-2001): Walking tracks. Classification and signage.	Class 1 	Class 5  [Class 6: informal trail]
Mountain Bike Riding	International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA): Trail Classification	Very Easy 	Extreme 
Horse Riding	Horse SA: Trail Difficulty Rating System – Horse	Easiest 	Advanced 
Canoeing/Kayaking	International River Grading System	Easy 	Difficult 
Four Wheel Driving	4WD Recreational Track Classification	Easy 	Very Difficult 

Australian Standard 2156.1-2001 Walking Tracks - Classification and Signage

In 2010, the *Australian Walking Track Grading System* was developed by the *Walking Tracks Grading and Improvement Project* and funded by 'Go for your life' – a Victorian Government initiative aimed at developing stronger, healthier communities through promoting healthy eating and increased participation in physical activity. This system was endorsed

by Parks Forum (the former peak body for park management organisations) as a voluntary industry standard and is used by Parks Victoria. The aim of the Australian Walking Track Grading System is to encourage people who are not regular or confident bushwalkers to get out there and give it a go. It is specifically designed to reassure entry level walkers, particularly persons with a disability or people walking with children, that a particular trail is suitable for their skill level.

Under this system, walking trails are graded on a difficulty scale from grades one to five, as follows:



Grade One is suitable for persons with a disability with assistance



Grade Two is suitable for families with young children



Grade Three is recommended for people with some bushwalking experience



Grade Four is recommended for experienced bushwalkers



Grade Five is recommended for very experienced bushwalkers

The first walking track to have been re-graded to this system was the Whipstick Loop Walk in Wombat State Forest near Daylesford. Below is an image of the sign installed which includes the symbol showing the walk's grade as well as information on its distance, time to complete, gradient and quality of path.



Figure 5: Whipstick Loop Walk, Victoria



Whipstick Loop Walk






Grade of Walk ¹ :	Grade 3
Distance:	Circuit 5.0km
Time:	2 hours return
Gradient:	Short steep hills
Quality of Path:	Formed track, some obstacles
Quality of Markings:	Sign posted
Steps:	Occasional steps
Experience required:	Some bushwalking experience recommended

Mountain Bike Trail Classifications

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) has developed a guide for

developing trails to specific ratings or for assessing existing trails. This system has been adopted worldwide and is shown in the table below.




Table 18: Mountain bike trail classifications

Classification		Description
Very Easy		Likely to be a fire road or wide single track with a gentle gradient, smooth surface and free of obstacles. Frequent encounters are likely with other cyclists, runners, walkers and horse riders.
Easy		Likely to be a combination of fire road or wide single track with a gentle gradient, smooth surface and relatively free of unavoidable obstacles. Short sections may exceed these criteria. Frequent encounters are likely with walkers, runners, horse riders and other cyclists.
Intermediate		Likely to be a single trail with moderate gradients, variable surface and obstacles.
Difficult		Likely to be a challenging single trail with steep gradients, variable surface and many obstacles.
Extreme		Extremely difficult trails will incorporate very steep gradients, highly variable surface and unavoidable, severe obstacles.

Horse Trail Classifications

The *Horse Trail Difficulty Rating System*^{xix} includes a description of horse trail classifications, as shown in the table below.

Table 19: Horse trail classifications

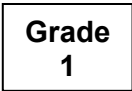
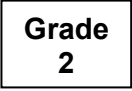
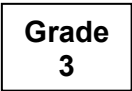
Classification	Description
Easy 	<p>Easy Trails are most suitable for novices; social groups and others seeking a relatively short distance trail requiring a basic level of skill and horse & rider fitness.</p> <p>Easy Trails are most likely to be fire roads or wide single tracks (bridlepaths) with a gentle grade (not exceeding 10%) and a relatively obstacle free, hardened natural surface.</p> <p>Easy Trails are likely to be shared-use and frequent encounters with other users including cyclists, walkers & runners can be expected.</p>
Intermediate 	<p>Intermediate Trails are most suitable for individuals and smaller social groups seeking a short to medium distance trail requiring a moderate level of skill and fitness.</p> <p>Intermediate Trails are most likely to be a combination single trail and/or fire road with obstacles, variable surface, and a moderate slope.</p> <p>Intermediate Trails are likely to be shared-use so encounters with other users including cyclists, walkers, runners and horse riders should be expected.</p>
Advanced 	<p>Advanced Trails are suitable for individuals and small social groups seeking a very challenging trail requiring a high level of skill, fitness, and basic navigation skills.</p> <p>Advanced Trails are most likely to consist of challenging single trail and/or fire road with many obstacles, variable surface, and steep sections. Some trail routes may not be marked at all.</p> <p>Advanced Trails may possibly be shared-use so encounters with other users possibly including cyclists, walkers, vehicles and other stock should be expected, however, many of these trails may be located in remote areas and encounters with others is expected to be minimal.</p>

Canoe and Kayak Trail Classification

The International River Grading System^{xx} provides an indication of the degree of difficulty of a rapid and/or river. The following table provides a description of the first three

grades (Easy, Medium and Difficult) of the rapid ratings, however it has a total of six levels including Advanced, Expert and Extreme.

Table 20: International river grading system





Grade	Description
Easy 	Slow to medium flowing water with very small, regular waves or riffles. Relatively few obstacles, with an easy path to find and follow. Suitable for novices.
Medium 	Rapids are straightforward with medium sized, regular waves. The path through rapids can be clearly seen from the water and is often indicated by well-defined chutes or Vs of water. There are some obstacles that require manoeuvring around, but paddlers with a good command of basic strokes can easily miss them.
Difficult 	Rapids have moderate, irregular waves and strong currents. Manoeuvring is required to follow the preferred route. Small to medium sized stoppers may have to be negotiated. The route is difficult for inexperienced paddlers to see and scouting is advisable. Suitable for experienced Whitewater paddlers, with the ability to roll an advantage.

4WD Recreational Track Classifications

4WD Victoria endorses this track grading classification scale which has been developed to assist in advising Trip Leaders and participants on 4WD trips of the type of tracks

that they can expect to encounter. It is intended, over time, for all 4WD tracks to be rated according to this scale and sign-posted accordingly.

Table 21: 4WD recreational track classifications

Classification	Description
Easy 	All-wheel Drive and High Range 4WD. Novice Drivers. Mostly unsealed roads with no obstacles and minor gradients
Medium 	Mainly High Range 4WD but Low Range required. Some 4WD experience or training required. Tracks with some steep and/or rocky/slippery/sandy sections. May have shallow water crossings.
Difficult 	Significant Low Range 4WD with standard 4WD ground clearance. Should have 4WD driver training. Tracks with frequent steep and/or rocky/slippery/sandy track sections. Possible water crossings.
Very Difficult 	Low Range 4WD with high ground clearance. Experienced drivers. Tracks with frequent very steep and/or rocky/slippery/sandy track sections. May have difficult river crossings.

7

Existing Trails Audit

MAJOR MITCHELL
CAMPED NEAR HERE
31ST JULY 1836



MAJOR MITCHELL TRAIL

Major Mitchell Monument, Harrow

7.1 Trail Audit Methodology

Existing trails were audited through a process involving desktop research and on-ground assessments. An on-ground assessment of trails across the Shire was undertaken during January and February 2018, using a GPS device to collect a range of information for each formal and informal trail identified.

The information collected included photographs and records of key attributes for each trail. The data collected through the audit process is collated in the full audit matrix/database (included in *Volume II: Background Report*) and relates to the following categories:

Trail details

- Trail name
- Main attraction

Location

- Park/Reserve
- Street/Road
- Suburb/Locality

Tenure

- Land manager

Category

- User type
- Walking trail grade
- Trail hierarchy

Specifications

- Length
- General tread width

Surface

- Primary trail tread material
- General surface condition

Signage

- Trail head sign
- Waymarking
- Interpretive

Infrastructure

- Car park
- Public toilets
- Picnic facilities
- Seating
- Stairs
- Bridge/s
- Fitness equipment
- Campground

Marketing

- WWSC website
- Wimmera Mallee Tourism website
- WWSC Visitor Guide
- Other

Additional information

- Consultation notes
- Audit notes

7.2 Existing Trail Provision Overview

The trail audit process identified 27 recreational trails across the Shire as well as two on-road cycling event routes and three promoted drive trails. These trails are in varying condition. Some are formalised, defined trails and others are informal routes potentially providing opportunity for further development. Figure 6 to Figure 11 provide a snapshot of key trails across the region.



Figure 6: Lake Wallace Perimeter Walk, Edenhope



Figure 7: Glenelg River Walking Trail, Harrow

Figure 8: Kaniva Fauna – Wetlands Nature Trail



Figure 9: Newlands Lake Nature Trail, Apsley



Figure 10: Rocky Creek Walking Trail & Bailey's Rocks Loop, Dergholm State Park



Figure 11: West Wimmera Cricket Trail (drive trail) site at Edenhope

Figure 12 shows the distribution of recreational trails, cycling routes and drive trails across the West Wimmera Shire and corresponds to the audit overview provided in Table 22. The comprehensive trails audit database, images and a series of maps are included in *Volume II: Background Report*.

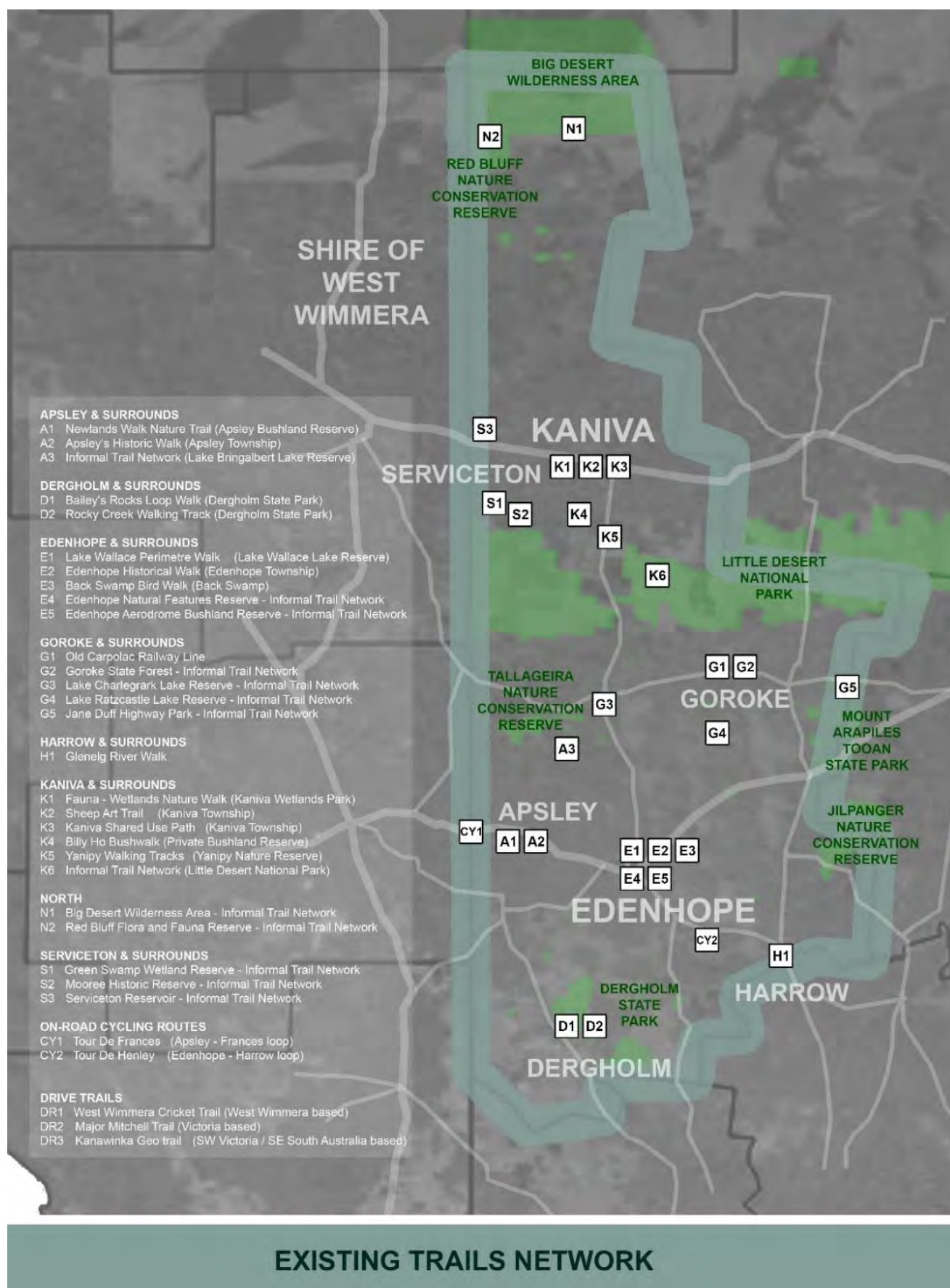


Figure 12: Existing trails network

Table 22: Existing trail provision overview

Area	Ref	Trail name/Identifier	Location (Park/Reserve)	Land manager	Approximate length
Apsley	A1	Newlands Lake Nature Trail,	Apsley Bushland Reserve / Boikerbert Swamp Lake Res.	Parks Victoria	5km loop
	A2	Apsley's Historic Walk	Apsley Township	WWSC	600m loop
	A3	Informal Trail Network	Lake Bringalbert Lake Reserve	Local CoM / Parks Victoria	700m each way
Dergholm	D1	Bailey's Rocks Loop Walk	Dergholm State Park	Parks Victoria	400m loop
	D2	Rocky Creek Walking Track	Dergholm State Park	Parks Victoria	5km loop
Edenhope	E1	Lake Wallace Perimeter Walk	Lake Wallace Lake Reserve	WWSC	5.6km loop
	E2	Edenhope Historical Walk	Edenhope Township	WWSC	1km each way
	E3	Back Swamp Bird Walk	Back Swamp	WWSC	300m return
	E4	Informal Trail Network	Edenhope Natural Features / Edenhope Flora Reserve	Local CoM / Parks Victoria	11km network
	E5	Informal Trail Network	Edenhope Aerodrome Bushland Reserve	Parks Victoria	6.2km network
Goroke	G1	Old Carpolac Railway Line - Goroke	Old Carpolac Rail Reserve	Vic Track / DELWP	3.6 km (east) 3.0km (west)
	G2	Informal Trail Network	Goroke State Forest	DELWP / VicForests	5.2km network
	G3	Informal Trail Network	Lake Charlegrark Lake Reserve	Local CoM / Parks Victoria	600m one way
	G4	Informal Trail Network	Lake Ratzcastle Lake Reserve	Parks Victoria	950 one way
	G5	Informal Trail Network	Jane Duff Highway Park	Parks Victoria	1.3km loop
Harrow	H1	Glenelg River Walk	Glenelg River Corridor	Local CoM / DELWP	2.4km one way

Area	Ref	Trail name/Identifier	Location (Park/Reserve)	Land manager	Approximate length
Kaniva	K1	Fauna - Wetlands Nature Walk	Kaniva Wetlands Park	WWSC	650m loop
	K2	Sheep Art Trail	Kaniva Township	WWSC / KDPA	700m one way
	K3	Kaniva Shared Use Path	Kaniva Township	WWSC	900m network
	K4	Billy Ho Bushwalk	Private Bushland Reserve 10km south west from Kaniva	Private	2.9km loop
	K5	Yanipy Walking Tracks	Yanipy Nature Reserve	DELWP / Parks Victoria	1.5km one way
	K6	Informal Trail Network	Little Desert National Park	Parks Victoria	-
Serviceton	S1	Informal Trail Network	Green Swamp Wetland Reserve	Parks Victoria	2km loop
	S2	Informal Trail Network	Mooree Historic Reserve	Parks Victoria	4.7km network
	S3	Informal Trail Network	Serviceton Reservoir	WWSC	900m loop
North	N1	Informal Trail Network	Big Desert Wilderness Area	Parks Victoria / DELWP	-
	N2	Informal Trail Network	Red Bluff Flora and Fauna Reserve	Parks Victoria	-
Cycling	CY1	Tour De Frances	Apsley - Frances	WWSC / Vic Roads	85km loop
	CY2	Tour De Henley	Edenhope - Harrow	WWSC / Vic Roads	72km loop
Drive touring routes	DR1	West Wimmera Cricket Trail (Drive Trail)	Edenhope College Oval; Jane Duff Highway Park; Harrow; Dergholm; Lake Bringalbert; Apsley; Mt Talbot	Various	-
	DR2	Major Mitchell Trail	WWSC location: Harrow	Various	-
	DR3	Kanawinka Geo Trail	WWSC location: Bailey's Rocks, Dergholm State Park	Various including Parks Victoria	-
	DR4	Silo Art Trail	No current locations within WWSC.	Various	-

7.3 Current Trail Marketing and Promotion

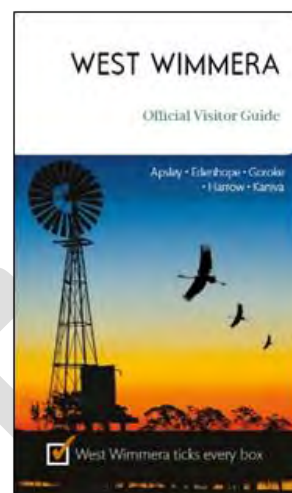
There are various websites and brochures providing information on key visitor destinations and trails in the Shire. The key resources providing information relating to trails and other recreational activities are:

- West Wimmera Shire Maps
- Wimmera Mallee Tourism Website
<https://www.wimmeramalleetourism.com.au>
- West Wimmera Official Visitor Guide
- Australia's First XI Aboriginal Cricket Trail Brochure
- West Wimmera Shire Council Website Page - "Discover"
<http://www.westwimmera.vic.gov.au>
- Parks Victoria Website e.g. Dergholm State Park
<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au>

In addition to the key information sources for trails, there are also a number websites and brochures referring to individual trails within the West Wimmera Shire. For example:

- Apsley's Historic Walk has an associated brochure available at the trailhead outlining the key destinations. This brochure is available in hard-copy at the site but is not promoted online.
- The Major Mitchell Drive Trail is signed on the ground in Harrow but is not promoted online or via brochure.
- The Kanawinka Geotrail (driving route) is promoted through a brochure which includes reference to the site at Bailey's Rocks, however the website is no longer maintained and there was no on-ground signage promoting the wider trail.

Further details are provided in *Volume II: Background Report*.



8

Activating Trails

Newlands Lake, Apsley

8.1 Programs and Events

Programs and events play an important role in promoting active participation, influencing the level of usage for trails and related infrastructure and contributing to the region's economy. The following programs and events have been identified within the West Wimmera Shire Council area which are likely to directly or indirectly impact on trail planning:

- Tour De Frances
An annual on-road cycling charity event held in June from Apsley to Frances.
- Dergholm Endurance Horse Ride
An annual horse ride beginning at the Dergholm Recreation Area.
- Dergholm Pub to Scrub Horse Ride
A fundraising event held in 2016 incorporating a horse ride from the Dergholm Pub.
- Henley on Lake Wallace / Tour De Henley
An annual festival on the shores of Lake Wallace incorporating the Tour De Henley on-road cycling event (Edenhope – Harrow)
- Edenhope and District Community Bank Fun Run/Walk for MS
An annual charity fun run/walk around Lake Wallace in October.
- Lake Charlegrark Country Music Marathon
An annual music event held on the foreshore of Lake Charlegrark.
- Navrun 4WD Amazing Race – Goroke
An annual Easter 4WD event held in Goroke State Forest.
- McCartney's Ride / Jane Duff 'Lost in the Bush' Horse Ride
A horse ride from Nhill to Jane Duff Memorial Park, Mitre via Little Desert National Park.
- Vinduro - Harrow 100
An annual endurance race for vintage motorcycles, based out of Harrow.

- Johnny Mullagh Cricket Championship
An annual cricket event held in Harrow during March commemorating Australia's first international cricket team.
- National Bush Billycart Championships
National championship held annually in Harrow simultaneously with the Johnny Mullagh Cricket Championship
- Harrow Fun Run
A fun run event incorporated into the Johnny Mullagh Cricket Championship weekend in Harrow.

In addition to the programs and events held within the West Wimmera Shire, the following events have been identified outside of the Shire's boundaries which may have potential to influence trail use in West Wimmera into the future:

- Murray to Moyne
An annual team relay cycle event from the Murray River (Mildura, Swan Hill or Echuca) to the Moyne River (Pt Fairy).
- Arapiles Cycling Event
Cycle event offering routes between Mt Arapiles, Horsham and Natimuk.
- Heart Foundation Walking Groups
Australia's largest free walking group network currently operating in a number of towns in the wider region (e.g. Bordertown, Casterton; Dimboola; Rupanyup and Hopetoun).
- Parkrun
parkrun is a series of 5km runs held on Saturday mornings around Australia. They are open to all, free and are currently operating in a number of towns in the wider region (e.g. Nhill; Hamilton; Portland and Mt Gambier).

Further details about opportunities for programs and events is provided in *Volume II: Background Report*.





8.2 Online Interactive Platforms

Online interactive fitness platforms are continuing to increase in popularity and diversify, with several specialist apps available. There is a wide range of platforms available which provide the opportunity to increase active participation in local communities by allowing trail users to track their activity, share their experience and compete with other users. Many platforms also provide incentives to get active (and to use their platform), such as challenges where users compete with others across their local community or across various countries.

For example, the series of *MapMyFitness* apps encourage users, during the year 2018, to track 1018km of running, walking or jogging to win prizes and Strava promotes May as a month for the *Grand Fondo Cycling Challenge*.

Table 23 provides an overview of some of the trending online interactive platforms which promote trail use, with reference to the results of a trail/route search across the West Wimmera Shire.

Table 23: Online Interactive Platforms

Platform	Description	West Wimmera Routes included (as of April 2018):
Strava 	Strava is a free online platform which promotes running and cycling 'segments' and virtual events/challenges around the world which can be tracked to monitor personal improvements and to add an element of competition to individual pursuits. Further use and promotion of apps such as Strava could help increase active participation while also adding 'segments' to this world-wide database.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Wallace Perimeter Trail (Cycling) • Apsley to Frances (Cycling route) • Edenhope – Penola Rd (Cycling route) • Harrow (Cycling routes)
Walking Maps 	Walking Maps is an online interactive platform delivered by Victoria Walks, providing trail maps and information about different walking routes available. This provides an opportunity to increase promotion of walking routes to encourage locals and visitors to use trails.	Currently there are no trails within the West Wimmera Shire promoted on this platform.
Trailforks 	Trailforks is a mountain bike trail database & management system. Users can contribute data and then local trail associations have the control to approve & curate the data. Ensuring updated and accurate data. Users share their experiences via GPS devices, including integrations with Strava. Users can also add photos & videos which are tagged to trails found on the website. Users also help moderate the site by voting to approve or deny new trails and report bad data. Trailforks helps with the promotion of mountain bike events across Australia	Currently there are no trails within the West Wimmera Shire promoted on this platform.
Map My Fitness 	integrated series of applications allowing users to track their route and time across various devices, compete against themselves and others and become involved in an online active community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Wallace Perimeter Trail • Edenhope Township • Powers Creek Road, Kadnook • Newlands Lake, Apsley

8.3 Access for All

To increase rates of physical activity and the use of trails across the region, it is imperative that all people can access the trails network. If trails are designed inclusively, the benefits of trails will have greater positive impact within the local community.

The *Australian Walking Tracks Grading System* identifies that Grade 1 trails are those which are accessible to people in a wheelchair with assistance. There are plans to upgrade the trail at the Kaniva Fauna – Wetlands Park to include accessible trail surface and associated facilities. This will be the first trail in the Shire to cater for all abilities, meeting the requirements of a Grade 1 trail. This will be a great place for local residents with access restraints while also providing for visitors to the region.

While other trail classification systems do not account for universally accessible grades, it is recommended universal design practices should be considered in the development of new trails or the enhancement of existing trails where possible.

Example: Huron River Water Trail, USA

The Huron River Water Trail is accessible to all thanks to the development of a universally accessible kayak launch. Paddlers of all abilities can launch and land smoothly without capsizing or damaging their watercraft. The facility is designed with a firm surface to support the person's movement from their arrival place to the launch at water's edge and sufficient space to accommodate the length of their watercraft while taking their craft to or from the water.



Source: <http://www.michiganwatertrails.org>

Trails provide opportunities for physical activity which should be available to all people including both physical and non-physical disabilities. While the development of accessible trail infrastructure is important, it is also vital that trail-related programs and events are accessible for all, regardless of physical or mental barriers. This may include people with hearing impairment, visual impairment or mental health illnesses. Physical activity programs and events which cater for specific groups of people and raise awareness of issues in the wider community can significantly help improve participation rates and connections among the community.

Example: Deaf Mental Health Bushwalk

People from Victoria's Deaf, hard of hearing and hearing friends' community joined a bushwalking challenge along Mornington Peninsula's stunning Two Bays Trail to highlight the importance of understanding mental health issues often faced by people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Karli Deaf Health and Deaf Bushwalking Victoria, supported by Parks Victoria and Deaf Children Australia, organised the event that included 13 and 26 km walks from Dromana to Cape Schanck.



Source: <https://deafchildreinaustralia.org.au>

9

Consultation

Glenelg River Walk, Harrow

9.1 Consultation Process

The development of the West Wimmera Recreational Trails Strategy has been informed by community consultation and stakeholder engagement.

A series of consultation mechanisms were used to engage with the wider community and key stakeholders. These mechanisms were:

- Community Forum
Edenhope Mechanics Hall
Wednesday 31st January 2018, 6pm
- Community Survey
Online via SurveyMonkey and hard copy at Shire offices
Survey open between 15th January – 18th February 2018
- Stakeholder meetings
Targeted phone calls, email correspondence and meetings

Figure 13 illustrates the information provided to the community through distribution of an informative flyer. The flyer was distributed in the following ways:

- Emails to the stakeholder database
- Promotion via the West Wimmera Shire Council Facebook page
- Posting of hard copies at town notice boards in across the West Wimmera Shire
- Advertisement in the *West Wimmera Advocate* on the 24th of January 2018
- Advertisement in the *Kaniva Times* on the 24th January 2018



Figure 13: Community Consultation Flyer

9.2 Key Consultation Findings

Wider Community

A wide range of information was gathered from the wider community through the community survey, forum and a series of interviews. The key community desires communicated through these consultation mechanisms are outlined in Table 24.

Table 24: Key Community Consultation Findings

Wider Community
Off-road cycling, horse-riding and walking routes, away from dangers associated with highway traffic
Enhanced recreational water opportunities (e.g. on various lakes/wetlands and the Glenelg River at Harrow)
Enhanced connectivity (walk or cycle trails) within townships and between key destinations
Enhanced connectivity (including rail trails and/or drive trails) between townships and to key outlying destinations (e.g. wetlands, historical sites)
Recreational walking, cycling and/or horse riding trails at around lakes/wetlands (e.g. Bringalbert, Charlegrark, and Ratzcastle)
Extension of existing trails (e.g. Glenelg River Walk at Harrow, Newlands Lake Nature Walk at Apsley)
Development of new trail experiences in Little Desert National Park
Formalisation of horse riding routes across public land
Improved infrastructure at existing trails (e.g. trail surface at Lake Wallace Perimeter Trail at Edenhope and Fauna – Wetlands Park at Kaniva)
Improved general trail maintenance
Improved marketing and promotion of trail opportunities
Improve accessibility to have regular experiences in nature

Key Stakeholders

The process of targeted stakeholder interviews provided important information which has informed the development of the West Wimmera Recreation Trails Strategy. Key findings are outlined below.

Table 25: Key Stakeholder Consultation Findings

Project Control Group (PCG)
Recreational trails need to promote and provide for increased physical activity.
Sustainability and ongoing affordability of trails and trail networks is of key importance
Neighbouring Local Government Areas
Hindmarsh Shire Council is focusing on the development of Wimmera River Discovery Trail.
Glenelg Shire Council intends to develop a Tracks and Trails Strategy in the near future
Southern Grampians Shire is currently preparing a Recreation and Leisure Strategic Plan.
Horsham Regional Council has been working towards developing a Bicycle Advisory Committee to strategically plan for bicycle use.
Wattle Range District Council (SA) is interested in connectivity across the wider region.
Land Owners/Managers
DELWP need to provide land owner consent for any trail developments on their land.
Gaining approval for a Harrow to Dergholm Canoe Trail may be difficult due to water frontage licenses, mainly grazing licenses.
Parks Victoria has finite resources and needs to prioritise these. To do this, Parks Victoria works with other government agencies, uses strategies such as state-wide trails strategies and uses a planning and prioritisation tool called the <i>Visitor Experience Framework</i> .
Due to finite resources, Parks Victoria looks for creative solutions that provide sustainable funding for trail planning, construction and ongoing management.

A comprehensive record of details relating to the consultation findings are included in *Volume II: Background Report*

10

Analysis of Trail Provision

Newlands Lake Nature Trail, Apsley

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to the provision of recreational trails across the Shire are identified in Table 26.

This analysis considers the findings from Stage 1 (Project Start Up & Review), Stage 2 (Audit and Usage Analysis) and Stage 3 (Community Consultation).

Table 26: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Strengths	Opportunities
Proximity to nationally and internationally significant tourism and outdoor recreation destinations (e.g. Mount Arapiles, Naracoorte Caves World Heritage Site, the Grampians)	Increasing and high participation in trail activities (walking, bushwalking/hiking, running, mountain biking, horse riding, water sports).
Proximity to renowned multi-day trail (Great South West Walk)	Improving the community's physical and mental wellbeing
Highly varied and diverse landscape settings within the Shire and the surrounding regions	Trails offer low cost easily accessible recreation and physical activity opportunities
Existing river and water-based recreation activities across the Shire such as water skiing, wakeboarding and canoeing/kayaking	Links to existing local businesses and creation of new trail related businesses, through development of visitor and trail services.
Located on the major thoroughfare between Melbourne and Adelaide	Enhancing inter-connectivity of trails across the region e.g. drive trails linked into walk/cycle trails.
Existing drive trails within the Shire	Regional collaboration between Councils to deliver trail opportunities.
Interesting and unique Indigenous and European heritage	Riverside/Lakeside and wetland activation through trails enhancement and development
Unique and highly diverse environments for trail-based activities and associated activities such as bird watching and nature photography.	Support traditional cycling types such as on-road cycling, whilst encouraging emerging types such as "fat bikes", gravel riding through the formalisation of trails, disused railway corridors and paths for these activities.
Distinctive landscape features (e.g. Bailey's Rocks, Glenelg River, Little Desert, Big Desert, Lakes and wetlands)	Develop and encourage environmental, land care and "friends of" groups to assist in managing and maintaining trail activities.
Popular off-road vehicle routes in areas such as Little Desert NP and Ngarkat Conservation Park	Linking in with existing regional art/drive trails (e.g. Silo Art Trail)
Community groups and volunteers with interests in trails.	Develop themed trail experiences (e.g. heritage, wetlands, bird watching, nature photography)

Weaknesses	Threats
Fragmented trails network across various land tenures	Limited availability and quality of trail information at Visitor Information Centres
No identified Universal Access trails (Grade 1)	Population decline
No coordinated approach to providing information on trails within the region	Inconsistent and inaccurate provision of trail names and other key trail attributes on signage and other trail infrastructure
Limited trail support infrastructure (e.g. car parking, trail signage, toilets, changeroom facilities)	Limited/dispersed availability and inconsistency of trail related information (online or printed)
Inconsistent range of signage styles and condition	Limited and poorly coordinated promotion and marketing of trails
Limited signage, mapping and promotional material	Potential impacts upon environmental and cultural heritage values
Currently no trail user/ advocacy groups based in the Shire	Limited capability of landowners to financially contribute to trail development & management

A photograph of a dirt trail winding through a forest. The trail is made of dry leaves and dirt, and is flanked by tall trees with green foliage. The lighting suggests a sunny day with dappled shadows on the path.

11

Future Trail Network

Edenhope Aerodrome Bushland Reserve

11.1 Strategic Planning Pyramid

The establishment of a common Vision for the provision of a recreational trails network for the West Wimmera Shire provides a goal for Council and other organisations to coordinate initiatives towards. As illustrated in Figure 14, the **Vision** facilitates the development of associated **Strategic Outcomes**, which in turn provide the framework for the development of **Strategies** (specific approaches to achieve the Strategic Outcomes and fulfil the Vision).

Individual **Actions** are then identified to deliver on each of the Strategies and address the relevant issues identified during the research and consultation phases.

Utilising this approach will result in a clearly articulated series of actions, with responsibilities assigned and an estimate of likely resources required, resulting in a clear and actionable implementation plan to deliver the overall Vision.



Figure 14: Strategic Planning Pyramid

11.2 10 Year Trail Network Vision

The following Vision has been developed, based on the findings of the trail network development process, informed by the issues and opportunities that emerged during the

community and key stakeholder consultation process, background research and on-ground assessments:

10-year Trails Network Vision

A cohesive trails network that offers active and challenging recreational experiences, encompassing West Wimmera's diverse and distinctive landscapes, ranging from arid desert wilderness in the north to wetlands, river and forests in the south

11.3 Strategic Outcomes

In order to deliver the Vision, a series of Strategic Outcomes have been developed, as outlined in Table 27

Table 27: Strategic outcomes

A	Integrated Planning and Management	Underpinning a sustainable, integrated and accessible trails network is a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment
B	Sustainable & Accessible Trail Network	Initial focus on upgrading the existing trails network to deliver sustainable and accessible trails within identified existing trail activity areas. Build upon the improved existing trail network to provide additional recreational trail opportunities, maximising the potential of the region to cater for a wide range of recreational trail users and aiming to deliver outstanding trail experiences
C	Increased Participation through Marketing and Programs	Encourage strong local community and visitor participation in recreational trail activities through effective promotion and marketing of the region's trails and the associated programs and experiences available
D	Development, Management and Maintenance	Underpinning a sustainable, integrated and accessible trails network is a strategic and coordinated approach to trail development, ongoing management and maintenance
E	Community, Tourism and Economic Development Opportunities	Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and transportation/liveability benefits

The following strategic approach to the delivery of a trails network across the region is proposed, principally based around recognising areas that offer distinct landscapes for trail opportunities across distinct character zones. The three distinct landscape character zones are:

- Zone A: Desert wilderness
- Zone B: Lakes and wetlands
- Zone C: Hills, Forest & River

These character zones are described in the text below and illustrated with the trails network vision in Figure 15 and Figure 16.

Zone A: Desert Wilderness

This zone is characterised by the desert areas and remote wilderness. The trail opportunities are likely to cater for the adventurous trail user, venturing into the Little Desert National Park, or for the true explorers, into the relatively untouched Big Desert Wilderness Area. Currently, there is very limited trail infrastructure, inhibiting the ability of residents and visitors to lead physically active lives.

This zone encompasses the towns of Kaniva and Serviceton. Kaniva is based on the main road between Melbourne and Adelaide, offering great potential for visitation and promotion of the wider trails network. There is opportunity for widespread marketing of the trails network in Kaniva, particularly on the thoroughfare for travellers. It has been noted that a large volume of travellers pass through Kaniva without being aware of the distinct experiences available across the West Wimmera Shire.

The upgrade of the Kaniva Fauna – Wetlands Park and Nature Trail will offer Kaniva residents a high quality, universally accessible trail on their doorstep, which will also cater for travellers passing through. This site is the key opportunity to market the West Wimmera Shire's distinct recreational opportunities to locals and travellers.

There are currently no formalised trails in the Little Desert National Park within the West Wimmera Shire boundary. Through cooperation with Parks Victoria, there is an opportunity for enhanced recreational opportunities across this distinct landscape.

Zone B: Lakes and Wetlands

This zone is characterised by the lakes and wetlands which are spread across the mallee landscape. The trail opportunities in this region are likely to appeal to a wide range of trail users, if awareness is raised about the trail and nature-based opportunities. The region is likely to be ideal for bird watchers, canoe/kayakers and casual bushwalkers or hikers.

Visitors or locals travelling through the region from the west may take the opportunity stop for a pleasant nature walk at Newlands Lake in Apsley, or those traveling from the east may be enticed by the world-renowned rock climbing destination and associated trails at Mt Arapiles – Tooon State Park. For those in Edenhope, the Lake Wallace provides great recreational opportunities, although consistent with trails across the region, these opportunities are not widely promoted.

The Lake Wallace Perimeter Trail is a highly valued community asset providing opportunities for residents to be physically active and a foreshore space to host events.

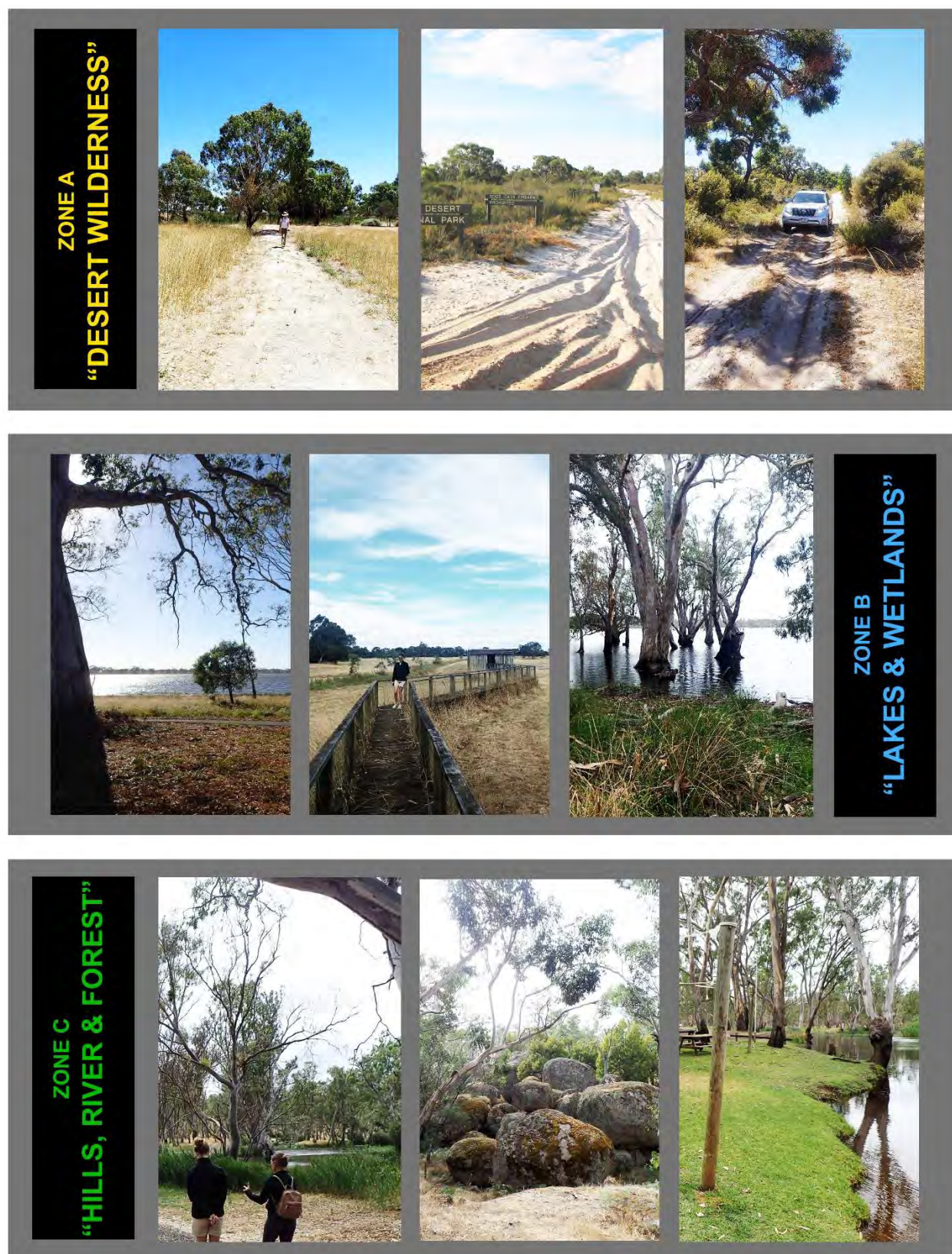
The township of Goroke and the outlying lakes which are accessible for recreation do not have formalised trails but offer opportunities for trail development and promotion.

Zone C: Hills, River and Forest

This zone is characterised by the hills, Dergholm State Forest and the Glenelg River. The trail opportunities are likely to appeal to a wide range of trail users, particularly those with an interest in geology, river environments and heritage. The township of Harrow has capitalised on its unique history and provides opportunity for linkages with the distinct landscape of the Glenelg River.

The community of Harrow has limited physical activity opportunities and would benefit from enhancement of the existing trail to cater for both locals and visitors.

There are existing trails in Dergholm State Park which offer opportunity for enhancement and further promotion through cooperation with Parks Victoria.



SHIRE OF WEST WIMMERA - CHARACTER ZONES

Figure 15: Character Zones

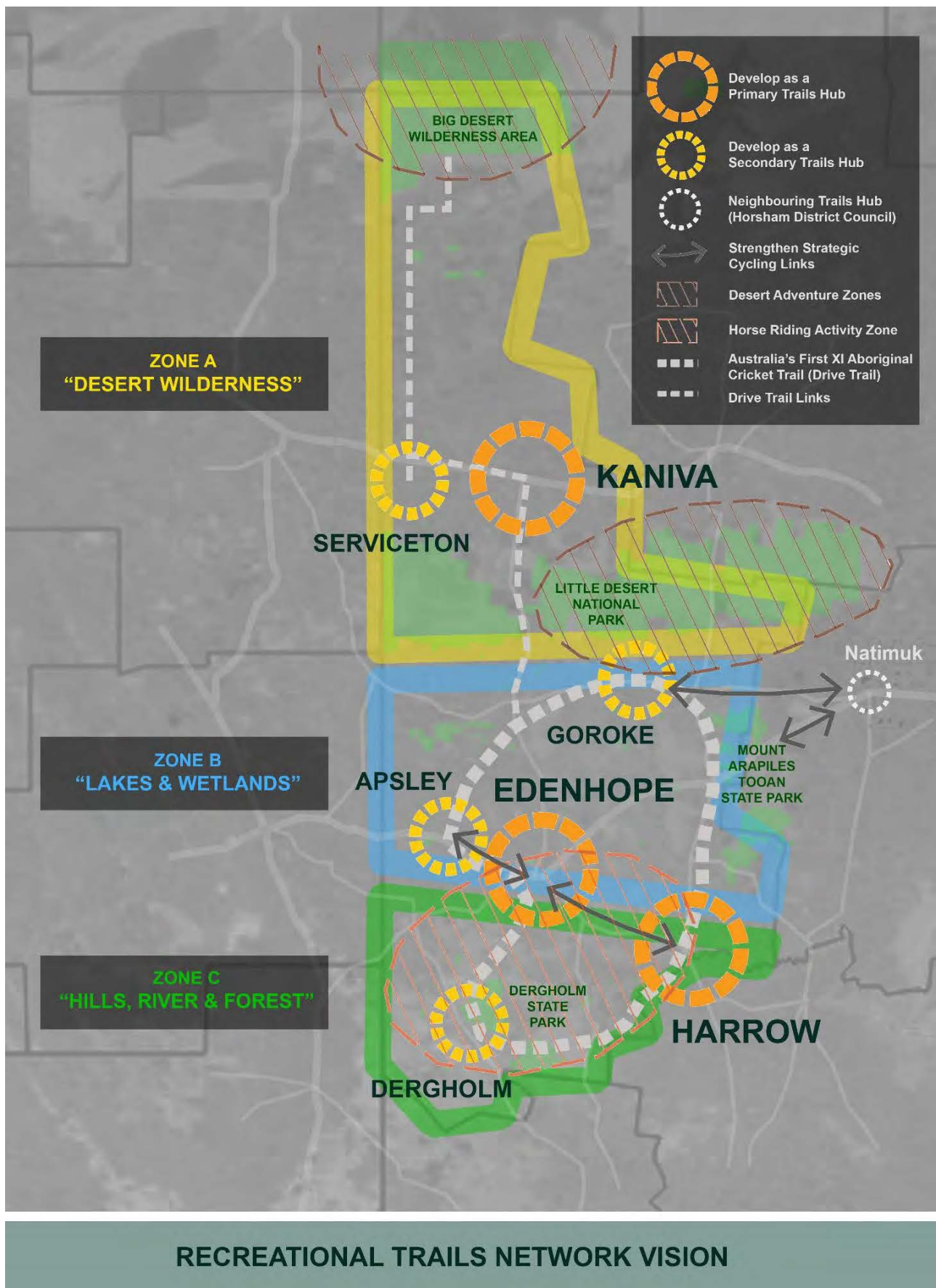


Figure 16: Trails network vision

12

Strategy & Action Plan



Federation Corner, Apsley

12.1 Project Assessment Criteria

In order to effectively focus available funding (private, local, state, federal) to deliver a network of recreational trails, a phasing and prioritisation strategy is required.

Potential trail projects have been identified and broadly prioritised based on:

- Need/Demand: field observation, professional judgement and input from Council staff
- Feasibility: project size, corresponding broad resource estimates and those projects offering best opportunities for implementation

The following evaluation criteria were also broadly utilised to refine the prioritisation process:

- Proximity to residential population
- Proximity to existing trails networks
- Gaps in the current trail network
- Connectivity between key destinations

- Proximity to significant visitor/tourist attractions
- Relative ease of project implementation (resources required, environmental issues, land tenure, complexity)
- Overall benefit to the region and community (social, environmental, economic)

The Strategy & Action Plan recommends that the next steps for each of the identified projects include some level of community consultation. Levels of interest in a project shown from the community should inform the prioritisation process. A potential project that generates a high level of public interest and is considered to be relatively easy to implement at reasonable cost should be prioritised above a project which requires substantial funding, has multiple significant constraints with limited public interest.

12.2 Timeframes

The timeframe identified for completion of each action is an indicative timeframe only and should be reviewed periodically. Key projects requiring initial feasibility studies, design development and requiring cross agency collaboration will likely take multiple years before the project is delivered on the ground. Some identified projects are reliant on the successful completion of other trail projects, securing of land or other major infrastructure projects. It needs to be recognised that it is not feasible to deliver all the identified projects at the same time.

Table 28: Timeframes

Term	Year Range
Ongoing	2018 onwards
Short	2018 - 2021
Medium	2022- 2026
Longer	2026+

12.3 Indicative Cost Estimates

An estimate of the resources required to implement each action has been identified to inform Council with its budget processes. These are broad indicative estimates and should be reviewed prior to implementation or as part of annual business and budget planning.

Table 29: Indicative cost estimates

Level	Resource Range
Low (L)	<\$20,000
Medium (M)	\$20,000 – \$50,000
High (H)	>\$50,000 - \$100,000
Very High (VH)	>\$100,000

12.4 Partners

There are various complexities surrounding trail planning and development, including multiple land tenure, cross government boundary/regional projects involving multiple government departments, and the diverse, and sometimes conflicting, aspirations of community stakeholders (e.g. environmental groups, trail user groups). Recognising this, Council will need to identify and work with a variety of partners, noting that some of the identified actions may not be deliverable without the support of these partners.

Partners include:

- Apsley Lions Club (ALC)
- Apsley Historical Walk Committee (AHWC)
- Australian Trail Horse Riders Association Victoria (ATHRA Vic)
- Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLCAC)
- Businesses;
- City of Mt Gambier (CoMG)
- CoM (Committees of Management)
- Community
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP),
- Edenhope Lions Club(ELC)
- Event organisers
- Forest Fire Management (FFM)
- Geological Society of Australia (GSA)
- Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA)
- Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water (GWM Water)
- Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (GMTOAC)
- Harrow Historical Society (HHS)
- Health Service Providers;
- Heart Foundation (HF)
- Hindmarsh Shire Council (HSC)
- Horsham Regional Council (HRC)
- Johnny Mullagh Reserve Committee of Management (JMRCoM)
- Kaniva & District Progress Association (KDPA)
- Kaniva Lions Club (KLC)
- Kaniva Rotary Club (KRC)
- Motorcycling Victoria (MV)
- parkrun
- Parks Victoria (PV)
- Passenger Transport Victoria (PTV)
- Peak bodies
- Private land owner/s
- Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV)
- Schools
- Serviceton Action Group (SAG)
- Southern Grampians Shire Council (SGSC);
- Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV)
- Tourism Victoria (TV);
- V-Line;
- Wimmera Development Association (WDA)
- Wimmera Indigenous Tourism Group (WITG)
- Wimmera Mallee Tourism (WMT);
- West Wimmera Shire Council (WWSC)
- 4WD Victoria (4WDVic)

Strategic Outcome A: Integrated Planning & Management

Existing Trail Areas			
Strategy A1: Focus trail development and enhancement within existing trail areas throughout the West Wimmera Shire to establish a distinctive and recognisable trails network			
<p>Rationale: It is recommended that future trail development initially focuses on formalising the existing trail network, particularly at locations where opportunities exist to encourage: increased participation in physical activity; appreciation of the Shire's distinctive landscapes and stimulation of economic activity. By further developing the trails network there are opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, and to attract new and enhance existing businesses and community organisations that service specific trail user groups and contribute to the overall development of the communities they are located within. 27 existing recreational trails (formal and informal) have been identified within the West Wimmera Shire as well as 2 on-road cycling routes (for specific events) and 3 themed driving routes. Most of the trails are informal routes which are not widely promoted or signposted on the ground. Inter-agency collaboration and partnerships will be vital to the development of the trails network as many existing trails are on land managed by other government agencies (e.g. Parks Victoria; DELWP) and/or Committees of Management (CoM), with only 7 being located on Council-managed land. <i>The Council Plan 2017 – 21</i>, and various local social infrastructure plans, have identified the need for improved provision of high quality social and community infrastructure which include requirements for upgrading, repairing and divesting of Council-owned and managed assets.</p> <p>Consistent branding across the trails network, in line with other WWSC branding, will raise the profile of the West Wimmera Trails Network and ensure that locals and visitors can see the connections across the distinct trail experiences offered.</p>			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
A1.1 Rationalise, clarify and clearly articulate the range of existing trail experiences available within the region, particularly in the character zones of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A: Desert Wilderness, B: Lakes and Wetlands, C: Mountains, Rivers and Forests 	Short	WWSC; PV; DELWP; CoM; TV; WMT;	L
A1.2 Upgrade existing trails and related infrastructure at Kaniva Cultural and Tourism Precinct (Fauna – Wetlands Park), Lake Wallace in Edenhope and the Glenelg River/township in Harrow to meet the definition of a <i>regional trail</i> (see definition in section 6.1). [Refer also Actions B2.1, B3.4 & B4.4]	Medium	WWSC; PV; DELWP; CoM; TV; WMT;	L
A1.3 Formalise, develop and enhance strategic linkages between existing key trail activity areas and key facilities/precincts within townships.	Ongoing	WWSC; PV;	M
A1.4 Undertake ongoing discussions with Parks Victoria to advocate for Walking Track development within National and State Parks in the Shire.	Ongoing	WWSC; PV;	L

Existing Trail Areas			
A1.5 Continue to develop the West Wimmera Cricket Trail (drive trail), integrating this drive touring route with recreational trail opportunities at key destinations across the Shire. [Refer also Actions B4.1 and B10.1]	Short	WWSC; PV; WMT	L
A1.6 Ensure consistent branding of trails across the West Wimmera Trails Network, including printed, online and on-ground materials. [Refer also Strategy C3]	Ongoing	WWSC; PV; WMT	L

Integrated Trail Planning Framework			
Strategy A2: Develop an integrated trail planning framework for the West Wimmera Shire Council			
Rationale: It is important that an integrated approach to planning for trails is undertaken, coordinating efforts between various government agencies, community groups and individual trail users. Trails have health, recreation, transport, environmental, cultural and heritage elements and there is a need to ensure that effective and coordinated trail planning and management approaches are considered and incorporated. Regular communication and collaboration will need to be maintained, and trail planning and implementation adequately resourced.			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
A2.1 Ensure trail planning initiatives are incorporated and recognised in broader community planning such as local and regional plans (e.g. strategic plans, development plans and recreation planning documents), Parks Victoria and DELWP/CoM management plans, tourism strategies and initiatives of other relevant organisations.	Short	WWSC; WDA; PV; DELWP; CoM; WMT	L
A2.3 Formalise mechanisms and strengthen partnerships for inter-Council and cross-border collaboration to implement mutually beneficial trail development projects for the wider region.	Short	WWSC; WDA; Neighbouring Councils	L
A2.4 Incorporate indigenous, cultural, educational and heritage interests into trail development initiatives where relevant and feasible.	Ongoing	WWSC; BGLCAC; GMTOAC	L
A2.5 Ensure that new trail and transport developments are designed to cater for and encourage active transport (i.e. walking, cycling) between key facilities/precincts.	Ongoing	WWSC; VicRoads	L
A2.6 Ensure that each formalised trail across the Shire has a clearly defined name to ensure that it can be identified for reasons to support trail management, maintenance, signage, safety and promotion.	Short	WWSC; PV; DELWP; CoM; Land owners	L
A2.7 Establish a WWSC Trails Reference Group (TRG) [Refer Action D1.1].	Short	WWSC; WDA; DELWP; PV; Peak Bodies; Community;	L

Strategic Outcome B: Sustainable & Accessible Trail Network

Trail-related Infrastructure Hierarchy
<p>Strategy B1: Establish a clearly defined hierarchy structure across the Shire for the provision of trail-related infrastructure on the ground</p> <p>Rationale: The Trail Network Vision identifies the strategic locations considered suitable to function as trails hubs (key access points onto the trail network), broadly based on proximity trails and the availability of existing support infrastructure such as car parking, toilet amenities, seating/shelter, shops/cafes, and other facilities supporting complementary recreational activities. These trails hubs are also sited at strategically important locations from a broader tourism perspective, with opportunities to provide information on all the region's visitor attractions including recreational trails.</p> <p>It is recommended that Primary Trails Hubs are established at the key location identified to be most suitable within each of the three character zones, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zone A Desert Wilderness: Kaniva Tourist and Cultural Precinct (Kaniva Wetlands – Fauna Park). This park is located on the region's major transport route, within walking distance to the town centre and Visitor Information Centre and hosts complementary activities (i.e. Fauna Park, bird watching). There are existing plans to upgrade this precinct, the associated trail (i.e. boardwalk, bridges, interpretation signage), the surrounding environment and support infrastructure (i.e. picnic facilities, amenities). • Zone B Lakes and Wetlands: Lake Wallace Foreshore in Edenhope. This precinct is the existing trailhead for the Lake Wallace Perimeter Walk which is an existing trail highly valued by the local community. The Foreshore is the town's premier open space, it has been recently upgraded, hosts community events, has established support infrastructure (amenities, car parking, visitor facilities/accommodation, BBQs) and is located within walking distance to the town centre and Visitor Information Centre. • Zone C Hills, River & Forest: Blair Street in Harrow. Blair Street is the main street of Harrow and provides potential for further linkages with the the Glenelg River and the associated walking trail. Attracting visitors and residents to the main street (rather than directly to Johnny Mullagh Park) will support the town's desire to activate Blair Street and bring people to the shops and facilities in the town. The proposed location is currently the Visitor Information Board (which requires enhancement) and has established support infrastructure (amenities, car parking). The proposed location of the trailhead and Primary Trails Hub is located within walking distance to all town facilities including Johnny Mullagh Park, the Glenelg River frontage, the Harrow Discovery Centre, local businesses and historical attractions at Gardner Park (e.g. log jail). <p>The purpose of establishing Primary Trails Hubs at these locations is to inform locals and visitors about trails in the area, provide trail users with the required facilities (e.g. amenities) and trail information (e.g. distance, difficulty) and to promote the wider trails network and other recreational opportunities across the Shire.</p> <p>It is also recommended that Secondary Trails Hubs are established at existing key trail activity areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serviceton Railway Station • Main Street, Goroke • Federation Corner, Apsley • Dergholm State Park <p>The purpose of establishing Secondary Trails Hubs at these locations is to provide detailed information about the adjacent network of trails along with reference to the wider trails network.</p> <p>In addition to the Primary and Secondary Trails Hubs, individual trails which are geographically isolated from the gateway locations will require trailhead signage specific to that reserve and trail (i.e. trail name, distance, grade etc.).</p>

Trail-related Infrastructure Hierarchy			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
<p>B1.1 Primary Trails Hubs: Kaniva Tourist and Cultural Precinct (Kaniva Fauna - Wetland Park); Lake Wallace Foreshore, Edenhope; Blair Street, Harrow.</p> <p>New signage should provide a comprehensive overview of all recreational facilities/amenities/attractions across the region to incorporate mapping and interpretation, plus details relevant to all trails (e.g. trail names, distance, grade, authorised users/code of conduct etc.) across the Shire. Promotion of related activities which are in adjoining areas (e.g. Mt Arapiles trails and rock-climbing) should be noted here.</p>	Short	WWSC; WDA; WMT; KDPA; KLC; KRC; HHS; PV; Community	M
<p>B1.2 Secondary Trails Hubs: Federation Corner, Apsley; Dergholm State Park; and Main Street, Goroke.</p> <p>New signage should provide a map and details about trails accessible from the location (e.g. trail names, distance, grade, authorised users/code of conduct etc.) and reinforce the brand and opportunities of the wider trail network.</p>	Short	WWSC; PV; AHWC; ALC; Community	M
<p>B1.3 Individual reserves/trails: Where trails are formalised and suitable for promotion, signage should provide a map and overview of the reserve (possibly including interpretation), plus details relating to the relevant trail (trail name, distance, grade, authorised users/code of conduct, safety etc.). This may include trails at: Billy Ho Bushwalk; Lakes Charlegrark; Ratzcastle and Bringalbert; Little Desert National Park (Broughton's Waterhole); Big Desert Wilderness Area; and Red Bluff Flora and Fauna Reserve.</p> <p>Trails in remote areas should be promoted once trails have been assessed to be safe and appropriate. Signage should inform users about potential risks and identify the trail in line with the relevant trail classification system (e.g. 4WD grading system).</p>	Short	WWSC; PV; Private land owner; Community	M

Primary Trails Hub Zone A: Kaniva Tourist and Cultural Precinct (Fauna - Wetlands Park)			
Strategy B2: Establish a <i>Primary Trails Hub</i> at the Kaniva Fauna - Wetlands Park with enhanced facilities and connectivity to the town centre			
<p>Rationale: The existing Nature Trail at this site is one of 7 existing trails in the Shire which is located on Council land. The trails audit identifies that the trail is currently in poor condition - there is significant potential to improve this trail, the associated facilities and connectivity to the Kaniva township.</p> <p>The Kaniva Tourist and Cultural Precinct (Fauna – Wetlands Park) is in a strategically important location for the wider trails network. It is close to residential populations and on the Shire’s major transport route. The WWSC is currently undertaking upgrades at the site which include enhancements to the wetlands, upgrades of the trail for universal access and support infrastructure including public toilets, a play space and fitness area. Opportunities exist to enhance connectivity to the centre of Kaniva, bringing benefits to community health and well-being, the environment and the local economy. This project was highlighted as a <i>priority project</i> in the <i>Kaniva & Surrounds Social Infrastructure Study</i> (2014).</p>			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
B2.1 Continue to progress with upgrades at the Kaniva Tourist and Cultural Precinct including upgrades to the nature trail and support infrastructure, striving towards this trail meeting the definition of a <i>regional</i> level trail experience.	Short	WWSC; KDPA; KLC; KRC	VH
B2.2 Ensure that the upgraded trail at the Kaniva Tourist and Cultural Precinct meets the requirements of a Grade 1 walking trail, accessible to people in wheelchairs with assistance.	Short	WWSC; KDPA; KLC; KRC; Community	H
B2.3 In line with Strategy B8, develop a walking trail (ideally Grade 1) to connect the Tourist and Cultural Precinct to the Kaniva Town Centre and other precincts in town (e.g. Health & Wellbeing Precinct, Recreation Reserve) integrating with the existing shared-use path and the Sheep Art Trail.	Short	WWSC; KDPA; KLC; KRC; Community	H
B2.4 Ensure that on-ground signage widely promotes the Kaniva Tourist and Cultural Precinct to passing traffic, visitors and residents.	Short	WWSC; KDPA; KLC; KRC; Community	L
B2.5 Install a trailhead sign at Kaniva Tourist and Cultural Precinct which includes information about the adjacent trail (map, trail classification, interpretation) as well as other recreational experiences offered across the Shire.	Short	WWSC; KDPA; KLC; KRC; Community	L
B2.6 Install interpretation signage around the wetland focusing on native flora, fauna and environmental values	Short	WWSC; KDPA; KLC; KRC; Community	M
B2.7 Continue plans for environmental enhancements including reconfigured water into wetlands, revegetation of native flora and weed management	Short	WWSC; KDPA; KLC; KRC; Community	M

Primary Trails Hub Zone B: Lake Wallace Foreshore, Edenhope (WWSC managed land)

Strategy B3: Establish a Primary Trails Hub at Lake Wallace Foreshore utilising existing facilities and enhanced connectivity to the town centre

Rationale: The Lake Wallace Foreshore is the existing trailhead location for the Lake Wallace Perimeter Walk. It is located on Council land and is Edenhope's premier open space. Existing infrastructure provides the required facilities (e.g. amenities, shade, carparking) for the establishment of a *Primary Trails Hub* for the wider network. This location is accessible for residents, travelers and offers opportunities for enhanced connectivity with the town centre, Visitor Information Centre and other related trails, such as Back Swamp Bird Walk and Edenhope Heritage Trail.

Edenhope's premier annual event, Henley on Lake Wallace and the associated fun run, is held at Lake Wallace and there is opportunity to encourage more use of the area and the trail through establishment of more regular programs such as parkrun and Hearth Foundation Walking Groups, and through further activating aquatic recreation on the lake.

The Council Plan 2017 – 21 identifies the need to improve recreational access to Lake Wallace by improving walking and gopher paths around the precinct.

The Edenhope and Apsley Social Infrastructure Study (2014) identifies *pedestrian linkages between Lake Wallace and Back Swamp* as a priority project, along with the opportunity for a sealed walking track around the Swamp.

The Grampians Region Cycling Masterplan – Discussion Paper (April 2018) identifies that a key cycling opportunity for the West Wimmera Shire is to cater for the niche discipline of 'Fat Bikes', with the potential of an *Edenhope Fat Bike Cross Country Loop*. There are existing informal trails/management tracks in the Edenhope Flora and Fauna Reserve and the Aerodrome Reserve which are used informally by horse riders, walkers and off-road vehicles. These reserves offer potential for the Fat Bike Cross Country Loop, which could cater for various trail user types.

Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
B3.1 Install a trailhead sign at the Lake Wallace Foreshore which includes mapping and information about the adjacent trails (name, distance, grade, interpretation) as well as about other recreational experiences offered across the Shire.	Short	WWSC; Community	L
B3.2 Continue to maintain the Lake Wallace Perimeter Trail and associated support infrastructure in good condition.	Ongoing	WWSC	L
B3.3 Investigate options to provide public access around the circumference of Lake Wallace to enable a complete sealed loop.	Short	WWSC; Private land owner	L
B3.4 Upgrade the surface of the Lake Wallace Perimeter Trail to meet standards as a Grade 1, universally accessible trail, striving towards this trail meeting the definition of a <i>regional</i> level trail experience.	Medium	WWSC; SRV; WDA	M
B3.5 Work with the community and organisers of existing (e.g. Henley on Lake Wallace) and potential (e.g. parkrun, aquatic sport events) events and programs to ensure that infrastructure at Lake Wallace is suitable and complementary to event requirements.	Ongoing	WWSC; Community	L
B3.6 In line with Strategy B8, enhance connectivity between the Lake Wallace Foreshore, the town centre, the existing Edenhope Historical Walk and the Back Swamp Bird Walk with consideration of a route providing access for all (specifically walkers and gophers).	Short	WWSC	L

Primary Trails Hub Zone B: Lake Wallace Foreshore, Edenhope (WWSC managed land)			
B3.7 Promote Lake Wallace for its aquatic recreation opportunities such as canoe/kayak, paddle boarding etc. Consider opportunities to provide universally accessible support infrastructure for such activities.	Short	WWSC; WMT; Community	L
B3.8 In line with Strategy B8, investigate options to provide a formalise loop trail (with trailhead and wayfinding signage), incorporating Edenhope Flora and Fauna Reserve and Edenhope Aerodrome Reserve to cater for 'Fat Tyre' bike riders and horse riders. Integrate these trails into the town's network by providing connectivity with the Lake Wallace Foreshore.	Short	WWSC; Community	L
B3.9 If water security is improved as an outcome of the <i>West Wimmera Pipeline Project</i> , consider opportunities to reinstate the trail around the circumference of Back Swamp, linking with the primary trailhead at Lake Wallace Foreshore and the existing Bird Walk infrastructure at Back Swamp.	Long	WWSC; ELC; Community	H

Primary Trails Hub Zone C: Blair Street, Harrow			
Strategy B4: Establish a Primary Trailhead at Blair Street, Harrow utilising existing facilities and enhanced connectivity to the town centre			
<p>Rationale: An existing 'tourist information board' exists at the proposed location of the Primary Trailhead, on Blair Street and offers significant opportunity for enhancement. As noted in the <i>Harrow and Goro Community Precinct Plan</i> (2015), Blair Street is the main street of Harrow, it is the primary entry point into the township, it acts as the social and commercial heart for residents and is a key asset for visitors and tourists. The streetscape includes numerous examples of locally significant heritage buildings and monuments, large areas of public open spaces, and community facilities within easy walking distance of the Glenelg River and Johnny Mullagh Reserve. The existing Glenelg River Walk has loose connections to Blair Street which provide opportunity for strengthening.</p> <p>Existing infrastructure on Blair Street provides the required facilities (e.g. public amenities, shade, seating, carparking) for the establishment of a trailhead which will be a Primary Trails Hub for the network. This location is easily accessible and visible to both residents and visitors and offers opportunities for enhanced connectivity between the Glenelg River, Johnny Mullagh Reserve, the town centre/ Harrow Discovery Centre and other heritage sites across the township (e.g. log jail; canoe tree, Major Mitchell monument).</p> <p>The <i>Harrow and Goro Community Precinct Plan</i> (2015) recommends enhancing visitor amenities to maintain Blair Street as the town's focal point, including relocating play equipment from Johnny Mullagh Reserve to the town centre. The plan also suggests the development of a <i>Glenelg River Corridor Masterplan</i> to incorporate walking tracks and aquatic recreation activities such as fishing, canoeing and other water sports.</p> <p>The GHCMA is currently finalising the report <i>Connecting Harrow to the Glenelg River</i> (2018). The preliminary project findings generally align with background research and consultation findings of this <i>Recreational Trails Strategy</i>; identifying the significant opportunities associated with creating better access to the Glenelg River, revegetation along the river corridor and linkages with the town.</p> <p>During consultation for this Strategy, trail riding groups identified that Harrow may be a suitable location to promote for horse riders, providing facilities to host weekend trail-riding events/camps, utilising the space adjacent Johnny Mullagh Park and various informal trails (primarily management tracks) in the area. Identification and promotion of horse riding trail routes between Harrow and Dergolhm, and suitable overnight camping facilities (e.g. float parking, space for temporary horse yards) would enhance this experience and encourage horse riding groups to visit the area.</p>			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range

Primary Trails Hub Zone C: Blair Street, Harrow			
B4.1 Review the alignment and name of the existing Glenelg River Walking Trail to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encompass the Harrow town centre (including interpretive centre, heritage buildings, log jail etc.); cater for a wider range of trail users (i.e. walkers, bike riders, horse riders (if deemed appropriate)); and reflect the distinctive features of the trail (i.e. town, river and heritage) link with and promote the town and the Harrow Discovery Centre Integrate with the West Wimmera Cricket Trail (Drive Trail) For example, the name <i>Harrow Town and River Discovery Trail</i> .	Short	WWSC; GHCMA; DELWP; JMRCoM; HHS; Community	L
B4.2 Install a trailhead sign at the site of the existing 'Tourism Information' structure on Blair Street in Harrow. The trailhead sign is to include a map and information about the trails accessible from Harrow (name, distance, grade, interpretation) as well as promote other recreational experiences offered across the region.	Short	WWSC; GHCMA; DELWP; HHS; JMRCoM	M
B4.3 Utilise trail enhancements, landscaping and signage to create a clear visual link between the town centre, Johnny Mullagh Park and the Glenelg River.	Short	WWSC; GHCMA; DELWP; JMRCoM	M
B4.4 Install wayfinding signage and quality interpretation signage along the <i>Harrow Town and River Discovery Trail</i> outlining both natural (flora, fauna, geography) and historical (Indigenous, European and Chinese) features. Striving towards this trail meeting the definition of a <i>regional level</i> trail experience.	Short	WWSC; GHCMA; DELWP; JMRCoM; HHS; GMTOAC	M
B4.5 Consider installation of boardwalk infrastructure over sensitive areas of the Glenelg River/wetlands. This infrastructure must be built to suit the local conditions (i.e. seasonal flooding) with maintenance costs and risk of replacement factored into the budget in case of loss or damage.	Short	WWSC; GHCMA; DELWP; JMRCoM	VH
B4.6 Formalise and maintain the existing informal trail alignment which extends to the north of town (along the original Adelaide – Melbourne road reserve) along the Glenelg River and under the bridge as far as the canoe tree.	Short	WWSC; GHCMA; DELWP; JMRCoM; GMTOAC	L
B4.7 Work with Traditional Owners to seek opportunities to identify more culturally significant sites which are able to be promoted to recreational trail users (e.g. existence of multiple scar trees along the Glenelg River precinct).	Medium	WWSC; GHCMA; DELWP; JMRCoM; GMTOAC; HHS;	L
B4.8 Investigate options to establish a new trail alignment to extend the existing trail to the south as far as the historic Chinese market gardens	Short	WWSC; GHCMA; DELWP; JMRCoM; HHS	L
B4.9 Implement an ongoing program of invasive plant removal and native revegetation to enhance the amenity of the trail as well as to achieve other environmental benefits	Ongoing	WWSC; GHCMA; DELWP; JMRCoM	M
B4.10 Consider opportunities to provide facilities to cater for overnight camps for horse trail rider groups at (or adjacent to) Johnny Mullagh Park.	Medium	WWSC; GHCMA; DELWP; JMRCoM; ATHRA Vic	L

Primary Trails Hub Zone C: Blair Street, Harrow			
B4.11 Investigate options to formalise horse trail riding opportunities in the region around Harrow and towards Dergholm, likely utilising existing informal routes (i.e. management tracks) around areas such as Connewirricoo. Ensure that horse riding trail developments are accompanied with the development of an appropriate management plan.	Medium	WWSC; ATHRA Vic; DELWP; Private land owners	L
B4.12 In line with Strategy B10, support further formalisation and promotion of the Major Mitchell Trail (drive route) including distribution of printed information/maps, online content and improved on-ground signage.	Short	WWSC; TV; WMT; HHS	L
B4.13 Investigate options to provide a formalised canoe/kayak trail along the Glenelg River between Harrow and Dergholm. The development of such a trail may stimulate seasonal demand for a canoe hire business.	Medium	WWSC; GHCA; DELWP; JMRCOM; Private and owners; Canoeing Vic	L

Secondary Trails Hubs: Federation Corner, Apsley			
Strategy B5: Establish a <i>Secondary Trails Hubs</i> at Federation Corner, Apsley			
Rationale: Federation Corner in Apsley is the existing trailhead for the Newlands Lake Nature Walk and Apsley's Historic Walk, exhibiting the distinctive key landscape features showcased across <i>Character Zone B: Lakes and Wetlands</i> . Existing infrastructure (i.e. shelter and carpark) provides the necessary support facilities to welcome and provide for trail users. This <i>Secondary Trails Hubs</i> will support the wider trails network as it accessible to the residents of Apsley and is on a major transport route through the region, for example for travellers to or from the Naracoorte Caves World Heritage Area.			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
B5.1 Install a trailhead sign at Federation Corner, Apsley which includes mapping and information about the adjacent recreational trails (trail names, distances, grades, interpretation) while reinforcing the brand and opportunities of the wider trails network.	Short	WWSC, ParksVic; AHCW; ALC; Community	M
B5.2 Continue to maintain the existing trail support infrastructure (e.g. seating, picnic table, shelter) at the Federation Corner trailhead to welcome and provide for recreational trail users.	Ongoing	WWSC, ParksVic; AHCW; ALC; Community	L
B5.3 Support the Apsley community and Parks Victoria to continue to maintain the Newlands Lake Nature Walk in good condition and to enhance trail signage including enhancement of interpretation signage and material.	Ongoing	ParksVic; ALC; WWSC,	L
B5.4 Support the Apsley community to maintain and enhance Apsley's Historic Walk including ongoing supply of printed interpretation brochures at the Federation Corner Trailhead	Ongoing	AHCW; ALC; WWSC	L
B5.5 Support the Apsley community to modernise the access of interpretation material for the Historic Walk by enhancing the printed trail brochure (print available at trailhead) and providing this information at an online source accessible to trail users on their mobile device.	Short	AHCW; ALC; WWSC; Community	L
B5.6 Support sustainable opportunities to extend Newlands Lake Nature Walk further around the lake and/or along Kojak Creek	Medium	ParksVic; WWSC; Community	L

Secondary Trails Hub: Bailey's Rocks Campground, Dergholm State Park			
Strategy B6: Establish a secondary trailhead at Bailey's Rocks Campground, Dergholm State Park.			
<p>Rationale: Bailey's Rocks Campground in Dergholm State Park is the existing trailhead for the Bailey's Rocks Loop Walk and the Rocky Creek Walking Track. The existing infrastructure (i.e. campground, amenities and carpark) provides the necessary support facilities to welcome and provide for trail users. The two formal trails within Dergholm State Park are in relatively good condition except for the trailhead and wayfinding signage which require upgrades. Interpretation signage is limited and there is opportunity to provide interesting information about the distinctive geology and Indigenous heritage of the area.</p> <p>While dogs and horse riding are generally not permitted in areas under the National Parks Act, Dergholm State Park is unique for its allowance of dogs at Bailey's Rocks Campground and horse riding on specified tracks (Baileys Rocks entrance road, Sharam Rd, Nolans Creek Rd, Dergholm–Chetwynd Rd & Tallengower Rd), providing opportunity to promote this and link with other areas where horse riding is (or might be in the future) permitted.</p> <p>Parks Victoria intend to maintain the existing walking tracks at Bailey's Rocks to a Grade 4 level, commensurate with providing a remote camping opportunity. This would likely align with provision of improved trailhead signage and waymarking.</p> <p>The Kanawinka Geotrail is no longer maintained and there is opportunity to reinstate this trail to bring people into the region and link in with the Recreational Trails Network at the Bailey's Rocks.</p>			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
B6.1 Work with Parks Victoria to enhance the trailhead sign at Bailey's Rocks Campground to include information about the adjacent recreational trails (map, trail classifications, interpretation) while reinforcing the brand and opportunities of the wider trails network.	Short	WWSC; ParksVic;	M
B6.2 Work with Parks Victoria to enhance the wayfinding and interpretation signage on Bailey's Rocks Loop Walk and Rocky Creek Walking Track, in line with appropriate service levels.	Short	WWSC; ParksVic;	L
B6.3 Work with Parks Victoria to maintain the existing trail support infrastructure (e.g. seating, picnic table, shelter, campground, amenities) at the Bailey's Rocks Campground to welcome and provide for campers and recreational trail users.	Short	WWSC; ParksVic;	L
B6.4 In line with Strategy B10, encourage and support the restoration of the Kanawinka GeoPark (drive route) including distribution of current information/maps at an accessible location online and on-ground signage at Bailey's Rocks.	Short	WWSC; GSA; SGSC; CoMG; Community	L

Secondary Trails Hubs: Serviceton and Goro ke			
Strategy B7: Establish Secondary Trails Hubs in the towns of Serviceton and Goro ke			
<p>Rationale: The towns of Serviceton and Goro ke are strategically located to provide services to visitors and residents who are seeking to explore the desert wilderness, lakes and wetlands. Improved services, signage and promotion could position these towns as a 'Gateway' for off-road vehicle adventure tourism, including compatible activities such as bird watching and camping.</p> <p>The <i>Harrow and Goro ke Community Precinct Plan</i> (2015) suggests that Goro ke could be at the centre of a network of adventure tourism opportunities including Little Desert National Park, lakes, 4WD/trailbike tracks, campgrounds and historical sites. Community consultation findings suggest there is support for the development of a Town Walking Trail in Goro ke.</p>			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
B7.1 Work with DELWP to formalise off-road vehicle access within Goro ke State Forest and prepare a map/information brochure for park users.	Short	WWSC; DELWP; Vic Forests	L
B7.2 In line with Strategy B8, work with the community to develop a town walking trail in Goro ke	Short	WWSC; Community	L
B7.3 Provide information signage in Goro ke township relating to recreational trail opportunities in surrounding areas including Goro ke State Forest, Little Desert NP, Mt Arapiles, -Tooan State Park, Lakes Ratzcastle, Bringalbert and Charlegrark.	Short	WWSC; ParksVic; CoM; Community	M
B7.4 Work with Parks Victoria to formalise off-road vehicle access to and within Red Bluff Flora and Fauna Park and Big Desert Wilderness Area. Prepare a map/information brochure for park users.	Short	WWSC; ParksVic; DELWP	L
B7.5 Provide information signage in Serviceton township relating to recreational trail opportunities in surrounding areas including Red Bluff Flora and Fauna Reserve, Big Desert Wilderness Area and Little Desert National Park.	Short	WWSC; ParksVic; SAG; Community	M

Connectivity within and between townships			
Strategy B8: Improve connectivity within and between townships			
<p>Rationale: There are two on-road cycling routes within the Shire which are promoted for specific annual cycling events and there is community desire for enhanced connectivity within and between towns (primarily between Edenhope and Apsley). The formalisation of safer, designated cycle routes would help to encourage physical activity and facilitate active modes of transport.</p> <p><i>The Grampians Region Cycling Masterplan – Discussion Paper</i> (April 2018) identifies that key cycling opportunities for the West Wimmera Shire may include an 'Edenhope Fat Bike Cross Country Loop' and the 'Goroke to Natimuk Rail Trail'. Connecting Goroke and Natimuk via the disused rail line (which is existing but restricted due to agricultural fencing), would strengthen the link between the West Wimmera Shire and Mt Arapiles-Tooan State Park which lies on the border of the Shire and hosts a network of recreational trails and highly renowned rock-climbing facilities.</p> <p><i>The Council Plan 2017 – 21</i> identifies the need to <i>improve accessibility within towns for walkers and gophers</i>. Due to the high proportion of older residents and ageing populations in towns across the Shire, gopher accessibility is likely to remain a priority.</p> <p>The <i>Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Strategy</i> (2014) identified a potential opportunity to develop a 'Western Victoria Iconic Walking Trail' which would be 140 km in length comprising rail trail, roadside trails and existing tracks in the West Wimmera Shire, Horsham District and Hindmarsh Shire Council areas. The initial recommendation for this project is to undertake a feasibility study.</p>			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
B8.1 Investigate opportunities to formalise safer on-road or off-road cycling routes utilising existing special event routes and new routes which respond to community demand (e.g. Edenhope to Apsley) with a consideration of road user and rider safety.	Short	WWSC; VicRoads; Community	L
B8.2 Investigate the feasibility of a rail trail along the disused rail line between Goroke and Natimuk (to the eastern side of the Shire boundary).	Long	WWSC; WDA; VicTrack; DELWP; Community	M
B8.3 Support the development of a feasibility study on the Western Victorian Iconic Walking Trail concept.	Short	WDA; WWSC; HSC; HDC	M
B8.4 Investigate options to provide an 'Edenhope Fat Bike Cross Country Loop' [Refer Action]	Short	WWSC; ParksVic;	M
B8.5 Enhance connectivity within Kaniva [Refer Action B2.3]	Short	WWSC; KDPA; Community	L
B8.6 Enhance connectivity within Edenhope [Refer Action B3.6]	Short	WWSC; Community	L
B8.7 Enhance connectivity within Harrow [Refer Action B4.4]	Short	WWSC; GHCMA; DELWP; JMRCOM; HHS; GMTAC; Community	L
B8.8 Enhance connectivity within Goroke [Refer Action B7.2]	Short	WWSC; Community	L
B8.9 Consider opportunities to formalise and promote horse riding routes along existing roads/management tracks. This may include making existing event routes permanently accessible (e.g. Dergholm Endurance Horse Ride)	Medium	WWSC; Event organisers; Community	L

Individual Reserves			
Strategy B9: Enhance, formalise, maintain and integrate other trails			
<p>Rationale: In addition to the trails which are directly associated with the <i>Primary and Secondary Trails Hubs</i>, or located within townships, there are existing (formal, informal or potential) trails at reserves/areas which are relatively isolated from the wider trails network. These are: Billy Ho Bushwalk; Lake Charlegrark; Lake Bringalbert; Lake Ratzcastle; Jane Duff Highway Park; Serviceton Reservoir; Yanipy Walking Tracks; Green Swamp Wetland Reserve and Mooree Historic Reserve. Some of these trails have the potential to be further formalised and integrated into the wider trails network.</p> <p><i>The Council Plan 2017 – 21</i> identifies the need to develop <i>masterplans and maintenance schedules for high volume visitor locations adjacent to waterways to ensure protection of the natural environment while still providing recreational access to the water</i>. This is particularly relevant at Lakes Bringalbert, Ratzcastle and Charlegrark. While there is a very large network of wetlands across the Shire, these three lakes (Bringalbert, Ratzcastle and Charlegrark) currently provide for recreational activities and should be maintained for this purpose, including the development of walking trails at these sites.</p> <p>The <i>Kaniva and Surrounds Social Infrastructure</i> (2015) identifies that Serviceton Reservoir is a locally significant site for the Serviceton and Kaniva communities. It plays an important role as a social and recreational venue and requires improvements, including to the existing walking track.</p> <p>Parks Victoria manage a large network of open spaces across the Shire, which are currently of varying condition. Site visits to reserves such as Yanipy School Reserve, Green Swamp Wetland Reserve and Mooree Historic Reserve, and discussions with Parks Victoria have identified that investment in these trails is unlikely to be a priority. Such areas should be reviewed by Parks Victoria.</p>			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
B9.1 Support the private land owner to enhance signage and trail support infrastructure and maintain Billy Ho Bushwalk as a publicly accessible trail.	Ongoing	WWSC; Local land owner	L
B9.2 Work with Parks Victoria and the relevant Committees of Management to formalise recreational trails (walking and canoe/kayak) at Lake Charlegrark; Lake Bringalbert and Lake Ratzcastle.	Medium	WWSC; Parks Vic; CoM; Community	M
B9.3 Work with Parks Victoria to continue to maintain interpretation material relating to the Jane Duff Memorial and to formalise a walking trail within Jane Highway Park, incorporating interpretation about the site's unique historical links. This trail would enhance the visitor experience for campers, would enhance the site as a destination along the West Wimmera Cricket Trail (drive trail) and could be incorporated into the features of McCartney's Ride (horse riding event).	Medium	WWSC; Parks Vic; Community	M
B9.4 Upgrade the existing walking track around Serviceton Reservoir, and the provide additional shelters and barbeques to improve the experience for the local community and visitors. .	Long	WWSC; SAG; KDPA; Community	M
B9.5 Parks Victoria to review walking tracks at various parks across the Shire. Remove dysfunctional, damaged and illegible trail signage with consideration given to decommissioning if trails do not provide a quality experience and cannot be sustainably maintained and managed. This is likely to include reserves such as Yanipy School Reserve, Green Swamp Wetland Reserve and Mooree Historic Reserve.	Medium	Parks Vic; WWSC; WITG; BGLCAC	L

Drive trails			
Strategy B10: Enhance, extend and integrate existing drive trails			
<p>Rationale: Three drive trails currently exist within the Shire and are promoted to varying levels. Drive trails provide a necessary connection between the key trail activity areas across the West Wimmera Recreational Trails Network due to the vast distances. The majority of infrastructure necessary for drive trails is existing (i.e. maintained roads) which means these trails can be implemented and maintained at a relatively low additional cost. Requirements are likely to include maps, printed and online promotional material and on-ground signage.</p> <p>The key existing drive trail is the West Wimmera Cricket Trail. This route has primarily been promoted through on-ground signage at each of the sites - each of which is linked to a player of the 1868 Indigenous Cricket Team which toured England. The brochure for this drive trail was revamped early in 2018 in preparation for the 150th anniversary event which was held in Harrow. Information about this trail does not currently feature online. There is further opportunity to build upon the existing West Wimmera Cricket Trail, linking with recreational trail opportunities at key sites and promoting alternative routes showcasing the distinctive landscapes and sites of the West Wimmera Shire and enticing visitors to stay longer.</p> <p>The other two drive trails existing in the region (Kanawinka GeoPark with a site at Bailey's Rocks Campground and Major Mitchell Trail with a site at Harrow) do not maintain a strong and clear presence online, via brochure distribution or through on-ground signage. A monument for the Major Mitchell Trail exists at Harrow which could benefit from improved interpretation signage and a clearly articulated map.</p> <p>The Silo Art Trail has recently gained momentum across regional Victoria and other parts of Australia. WWSC is currently advocating for a silo art destination to be established within one of the Shire's towns. Integration into the landscape or heritage themes would add value to the recreational trails network and associated drive trails.</p>			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
B10.1 Enhance the West Wimmera Cricket Trail through linking with distinctive trail experiences and other recreational activities at key sites and widely promoting the trail and the unique historical connection via printed brochures/maps, online content and on-ground signage.	Short	WWSC; Cricket Australia; Cricket Victoria; Harrow Discovery Centre; Parks Vic; Community	M
B10.2 Support further formalisation and promotion of the Major Mitchell Trail (drive route) [Refer to Action B4.12]	Short	WWSC; RHSV; Community	L
B10.3 Encourage and support the restoration of the Kanawinka GeoPark (drive route) including distribution of current information/maps at an accessible location online. [Refer to Action B6.4]	Short	WWSC; GSA; SGSC; CoMG; Community	L
B10.5 Continue to advocate for the inclusion of a West Wimmera township into the wider Silo Art Trail. Encourage the theme of the artwork to link with the region's distinct landscapes and/or heritage. Consider opportunities to link the location of the silo art with recreational trail experiences.	Short	WWSC; VicGov; Community	L

Strategic Outcome C: Participation, Promotion and Marketing

Programs & Events			
Strategy C1: Improve health and wellbeing across the Shire through programs and events which promote regular physical activity and active lifestyles			
<p>Rationale: The West Wimmera Shire is home to a range of trail-related events including fun runs, annual cycling events, 4WD challenges and horse rides. These existing events, as well as new events and programs, will play an important role in promoting trail activities across the Shire and to the wider visitor market. It is important that events and programs which encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyles are supported and promoted.</p> <p>The resident population of the West Wimmera Shire has high rates of physical inactivity, overweight, obesity and preventable mortality compared to the average across the State. There is increasing need to provide and promote accessible and affordable physical activity opportunities to encourage regular exercise and healthy lifestyle habits.</p> <p>The Shire has one of the highest rates of volunteerism in Victoria with almost half of the population reported to have done some form of voluntary work in 2016. This is significantly higher than the average across Regional Victoria and should be embraced to help support the ongoing sustainability of programs and events.</p> <p>A number of existing organisations offer free, regular physical activity programs which could be introduced, with Council and community support, into West Wimmera communities. Examples include parkrun and the Heart Foundation Walking Groups. Such programs are designed to be implemented by proactive community members/volunteers, and local government can play a role in providing relevant community infrastructure (e.g. trails, open space) and helping to facilitate and promote participation in the program.</p> <p>There are also a number of online platforms/apps promoting physical activity programs, setting physical challenges for users and offering a level of virtual competition.</p> <p><i>The Grampians Region Cycling Masterplan – Discussion Paper</i> (April 2018) notes that the Wimmera is not well known for cycling, however is well suited to road cyclists who prefer flatter rides, recommending that a <i>gran fondo loop</i> be devised, commencing in Horsham and traversing through the towns and villages of the Wimmera.</p>			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
C1.1 Provide a supportive framework for new and existing trail-related programs and events to grow and diversify, offering and promoting healthy lifestyle choices.	Ongoing	WWSC; SRV; WDA; Event organisers	L
C1.2 Work with organisations and local communities to establish regular and free fitness groups and programs (e.g. Heart Foundation Walking Group, parkrun) utilising trails.	Ongoing	WWSC; SRV; HF; parkrun; Event organisers; Community	L
C1.3 Establish a calendar of events which encourage local residents to live active lifestyles and utilise trails. This may involve existing and new events/programs such as fun runs, virtual races (e.g. via strava maps), a pedometre challenge, triathlon, guided group walking program.	Short	WWSC; SRV; Event organisers; Community	L
C1.4 Encourage and promote the use of virtual challenges utilising platforms such as Strava. This technology may also be integrated with community events, fun runs and regular fitness groups.	Ongoing	WWSC; SRV; Event organisers; Community	L
C1.5 Consider opportunities to link a Wimmera Gran Fondo cycling event into the Shire.	Ongoing	WWSC; CV; SRV; HRC	L
C1.6 Establish and support Ride2School programs in Edenhope and Kaniva.	Short	WWSC; BN; Community; Schools	L

Programs & Events			
C1.7 Support healthy workplace programs which reduce sedentary behaviour and promote active lifestyles.	Ongoing	WWSC; Businesses; Community	L
C1.8 Embracing the Shire's high rate of volunteerism, investigate opportunities to expand current WWSC volunteer programs to promote local community involvement in trail maintenance, management and events, ensuring that volunteers are effectively supported, recognised and valued in their roles.	Short	WWSC; Community	L
C1.9 Develop partnerships with neighbouring Councils and event organisers to link compatible destinations, programs and events across local government boundaries (e.g. Big Sky Bicycle Trail, Arapiles Cycling Event, Murray to Moynes)	Short	WWSC; Neighbouring Councils	L
C1.10 Work with Hindmarsh Shire Council and Parks Victoria to build upon the Jane Duff annual horse ride/event which brings participants from Nhill to Mt Arapiles and incorporates the Jane Duff Highway Park	Medium	WWSC; HSC; PV	L
C1.11 Work with event organisers to ensure the ongoing sustainability of events in the Shire (e.g. Dergholm Endurance Ride Event, NavRun 4WD Amazing Race, Dergholm Pub to Scrub Horse Ride; Tour de Frances) and to consider opportunities to have such events more frequently.	Short	WWSC; SRV; Event organisers; Community	L

Mapping & Information			
Strategy C2: Improved mapping and identification of trails throughout the region			
<p>Rationale: The availability and quality of trails related information is highly variable across the region, and the information that is available is not always complete/current, nor does it always reflect existing conditions on the ground. There is no single, comprehensive source that provides a consistent level of information suitable to inform prospective trail users and promote the existing trails network to local community members and visitors to the region.</p> <p>The <i>Council Plan 2017 – 21</i> identifies the priority to <i>map community assets to improve planning and efficiency</i>.</p> <p>As part of this Strategy, existing trails were audited, including GPS mapping of trail alignments. This spatial information can now be maintained as a GIS database and used to reliably develop trail maps to be distributed through printed copies as well as online, interactive platforms. Maps are an integral element of trail promotion to ensure that trailheads can be easily located.</p>			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
C2.1 Using the ground-truthed GIS data prepared as part of this Strategy, develop a series of trail user maps/brochures that are consistent in terms of design and levels of information provided – distributed as printed copies and online. Support non-Council trail managers (e.g. private landowner at Billy Ho Bushwalk) to access and utilise this information for enhancements of trail information at their site.	Short	WWSC; WMT; Private landowner	L

Mapping & Information			
C2.2 Develop a website (or webpage hosted by Council) that provides comprehensive details of all trail opportunities within the region, to include interactive mapping and downloadable resources with links to other websites where relevant (e.g. Parks Victoria trail information). This may be integrated into existing Council and WMT websites.	Short	WWSC; WMT; PV	L
C2.3 Develop a booklet of trails, detailing the best trails from around the region with supporting photographs and clearly articulated maps. This may be integrated into the existing the <i>Official Visitor Guide</i> .	Short	WWSC; WMT	L
C2.4 Update and enhance visitor information signage at the roadside rest area located on the SA/VIC state border to include information about the West Wimmera Trails Network and other recreational opportunities.	Medium	WWSC; VicRoads; WMT	L
C2.5 Investigate the use of interpretive and wayfinding technology for the enhancement of visitor and trail user experiences. This is likely to include integration of maps into new and existing mobile apps/websites such as Victoria Walks, Maps.ME, Strava Mapping etc.	Long	WWSC; WMT	L
C2.6 Maintain and continually update the GIS database of trails which has been developed as part of this Strategy with integration into existing spatial databases. Encourage inter-agency sharing of this type of information (e.g. with ParksVic, DELWP, neighbouring Councils, Forest Fire Management).	Ongoing	WWSC; ParksVic; DELWP; Neighbouring Councils; FFM	L

Promotion & Marketing			
Strategy C3: Increased promotion and marketing of trail opportunities within the region			
<p>Rationale: The development of a co-ordinated approach to the marketing of the region's trail network would greatly assist promotion - clearly conveying information to the local community and visitors. The development and implementation of a consistent branding strategy across the trails network is recommended, with consideration given to the development of a trail logo that could be included on promotional material, signage and provide a consistent image that is recognisable across the region.</p> <p>The <i>Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan</i> (2014) identifies the need for marketing of experiences across the region as part of packaged tours for daytrips including transport, food and distinct experiences. This approach would help promote trail use to prospective visitors to the region.</p> <p>The <i>Wimmera and Grampians Indigenous Tourism Feasibility Study</i> (2017) identifies that a key opportunity for the region is to provide support to an Indigenous tour operator to develop, maintain and distribute a Wotjobaluk Country mobile app that would provide interpretive information, storylines and maps of Wotjobaluk Country for self-guided touring and to complement guided tours. This is a further opportunity for integration and promotion of relevant trails across the West Wimmera Trails Network.</p> <p>The <i>WWSC Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017 – 2021</i> identifies the need for further promotion of the benefits of physical activity and active modes of transport. This can integrate active lifestyles for residents and support for active trail-related activities and programs across the Shire.</p>			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range

Promotion & Marketing			
C3.1 Develop a coordinated approach to marketing the trails network through the development of a Trails Marketing Strategy / or integrate into a region-wide tourism strategy	Medium	WWSC; WMT	M
C3.2 Develop a style guide for trail signage, facilities and infrastructure in line with other Council branding initiatives.	Short	WWSC; WMT	L
C3.3 Develop a Trail Network logo for inclusion on all future trail signage	Short	WWSC; WMT; Parks Vic; DELWP; CoM	L
C3.4 Ensure that appropriate signage is placed at strategic locations to ensure that locals and visitors are aware of the trail experiences offered across the Shire. [E.g. Refer to Strategy B1 and Action B2.4]	Short	WWSC; WMT	M
C3.5 Remove dysfunctional, damaged and illegible trail signage and replace with contemporary and appropriate signage	Short	WWSC; Parks Vic	M
C3.6 Integrate the region's best and most distinct trail opportunities into packaged tours / daytrips bringing visitors into the Shire	Medium	WWSC; WMT; TV	L
C3.7 Support the creation of Wotjobaluk Country mobile phone app and ensure comprehensive integration of relevant Indigenous sites and trails across the wider region	Short	WITG; WWSC; WDA;	M
C3.8 Promote the benefits of physical activity and active modes of transport through key messages and information sharing "any movement is good"	Ongoing	WWSC; Community	L
C3.9 Encourage local communities to utilise online interactive platforms for trail related activities, contributing to user-input online databases of trails (e.g. Strava, Walking Maps, Trailforks, Walk Victoria, Maps.ME)	Ongoing	WWSC; Community	L
C3.10 Update and maintain information about existing trails within WWSC on key interactive online platforms and continually assess popularity and relevance of these platforms and engage in new and emerging platforms as appropriate.	Ongoing	WWSC; Health Service Providers; Businesses; Community	L

Strategic Outcome D: Development, Management & Maintenance

Management Structures			
Strategy D1: Ensure the management structures for all current and future trails are clearly defined.			
Rationale: To ensure that all trails are managed appropriately, management responsibilities must be clearly identified, alongside the development of maintenance schedules. Where trails cross multiple land tenures it is essential that trail management and maintenance responsibilities are assigned to a designated body, which may be a government agency (local or state) or an established community group with the necessary resources and expertise.			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
D1.1 Establish a WWSC Trails Reference Group (TRG) which can be sectioned into the three Character Zones (A, B and C). This may potentially comprise of representatives from Council and community groups with relevant stakeholder groups invited to attend as and when relevant (e.g. PV, DELWP, CoM, peak trail bodies, neighbouring Councils). [Refer also Action A2.7].	Short	WWSC; WDA; DELWP; PV; Peak Bodies; Community;	L
D1.2 Ensure all trail manager roles are clearly defined	Short	WWSC; PV;	L
D1.3 Ensure adequate trail maintenance schedules and procedures are defined and adhered to for all trails	Short	WWSC	L
D1.4 Develop a management and maintenance manual as a guide for all trail managers, community and volunteer groups	Short	WWSC	L

Strategic Outcome E: Community, Tourism and Economic Development Opportunities

Community & Economic Development			
Strategy E1: Use trail development and provision as an economic and community development tool			
<p>Rationale: Established trail networks and their associated activities are able to provide significant benefits to the communities they traverse, particularly from an economic and tourism perspective. The development of special events in the region that use the trail networks as their principle facility should be supported to assist in raising the profile of the existing and future trail networks and provide economic spinoffs to the communities that host the events. There is an opportunity to create vibrant recreational trail precincts in each of the Shire's three character zones, which over the long term should provide significant economic and tourism benefits to the region.</p> <p>The <i>Grampians and Barwon South West Passenger Services Cost & Feasibility Study</i> (2017) identifies that a major barrier to the growth of cycle tourism in the region is that carriage of bike is not permitted in the Grampians and Barwon South West regions. The study recommends that reforms permit the conveyance of bikes on regional road coaches.</p> <p>The West Wimmera Pipeline Project is currently investigating the feasibility of extending the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline to provide ongoing water security for the townships of Edenhope and Harrow, bringing a range of benefits to the region. The socio-economic value of recreational water has been the subject of a study undertaken in 2017 which substantiates the significant benefits of recreational water to regional communities. Key attractions to some of the region's most distinctive trails (i.e. Lake Wallace and the Glenelg River) would benefit from the water security associated with piped water supply.</p>			
Action	Timeframe	Partners	Cost Range
E1.1 Continue with investigations into the feasibility of extending the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline to provide ongoing water security to areas such as Lake Wallace and the Glenelg River, providing significant recreational, environmental, social and economic benefits to the region.	Short	GWM Water; DELWP; WWSC	L
E1.2 Support and develop trail related special events such as mountain bike racing, trail rides, walks, orienteering, rogaining and other appropriate activities	Ongoing	WWSC; WDA; SRV; WMT; Event organisers; Community	L
E1.3 Encourage communities along the existing/future trails network to become 'walker, bicycle and horse rider friendly'	Ongoing	WWSC; WDA; SRV; WMT; Community	L
E1.4 Encourage businesses (e.g. tour operators, associated retail outlets, hospitality venues, accommodation providers) to promote, utilise and enhance trails and associated visitor experiences	Ongoing	WWSC; WDA; SRV; WMT; Businesses; Community	L
E1.5 Encourage trail managers and interest groups to share trail information, such as GIS data, trail and asset management resources	Ongoing	WWSC; WMT; PV; DELWP	L

Community & Economic Development			
E1.6 Consider the viability of establishing a bike-hire facility in Edenhope for residents and visitors to utilise opportunities such as cycling Lake Wallace Perimeter Trail or cross-country riding through Fat Bike trails.	Medium	WWSC; WDA; SRV; WMT; Businesses; Community	L
E1.7 Support initiatives which accommodate cycle tourists on train and bus transport across the wider region	Ongoing	WWSC; WDA; WMT; V-Line; PTV; Businesses; Community	L

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A large, rounded rock formation with a flat top, covered in green moss and lichen. It sits on a smaller, more vertical rock base. The background is a dense forest of tall, thin trees with green foliage. The foreground has some ferns and dry leaves.

13

Priority Projects

Bailey's Rocks, Dergholm State Park

Table 30 outlines the key priorities and strategic recommendations for trails across the West Wimmera Recreational Trails Network.

Table 30: Priority Projects

Zone	Town/Area	Description	Priority
Highest Priorities			
A	Kaniva	Kaniva Fauna – Wetlands Nature Trail: upgrades and connectivity to town centre (Kaniva Town Walk)	Highest
B	Edenhope	Lake Wallace Perimeter Trail: upgrade to Grade 1 – accessible walking trail and connectivity with town centre	Highest
C	Harrow	Glenelg River Walking Trail: enhance, extend and rename (e.g. Harrow Town and River Discovery Trail)	Highest
Shire-wide		West Wimmera Cricket Trail (Drive trail): Extend and integrate	Highest
		Silo Art Trail: advocate for silo art in WWSC	High
		Improve health and wellbeing across the Shire through programs and events which promote regular physical activity and active lifestyles	Highest
		Hierarchy structure for the provision of trail-related infrastructure (in line with trail vision)	Highest
		Establish a Trails Reference Group	Highest
		Develop a Trails Marketing Strategy	Highest
Other Trail Development Projects			
A	Little Desert	Trails network in Little Desert National Park (off road vehicles and walking)	Medium
A	North	Off-road vehicle trails in Red Bluff Flora and Fauna Reserve and Big Desert wilderness Area	Medium
B	Edenhope	Edenhope Fat Tyre Cross Country Bike Loop	High
B	Edenhope & Apsley	Edenhope to Apsley Cycling Route	High
B	Lakes	Recreational trails at Lakes Bringalbert, Charlegrark & Ratzcastle	Medium
B	Goroke	Goroke Town Walk	Medium
B	Goroke	Goroke to Natimuk Rail Trail (long term)	Low
C	Harrow & Dergholm	Horse riding trails between Harrow and Dergholm	Medium
C	Harrow & Dergholm	Glenelg River Canoe Trail, Harrow to Dergholm (long term)	Medium
Shire-wide		Western Victoria Iconic Walking Trail (long term)	Medium

A scenic view of Lake Bringalbert. In the foreground, a large, gnarled tree with thick branches and green foliage stands on a grassy bank. The tree's trunk is light-colored and textured. The lake is calm with gentle ripples. In the distance, a line of trees marks the opposite shore under a cloudy sky. A small orange buoy is visible in the water near the shore.

14

Potential Funding Opportunities

Lake Bringalbert

A variety of funding sources to support infrastructure and programming development are potentially available for recreational trail development projects and are identified below. Funding can be procured from a variety of sources locally and at state and federal levels. These programs change regularly, and it is important to contact the funding agency/organisation to get up to date details on funding guidelines and determine eligibility and a funding strategy eligibility.

Federal Government

Building Better Regions Fund - provides funding for infrastructure and community investment projects that will create jobs, drive economic growth and build stronger regional communities into the future. Refer <https://www.business.gov.au/assistance/building-better-regions-fund>

Victorian Government

Community Sports Infrastructure Fund - The Community Sports Infrastructure Fund provides grants for planning, building new, and improving existing facilities where communities conduct, organise and participate in sport and recreation. Refer <http://sport.vic.gov.au/grants-and-funding/our-grants/community-sports-infrastructure-fund>

Visitor Economy Program Stream - Infrastructure projects under this Regional Infrastructure Fund program stream will create new or redevelop existing tourism and cultural assets that demonstrate a significant impact on the visitor economy. In particular, projects must attract increased visitors to the region and deliver an improved experience for those who visit and reside in regional Victoria. Refer <http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/programs-and-grants/visitor-economy>

Rural Development Program Stream - This program stream assists rural Victoria's businesses and communities by investing in local infrastructure, creating opportunities for economic growth and enhancing the appeal and liveability of rural towns and surrounding areas. It aims to assist the growth of rural Victoria by providing grants for infrastructure

projects that have the potential to stimulate economic activity in rural towns and their surrounding areas. Projects that will generally be funded include:

- infrastructure that connects communities, links recreation to retail precincts, attracts visitors and promotes recreation activity such as rail trails and walking tracks
- heritage and cultural initiatives of economic significance to the local community such as renewal of historic buildings and sites, arts and cultural centres or resource facilities
- civic renewal to enhance liveability and improve business opportunities such as township entrance points, streetscaping, signage and upgrading of open space areas

Refer <http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/programs-and-grants/rural-development>

Commercial and Private Sector Funding

Commercial and private sector funding is often used by organisations to assist with facility developments and ongoing operations. Opportunities such as facility naming rights and in-kind donations of labour and materials are a potential resource for new facility developments and upgrades.

Jetstar's Flying Start Program – provides grants of up to \$30,000 to support community groups and organisations to fund a project that will enrich their local community.

Refer <http://www.jetstar.com/au/en/flyingstart>

Not-for-profit organisations

Australian Sports Foundation - The foundation operates the Fundraising4Sport Program to increase opportunities for Australians to participate in sport or excel in sport performance. Refer <https://asf.org.au/>.

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal – provides grant funding for charitable purposes that benefits the residents of Australia's rural, regional or remote communities. Refer: http://www.frrr.org.au/cb_pages/grants.php

Trusts and Foundations - There are numerous trusts and foundations established in Australia and a number provide funding for projects such as this. Often they are established by large corporations. Refer www.philanthropy.org.au

Peak Bodies, Associations and Clubs - Contributions from clubs and associations developing facilities and other initiatives is common. This may include funds generated through fundraising efforts, loans and savings. Peak bodies and associations may also have funds which could be contributed towards the projects.

Other trails resourcing mechanisms

There are other not for profit organisations that provide on the ground support in relation to trail maintenance and development, such as:

- Green Corps
- Conservation Volunteers Australia
- “Friends of” Groups

A photograph of a park with large trees and a path. The image shows a paved path winding through a grassy area with several large, mature trees. The trees have thick, textured trunks and dense green foliage. In the background, a body of water is visible under a clear sky. The overall scene is bright and sunny, with shadows cast on the ground.

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Project Benchmarks

Lake Wallace Perimeter
Walk, Edenhope

The West Wimmera Shire possesses distinctive attributes that can be harnessed to develop the trails network such as the wetlands, river, desert areas, fauna, flora, heritage, history and cultural sites. Throughout Australia there are prime examples of trails that have been well

designed to promote, attract, protect and offer people an opportunity to pursue outdoor recreation activities.

Table 31 summarises why the trail examples have been chosen and the relevance to the West Wimmera Region.

Table 31: Project benchmarks

Junee Walking and Cycling Routes, NSW	
Overview	<p>Since 2000, the town of Junee (population 4,762) in the NSW Riverina region has gradually developed a network of walking and cycling paths. The path network is effective in linking schools and sporting facilities to the town centre so that people can walk or cycle around the town to meet their everyday needs and features a series of loops which are suited for more recreational use.</p> <p>This initiative has gained support the local community as well as health professionals. The trails have signage indicating routes and stances and are promoted with a brochure/map. These brochures/maps are distributed to local doctors, enabling them to 'prescribe' physical activity to their patients by encouraging them to use these marked walking routes.</p> <p>While it is difficult to determine how much the path network has reduced the reliance on cars, it is reported that considerable anecdotal evidence from parents suggests that they "feel comfortable sending their children off to sporting venues on foot or on their bicycle knowing that there is a good safe network for them to travel on".</p>
Relevance to West Wimmera Shire	<p>The population of the West Shire has high rates of physical inactivity, obesity and preventable mortality. In order to stop the continual increase in these rates it is essential that infrastructure developments facilitate and encourage more active lifestyles.</p> <p>Townships such as Kaniva and Edenhope offer opportunities to improve connectivity between schools, sporting facilities and other key destinations (e.g. wetlands/lakes) through providing safe, clearly defined active transport routes.</p>
Mudgeeraba Parkrun, QLD	
Overview	<p>The QLD Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing provided \$7,494 of funding to help establish the new Mudgeeraba Parkrun event. The funding enabled the running community to set up the Mudgeeraba parkrun much sooner than if it had to fundraise to purchase the initial set up costs.</p> <p>There is now a regular average group of 83 runners per week who are out and getting active. Parkrun used the funds to purchase barcode scanners and first aid kits to support the new running location at Mudgeeraba. By 2014, the program had engaged over 463 runners which was anticipated to increase to 1000 runners over the following 12 months.</p> <p>Mudgeeraba parkrun is now conducted every Saturday at 7am and is sustainable due to the dedicated volunteers who give their time.</p>
Relevance to West Wimmera Shire	<p>Communities in West Wimmera Shire would significantly benefit from increased physical activity for its range of benefits including health outcomes and social connectedness. Programs, such as Parkrun, offer an existing structure for community members to access weekly fitness events at no cost.</p>

Greater Shepparton on the Moove, VIC	
Overview	<p>Greater Shepparton on the Moove is an initiative of Greater Shepparton City Council and many local health promotion organisations. This project forms part of Council's Municipal Public Health Plan. The main aim of the program is for Greater Shepparton to be renowned as the Mooving City, encouraging residents and visitors to get active by walking. The project website is: http://www.getmoovingshepparton.com.au/</p> <p>Programs and events the Council uses to promote walking include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedometer Challenge This challenge is held annually in <i>Walktober</i>. Workplaces are encouraged to enter multiple teams to compete against other workplaces and community groups. Both individual and team entrants can view their progress from the leader board and be in the running to win prizes. • The Summer Stroll Series This series is held in six small towns. The series involves a short walk around the township and concludes at either the local recreation reserve or swimming pool. • Audit and mapping Maps have been developed for several walking routes throughout the municipality, with copies available the Greater Shepparton on the Moove website. • Walking Group Directory Council has coordinated a directory of walking groups in the municipality including details such as departure location, time, cost, intensity, average age groups and contact details. • Guided Group Walking Program Older adults living in Greater Shepparton are encouraged to participate in a guided group walking program. Walkers meet three mornings a week (Monday to Wednesday) and then set off for a 30-minute walk around Victoria Park Lake led by a Fitness Instructor. Walkers return to share morning tea and a chat.
Relevance to West Wimmera Shire	Programs and events offer a great way to encourage the local community and visitors to get out and use trails. It is important that a range of programs are offered to suit varying levels of fitness, interests and ages.
Bike-friendly Barossa, SA	
Overview	<p>The Barossa Council has developed the Bike-Friendly Barossa behaviour change initiative and launched the Barossa Cycle Hub, the first regional cycle hub in South Australia. These complementary projects have involved a significant investment in cycling infrastructure and facilities, with the aim of increasing opportunities for transport and leisure cycling. In addition, cycling education and facilities support social connections and community engagement, removing barriers to participation. This project recognised that increasing cycling tourism has economic benefits for the region and worked to attract cycling based events. The region had 1,890 cycle enquiries in 2015-16 and bike hire which generated \$30,000 in revenue.</p>
Relevance to West Wimmera Shire	<p>This is one example of the economic impact which can be experienced through investment in recreational cycling trails which are appropriate to the local context and landscapes. The varied landscapes of the West Wimmera Shire may offer opportunity to establish alternative bike trails (e.g. for fat bikes), with an effort to help promote new cycling events and further develop existing events (e.g. Tour de Frances & Tour de Henley).</p>

Bike & Hike Narrandera, NSW	
Overview	A network of on and off-road walking and cycling trails that guide the visitors around the local town and to local points of interest, through adjacent riverside, lakeside and forested areas. Promoted via an A3 colour brochure
Relevance to West Wimmera Shire	All the Shire's local townships would benefit from enhanced visitor experiences to show off local points of interest, including formalising intuitive routes to connect key destinations in and around the towns plus enhanced promotion and marketing.
Winton Wetlands, VIC	
Overview	The wetland area offers a wide variety of activities including canoeing, walking, cycling, bird watching and boating with a good online presence
Relevance to West Wimmera Shire	The Shire of West Wimmera benefits from an abundance of wetlands, in particular the central region around Apsley and Edenhope and extending beyond the Shire's boundaries. These have the potential to offer a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities and act as a draw card to the region
Waikerie Bird Watcher's Trail, SA	
Overview	A self-guided tour promoting the birdwatching locations, wetlands and scenic locations in and around Waikerie.
Relevance to West Wimmera Shire	The West Wimmera Shire has similar attributes with Kaniva and Edenhope being key service centres with small outlying townships offering scenic drives, historical trails, wetlands trails and birdwatching prospects.
Blackwood River Canoe Trail, WA	
Overview	A multi-day canoe trail experience with varying degrees of challenge and multiple opportunities for overnight stays, promoted via downloadable brochure
Relevance to West Wimmera Shire	Accessible sections of the Glenelg River in the vicinity of Harrow and Dergholm may present opportunities to develop and formalise canoe/kayak access (and associated infrastructure) and promote to locals and visitors to the region
Mudlangga to Yertabulti Track, SA	
Overview	The track is based around Port Adelaide Enfield and LeFevre Peninsula and shares the stories/ experience of 15 much respected members of the Aboriginal community
Relevance to West Wimmera Shire	West Wimmera and the wider region hold great significance to the traditional Aboriginal owners, the Barengi Gadjin and Gunditj Mirring communities with songlines and stories linking across a wide region. There are multiple opportunities to develop sensitive and culturally appropriate visitor experiences around these themes
Bushwalking in the Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park, SA	
Overview	The Flinders Ranges has a selection of hikes/walks for all types of individuals and promotes this in a succinct manner.
Relevance to West Wimmera Shire	The Shire has a diverse and varied landscape that can be showcased through an improved and diversified trail network suitable for walkers, cyclists with a range of interests and abilities. Formalised trails in areas such as the Little Desert National Park are likely to encourage active participation for both locals and visitors.

Grampians Drive – Iconic 4WD Experiences, VIC	
Overview	This 4WD drive experience (alongside many others) is promoted by Parks Victoria, with detailed information available online including mapping and safety information
Relevance to West Wimmera Shire	The Big Desert Wilderness Area, Little Desert National Park and the Goroke State Forest offer a diverse range of 4WD experiences catering for all abilities – enhanced promotion and formalisation of additional routes would increase the profile and improve accessibility of these experiences (acknowledging the need to protect environmental and cultural heritage values)
Trail Bike Riding – Otways, VIC	
Overview	70km loop ride with visitor information area and amenities, promoted via online information brochure
Relevance to West Wimmera Shire	Little Desert National Park and the Goroke State Forest could provide opportunities to formalise loop trails or a network of trails suitable for trail bike riding (acknowledging the need to protect environmental and cultural heritage values)

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Little Desert National Park

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