



CENTRAL GIPPSLAND 'G7' MOUNTAIN BIKE HUB

FEASIBILITY STUDY AND BUSINESS CASE

July 2020



This report was prepared by TRC Tourism for Destination Gippsland Ltd in relation to the development of the Central Gippsland G7 Mountain Bike Hub Feasibility Study and Business Case.

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Executive Summary

Diversity and accessibility are core strengths of the mountain biking on offer in Central Gippsland.

It is this depth and breadth of offering that has spurred the concept of positioning Gippsland as a nationally-significant mountain biking destination and, specifically, the bringing together of seven selected 'hero' bike parks into a proposed Gippsland 'G7' Mountain Bike Hub.

The formalisation of the G7 concept – and the attendant formalisation and upgrade of the trails contained within the G7 – would create a significant trails resource and asset for the Central Gippsland region. Implementation of the G7 will seed tourism development, increase physical activity opportunities for local and regional communities, spark economic development, and potentially create an opportunity for employment, business and skills development benefiting local communities and bolstering regional liveability indices.

For the purpose of this feasibility report, the seven mountain biking facilities/bike parks discussed will be collectively labelled with the working title 'the Gippsland G7 Mountain Bike Hub' or 'G7'.

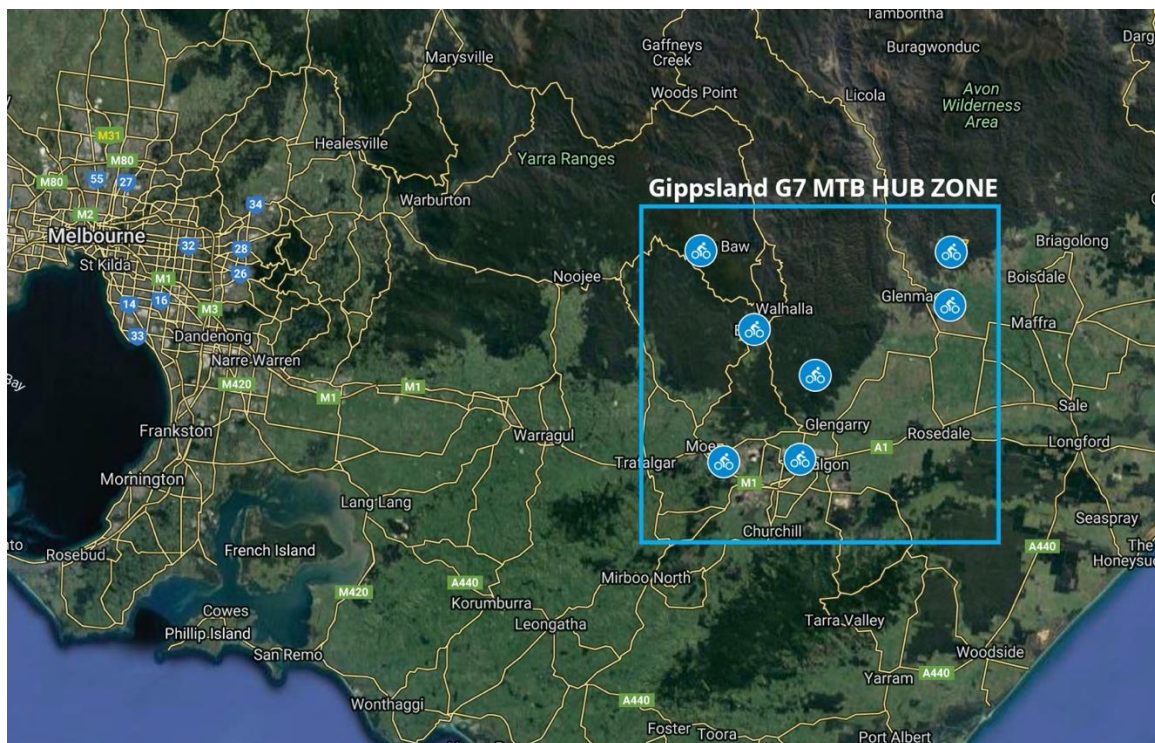
The seven sites identified for inclusion in the G7 are:

- Haunted Hills Bike Park (Newborough)
- Maryvale Pines (Maryvale/Traralgon)
- Somewhere Good (Glengarry)
- Blores Hill (Glenmaggie)
- Avon Mt Hendrick
- Erica
- Mt Baw Baw

Each G7 bike park has been assessed as featuring characteristics unique enough – and servicing a variety of ride experiences and skill demands – to warrant the establishment of, and investment in a distinct Gippsland G7 Mountain Bike Hub product.

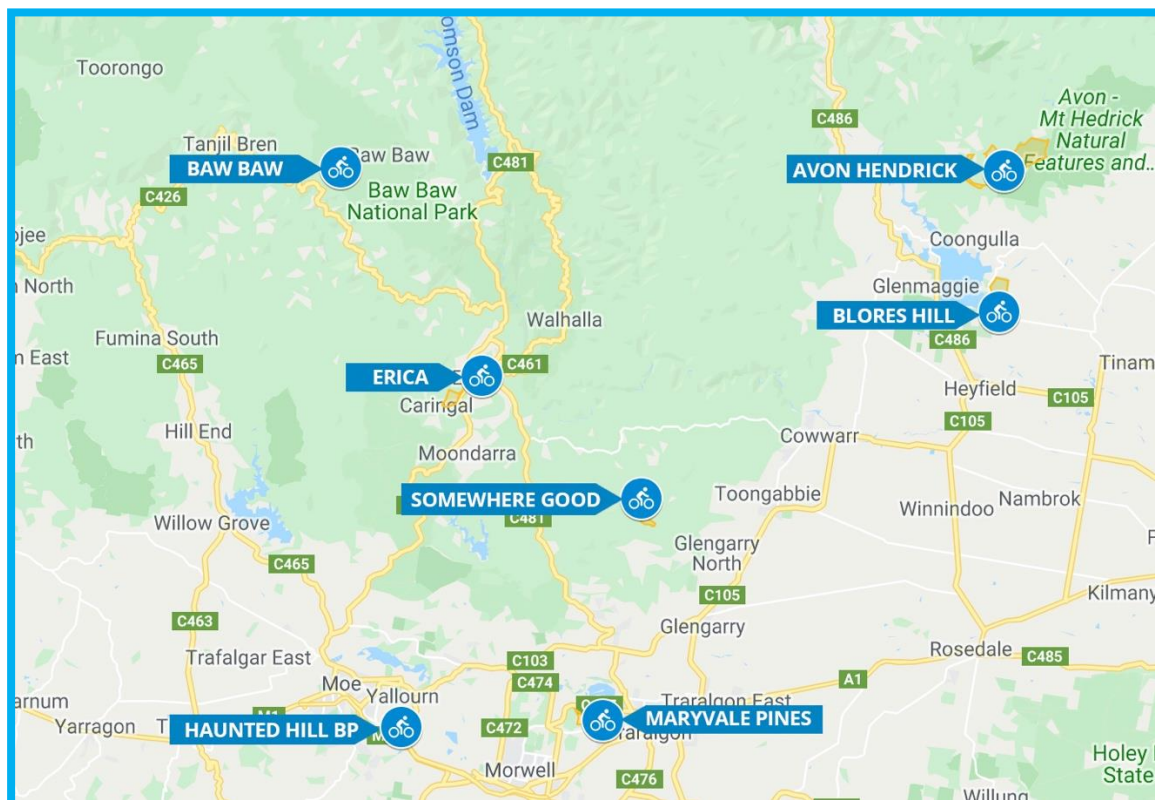
The location of the bike parks proposed for inclusion in the G7 are shown below.

Location of the G7 Mtb Parks and the Proposed Hub



SOURCE – GOOGLE MAPS

Specific Park Locations Within the G7



SOURCE – GOOGLE MAPS

The feasibility study has found that:

- the Gippsland G7 Mountain Bike Hub represents a significant opportunity to position Central Gippsland as a nationally significant mountain biking destination and, in doing so, has the capability to deliver positive economic outcomes for the region
- the Gippsland G7 Mountain Bike Hub and associated bike parks represent a significant recreational, health and wellbeing asset for local and regional communities
- the creation of the G7 Mountain Bike Hub could unlock potential skills development and employment pathways in trails design, build, management and maintenance due to the critical mass of infrastructure development required
- the proposed bringing together of the seven nominated bike parks would assist efforts to better develop, formalise (in some instances), manage, maintain, and promote the collective mountain biking experiences on offer across Central Gippsland
- a G7 Hub and associated management plans would assist in prioritising and planning ongoing trail development within Central Gippsland in a coordinated fashion
- significant investment is required inclusive of new trail build and upgrades, associated infrastructure, and maintenance
- a Trail Hub Masterplan is required to effectively manage ongoing development, coordination, and maintenance regimes. Such a Trail Hub Masterplan should reference and work sympathetically with individual Bike Park Trail Management Plans, many of which would require updating and/or creation.
- the collective G7 mountain biking offering would appeal to and service the broadest range of mountain bike riders across skills sets and desired riding experiences
- management and governance structure and processes is critical to the success of the concept, and will need to be established, leveraging current bike park specific management status and volunteer workforce
- there remain significant challenges in terms of appropriate and feasible governance.

Economic Considerations

This report provides an economic impact assessment of the proposed Gippsland G7 Mountain Bike Hub. The modelling is based on estimates of annual uses/users of the trails and other assumptions utilised in quantifying spending in the region.

The Gippsland G7 Mountain Bike Hub development will generate substantial positive economic benefits for the Gippsland Region during the construction phase and in the operations phase based on the investment of \$6.655 million plus ongoing annual maintenance of approximately \$1.6 million (note – this figure is an assumed figure for the purposes of the economic assessment).

Trail Use & Regional Spending

Rides on the G7 Trails are projected to increase from 44,510 in Year 1 to 75,925 in Year 10. The combination of user numbers by type, average spending and average length of stay is used to estimate annual spending (in constant 2020 dollars) in the region. Spending in the region by trail users increases from \$3.734 million in Year 1 to \$6.37 million in Year 10. The proposed events program adds around another \$1 million in regional spending in year 10 (to a total of \$7.390 million).

Construction Phase Jobs

A total of 22.5 FTE jobs (18.7 direct jobs and 3.7 indirect/induced jobs) would be generated during the construction period. The direct jobs comprise 15 jobs in on-site construction and 3.7 jobs in materials/equipment supply.

Operations Phase Jobs

The ongoing growth in user numbers will support an increasing number of jobs in the region.

The operation of the trails would generate a total of 19.7 direct full-time equivalent jobs in year 1, increasing to 33.6 direct FTE jobs in Year 10. Total jobs (direct and indirect/induced) are 23.7 FTE in year 1 increasing to 39.8 in year 10.

Of the direct jobs in year 10, day visitors would account for 10.2 FTE jobs, overnight visitors for 23.5 FTE jobs.

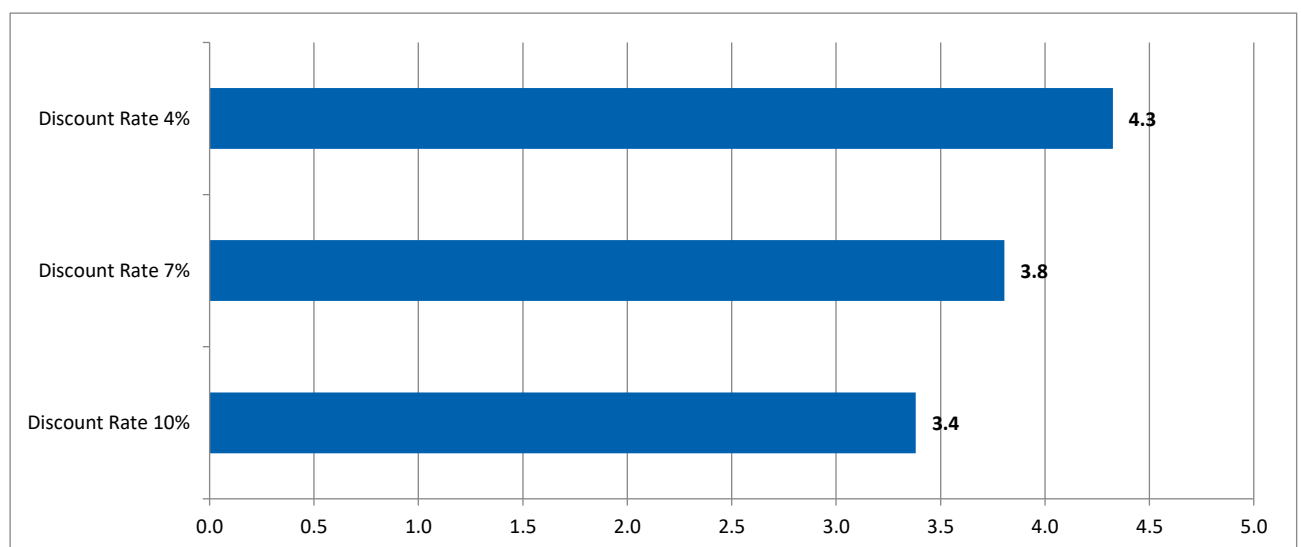
On a sector basis, the jobs (FTE- direct and indirect) generated by trail users are mainly concentrated in:

- accommodation
- food and beverage
- recreational services and other visitor services
- transport (including shuttles)
- other retail.

Benefit/Cost Analysis

The chart below compares Benefit Cost Ratios (BCR) for the 3 discount rates. For a trail project a 7% discount rate is appropriate, and the project yields a positive BCR of 3.8. The present value of total benefits (\$31.453 million) generated by the investment is 3.8 times the total costs of the project (\$8.264 million) over a 10-year period.

Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) – G7 Trails Development



Source: MCA modelling & estimates, May 2020

Summary

TRC Tourism has undertaken an extensive assessment of the current state of Central Gippsland mountain biking assets and their potential for development, along with the markets for mountain biking across both local/regional and out-of-region visitation.

TRC Tourism has also taken into account the strategic framework for Gippsland including the recommendations contained within the Destination Management Plan (2019) and the Gippsland Trails Feasibility Study (2019) and undertaken a detailed costs and benefits assessment of the proposed bike parks to be brought together under the G7 banner.

Following extensive desktop and field investigations, workshops and consultations, TRC Tourism believes that there is strong merit in establishing the Gippsland G7 Mountain Bike Hub. The ride experiences would be highly sought out by destination riders and local community alike with many and varied benefits.

Issues associated with the proposal include environmental and governance considerations and significant further work is required in these areas prior to the Hub's development. Should they be overcome, Gippsland will be positioned as a mountain biking destination of national significance attracting visitors and economic benefits while also delivering broader outcomes across sport, events, recreation, social, health and community wellbeing markers.



IMAGE 1 MT AVON HENDRICK/MTB PARK

1. Project Background

Brief

TRC Tourism was engaged by Destination Gippsland Ltd on behalf of a partnership including the local governments of Gippsland to undertake a feasibility study investigating the combining and upgrading of seven existing mountain bike parks located across Central Gippsland into a Destination Hub.

It is envisaged that the Hub approach will combine the strength of diversity on offer across the suite of bike parks to create significant experiences to the widest profile of mountain bike users, leveraging increased community and tourism visitation and resultant strengthening of mountain biking activity as an economic driver. The 'Hub' concept works as a stand alone suite of experiences. When combined with the proposed Epic Adventure Ride (see Feasibility Assessment), it potentially amplifies the benefits to the region.

This study aims to:

- outline the demands and strategic impetus for defining and developing a nationally significant, mountain bike 'hub' destination in Central Gippsland
- identify and evaluate the status of each bike park as stand-alone assets and how they relate to each other and the Central Gippsland MTB Hub
- describe potential user markets and economic implications of the proposed Hub concept
- consider ongoing management, maintenance and governance requirements
- deliver recommendations that provide decision makers with critical information in order to make decisions regarding the feasibility of progressing the Hub development.

The concept began through the process of developing the Gippsland Tracks and Trails Feasibility Study. Existing mountain biking parks, both formal and informal, were identified for inclusion based on location, current level of use, trail network quality, number and distance of trails at each site, level of development and infrastructure and mountain bike community support.

In considering the development of a Central Gippsland MTB Hub, TRC has assessed the feasibility and viability according to critical factors:

- creation of the best possible and most appropriate user experience at each bike park
- best possible use of existing mountain biking infrastructure (both formal and informal)
- reflection of and integration with concurrent mountain biking studies (i.e. Baw Baw Epic Adventure Trail Feasibility Study)
- environmental and sustainability considerations (high level only)
- differences of bike park ride experiences according to intended markets and relative to each other
- attractiveness to market segment(s) and product mix across green-blue-black IMBA ratings / rider skill levels
- improvements required to meet user market expectations
- linking of tourism nodes and amenities
- linking of townships with a view to best economic and best business stimulus outcomes

- leveraging of current appetite for trail development within local riding community and integration with strong positioning of Gippsland MTB Inc as a highly organised stakeholder with sound land manager relations and a growing support base.

Gippsland Tracks and Trails Feasibility Study

The Central Gippsland MTB Hub Feasibility Study is the result of recommendations made in the *Gippsland Tracks and Trails Feasibility Study (2019)*¹ under the section ‘Signature Mountain Biking Hubs and Trails’.

Signature Trails are defined in the report as ‘... a smaller number of trails that showcase the region and offer outstanding experiences attracting people to Gippsland and the region’. Other importance trails are listed in the hierarchy of trails important to the visitor economy as Regionally Significant or Locally Significant.

To ensure the desired outcomes, any trail development should meet set criteria:

- Designed as the highest quality experience of nature and culture
- The best trail of its type
- Feature the highest-quality infrastructure fit for purpose
- Low impact on the environment
- Accessible to target markets for Gippsland and for ex-region trail visitors
- Be supported by high quality information – from pre-trip to post-trip follow up
- Be environmentally and culturally sustainable
- Be supported by effective management and good coordination within community
- Designed with good ongoing financial and fund-stream modelling
- Have a brand and reputation aligned to the target user and be well positioned in the market
- Able to deliver strong visitor number growth into Gippsland.

Four (4) specific mountain bike hubs and trails were recommended as ‘Signature Trails’:

1. Develop the **Central Gippsland MTB Hub** based on the Haunted Hills MTB Facility with other parks in nearby areas forming a collective MTB offering. Formalising the parks in Glengarry and Avon Mount Hendrick as well as continued investment will see a significant visitor offer for mountain biking beyond the individual park’s attributes
2. The development of the proposed **Omeo MTB Hub** will see a world class facility with flow, cross country and other trails all leading from and into the town
3. Develop a feasibility for an **‘Epic’-style trail** that descends from Baw Baw Alpine Village, and traverses through the forests of the Gippsland alpine areas arriving in the Latrobe Valley. This trail could potentially change the game for riding in Gippsland and could use many existing trails
4. The potential for a timber trail ride through the **west Gippsland forests** with dedicated overnight accommodation for rides, while providing access to the villages would provide a strong commercial product similar to the successful models in operation in NZ.

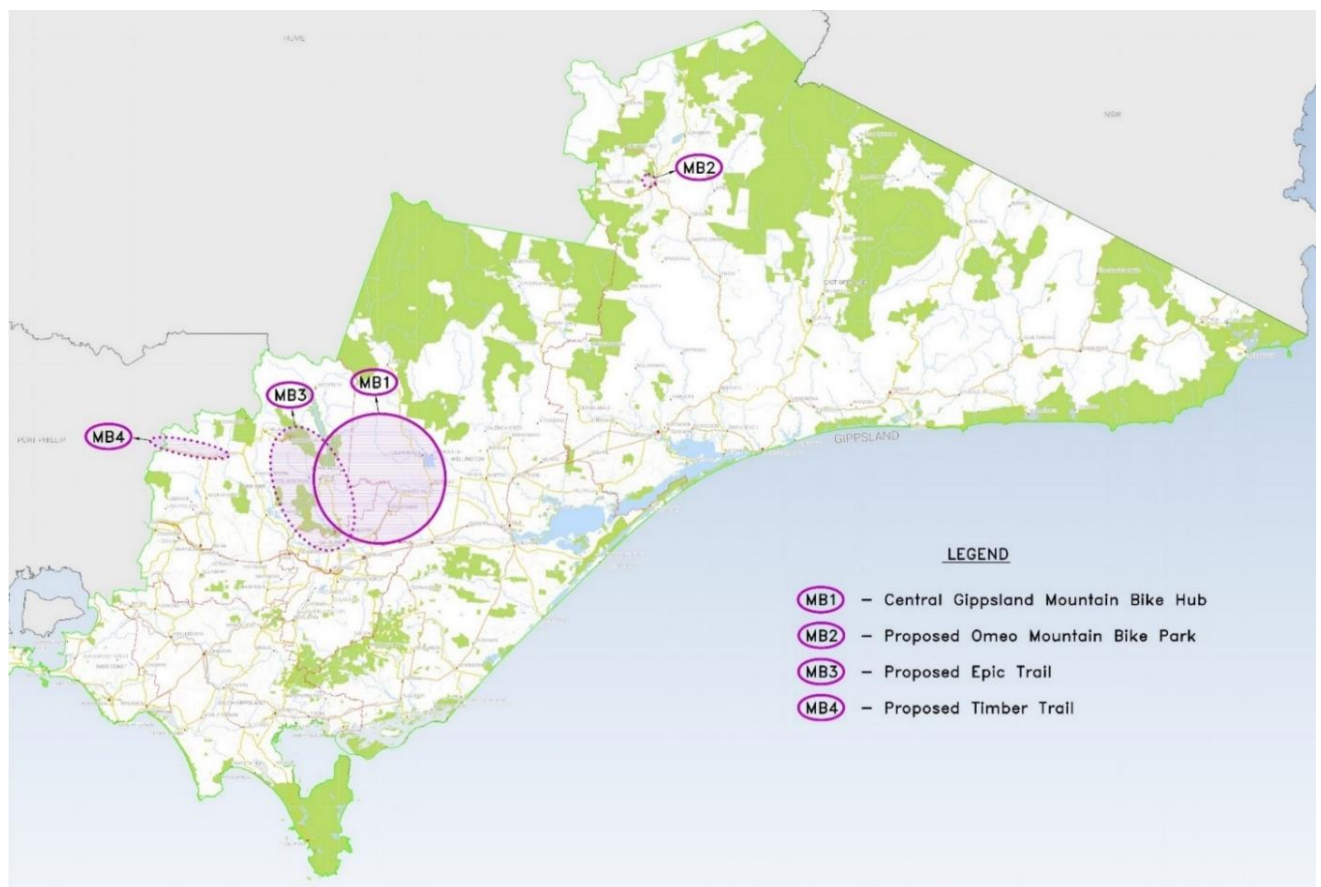
¹ Gippsland Tracks and Trails Feasibility Study. 2019. TRC Tourism For Destination Gippsland and partners.

The Gippsland 'G7' Mountain Bike Hub specifically contains bike parks that as stand-alone offerings would be considered 'Regional Trails' but collectively have the capacity to be classified as a 'Signature Trail' offering. The Hub would be rated as nationally significant for sheer variety, quality and quantity of mountain biking available in one region. Additionally, the G7 offers the unique attribute of being able to offer varied products to varied markets including flow, cross-country, downhill and family fun to the mountain bike community and users.

This study investigates the feasibility of the Central Gippsland MTB Hub and estimates the costs and benefits in more detail. It also looks into the combined benefits of proceeding with the Central Gippsland MTB Hub alongside the proposed Epic Adventure Trail – itself the subject of a separate but aligned feasibility assessment and business case.

Figure 1 below shows the distribution of the proposed Signature Mountain Bike Trails and Hubs in Gippsland.

Figure 1. Gippsland Signature mountain bike hubs and trails map



SOURCE – GIPPSLAND TRACKS AND TRAILS FEASIBILITY STUDY; 2019. TRC TOURISM



IMAGE 2 SOMEWHERE GOOD MTB PARK

2. Tourism Context - Gippsland

As a visitor destination, Gippsland is one of Victoria's most important tourism regions.

The region is comprised of six Local Government Areas (LGAs): Baw Baw Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Latrobe City, South Gippsland Shire, Wellington Shire and Bass Coast, the latter being in the unusual situation of straddling two state tourism regions of Gippsland and Phillip Island.

The Gippsland region has many national parks, a rich living indigenous culture and layers of colonial heritage. Of particular note and relevancy to this feasibility study, Gippsland is particularly strong in its nature-based tourism offering. The region boasts pristine stretches of coastline, national parks showcasing alpine peaks, old growth rainforests, high country and delicate coastal habitats.

Gippsland boasts some of Victoria's most striking landscapes including Wilsons Promontory, Gippsland Lakes, Croajingolong National Park, Strzelecki Ranges and parts of the Australian Alps. These natural assets support a diversity of activities including walking, hiking, kayaking, boating, fishing, aquatic activities, alpine sports and cycling.

Infrastructure such as walking tracks, cycling trails, camping areas, boat launching areas, and lookouts support the visitor experience across the region. Several tourism operators also provide guided experiences in these areas.

Parts of Gippsland have the advantage of being geographically close to the urban populations of Melbourne. The region's proximity to the state capital's population base has led to a high number of day visitors and short stays. This market feature is accentuated by the absence of strong flagship products or experiences that encourage longer-stay, higher-yield visitation. The recently released Gippsland Destination Management Plan² seeks to address this in part through experience development.

This highlights the importance of exploring ways of attracting higher-yield markets, addressing the challenge of seasonality, and identifying opportunities to increase length of stay for overnight visitors (both domestic and international) - markets that provide the best economic return.

The tourism economy is important for Gippsland. In the year ending 2019, the region received 6.353 million domestic (overnight and daytrip) and international overnight visitors who combined spent an estimated \$1,118 million noting the bushfires impacted these numbers towards the end of the 2019 year.³

² Gippsland Destination Management Plan 2019.

³ Gippsland Regional Tourism Summary Year Ending 2019. TEVE Research Published April 2020.

Domestic overnight expenditure in Gippsland in the year ending December 2019 was estimated to be \$654 million (+10.2% year on year), with visitors spending on average \$102 per night and \$296 per visitor.

By comparison, International overnight expenditure in Gippsland was estimated to be \$38 million in the year ending December 2019, a decrease of 24.0 percent year-on-year⁴.

The strong domestic visitor numbers highlight the importance of the domestic visitor segments to Gippsland. This is particularly so when considering the average overnight expenditure of International visitors of \$49 as against \$102 for the domestic market.

Summary of visitor segments for Gippsland

A snapshot from Tourism Research Australia taken from the Destination Gippsland Management Plan (2019) provides the following breakdown in visitor segments⁵.

Table 1. Domestic day visitors to Gippsland:

REASON FOR TRAVEL	LIFECYCLE GROUP	ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN
– 50.8% holiday – 30.3% visiting friends and relatives	– 52.0% older persons – 26.8% families – 11.6% midlife – 9.8% young	– 26.7% undertake outdoor/nature activity – 13.3% undertake active outdoor/sports

Table 2. Domestic intrastate overnight visitors to Gippsland:

REASON FOR TRAVEL	LIFECYCLE GROUP	ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN
– 57.7% holiday – 30.8% visiting friends and relatives	– 36.9% older persons – 32.5% families – 18.5% midlife – 12.1% young	– 51.4% undertake outdoor/nature activity – 34.6% undertake active outdoor/sports

Table 3. Domestic interstate overnight visitors to Gippsland:

REASON FOR TRAVEL	LIFECYCLE GROUP	ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN
– 53.4% holiday – 39.7% visiting friends and relatives	– 51.9% older persons – 28.5% families – 14.9% midlife – 4.6% young	– 39.1% undertake outdoor/nature activity – 18.7% undertake active outdoor/sports

⁴ Gippsland Regional Tourism Summary Year Ending 2019. TEVE Research Published April 2020.

⁵ Gippsland Destination Management Plan. Based on TRA data 2018.

Nature-Based Tourism

Nature based tourism is important for Gippsland and more broadly for Victoria. Gippsland has an abundance of nature-based attractions and the Gippsland Destination Management Plan⁶ recognises this with experience pillars and growth strategies built around the nature-based products of Gippsland.

Around 46 million nature-based outdoor activities occurred in Victoria in 2015, including around 36 million nature-based walking, running, cycling and swimming activities in Victorian Parks.⁷ 22% of all visitors to regional Victoria participated in a nature-based experience (including both domestic and international overnight visitors, as well as domestic daytrip visitors).⁸

Many nature-based outdoor activities support regional economies by shifting expenditure from urban to regional towns and cities and rural areas.⁹

\$265 million was the estimated avoided cost to the Victorian healthcare system attributable to nature-based outdoor activities in 2015.¹⁰

Trail Related Insights from Gippsland visitation

The following series of points contain data taken from the Gippsland Tracks and Trails Feasibility Study¹¹. It is noted that the data was derived for the feasibility study nine months prior to this report being prepared. The data would still be relevant for a full year of trails-based tourism except for the potential impacts from the 2019 Bushfires and the COVID- 19 pandemic visitor economy shutdown that will impact figures from following years.

- Gippsland has 12.3% share of regional visitor economy (-0.2%)
- East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland and Wonthaggi/Inverloch all experienced growth in visitor numbers
- Only East Gippsland and Wonthaggi/Inverloch reported growth in visitor nights indicating the continued tendency for day visits to the region
- 55+ represents 37% of the market, with a continued 5% growth in this age group over the past 3 years. When you add in 50-54 age group to the 55+, nearly half the market is represented by the 50+ market (46% combined), which will need to be a consideration with regards to future trail experiences, accessibility and comfort facilities
- The even spread across the rest of the demographics (15-49) would suggest that the active family market is also an important market for the region, especially in summer school holidays (combined 46% noting that children under 15 have not been represented in visitor analysis data)
- March quarter is a seasonal high with September and June quarters being seasonal lows indicating that there is spare servicing capacity in these periods
- LGAs closer to Melbourne have a higher percentage of day visitors
- VFR is a huge component of the market with 35.4% of all overnight visitors staying with friends and relatives. This has grown by an average of 9% over the last 3 years.

⁶ Gippsland Destination Management Plan. TRC for DGL 2019.

⁷ A Marsden Jacob Report. Victoria's nature-based outdoor economy. Outdoors Victoria & Sport and Recreation Victoria. Report Issued: 27.1.2016.

⁸ Tourism Events and Visitor Economy (TEVE) Research Unit Factsheet, January 2019. Visitors to Victoria – Experience Overview (Results for the year ending September 2018).

⁹ A Marsden Jacob Report. Victoria's nature-based outdoor economy. Outdoors Victoria & Sport and Recreation Victoria. Report Issued: 27.1.2016.

¹⁰ A Marsden Jacob Report. Victoria's nature-based outdoor economy. Outdoors Victoria & Sport and Recreation Victoria. Report Issued: 27.1.2016.

¹¹ Gippsland Tracks and Trails Feasibility Study. 2019. TRC for South Gippsland Council and partners.



IMAGE 3 MT AVON HENDRICK MTB PARK

3. Mountain Bike Activity

Mountain biking (MTB) is a rapidly growing recreational sport and tourism activity across Victoria, Australia and globally. Mountain biking provides both residents and visitors with the opportunity to enjoy outdoor activity in diverse natural environments.

Mountain biking involves riding a purpose-built mountain bike on specially constructed mountain bike trails (often in bike parks or trail networks), on other off-road trails such as fire-trails and shared use path networks or a combination of each. Mountain biking applies to a range of users from beginners and family groups, to more adventurous cross-country and downhill riders. Mountain biking may be done for leisure and physical activity locally or be engaged in as part of a visit, either as the primary driver of visitation to an area, or as an included activity combined with other attractions.

Mountain bike parks and networks and trails often contain a range of trails for different riding types – such as trails suitable for different standards of cross country, downhill and all-mountain riding. All types of mountain biking have developed competitive and recreational events at local, regional, national and international levels.

Mountain biking continues to grow as one of the fastest and most popular family-friendly lifestyle activities in Australia. This is highlighted by the number of people riding trails across Australia every weekend, both before and after work.¹²

SportAus' AusPlay survey results for 2019 calendar¹³ year reported 287,900 estimated adult (15+) population participating in mountain biking in Australia across states and territories. It reported 2.3 million adult participants more broadly participated in some form of cycling. In Victoria, 680,000 adults participated in cycling (no breakdown to mountain biking specific activity available).

Membership, affiliations and participation numbers have increased on the previous year with financial members of Mountain Bike Australia increasing by 13.7% to over 15,000. With the inclusion of past members and those that had purchased a day licence, MTBA's reach is currently over 70,000 individuals.¹⁴

Mountain bike trails created or ridden on by national park visitors that are not part of the authorised mountain bike trail network can sometimes be closed and rehabilitated by park managers to protect public safety, mitigate visitor risk and protect environmental and cultural heritage values.

There is apparent growth in destination-based mountain biking tourism whereby a large middle market of mountain bikers is seeking highlight ride experiences that focus on multi-day and journey-based experiences centred on high-quality landscapes. These can be bolstered by secondary tourism motivators (food and drink, history, culture, entertainment) and supported by off-trail facilities (accommodation, shuttles). Examples include Derby (Tasmania), St Helens (Tasmania), and the announcement of the Red Centre Adventure Ride (NT).

¹² Mountain Bike Australia Annual Report 2018.

¹³ AusPlay national sport and physical activity participation survey, Sport Australia, Jan-Dec 2019.

¹⁴ Mountain Bike Australia Annual Report 2018.

Mountain biking trails exist in all regions of Victoria to a greater or lesser degree depending on the interest of local clubs and riders, and suitable terrain and land tenure. This enables riders to experience a diverse range of terrain from the high county alpine slopes of Mount Buller and Falls Creek, down to the alpine foothills of Bright; the granite country of the You Yangs and Harcourt, and the heritage landscapes of Yackandandah and Beechworth.

The benefits of mountain biking are outlined by Mountain Bike Australia (MTBA):

- **Environmental** – greater awareness and understanding of our environments, leading towards advocacy and protection
- **Economical** – users can support complementary mountain biking experiences such as cafes, bike hire, guided tours, accommodation. Mountain biking experiences and trails support business sustainability and opportunities for new business investment and employment.
- **Social** – mountain biking can also connect communities together and provide a place for family and friends to enjoy time recreationally.¹⁵



¹⁵ Guidelines for trail planning, design and management, Barwon South West Region. TRC Tourism.

Type of Mountain Bikers

The following infographic depicts the types of mountain bike riders. TRC has broken the group into three segments based on their propensity to travel, spend money on equipment and interest in pursuing the sport further.



NON-CORE MOUNTAIN BIKERS

- Complete novices
- Road bikers that occasionally ride MTB
- Families seeking safe enjoyable places to ride away from cars
- School groups (often guided by tour operators)
- Off-road bike tourers
- With increased skill, may eventuate into Core Mountain Bikers.



CORE RECREATIONAL MOUNTAIN BIKERS

- High levels of expenditure on gear and equipment
- High amount of time spent mountain bike riding
- High willingness to travel to go mountain biking
- A large proportion of the MTB market
- Little likelihood of participating in competitive events.



CORE COMPETITIVE MOUNTAIN BIKERS

- High levels of expenditure on gear and equipment
- High amount of time spent mountain bike riding
- High willingness to travel to go mountain biking
- Strong likelihood of participating in competitive events

Usage

Most people mountain bike for fun and enjoyment with only a small proportion focused on competition. People choose their own riding groups, generally close friends, it can be done anytime, it doesn't require a minimum level of competency (other than the ability to ride a bicycle) and allows people to choose trails to match their ability. Some people that may be self-conscious about their ability can choose where and when and who they ride with.¹⁶

The rider types and descriptions listed in Table 4 were developed by Dafydd Davis, a pioneer and world-leading trail builder from Wales, UK. The descriptions provide an indication of skill levels, riding frequency, preferred trail types and the approximate market size of each rider type.

¹⁶ Warburton Mountain Bike Feasibility Study

Table 4. MTB trail type and usage¹⁷

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	SKILL LEVEL	RIDE FREQUENCY	PREFERRED TRAIL DIFFICULTY LEVELS	SIZE OF MARKET
Leisure	• Cyclists of all ages • Not usually member of club • Seek easily accessible trails that are close to home with facilities i.e. toilets, cafes, etc	Low	Infrequently	Green	Large
Enthusiast	• Recreational riders • Variable fitness • Don't tend to compete in events • Limited outdoor skills • Seek trails that are technical but not too challenging	Moderate	Weekly	Green Blue	Medium
Sport	• Competitive riders • High fitness • Member of club • Limited outdoor skills • Seek less accessible trails • Influential group	High	Multiple times per week	Green Blue Black Double Black	Small
Independent	• Outdoor enthusiasts • Good fitness • Involved in other outdoor activities • Plan own rides • Good outdoor skills • Adventurous aspect more important than technical challenge • Seek remote trails	High	Weekly	Green Blue Black	Small
Gravity	• Highly skilled technical riders • Member of club • Seek trails with highest difficulty	High	Weekly	Blue Black Double Black	Small
Adaptive	Para-cycling using off-road capable hand-cycles			Adaptive Trail Rating System	Emerging

¹⁷ WA Mountain Bike Management Guidelines, Queensland Mountain Bike Strategy

Rise of E-bikes

E-bikes – or pedal assisted bikes – are rapidly gaining popularity with cycle retailers reporting a surge of demand and ownership uptake, especially in the mountain biking category. This opens up a vast range of opportunities for hilly terrain (such as on Mt Baw Baw) and for long-distance ‘journey’ rides such as being proposed with the Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride.

E-bikes are making MTB riding more ‘accessible’ to people with different abilities including children (which are also expanding market segments) and a more senior demographic, with anecdotal evidence pointing to many more senior riders returning to the activity in older age, having previously lapsed their involvement due to perceived difficulty of physical effort.

Importantly, E-bike riders are typically seeking a recreational experience, more so than a competitive one, valuing high-quality, accessible, nature-based experiences that offer some degree of support (via township and service integrations, inclusive charging points for longer distance journeys).

Electric/power-assisted bikes represent one of the fastest growing segments of the bike industry as they:

- Allow riders to extend cycling distance
- Encourage more users into the recreational cycling fold
- Enable those who would otherwise not have considered cycling as a preferred recreation due to concerns about age or fitness
- Significantly extend upper age limit of riders
- Increase overall average usage, leading to health and well-being gains
- Encourage access to landscapes where ascents are a deterrent – this is of specific relevance to Gippsland landscapes.

The global e-bike market was valued at USD 15.42 billion in 2019, and it is expected to register growth of 6.21%, during 2020-2025. Increasing consumer preference toward recreational and adventure activities is expected to drive the market.¹⁸ Between 10,000 and 15,000 e-bikes were sold in Australia in 2017, twice the number than in 2016. It is expected sales have risen at a similar rate since.¹⁹

Comparative MTB Product Review

Many regional areas in Australia continue to see mountain biking as a source of visitor economy growth and either have pursued, or continue to pursue, the development of mountain bike trails as destinations. The following areas have seen significant growth in trail development:

- North Eastern Tasmania including Derby and Blue Tier to the East Coast (St Helens)
- Mount Buller and Falls Creek, NE Victoria
- Harcourt, Victoria
- Warburton, Victoria (coming on stream)
- Forrest, southwestern Victoria
- Canberra, ACT
- Atherton Tablelands, Qld.

¹⁸ .Mordor Intelligence E-Bike Market 2020-2025, Executive Summary

¹⁹ <http://www.mtbiking.com.au/news/bike-price-rises-off-table-as-tariff-appeal-fail>

As a potential entrant into this competitive marketplace, and with careful analysis and consideration, the Central Gippsland Mountain Bike Hub proposal can learn from competitors and modify/improve the offering to better meet the shifting preferences and quality expectations of emerging (and growing) destination ride markets. As with any tourism offering, clear positioning and strong point of difference is required to compete.

The following table provides insights into significant MTB developments that are relevant to the proposed Central Gippsland MTB Hub.

Table 5. Comparison of Significant MTB Destinations

TRAIL / FEATURE	CENTRAL GIPPSLAND MTB HUB	WARBURTON HUB, VIC*	MT BULLER, VIC	YACKANDANDAH / BEECHWORTH, VIC	DERBY, TAS	ST HELENS, TAS	ROTORUA
Type	Hub	Hub + shuttle / single day	Hub / network / single day	Hub / network / single day	Hub / network / multiday	Hub + Point to Point (Bay of Fires)	Hub / multiday
Total km	170km+ (current)	100km+ (stage 1) + 60km (stage 2)	150km	90km (Yack network only) + 17 Beechworth MTB Park + 30 Beechworth XC (TOTAL: 137km)	100km + 59km Blue Tier TOTAL: 159km	119km	180km
STYLE (majority)	Flow / XC / blue	Flow + XC Incl 27km 'Drop A Kay' highlight experience / green - blue	XC + All Mountain / incl. Australia's first 43km IMBA Epic trail / Blue - black	XC / green to blue	Flow + XC / Green - Black	Flow + XC / Green-Blue	Flow + Xc + Gravity / Green – Blue – Black / gondala assisted in part Gold level IMBA ride centre
Investment (approx.)	TBC	\$11.3 million (committed)	Unquantified (EPIC trail: \$500k Australian Alps Nat Landscape Committee, Mt Buller Resort and T-QUAL Strategic Tourism Investment Grants)	Unquantified. (New investment: \$2 million committed in March 2019 (\$1 million Federal Grant + \$1million council funding) to build all season Epic trail.)	\$3.15 million	\$4.7 million (\$3.1 million Federal, \$1 million State, \$600k Council)	25-year development - unknown total investment Recent: NZ\$14.5 million via 2018/19 co-funding bid for Whakarewarewa Forest Park.

TRAIL / FEATURE	CENTRAL GIPPSLAND MTB HUB	WARBURTON HUB, VIC*	MT BULLER, VIC	YACKANDANDAH / BEECHWORTH, VIC	DERBY, TAS	ST HELENS, TAS	ROTORUA
Economic Stimulus / FTE creation	TBC	ESTIMATED: 165,000 visitors 122 FTE jobs \$23.67 million	Unknown	ESTIMATED: 12,500 visitors 34 FTE jobs \$5.18 million expenditure	ESTIMATED: 30,000 visitors \$15-\$18 million (region expenditure) FTE jobs 51 (stage 2) \$30 million expenditure (Tasmania spend)	Unknown (opened late 2019)	ESTIMATED: 230,000 rides / year Between \$29.2 and \$47.3 million economic return; Up to 350 FTE equating to between \$10-\$20m income.

**in development*

Primary Target Market Mix

Critical to the success of the G7 will be ensuring it offers a wide range of trail experiences that appeal to and service the largest proportion of mountain bike trail users. Bike parks featured will be important to and used by local riders and visitors. They also need to appeal both to riders seeking a recreational or leisure-based experience and to increasingly proficient, technical riders seeking more physically and skill-challenging experiences.

It is the diversity and amount of riding on offer, all within close proximity, that will be the core attraction and strength of the G7 MTB Hub.

The table below provides an indicative segmentation of the users who will be attracted to the ride experience.

Table 6. Central Gippsland MTB Hub Primary Market Mix

BASIC SEGMENTS	CENTRAL GIPPSLAND MTB HUB
Beginner	✓
Intermediate	✓
Advanced	✓
Recreational / Leisure / Enthusiast	✓
Competitive / Sport	✓
Independent	✓
Gravity	✓
Adaptive	✗
E-bike	✓
Local	✓
Intrastate	✓
Interstate	✓
International	✓



IMAGE 4 BLORES HILL MTB PARK

4. Central Gippsland MTB Activity

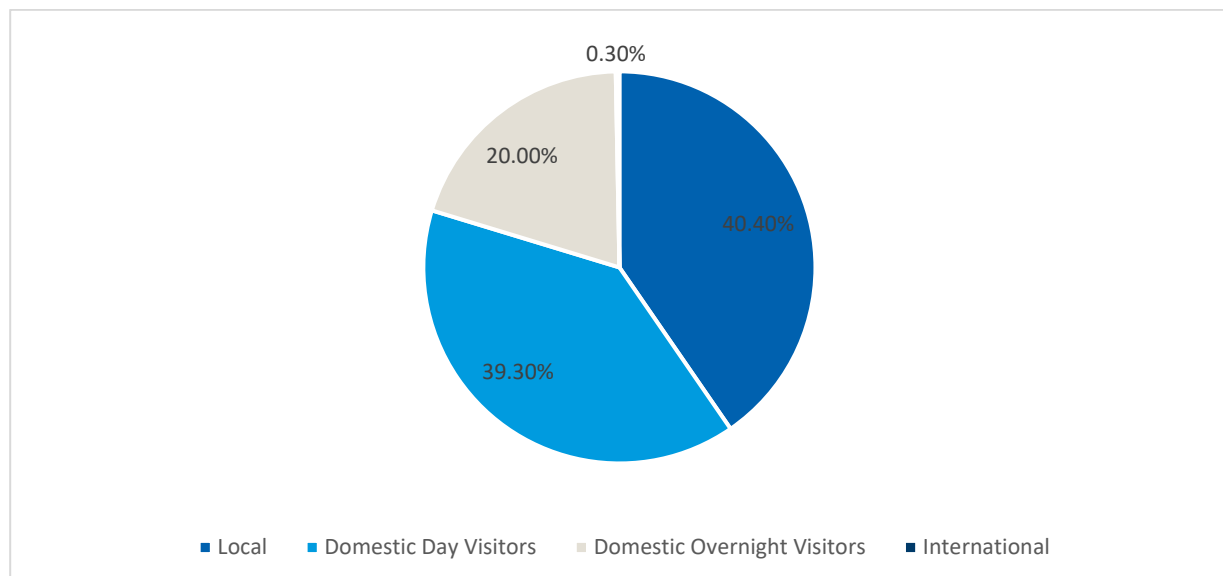
Usage statistics for most of the bike parks considered for the Gippsland G7 MTB Hub project are not comprehensive.

The nature of multiple access points of most parks combined with a lack of trail counter equipment and/or resource for collecting data has meant sparse measurement of how many riders use each bike park annually. There is also no data regards how often riders use the park in any time period, nor qualitative data.

Blores Hill

Blores Hill Mountain Bike Park does maintain a register of park users identifying which region the users reside. The profile of Blores Hill Mountain Bike Park users for the year to August 2017 shows 40% of park users are local, i.e. from within the Wellington Shire Council area. Domestic Day visitors (i.e. from outside of Wellington Shire) account for 39% of park users, 20% are Domestic Overnight visitors and a small proportion (0.3%) are International visitors²⁰.

Figure 2. Breakdown of Blores Hill Mountain Bike Park Users (12 months to August 2017)



SOURCE - ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT: HAUNTED HILLS BIKE PARK, REMPLAN, 2017

Based on an assessment by Gippsland MTB Club that approximately less than one third of those riding Blores Hill actually sign the register, it was estimated in 2011 that up to 10,000 riders used the park, with 2925 officially signed in. It is noted that the register is not promoted, and is located at one of three major trailheads, the other two – including one heavily used – do not have registers.

One electronic counter was positioned at the main trailhead in 2018. It registered 5,758 users in 2018 and 5,697 in 2019.

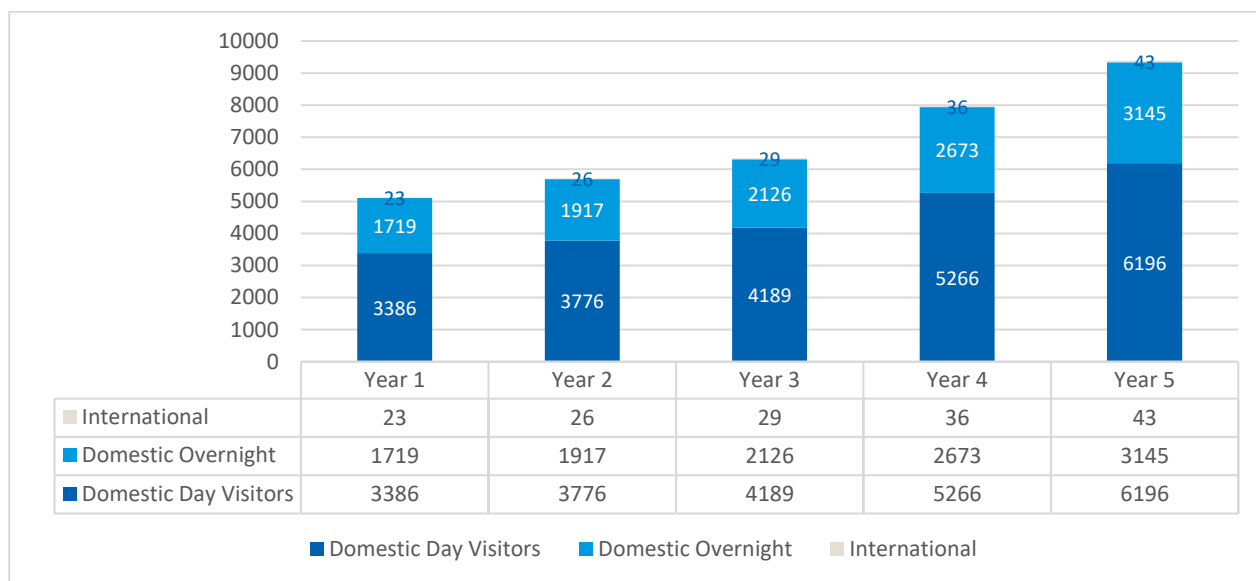
²⁰ Economic Impact Assessment: Haunted Hills Bike Park, REMPLAN, 2017

Haunted Hills

An Economic Impact Assessment for Haunted Hills commissioned by Latrobe City Council²¹ projects up to 21,000 users of the park by Year Five of operation. Figure 4 shows visitors to the park, with the balance being made up of local riders.

Projections were based on recreational use of a similar venue in the Wellington Shire, the Blores Hill Mountain Bike Park, and a number of likely events to be held at the Haunted Hills Bike Park.

Figure 3. Projections of visitors by visitor type to Haunted Hills



SOURCE - ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT: HAUNTED HILLS BIKE PARK, REMPLAN, 2017

Other Parks

Mount Baw Baw has no official count of mountain bike-specific visitation.

As (currently) informal trail networks, **Somewhere Good MTB** and **Avon Mt Hendrick** park have no recorded data. **Maryvale Pines** and **Erica MTB parks** also have no formal data recorded.

Events

Gippsland has a strong tradition of events across local and inbound organisers, including club and up to one National level downhill event held annually at Mount Baw Baw. All mountain biking events have been put on hold for 2020 during the COVID-19 crisis. Gippsland MTB Club has recently entered an arrangement with Rocky Trail Entertainment, a MTB management company expanding its operations into Victoria. This partnership is set to result in numerous professionally run MTB events across Central Gippsland in 2021. There are also several multisport (adventure racing) events planned that involve mountain biking / use of mountain biking trails.

²¹ Economic Impact Assessment: Haunted Hills Bike Park, REMPLAN, 2017

Table 7 provides the events by park/hub.

Table 7. Current and Planned Events across the Gippsland MTB Parks

LOCATION	NAME
Mt Baw Baw	• Victorian Downhill Series / Championship • Past enduro and multisport including MTB
Erica	• Erica 3 Hour • Local Gravity and XC events (GMTB hold 1-2 races each year)
Maryvale Pines	• Pines 3 Hour
Somewhere Good	• GMTB has held several point-to-point races in the area in the past
Blores Hill	• Six Hour / Three Hour Vic Enduro Series, Shimano GP event is proposed with support from Rocky Trail Entertainment
Avon Mt Hendrick	• Pete's Track Sprint - original gravity enduro
Haunted Hills	• N/A. Many planned.



IMAGE 5 MT AVON HENDRICK MTB PARK

5. The Proposal

The Vision

The Central Gippsland Mountain Biking Hub will collectively offer visitors and communities a range of mountain biking experiences that cater to all skill levels and deliver across competitive, health and fitness and recreational riding, positioning Gippsland as a nationally important MTB destination.

The objective of the Central Gippsland MTB Hub is to drive economic benefits via increased visitation and associated product and infrastructure development. Increased local use is likely to lead to health and wellbeing outcomes for regional communities.

All bike parks contained within the Hub will be developed to a set of design principles that ensure a quality-focused experience for all riders.

All bike parks within the G7 will offer or contain:

- The highest quality experience with unique selling points and a defined 'ride character' that positions each bike park within the overall Hub according to ride style and trail offerings
- Collectively target all rider skill sets according to IMBA green, blue and black descriptors
- Offer skills development pathways that elevate riders through beginner to intermediate and more difficult rides across the Hub
- A 'conveyor belt' strategy using variances in ride offering and landscape to deliver riders from one bike park to another
- Host various length-of-time experiences from half to multi-day across the bike parks
- Substantial benefits to local community and businesses
- Environmental and cultural sustainability
- Effective management and coordination, including community involvement
- Visitor number growth into Gippsland
- Strong connection to community, with health and wellbeing targets.

Each bike park is currently at a different level of development, with various levels of governance, land manager endorsement and infrastructure.

Creation of a G7 Hub requires bike parks to be identifiable as a single offering with common branding, messaging, centralised information resources and preferably a centralised model of coordinated management to ensure consistent development, implementation and best practise environmental stewardship.

Prioritisation for the development of each hub would be predicated on the likely parallel development of the proposed Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride.

It is important to recognise the considerable volunteer work that has already been contributed to each bike park to date, and recognise that to varying degrees, these (mostly) volunteers have successfully managed each site and for the most part developed strong land manager/owner relationships to ensure access and agreed terms of use. These agreements are not uniform across the proposed G7 bike hubs.

Further development of the G7 Hub should seek to strengthen these user group/volunteer/land manager/owner relationships and networks, while bringing increased consistency across management, maintenance, infrastructure development and marketing.

Any 'umbrella' management model would need to be flexible so as to work in cooperation with each volunteer group and informal management structures, whilst supplying strong overall guidance, strategic fundraising and higher-level land manager and government department relationships and lobbying.

The investments and commitments required to design, build, maintain and manage such a collection of trail facilities would be significant, however with other parallel and relevant mountain biking developments currently being considered (specifically the Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride and the proposed development a Gippsland Ride Centre (Warragul) within the Ride Nation program, www.ridenation.com.au), there is strong combined momentum for such a significant program.

Methodology

TRC carried out desktop research, site visits to each of the seven bike parks, along with phone and in-field consultations meeting with leading stakeholders (mountain bikers, land managers, businesses and community) linked to each bike park considered for inclusion.

Each location's suitability, benefits and placement in the overall Central Gippsland MTB Hub mix has been assessed according to the following factors:

- location and access
- amount of available trail (formal or informal)
- quality of existing trail and overall experience
- unique experience character / style of riding available
- infrastructure existing and required
- environmental, sustainability and cultural considerations (high level only)
- club, user and volunteer support for site
- potential for upgrades / expansion where deemed appropriate
- inbound visitor appeal and local community user appeal
- safety
- current land management and governance context
- linkages to tourism nodes and community
- linking of townships with a view to best economic and best business stimulus outcomes.

Financial modelling has been carried out based on research into other, comparable bike parks, hubs and relevant mountain biking infrastructure both within Central Gippsland and further afield. Projections of visitation and economic outcomes, along with costed health benefits, are based on modelling scenarios that estimate annual rides/users, and other assumptions utilised in quantifying spending associated with the Hub. The modelling offers conservative through best case scenarios.

It should be noted that if this proposal is to proceed, significant work will need to be undertaken in detailed master planning of all bike parks (with the exception of Haunted Hills, which already has a foundation of strong early planning). Detailed assessment on specific trail alignments, build and infrastructure requirements is beyond the scope of this feasibility assessment.



IMAGE 6 SOMEWHERE GOOD MTB PARK

6. Hub overview

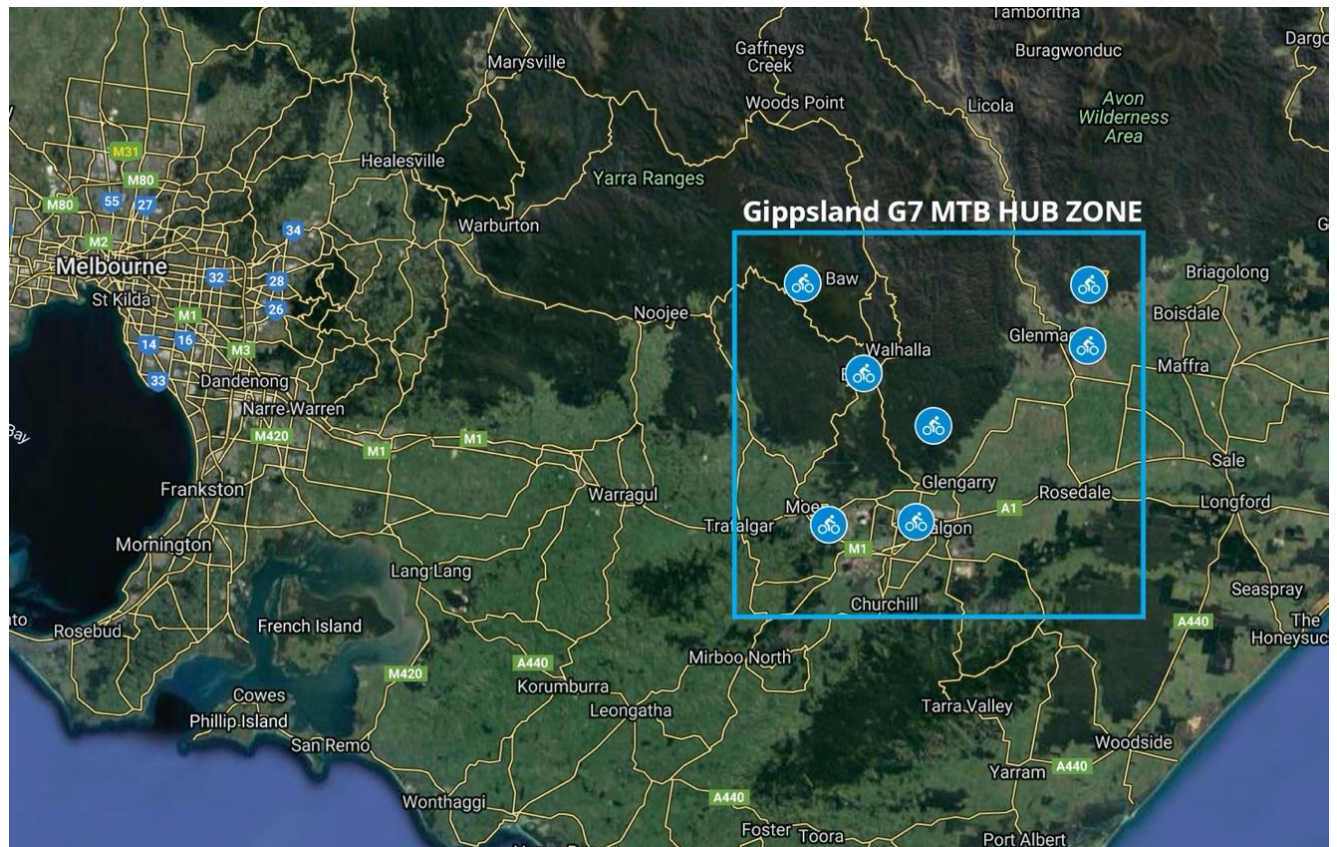
The G7 Hub consists of seven selected mountain biking parks. Sites have been selected for their concentration of trails, landscape and ride experience attributes, attractiveness to target markets, and potential for further development within the G7 Hub concept.

Location

The bike parks are located in Central Gippsland, all within close proximity of the region's primary population centres, Moe/Newborough and Morwell/Traralgon and to the north of these major centres. Other significant population centres nearby include Sale and Maffra to the east and Warragul to the west.

The map below provides the overview locational context for the parks and the region in which they sit.

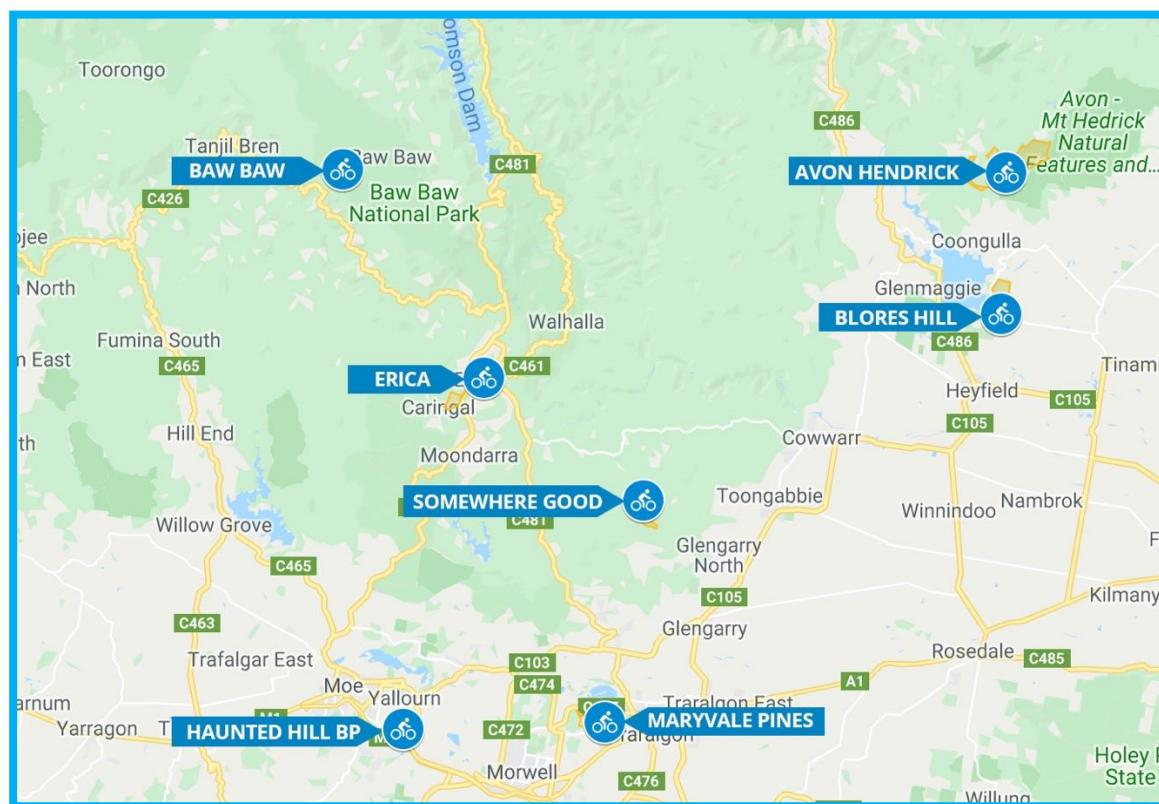
Figure 4. Location of the G7 Hub parks within the Central Gippsland region



SOURCE – TRC 2020. MAP LOCATION – [HTTPS://BIT.LY/2ULb7WR](https://bit.ly/2ULb7WR)

More specifically – each park’s location is shown on the following figure.

Figure 5. Map of the location of each G7 Hub Mountain Bike Park



SOURCE – TRC TOURISM 2020

Each bike hub is accessed in under one hour’s drive from a population centre with the exception of Avon Mt Hendrick and Mt Baw Baw, requiring just over an hour’s travel time via car. The table below provides the details.

Table 8. Access to Each G7 Hub Bike Park

BIKE PARK	DISTANCE FROM	DRIVE TIME FROM	CONNECTED BY RIDE PATHWAY/TRAIL?
Haunted Hills	- Moe/Newborough: 6.5km / 4km - Morwell/Traralgon: 14km / 24km - Melbourne: 140km	Moe/Newborough: 8mins / 5mins Morwell/Traralgon: 12min / 16min Melbourne: 1hr 30min	Yes – planned Newborough
Maryvale Pines	- Moe: 25km - Morwell/Traralgon: 12km/7km	Moe: 22min Morwell/Traralgon: 13min / 9min	Yes – Morwell, Traralgon via new pathway
Somewhere Good	- Moe: 44.5km - Morwell/Traralgon: 38km / 27km	Moe: 40min Morwell/Traralgon: 35min / 30min	No
Blores Hill	- Moe: 68km - Morwell/Traralgon: 61km / 50km	Moe: 51min Morwell/Traralgon: 49min / 40min	No

BIKE PARK	DISTANCE FROM	DRIVE TIME FROM	CONNECTED BY RIDE PATHWAY/TRAIL?
Erica	- Moe: 32km - Morwell/Traralgon: 46km / 38km	Moe: 26min Morwell/Traralgon: 37min / 33min	Yes – Erica only
Avon Mt Hendrick	- Moe: 84km - Morwell/Traralgon: 77km / 66km	Moe: 1hr 11min Morwell/Traralgon: 1hr 7min / 1hr	No
Mt Baw Baw	- Moe: 68km - Morwell/Traralgon: 71km / 78km	Moe: 1hr 7min Morwell/Traralgon: 1hr 12min / 1hr 16min	No *Epic Adventure Ride under study would connect one way from Baw Baw

SOURCE – TRC TOURISM 2020.

G7 Hub Individual Park Attributes

The following table provides a description of each proposed G7 Hub mountain bike park. The priority column is proposed to indicate the relative priority for development in achieving the vision for the G7 outlined earlier in this assessment.

Table 9. Individual G7 Hub Park Attributes

BIKE PARK	LOCATION	RIDING EXPERIENCE/ POSITIONING	TOTAL KM	BLACK	BLUE	GREEN	PRIORITY	NOTES
Haunted Hills	Newborough	Hero bike park; all levels with focus on green-blue; gateway park providing for skill development; pathway product; highlight experience; daily use given accessibility	13km Stage 2 will add another 15 km	3km (extra 5 km black in stage 2)	6km (extra 5 km blue in stage 2)	4km (extra 5km green in stage 2)	HIGH	Not yet built; part funding secured; build due 2020. Stage 2 in planning and Latrobe City has leased land for the development of stage 2.
Maryvale Pines	Maryvale	Green-Blue for non-technical riding with some skills features, all with B-lines, good accessibility being good for regular/local/fitness riders	22km	2km	16km	4km	MEDIUM	Handshake agreement between riders and land manager, informal agreements with goodwill; trail alignments shift according to forestry harvest schedules (positive: always new trails/interest for users; negative: constant trail build program; positive: ongoing improvement of trails and trail build skills – good training ground for trail builders and maintenance; easy access from large population centres.
Somewhere Good	Glengarry	Excellent handmade flow trails, some black technical features, all with B-lines, mostly Blue trails, good all-intermediate level with features also	22km	2km	18km	2km	HIGH	High quality trails hand-built by core crew of riders; land manager-rider relationship unclear/informal.

BIKE PARK	LOCATION	RIDING EXPERIENCE/ POSITIONING	TOTAL KM	BLACK	BLUE	GREEN	PRIORITY	NOTES
		appealing to higher level riders						
Blores Hill	Blores Hill	Green-Blue mostly non-technical riding with fun features (berms etc); good for school groups, beginners-intermediates, skills advancement; accessible	28km	1km	18km	9km	MEDIUM	Good quality trails, semi-formal arrangements, and clear support from land manager (Parks Victoria); popular with school groups.
Avon Mt Hendrick	Avon Mt Hendrick via Lake Glenmaggie	Grassroots, backcountry adventure and XC trails, double diamond black to blue, suited to technically proficient and self-sufficient riders, hand-built trails / shared use walking trails	53.5km	47 km 0.5 km Double Black	6 km	0 km	LOW	All informal trails; remote, difficult/technical nature, no facilities, no formal parking, no recognised trailhead. The most undeveloped of all sites, but with clear point of difference (backcountry-adventure, XC, ebike)
Erica	Erica / Rawson	Traditional XC trails, mostly lower level Blue with some advanced features, most with B-lines; secondary gravity trails on western side for more advanced riders, suited to shuttle.	22km	0km	22km	0km	MEDIUM - HIGH	Mill Park: Good trails of an 'old school' style not necessarily attractive to a large section of the current MTB market. Handshake agreement between riders and land manager, informal agreements with goodwill; land manager undertakes summer maintenance Western Trails: high quality flow trails down exciting terrain; no land manager agreement, no current formal maintenance, no 'ride up' return loop
Mt Baw Baw	Mt Baw Baw	Mountaintop, unique environment, XC and DH, destination riding (needs development/experience improvement)	11.2km	1.8km	2.8km	6.6km	MEDIUM - HIGH	Unique and stunning environment; potential marquee experience currently impacted by low-grade trails not suited to ideal market and lack of trails (not enough). Excellent potential to be Regionally and potentially Nationally Significant, but investment required.

BIKE PARK	LOCATION	RIDING EXPERIENCE/ POSITIONING	TOTAL KM	BLACK	BLUE	GREEN	PRIORITY	NOTES
G7 TOTAL	7 Bike parks	Green-Double Black Diamond // Weighting Blue > Green > Black	169.7km	11.8km	133.8km	24.1km		

Market matching

The table below gives an indication of the primary focus of the style of trails and riding on offer at each park. This gives an overview of the current contrasts between each park and future potential trail requirements suited to landscape.

Table 10. Type of Trail by Mountain Bike Park within the proposed hub

☑ = current ✓ = potential development / further development

RIDE MARKET	HAUNTED HILLS BIKE PARK	MARYVALE PINES	SOMEWHERE GOOD	BLORES HILL	AVON MT HENDRICK	ERICA	MT BAW BAW
XC		☑			☑	☑	☑
Gravity			✓			☑✓	✓
Flow	☑	✓	☑	☑		☑✓	✓
DH					✓		☑
Skills	☑	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Adventure / Back Country					☑	✓	☑✓
eBike		☑	✓	☑✓	☑✓	☑✓	☑✓
Local / Fitness	☑	☑	☑	☑		☑	
Tourism	☑		☑	✓	✓	☑✓	✓
Family	☑	☑		☑		✓	✓
School Groups	☑	☑		☑		✓	✓

Experience progression / product layering

The table below gives indication of where each park sits within a skills / experience hierarchy or user pathway (in a broad context). The G7 MTB Hub concept offers a logical flow of user engagement as they move from easier / beginner experiences to more challenging trails offered across the Hub bike parks. This assists in spreading visitation across the region, distributing visitation benefit, and encouraging repeat visitation as riders progress their skills. It is especially important in considering local / regional riders who have specific skills / fitness progression requirements and also to the visitation market who seek diversity and ‘step-up’ challenges that encourage them to return to the Hub offering.

Table 11. Skills and Rider Progression through the G7 Hub Parks

BIKE PARK	HAUNTED HILLS BIKE PARK	MARYVALE PINES	BLORES HILL	SOMEWHERE E GOOD	ERICA	MT BAW BAW	AVON MT HENDRICK
RELATIVE CHALLENGE LEVEL 1 = easiest 7 = most challenging	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SOURCE – TRC 2020

Mt Baw Baw may be considered in future developments to incorporate a higher number of green trails to better match its current target market (family-friendly / beginner) and therefore sit deeper in the light blue / dark green zone (3-4).



IMAGE 7 ERICA MTB PARK

7. Bike park profiles

This section outlines the general description of each bike park, its strengths and areas for improvement, how it is managed and the land tenure upon which the park sits and provides recommendations for each park.

Haunted Hills Bike Park

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Haunted Hills Bike Park (HHBP) is currently planned and approved for a parcel of land near Newborough / Moe, 140km east of Melbourne. Stage 1 is shovel ready and fully funded. Trail and infrastructure build were due to begin in February 2020 (however delayed at the time of writing due to planning and permit challenges). It has been designed to act as a new and significant gateway bike park and skills development facility, which will attract strong interest from both local and visiting riders.

HHBP sits strategically located as the first mountain bike facility reached within Central Gippsland when travelling from the west (Melbourne / Eastern Suburbs), sited adjacent to the major highway with nearby off ramp access. It is near major population centres Moe, Newborough, Morewell and Traralgon.

As a custom-built and designed facility, the HHBP site offers significant potential to be developed as one of Australia's leading gateway mountain bike destinations to a standard that would attract considerable attention and visitation, whilst also acting as a major cycling facility for local and regional communities.

The bike park will provide a gateway to mountain biking in Gippsland with trails progressing from beginner to intermediate and expert, plus a skills area and a large asphalt pump track. The park is designed to progressively introduce riders to rollers, berms, jumps, rock gardens, technical trail and climbs, making it suitable for beginners, intermediate riders, and experts.

The land parcel sits on Latrobe City Council land and has excellent soil type for trail construction, gentle rolling hills and a strong vista.

HHBP will be the 'hero' park within the G7 proposal. Latrobe City Council projects the park to receive 21,000 visitors per annum by Year Five of operation.

CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN THE G7

Hero bike park:

- industry leading 'fit for purpose' facility
- purpose built, strategically designed and professionally constructed to Industry Standards
- ride experience commensurate with other high-end nationally significant bike parks
- cater for complete market progressing from easy Green to expert Black riders.

TRAIL TYPE & LENGTH

The table below provides a breakdown of the park trail types.

Table 12. Trail Type Breakdown – Haunted Hills Bike Park

	Technical	Old School	FLOW		Stage 2 Machine Built Flow	Other	Total
			Hand	Machine			
Green	-	-	-	4km	5km	-	4km
Blue	3km	-	-	3km	5km	-	6km
Black	-	-	-	3km	5km	-	3km
Double Black	-	-	-	-		-	-
Total	3km	-	-	10km	15 km	-	28.5km

MAPPING

The maps below provide the location of Haunted Hills Bike Park and the designed trail layout.

Figure 6. Location of Haunted Hills Bike Park



SOURCE: TRAIL FORKS: <https://www.trailforks.com/region/haunted-hills-mtb-park-30038/?activitytype=1&z=14.0&lat=-38.20160&lon=146.31890>

Figure 7. Designed Trail Locations – Haunted Hills Bike Park



SOURCE:TRAIL FORKS: [HTTPS://WWW.TRAILFORKS.COM/REGION/HAUNTED-HILLS-MTB-PARK-30038/?ACTIVITYTYPE=1&z=14.0&LAT=-38.20160&LON=146.31890](https://www.trailforks.com/region/haunted-hills-mtb-park-30038/?activitytype=1&z=14.0&lat=-38.20160&lon=146.31890)

STATUS

In late 2017, Gippsland MTB Inc. applied for funding to the Australian Government’s Regional Jobs for Investment Package for construction of Stage 1 of the Park.

Funding (\$1 Million) for the Stage 1 (39 Hectares) of the project was announced in April 2018.

A management plan and maintenance schedule are being developed by Park Managers.

An Economic Impact Assessment Plan produced by Latrobe City Council in November 2017 reported a \$3 million total visitor expenditure impact, with 12 FTE jobs created as a result of the HHBP project.

A lease has been secured with Energy Australia for a 50-year lease of 30 Hectares for stage 2 of the development.

FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

When established, the HHBP will have a car park and a toilet with a small secure storage area and on-site septic tanks. HHBP will also have a BBQ area and shelters with seating for family picnics and social gatherings.

A bike wash facility and repair station will be sited at the main trail head. A 40m x 40m asphalt pump track shaped as a Skull and Crossbones is proposed. The skull feature will suit children and beginners, the crossbones will suit all ability levels. Trailhead signage will welcome visitors, provide HHBP information and will be a key site for information on the other G7 Bike Park locations in Gippsland. All trails will be signposted using best practise including signs at all junctions, and emergency markers located throughout the trail network.

Landscaping and native plantings will revegetate the site. There will be trail counters at main and minor trailheads, making HHBP an excellent resource for data collection on-trail usage and rider behaviour.

SITE SPECIFICS

HHBP will feature entirely machine-built trails, constructed by professional trail builders. They will be a minimum one-metre wide, featuring compacted soil with topping to ensure the ride experience will be fast flowing and fun (attractive to the largest section of the current MTB market). Future structures are likely to be built to a new Australian Standard that can be replicated and manufactured for export out of Latrobe Valley.

New trails feature predominantly gentle, sustainable gradients, which largely eliminates issues associated with erosion and sediment dispersion, resulting in a greatly reduced or eliminated environmental impact and a lowered need for trail maintenance.

A limited number of trails will feature steeper, more sustained gradients to meet the needs of more experienced, gravity-orientated riders.

The site has low native vegetation or cultural heritage management issues.

LAND MANAGERS

- Latrobe City Council
- Gippsland MTB Inc
- Energy Australia (Stage 2 Lease and potentially Stage 3)

ISSUES

- Planning permit delays (potential)
- Potential budgetary oversend due to unforeseen planning requirements
- Timing of land release for the planned Phases 2 and 3
- Coordination / dovetailing with proposed G7 MTB Hub given that the project is already underway as a stand-alone bike park
- Ongoing funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Haunted Hills MTB Bike Park be included as a leading Bike park in the 'Gippsland G7 MTB Hubs' project
2. Management structure of HHBP is referenced back to a proposed umbrella management entity for the holistic G7 MTB Hub product
3. Brand identity being developed (work already undertaken) – while remaining distinct – should consider an overarching G7 MTB Hub brand identity
4. G7 MTB Hub brand identity be referenced within HHBP collateral
5. Construction of HHBP involve where possible trail build and maintenance skill acquisition and training of a local workforce. This is an employment objective of the G7 MTB Hub project, given critical mass of pipeline work across parks and ongoing maintenance requirements
6. Continue to support the development of the park to the master plan and for stages 2 and 3.

Maryvale Pines

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Maryvale Pines trails are located close to Traralgon and Morwell (pop 40,000+).

Maryvale Pines Trails represents a collection of Green and Blue trails that were developed 'grassroots' style. This has grown to approximately 20km of single trail, built by hand within the local Pines Plantation under the coordination of Gippsland MTB Club and with the permission of the landowner, HPV Plantations, Australian Paper and LV Sands.

The standard of the trails has improved to allow the GMTB club to host events in the park, with heavy usage of trails by local riders. The trail network is a favoured training ground for junior / developing competitive riders given accessibility and the moderate terrain.

Trails cover undulating landscapes, mostly within forested land parcels, with some basic hand-built features (all with B-lines), ideal for beginner to intermediate riders.

The newly created shared bike path from Traralgon to Morwell is routed directly adjacent (south side) to the plantation representing an excellent development link to access the trails, inclusive of the opportunity to develop a trail head, parking and toilets.

CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN G7

The heavily forested riding environment provides a unique ride experience catering for mostly Green and Blue level riders. The community facility is close to major populations, easily connected to the soon-to-open shared pathway linking Traralgon to Morwell and is family friendly.

TRAIL TYPE / LENGTH

Table 13. Trails Type Break Down – Maryvale Pines Bike Park

			Flow		Other	Total
	Technical	Old School	Hand	Machine		
Green	-	-	4km	-	-	4km
Blue	-	-	16km	-	-	16km
Black	-	-	2 km	-	-	2 km
Double Black	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	20km	-	-	22km

MAPPING

The figures below provide the location of the park and the layout of trails within the Maryvale Pines bike park.

Figure 8. Location of Maryvale Pines Bike Park

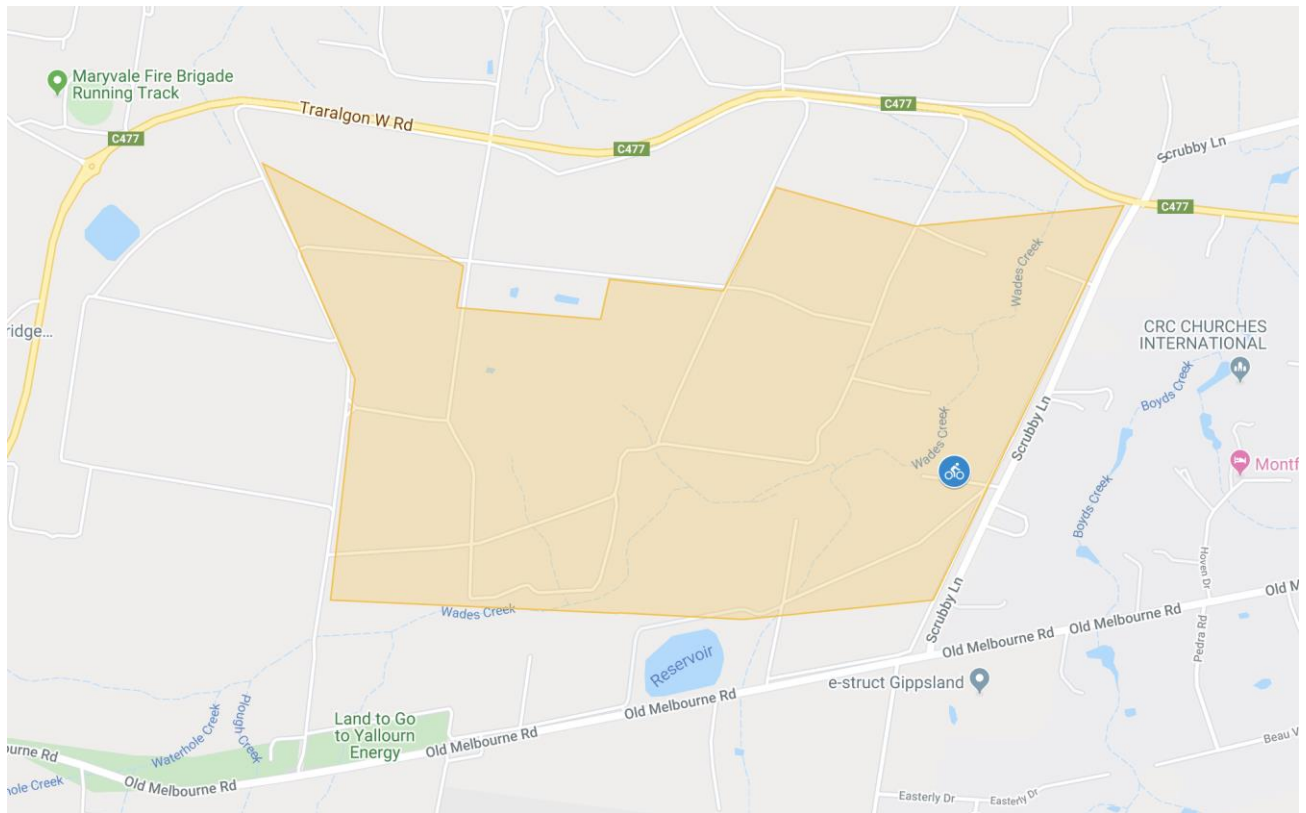
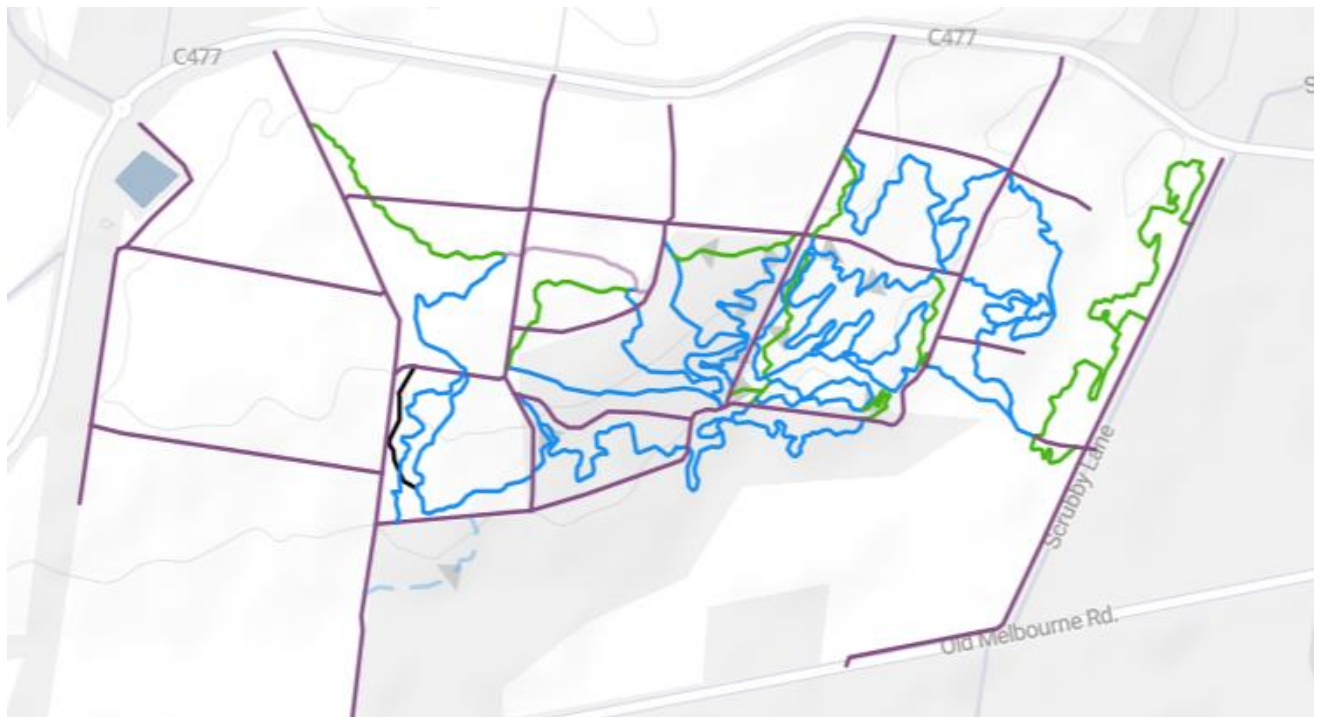


Figure 9. Layout of the trail network at Maryvale Pines



<https://www.trailforks.com/region/traralgon-pines-19417/>

STATUS

Gippsland MTB Club has informal arrangements with three private land managers and has a good working relationship (numerous local MTB riders also work for land manager, HPV) with them.

Trail alignment adjustments/re-alignments are required on occasion according to planting and harvesting schedules, however HPV has been happy to work in with riders to communicate timelines and allow new trail build in areas being regenerated (YRS 13 & 18 thinning; YRS 25-30 felling).

HPV currently requests no night riding (blanket policy of no night time access to plantation areas). The fire trails intersecting the ride area are maintained by land manager, HVP Plantations. Trails are maintained as needed by local riders. Trail maintenance is currently ad hoc, with most action required after storms, vandalism, or prior to events. Maintenance needs are communicated via a Facebook group.

All trails are currently on private land – a status that overlays different operating conditions and considerations compared to sites on public lands (as is the case with the majority of the other proposed G7 MTB Hub sites).

There is currently one event held on site (Pines 3 Hour) along with weekly club social rides during summer.

FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

There are no facilities on site. There are numerous options used for informal car parking / trailhead access.

Events have been staged within the Plantation.

There is minimal signage with little to a high standard.

SITE SPECIFICS

Maryvale Pines is somewhat protected from prevailing westerly winds, with a mono-culture timber type throughout the site that creates a unique “mystic”, “maze” riding experience, differentiating it from all other sites. The undulating terrain has few extended climbs (and those that do exist are gentle) and features gullies and creeks that represent a more natural and native habitat. As pines grow, trails have more shade and protection from sun on hotter days.

The site is close to population centres (Morwell/ Traralgon), is linked on the south side by Morwell-Traralgon shared pathway and thus represents an excellent (and valuable) local community resource. This also allows a certain ease of developing an active volunteer maintenance base.

As private land impacted by regular earth and vegetation movement, the site has few limitations in regard to native vegetation offsets or cultural heritage issues. The earth base is easy to work with for trail build, exhibiting a uniform soil type (except in wet gully areas). Soil can get fine and dusty in dry conditions, partly a result of remnant ash. Trails benefits from some rain – providing the best grip two days after rain. Rotting timber from previous plantations can provide softer conditions under wheel.

LAND MANAGERS

- HPV
- Australian Paper (AP owns part of the area)
- LV Sands (LV Sands owns part of the area)

ISSUES

- Hard rubbish dumping on site is an ongoing issue, however land managers see mountain biking as helping to mitigate through passive surveillance
- No formal signage, information boards, official car parks / facilities
- Ongoing re-alignment of trails according to harvest/planting schedules
- Long term proposal for sand quarry site development impacting on network
- Government funding likely not available for development of trails on private land
- Any potential future sale of land could mean a loss of trail resource.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Formalise a Bike Park Management Committee with roles, responsibilities for resource oversight (and potentially reporting in to G7 Committee of Management)
2. Formalise a main car park area – potentially shifting trail head to where border of MTB Park meets with new Morwell-Traralgon cycleway
3. Build toilets at new car park trailhead to service both MTB Park and halfway mark / users of cycleway – seek government funding
4. Seek trails development/maintenance funding from HPV (precedent in HPV contributing funds to trail development in Bright under a similar scenario).
5. Negotiate to use all of AP / LV Sands owned land to create larger circuits in consultation with HVP.
6. Create a forward-looking trail alignment plan and schedule around HPV harvesting schedules (YRS 13 & 18 thinning: YRS 25-30 felling)
7. Opportunity to introduce machine building on land parcels post harvesting (speed up build, increase quality and sustainability)
8. Look to add 1-2km of black-rated trail and/or skills-based features to service skill development of junior/developing riders
9. Potential small skills park or 4X combined area located on southern boundary adjacent proposed new primary trailhead, to service local community / encourage usage
10. Investigate potential (as part of alignment schedule) for ‘new’ innovative feature ride product
11. Investigate potential to shift night-ride ban – even if only for specific ‘special permission’ events
12. Investigate potential for increasing number of small, regular events (series?) aimed at locals plus develop one major event targeted at all local, regional and visitation markets.
13. Ride features - review, design, build and install focusing on ‘smart features’: removeable/transportable features and bridges throughout park, all with B-lines [opportunity for broader local public/private build/maintenance and skills development operation to take on innovative MTB feature design and build, to other-market/export ready].
14. Signage required – at trail heads, major intersections and route identification signage throughout, inclusive of driver warning / rider slow signs at fire road crossings. Signage should include an easy-to-follow guided loop through the trail network requiring minimal navigation by riders
15. Hold a trail build sustainability session for local volunteer group – hosted by professional trail builders to engage, empower and upskill local trail crew to build more sustainably
16. Installation of raised bridges over Wade Creek to create more sustainable north-south link and access to proposed southern primary car park/trailhead
17. Explore the potential for the park to be a training centre for design and construction of trails aligned to a possible future Gippsland based social enterprise
18. Branding created consistent with overarching G7 MTB Hub branding.

Somewhere Good

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Located in the Boola State Forest, north of Glengarry, Somewhere Good is a collection of flowing, technical intermediate (Blue) single tracks boasting a large array of hand-hewn earthen and built features. In the context of being volunteer built trails they present a high-quality riding experience recognised within the market.

The trails generally make use of a north-south ridge with some fire trail central access roads.

An unofficial top-end car park is located at the junction of Five Ways and Eaglehawk (Old Glengarry) Rd. It has informal seating.

The trails are presently unauthorised and as such all maintenance works are carried out by a small group of dedicated volunteers under no official remit or oversight by land managers. Volunteer buy in and ownership of Somewhere Good is very high.

CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN G7

One of the best flow ride products within the G7 Hub, Somewhere Good provides an ‘amusement park’ of flow riding features suitable to a wide range of riders. It is however best for riders looking for easy through to black experiences, with limited climbing trail access requiring some fitness and with a good nature-based forest riding experience.

TRAIL TYPE / LENGTH

The table below provides a breakdown of the trail types at the Somewhere Good mountain bike park.

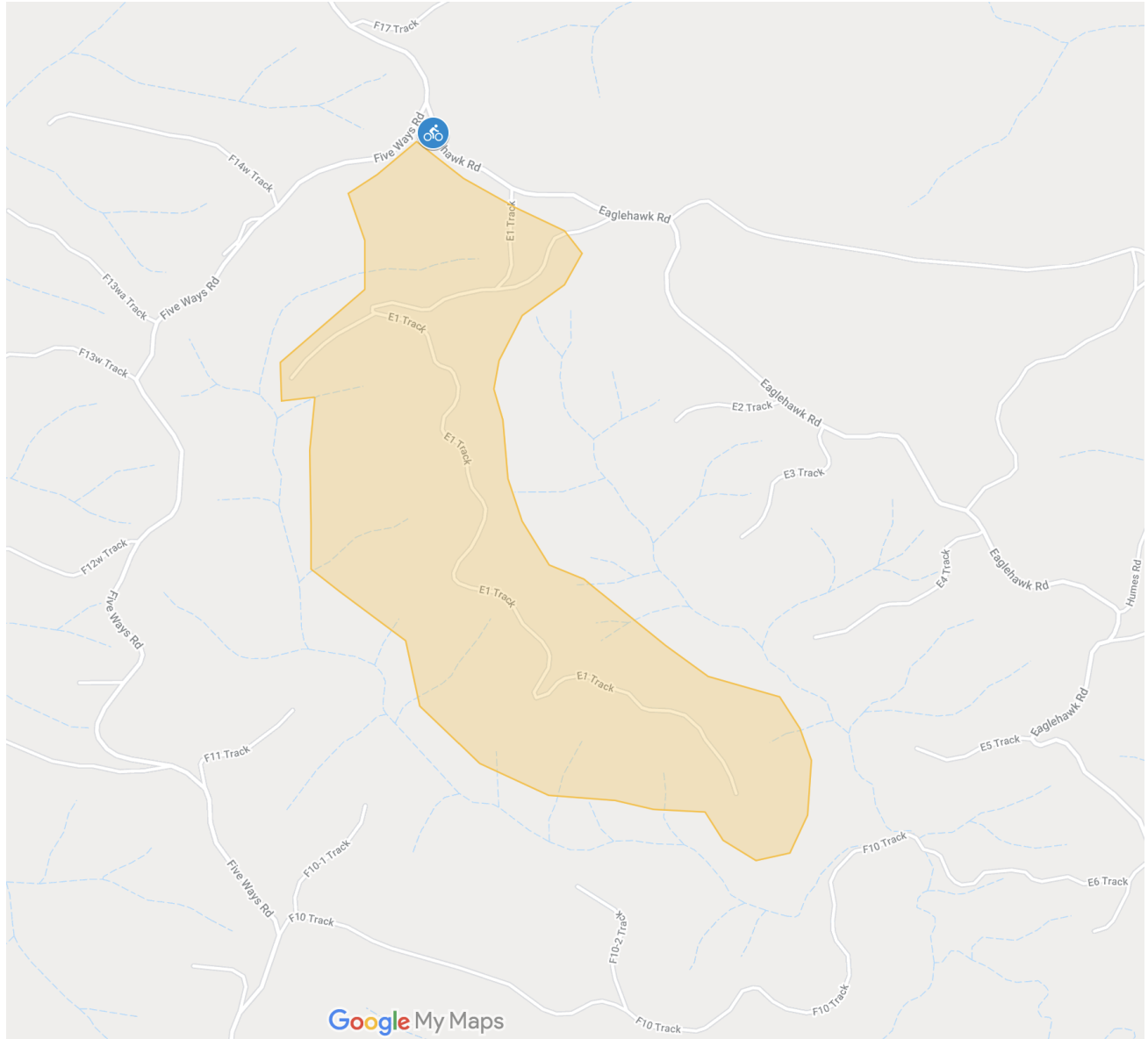
Table 14. Trails Type Breakdown – Somewhere Good MTB Park

			Flow		Other	Total
	Technical	Old School	Hand	Machine		
Green	-	-	2 km	-	-	2 km
Blue	-	-	18 km	-	-	18km
Black	-	-	2 km	-	-	2 km
Double Black	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	22	-	-	22

MAPPING

The following maps provide the location and trail mapping for the Somewhere Good MTB Park.

Figure 10. General Location Map – Somewhere Good MTB Park



SOURCE – GOOGLE MAPS

Figure 11. Somewhere Good MTB Park Trail Configuration



TRAIL FORKS: [HTTPS://WWW.TRAILFORKS.COM/REGION/SOMEWHERE-GOOD-20099](https://www.trailforks.com/region/somewhere-good-20099)

STATUS

The park is currently well maintained by a small group of volunteers and is mainly done by hand. The quality of trails is high and comparable to other sites.

The land manager (DELWP) relationship is undefined and trails remain non-gazetted / unofficial. As such, there have been no cultural or environmental assessments made of the site.

Access to the trails is via a managed forest dirt road.

Potential for a large carpark using the existing fire break Between E1 track and the intersection of Eaglehawk and Fiveways roads.

FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

The trail network features numerous hand-built bridges, log rides, A-frames, a seesaw and timber berms (11).

Most structures have been built to a good standard with treated pine and are informally inspected every few weeks by volunteers. There are 50+ earthen berm features built with drainage; 30+ earthen jumps – all of good hand-built quality. Sustainability of current trail is TBC.

There are no other facilities on or near the site.

There is an informal car park at the northern end of the network.

SITE SPECIFICS

Somewhere Good contains mostly a dark, loamy soil that compacts well and is very durable, riding well in almost any weather conditions.

There are some areas of a mixed gravel and loam that tends to be a little loose to ride. Most of the trails drain extremely well and can be ridden within 24 hours of heavy rain. Similar to the rest of the Latrobe Valley, the site tends to get more rain from easterly weather events.

LAND MANAGERS

- Department of Environment Land and Water & Planning

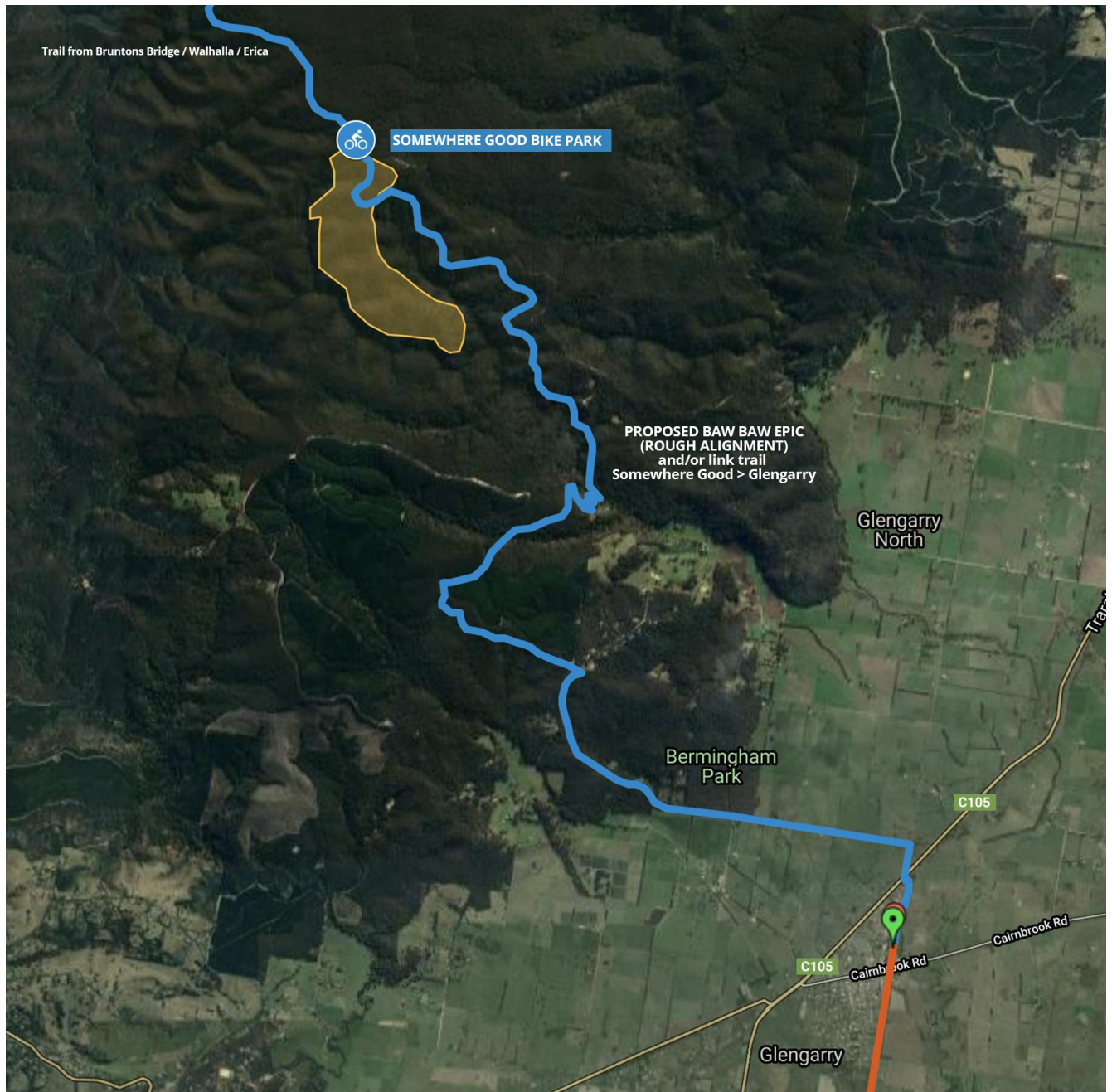
ISSUES

- Lack of formalisation / governance arrangements
- Lack of formal management group
- Lack of structured trail maintenance program, reliance on volunteer energy and commitment
- Volume of trails vs. current volunteer resource to manage / maintain
- Volume of tree litter and required regularity of clearing
- Lyrebird scratching / damage of trail
- No directional or trailhead information
- Risk and safety status of man-made ride structures (i.e. wooden ramps).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Formalise a bike park management committee with roles, responsibilities for resource oversight (and potential reporting in to G7 Governance arrangements)
2. Consult DELWP regards formalisation of trails and trail management agreements, aiming to be recognised within DELWP and (preferably) gain allocated maintenance to support volunteer efforts (precedent at Erica where DELWP staff have allocated MTB trail maintenance)
3. Create a site trail plan consistent with modern standards to guide formalisation, upgrading, renewal of trail alignments and the expansion of the trail network
4. Focus on machine-grade benching (for sustainability)
5. Signpost for suggested loop directions / 'best rider experience' requiring minimal navigation
6. Install on-trail directional signage and trailhead map signboard
7. Formalise parking at trailhead
8. Improve skill features to IMBA or new Australian standards inclusive of berms, benchings, log rolls etc (rationalise and upgrade with reference to safety parameters, however, maintain Blue-Black skills features as a distinctive feature of this Bike Park)
9. Investigate opportunity for development of a shuttle making use of central E1 fire road access, including clearing of turn-around
10. Link this park with the proposed Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride, investigate linking trail (to be final alignment of Epic Trail) down to Glengarry approx. 16km incl. some road / rail trail sections. See the figure below for example alignment.

Figure 12. Potential for a linkage of Somewhere Good to the Proposed Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride



Blores Hill

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Blores Hill features approximately 30km of track ranging from easy Green to more challenging Blue trails located in the Glenmaggie Regional Park. Trails comprise a mixture of old-school handmade flowing singletrack with some machine-built flow track. There are a small number of rock features.

Blores Hill is very family friendly and is located 6km from the township of Heyfield, offering quick and easy access to food and emergency facilities. Lake Glenmaggie (Sandy Point), only 1km away and offers toilet facilities and swimming.

Blores Hill is used extensively by school groups and for users enjoying single sessions through multi-day trips.

It has reasonable mobile phone coverage across most of the site.

Blores Hill has its own MTB Park Management Strategy (2013-14), with significant input and support from Parks Victoria. Trailhead signage exists, with some basic on-trail directional signage.

CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN G7

The park offers:

- Safe ride experiences
- An accessible bike park catering for Green and Blue standard riders and is good for families, parents and kids
- Excellent cool weather riding, good wet weather riding
- A gateway network allowing new riders entry into technical mountain biking and
- Close to amenities.

TRAIL TYPE / LENGTH

The table below provides the breakdown of trail types in Blores Hill MTB Park

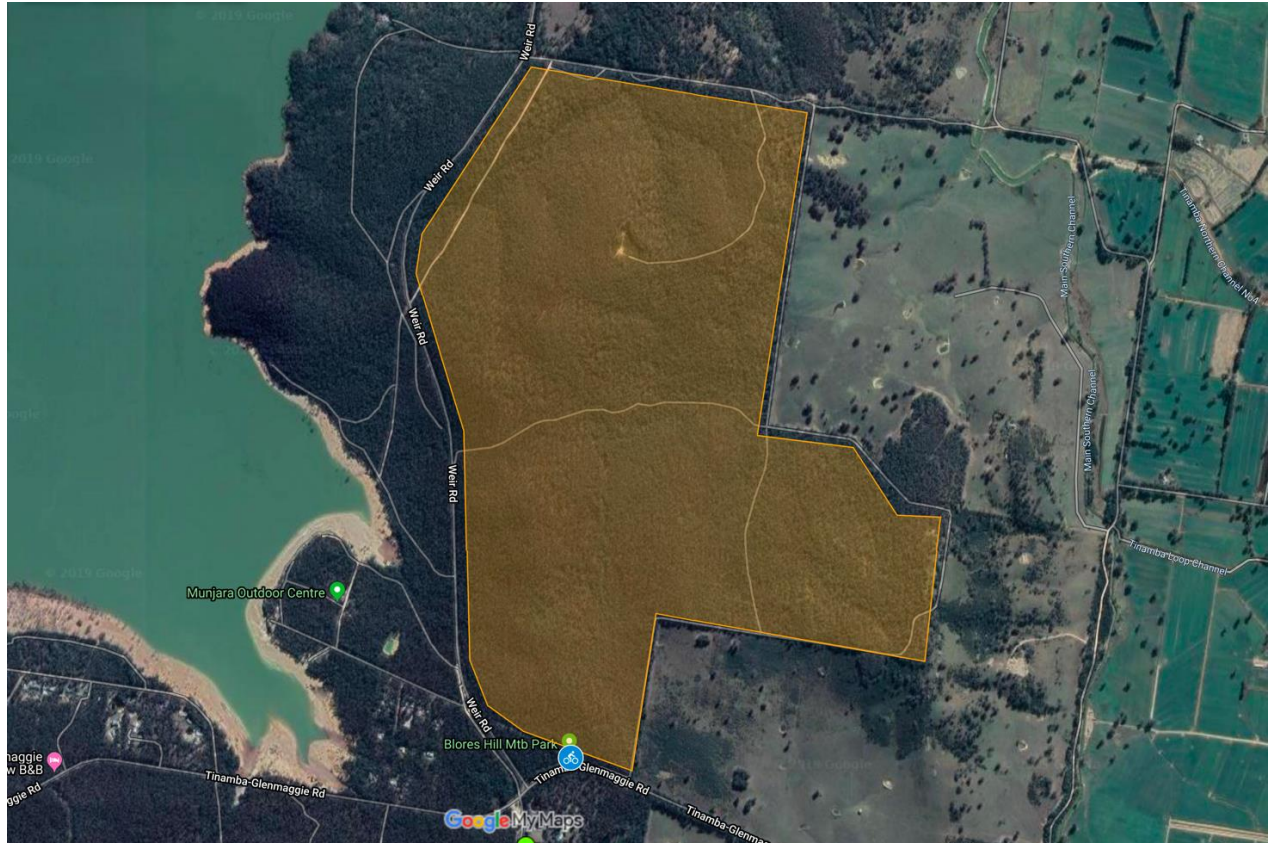
Table 15. Trail Type Breakdown Blores Hill MTB Park

			Flow		Other	Total
	Technical	Old School	Hand	Machine		
Green	-	6km	2.4km	-	0.6km	9km
Blue	-	13km	-	5km	-	18km
Black	1km	-	-	-	-	1km
Double Black	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	19km	2.4km	5km	0.6km	28km

MAPPING

The figures below provide the location and trail maps for the Blores Hill MTB Park.

Figure 13. Location of Blores Hill MTB Park – Lake Glenmaggie



Source Google Maps

Figure 14. Trail Maps – Blore Hill MTB Park



TRAIL FORKS: <https://www.trailforks.com/region/blores-hill-mtb-park-12906/>

STATUS

The trail network has informally developed over the last 30 years by walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers. In February 2010 a memorandum was signed by Parks Victoria's Regional Manager East endorsing the progression of the proposal to formalise a mountain bike facility within the Glenmaggie Regional Park, this included liaison with Public Land Service and DEPI.

Blores Hill has its own *MTB Park Management Strategy* (2013-14) developed by Parks Victoria and Gippsland MTB Club.

The strategy outlines that the purpose of Blores Hill MTB is to "provide a publicly accessible facility where people of all ages, experience and fitness levels can ride on purpose built, sustainable mountain bike trails in what is a predominantly natural environment".

The strategy addresses the values and needs of the three main user groups (mountain bikers, walkers and horse riders) and contains actions to ensure these groups can use the facility with minimal conflict. A dedicated Horse-Riding Trail will be provided, permitting walkers, but not mountain bikes. Some parts of the Horse-Riding Trail will be shared, intersected or in the proximity of mountain bike trails.

Some cultural heritage assessments have already been carried out.

FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

There are two trail heads (one located at the south end and one at the north west end of the park). Both provide car parking and have information/map boards displaying the trail network.

Currently there are no toilet facilities at Blores Hill MTB Park, the closest being at Sandy Point, Lake Glenmaggie, which is approximately 1km away.

SITE SPECIFICS

Blores Hill enjoys mostly dry conditions. Thunderstorms, although rare, can produce very heavy falls in a short period that are very damaging to the current trail network. Conditions can be very hot and dry in the summer months.

The network is enclosed in a predominantly natural environment, elevated areas are very rocky, though surrounding soil is often of a poor build quality and needs armouring (to date this has been done largely through 'carpeting'). Most of the soil is sandy loam, which after rain becomes 'hero dirt' offering a very high-quality riding experience. This is consistent with most of the G7 Hub bike parks which improve after rain. Alternatively tracks become loose, dusty and 'skatey' to ride on after prolonged dry periods.

The Glenmaggie Regional Park, in which sits the Blores Hill bike park, is close to the township of Heyfield.

LAND MANAGERS

- Parks Victoria
- Wellington Shire
- Southern Rural Water

[NOTE: despite the existence of three land managers, essentially Parks Vic manages the site.]

ISSUES

- Southern Rural Water has expressed a desire to sell its land. Parks Victoria and DELWP have been unable to find a solution to this as yet
- Tracks become loose and dusty after prolonged dry periods
- Some tracks currently in poor condition due to design/drainage
- Soil type complicates trail building, increasing the need for armouring

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Formalise a bike park management committee with roles, responsibilities for resource oversight (and potential reporting in to G7 governance entity)
2. Revisit site trail plan consistent with modern standards to guide formalisation, upgrading, renewal of trail alignments and expansion of trail network
3. Trail realignment/s where necessary, berm construction/compacting and appropriate armouring of trails to mitigate erosion/degradation
4. Signage required – at trail heads, major intersections and route identification signage throughout, inclusive driver warning / rider slow signs at fire road crossings
5. Signage should include an easy-to-follow guided loop through the trail network requiring minimal navigation by riders for the highest quality experience
6. Include Indigenous storytelling elements in communication both online and on the ground.

Avon Mt Hendrick

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Avon Mt Hendrick offers riding for expert and advanced-intermediate riders. The current trails are technically challenging, steep, rocky, rutted and remote, with literally hundreds of kilometres of unauthorised dirt bike trails throughout the Avon Mt Hendrick Scenic Reserve and surrounds. There are a number of trails that have been constructed by mountain bikers and many of these have been adopted and degraded by dirt bikes.

Avon Mt Hendrick is different to the other proposed bike parks in the G7. The trails offer a true back country experience for riders with a sense of adventure who are interested in journey and place. The location features gorges, rocky escarpments, high peaks, sweeping and river views. It is an all-weather, all season destination and especially ideal for eBike adventures given hilly terrain.

The most popular trail in the network is Pete's Track, a flowy Blue trail suitable for advanced-intermediate and expert riders. Other trails are (unofficially) shared use, including rides along the Mt Hendricks Walking Track (to and on from the summit), and on fire roads.

Most rides are high level Blue to Double Black, accentuating the adventure / extreme nature of the riding. There are many natural obstacles, steep and highly technical descents and very little 'build', especially in the north east (Mt Hendrick) sector.

The current network is spread across a vast area, with no designated preferred loops and a disconnect of linkages, requiring long return rides or car shuffles. This requires users to be confident back country riders, self-sufficient, competent at navigation and organised.

CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN G7

This park contains back country ride experiences offering adventure, spectacular scenery showcasing gorges, rocky escarpments, high peaks and sweeping and river views the park has technical trails, difficult climbs and caters to expert riders.

TRAIL TYPE / LENGTH

The following table provides the trail types within the Avon-Hendrick MTB Park

Table 16. Trail Characteristics within the Avon-Hendrick MTB Park

	Technical	Old School	Flow			
			Hand	Machine	Other	Total
Green	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blue	6km	-	-	-	-	6km
Black	47km	-	-	-	-	47km
Double Black	0.5km	-	-	-	-	0.5km
Total	53.5km	-	-	-	-	53.5km

NB: Distances from Trailforks excluding Avon River Walking Track. Does not include trails not recorded on Trailforks. Local riders estimate 100km+ of trails based on motocross, fire, walking trails used for riding.

MAPPING

The following figures show the location of the proposed mountain bike park and the trail locations.

Figure 15. Avon Mount Hendrick Natural Features Reserve

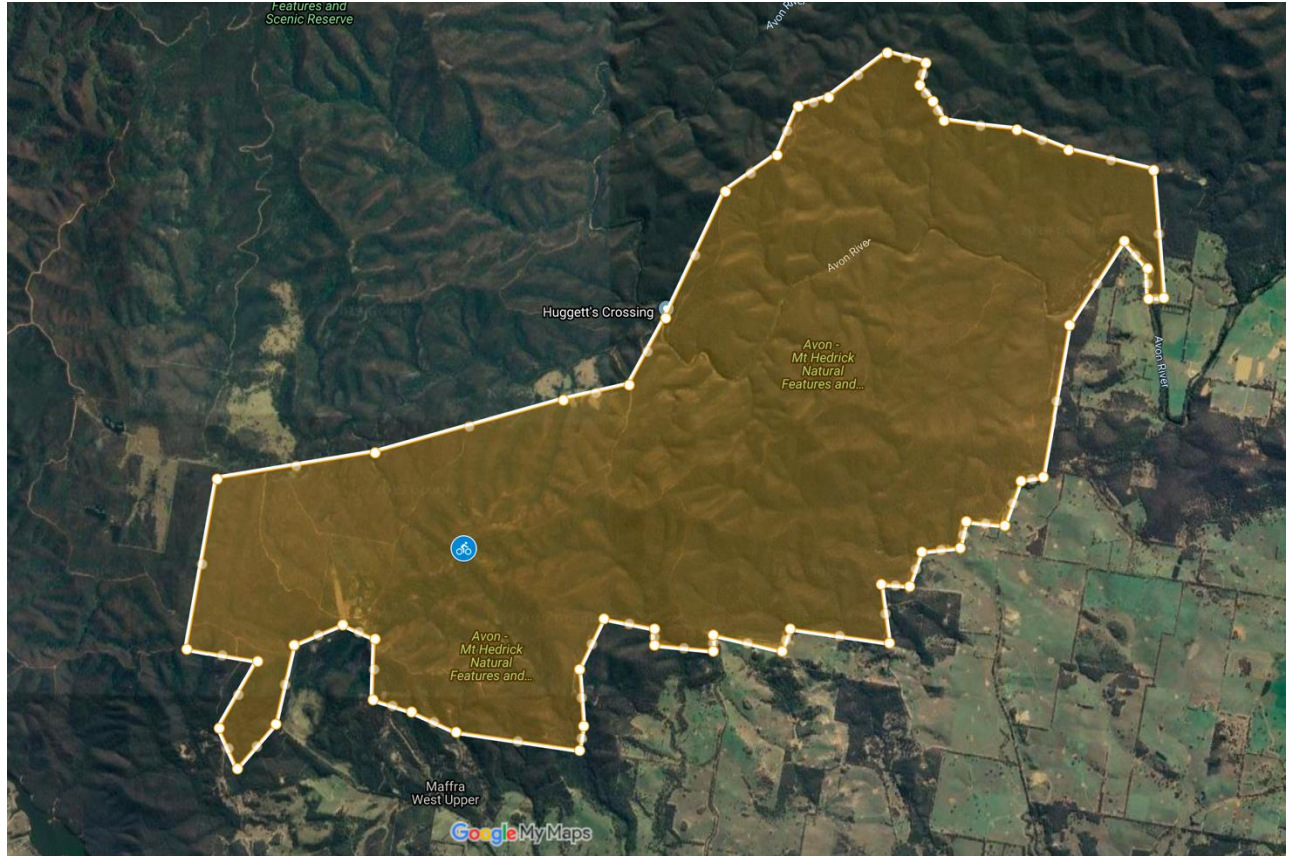
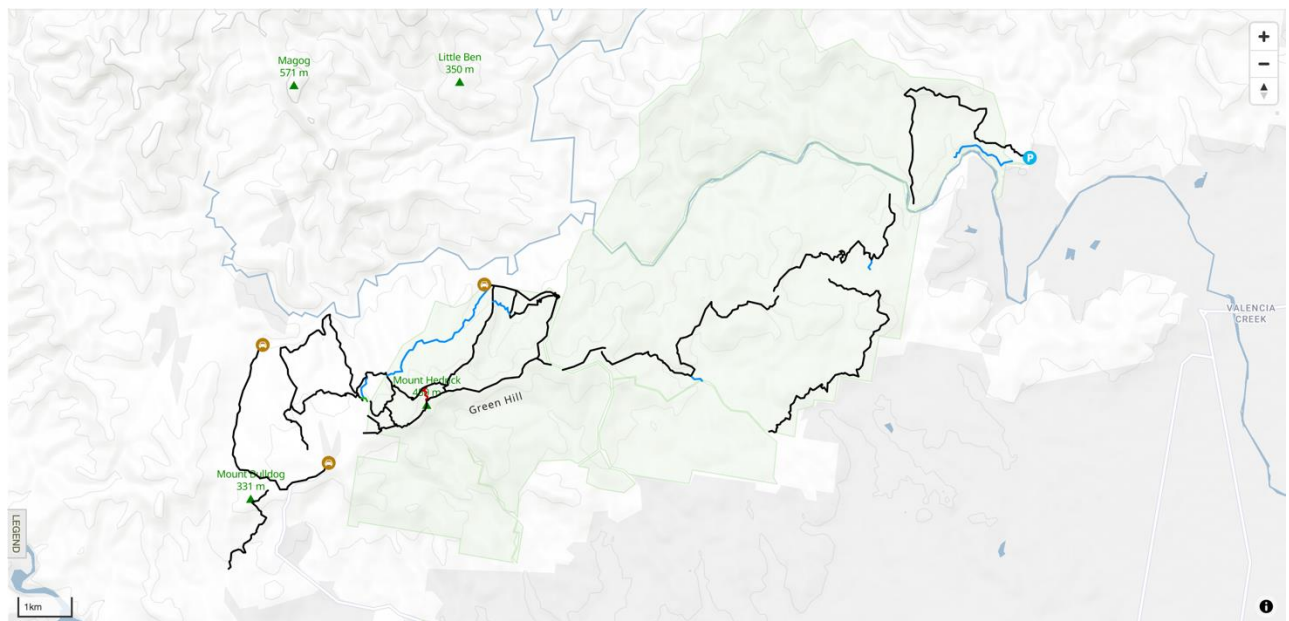


Figure 16. Recorded Trail Locations – Avon Mount Hendrick MTB Park.



TRAIL FORKS: [HTTPS://WWW.TRAILFORKS.COM/REGION/AVON-MT-HEDRICK-RESERVE/?ACTIVITYTYPE=1&z=11.8&LAT=-37.82349&LON=146.86610](https://www.trailforks.com/region/AVON-MT-HEDRICK-RESERVE/?ACTIVITYTYPE=1&z=11.8&LAT=-37.82349&LON=146.86610)

STATUS

Pete's Track has recently become an authorised mountain bike trail with the support of DELWP. A 'No Entry' sign intended to keep dirt bike riders off the trail was posted though it was destroyed within two weeks of being erected, highlighting the difficulty in managing the impacts of alternate trail users in the area.

Other trails remain unauthorised with many shared used (walkers, horse riders, moto riders).

Little trail maintenance is undertaken.

There is a shady car park with a few picnic tables on Huggett's Road at the trailhead for the Mt Hedrick Walking Track.

FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

There is currently no official car park, no toilet or shelter and no trail network signage.

SITE SPECIFICS

Trails are rough and a mix of either loam or shale and can become very skatey. Pete's in particular can be dusty. Trails are best immediately after rain. Like Blores Hill, Avon Mt Hedrick is in a rain shadow area. When prevailing westerly weather brings rain to most of the southern parts of Victoria, Avon Mt Hedrick is likely to be dry. AMH presents perfect riding in winter. It can get hot and dry in summer, with no drinking water sources.

LAND MANAGERS

- DELWP

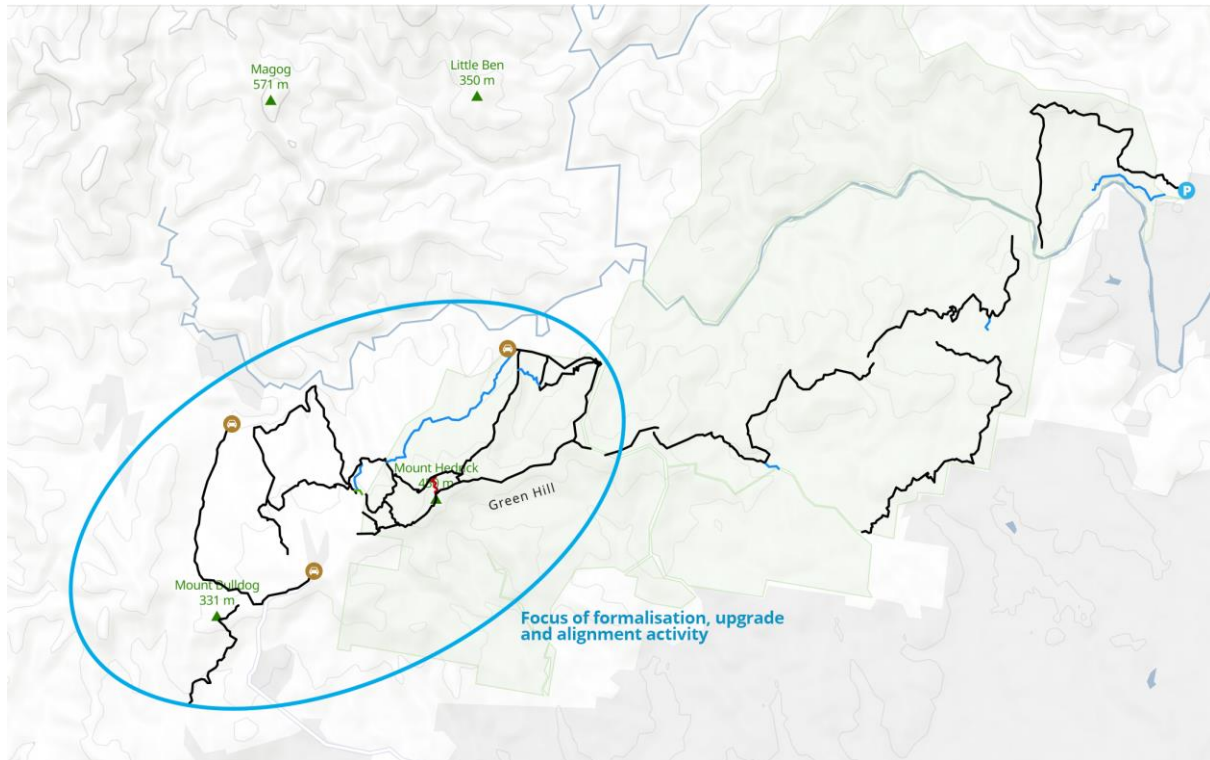
ISSUES

- High potential for dirt bike / moto conflict.
- Issue with cars parked at entrance of private property (Bulldog), with property on market for sale
- Remote nature of trails and relevant safety risk / emergency extraction
- Lack of formalised facilities / car parking, toilets
- Lack of any managerial oversight / coordination / volunteer trail group
- Lack of logical links and loop ride trail design
- Lack of signage or information at trail heads.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish proactive and constructive engagement with moto / trail bike rider community (identify key stakeholders / channels) to discuss potential zoning and common usage. Develop messaging within communities regards trail designations and safety issues (danger of moto on MTB trails and, importantly, vice versa). Build/rework trails with the goal in mind of making them less attractive to dirt bikers (gradients, switchbacks, width etc)
2. Audit all trails and rationalise with a move to formalise cycling
3. Suggest concentrating on trails in central and west sector (leaving others in east as informal) as shown in the following figure.

Figure 17. Potential area for MTB Trail Concentration – Avon Mount Hendrick MTB



4. Create logical loop rides in western zone aligning new trail and creating links to enable easier logistics for riders (i.e. no need for shuttles or long fire roads back to base)
5. Designate and develop small car park, potentially with biodegradable toilet facility (servicing walkers as well), nearby walking trailhead on Huggets Rd
6. Priority upgrades to Mt Hendrick Walking Track to control erosion (fall line trail)
7. Design trail entries to be too tight for moto cross riders
8. Re-align fall line sections where needs and upgrade/realign and armour rutted sections
9. Consider Avon / Mt Hendrick to be managed under same grouping as Blores Hill
10. Implementation of basic directional signage and trailhead information
11. Future (long term) expansion of XC trail Mt Hendrick to Briagolong suggested
12. Potential for backcountry event

Erica

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Erica MTB Bike Park is split into two sections, offering two distinct rider experiences. Mill Park is located to the east of the township. The Western Trails are located to the west of the township.

Mill Park boasts a network of 12km of predominantly Blue trails. The trails are hand-cut and represent traditional cross-country style riding. The fitness level required to enjoy the trails is comparatively higher than other mountain bike parks. There are two trail heads with signage and minimal facilities provided. The trails wind through tall eucalypt trees and fern gullies.

The Western Trails offer approximately 10km of trails comprising of two flow trails offering an exciting descent. Though rated Blue, they are significantly more challenging than the Mill Park trails. The Western Trails begin from an informal trail head off Moe-Walhalla Rd and finish on an informal trail head on Rusks Road, towards Caringal. Currently the Western Trails lack a climbing trail option and riders rely on self-organised shuttles.

CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN G7

Erica has a unique environment with tall eucalypt forests and ferny gullies and a diversity of ride experience. This includes a large trail network expansion opportunity to fill G7 gravity enduro gap on Western Trails with large available elevation gain and loss. Excellent soil type for grippy trails and low maintenance with a cooler climate.

Historic mining, narrow gauge rail, logging, and pack horse trail infrastructure provide for multiple storytelling opportunities. The proximity to Erica/Rawson provides business and community development opportunities.

TRAIL TYPE / LENGTH

The table below provides the trail type categories and lengths for the Erica MTB park.

Table 17. Erica MTB Park Trail Types

	Technical	Old School	Flow		Other	Total
			Hand	Machine		
Green	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blue	-	-	22km	-	-	22km
Black	-	-	-	-	-	-
Double Black	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	22km	-	-	22km

MAPPING

The figures below provide the location of the park and the trail network map.

Figure 18. Erica MTB Park Locations

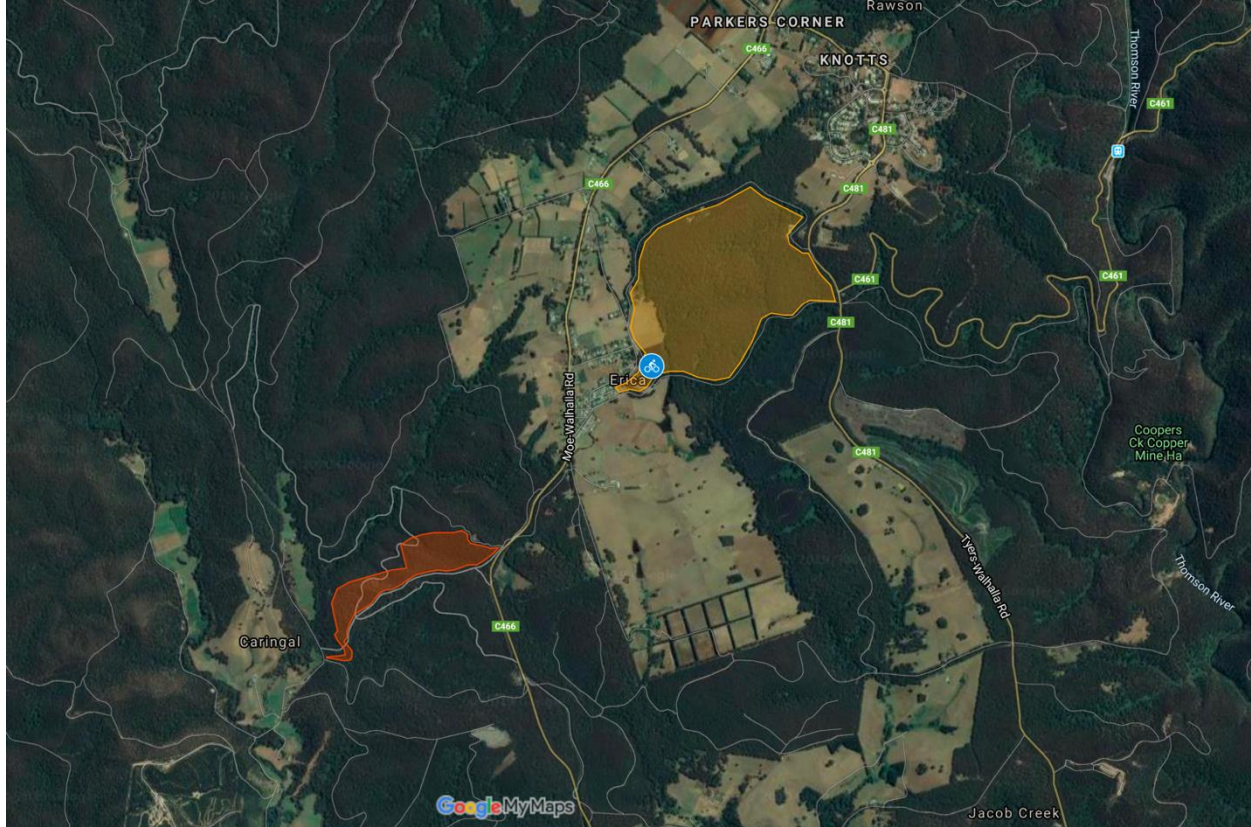
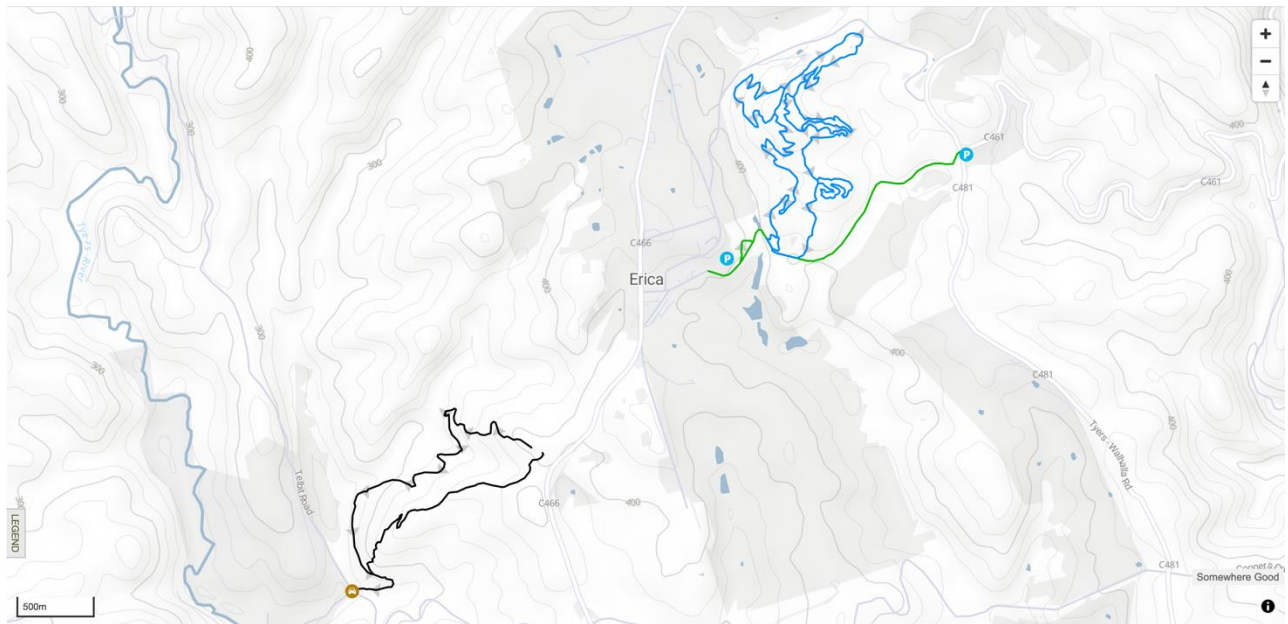


Figure 19. Trail Type and Location – Erica MTB Parks



STATUS

A 'handshake agreement' extended into a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the original trail builders and DELWP (land manager) for the Mill Park component. DELWP currently provide monthly trail maintenance throughout summer on the Mill Park trails. Trail conditions decline over winter when maintenance program is not active.

There is no such agreement covering the status of the Western Trails. There is no official maintenance on the Western Trails.

FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

There is informal parking situated at both trail heads. This consists of open grassland at the eastern trail area and a gravel dump at the western trail area. A formal trailhead and signage have been installed on the Mill Park trails by DELWP. There is also a shelter with seating at the eastern trailhead.

The Erica town centre is a five-minute ride from each trail head and provides additional parking, drinking fountains, rubbish bins, toilets, food and accommodation.

Mobile phone service is good throughout Mill Park but is inconsistent in the Western Trail area.

SITE SPECIFICS

The soil type is varied, however it is predominantly very stable, deep clay loam, which is very good for trail building and provides for relatively easy maintenance. Leaf litter can affect ride experience and needs constant clearing. The ride surface provides for plenty of grip on the whole. Sections of red clay remain compact over the dry months, however become slippery once wet. Trails can be very wet and slick during winter/spring on the Mill Park side due to shady aspect and tall eucalypts. Western trails tend to dry out a lot faster due to aspect and a more open tree canopy.

Located in the foothills of the Victorian High Country, temperatures tend to be a few degrees cooler than the valley floor or north facing mixed species forests.

LAND MANAGERS

- DELWP

ISSUES

- Rider perception of trails as offering a low 'descent bang for ascent buck' (trails were originally hand built to be 'cross country tough')
- Mill Park is heavily vegetated, can become overgrown quickly and needs regular maintenance to keep trails clear. However, the soils drain well and the trail surface requires little maintenance once established
- DELWP currently provides monthly trail maintenance throughout summer. Trail conditions decline over winter when maintenance program is not active
- The environment can be very wet in winter
- High potential for conflict with other user groups, most notably dirt bike riders
- There are currently no active mountain bikers living in Erica township.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Formalise a bike park management committee with roles, responsibilities for resource oversight (and potential reporting in to G7 Governance entity)
2. Create a site trail plan consistent with modern standards to guide formalisation, upgrading, alignment and expansion of trail network, including connections to the proposed Baw Baw Epic Ride
3. Mill Park: create new linking trail from 'gravel dump' trail head to the beginning of the trail network
4. Mill Park: trail realignments to focus on increasing flow and make better use of topography, bringing trails up to current expectations of 'ride experience'
5. Mill Park: focus on clever redesign to overcome the perception of low 'descent bang for ascent buck'
6. Mill Park: expansion of Green trail offering
7. Mill Park: signage should include an easy-to-follow guided loop through the trail network requiring minimal navigation by riders for the highest quality experience
8. Western Trails: construct new flow/technical trails
9. Western Trails: construct new trails with reference to fill the G7 gap of 'gravity enduro'
10. Western Trails: construct climbing trail (this should function as a section of the proposed Baw Baw Epic Trail)
11. Western Trails: investigate shuttle possibilities
12. Western Trails: construct linking trail from trail head off Moe-Walhalla Rd back into Erica township
13. Both: Improve skill features to IMBA or new Australian standards inclusive berms, benching, log rolls etc (rationalise and upgrade with reference to safety parameters)
14. Both: berm construction/compacting and appropriate armouring of trails to mitigate erosion/degradation
15. Both: signage required – at all trail heads, major intersections and route identification signage throughout, inclusive driver warning / rider slow signs at fire road crossings
16. Both: upgrade all car parks
17. Investigate development of a *combined Erica/Rawson Twin Town Trails, Recreation and Tourism Strategy* which would encompass (but not be limited to) developments recommended across feasibility studies for Baw Baw Epic Trail, G7 Mountain Bike Hub and walking trail links between towns. This would encompass strategies to bring economic develop and township revival opportunities across retail, accommodation and tourism service businesses akin to the Derby (Tasmania) model. Linking the two towns as a singular destination entity to build on the location's unrealised potential and strength in trails and outdoor active tourism would unlock latent economic development opportunities.
It is noted that \$850K of funding has been secured to provide a 4.7 km trail linking the towns of Erica and Rawson which provides a strong start to the linkages of the towns as a service hub.

Mt Baw Baw

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Mt Baw Baw offers perhaps one of the most unique mountain biking environs in the Gippsland region with fields of wildflowers, forests of Snow Gums and Mountain Ash and an impressive view from the summit. Situated on the flanks of the Baw Baw summit and centred on the alpine village and its facilities (accommodation, retail), Mt Baw Baw's mountain bike trails have the potential to become a highlight component of the G7 suite of locations.

Current trails rely heavily on pre-existing wide, cross country ski trails and walking tracks, with limited hand-built mountain bike trails set on old walking track and/or technical ground. They pass amidst snowgum and granite boulder gardens making use of the descents off the back of the resort and back down to the village.

From the summit Upper Tyers, Tanjil Link and Mueller's single tracks feature alternate sections between flowing and high-end technical riding, while Summit and Village trails are green 'exploratory' rides needing little technical expertise, but plenty of pedalling effort to access the summit given steep gradients. Village and McMillan trails meander through undulating terrain down to the boundary of the Baw Baw National Park in the north. The ride is picturesque with rest areas and picnic tables scattered along the trail.

Mt Baw Baw also features a pro-grade Downhill course and has developed a reputation amongst the riding community as one of the most challenging and exciting runs in the country. Dropping nearly 400 vertical metres over 1.3km, it has hosted Victorian and Australian Championship rounds among other prominent DH events and is a key drawcard for downhillers. Those not so experienced can bypass the more difficult features via alternate 'B-line' routes. Trails are open during the green season (excluding major event weekends) from the end of November until late April each year.

Resort management has recently invested in two eBikes, signalling a potential push into this expanding market, one much suited to both the hilly terrain of Baw Baw and the beginner-intermediate market usually attracted to the mountain for general outdoor active tourism.

Given its mountain top location, Mt Baw Baw offers excellent cooler respite and an ideal activity centre on hotter days, when other Bike Parks (in the valley) may be experiencing conditions too hot / humid to ride in.

CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN G7

Mount Baw Baw (along with Haunted Hills) represents perhaps the best potential drawcard of the G7 with a unique mountaintop location, pristine sub-alpine snowgum and granite environs, views and proximity to tourism services. With some investment leveraged from both G7 and Baw Baw Epic Trail proposals, it could become a major ride destination, verging on Nationally Significant, and tap into the coming wave of interest in mountain bike experience products to be sparked by the Warburton Mountain Bike Hub further to the west, and other significant destination developments coming on stream including Red Centre Adventure Ride (NT) and St Helens (Tasmania).

TRAIL TYPE / LENGTH

The table below provides the current trail type and length.

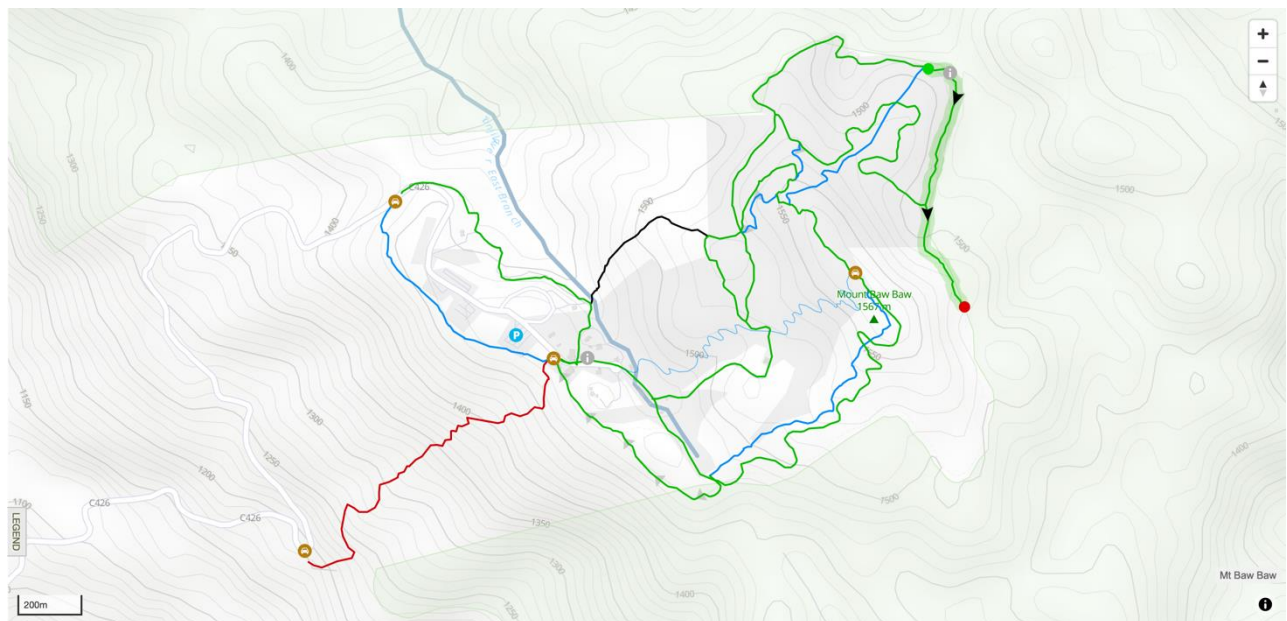
Table 18. Trail Type and Length at Mount Baw Baw MTB Park.

	Technical	Old School	Flow		Other	Total
			Hand	Machine		
Green	-	-	-	-	6.6km	6.6km
Blue	-	2.8	-	-	-	2.8km
Black	0.5	-	-	-	-	0.5km
Double Black	1.3km	-	-	-	-	1.3km
Total	1.8km	2.8km	-	-	6.6km	11.2km

MAPPING

The map below provides the trail maps for the current Mount Baw Baw MTB trails.

Figure 20. Current Trail Maps for Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort



TRAIL FORKS: [HTTPS://WWW.TRAILFORKS.COM/REGION/MT-BAW-BAW/](https://www.trailforks.com/region/mt-baw-baw/)

STATUS

The existing mountain bike trails on Mt Baw Baw do not meet current market expectations in terms of build and experience quality, nor is there enough product in terms of overall trail length / distance or trail skill mix. They do however explore some of the best natural landscapes and environs of all the G7 parks.

Apart from the custom-designed downhill trail, other alignments are typically based on legacy trails, being old walking trails or XC ski / access trails. This has resulted in 'make do' experiences where the ride quality and trail design are subservient to following old trail alignments. Climbing sections – of which there are many – do not match best practice build/design/alignment for an acceptable ride experience.

Some 'flow' sections have been re-created / built by hand and in some parts re-aligned, however the build quality can be average. Several problematic sections exist representing poor alignment (i.e. Top of Tyres blue trail goes directly into black level obstacles with no easy B-line, yet further down has good flow sections suitable to a lower-mid level Blue rider).

As noted in World Trail's MTB development assessment (2011)²²: "While (the mountain biking trails) can be used for cross-country mountain biking, it must be emphasised that they do not provide an ideal mountain biking experience. While they do immerse the rider in a beautiful and scenic alpine setting and generally have gentle gradients suitable for mountain biking, they are much wider than the preferred singletrack width that is favoured by most riders and generally have a grassy tread surface, which is quite slow and 'dead' to ride on. While they do provide a basic mountain biking experience that is suitable for novice riders, it is not sufficient to attract mountain biking enthusiasts in significant numbers." This assessment remains intact in 2020.

Overall, there is not enough distance of trails to be considered a critical mass (suggested at a minimum of 20-30km) that turns Mt Baw Baw from a 'location that happens to have trails' into a trail-specific destination. The current offering does not meet the criteria for either specific mountain bike tourism (usually Blue+ riders who expect a certain level of quality and a minimum total trail distance) or for incidental / add-on visitors wanting a ride experience as a secondary experience (usually Green-Blue riders).

Those travelling to Mt Baw Baw are currently, in general, likely to be visitors whose travel decisions have not been based purely on a ride offering, and thus most visitors are more likely to be a Green-Blue level rider. However, there are not enough Green-Blue trails of significant quality to deliver a satisfactory experience.

Trails are cleared prior to the opening of each season, and a ride season announced publicly.

In 2011, trail designer/builder, World Trail, presented a concept plan for a flow trail along with several other alignments – many of which could be revisited.

The retail outlet offers a selection of hire bikes, including two new E-bikes.

FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Mt Baw Baw, as a mountain resort, is comparatively well serviced with a restaurant and small retail shop open year-round, a diverse selection of accommodation available (although can still be limited by willingness of owners to open during green season, regarded as low volume), public toilets, numerous picnic areas and car parking.

There is some temporary (seasonal) signage on trails that is adequate but may be improved / added to.

SITE SPECIFICS

Trails are only open November through April. A cool and mild summer climate presents perfect conditions for cycling, especially appealing when heat/humidity experienced in the Latrobe Valley. The topography within the resort is of rolling hills and plateaus in the upper parts, dropping steeply down towards the south west, lending itself to a range of different styles of mountain biking. Beautiful sub-alpine scenery is a highlight of the upper parts of the resort, while Mountain Ash and Myrtle Beech forests presenting on the lower southern slopes of the resort have a similar aesthetic to the cool temperate rainforests of Canada (highly desirable environments for mountain bikers). The abundance of granite boulders throughout the upper parts of the resort and the village forms a critical part of the character of the resort and defining the style of the mountain biking trails.

Current trails are hand-built based on legacy trails and/or XC ski trails. Granite rock presents excellent opportunity for interesting ride features and surfaces, and soil is relatively stable, however fall lines and alignments are not always consistent with best practice design or sustainability.

Some available land parcels are unusable due to soft, water-logged, marshland type and vegetation and the need to be cautious of soil disturbance in a highly sensitive alpine and sub-alpine environment.

²² World Trail (2011) Assessment of Mount Baw Baw MTB Trails

There are numerous environmental, flora and fauna sensitivities including endangered species.

LAND MANAGERS

- Mt Baw Baw Resort Management / Southern Alpine Resort Management Board
- Parks Victoria (outside resort boundary)
- Department Environment, Land, Water and Planning (below 1200m).

ISSUES

- Limited season November – May
- Tight environmental controls given sensitive and protected vegetation types
- Limited space within resort boundaries to extend / re-align trails
- Limited green season resources for mountain biking
- Current limited investment by management in mountain biking infrastructure
- Management reservations about cost benefits / reservations regards investment in mountain bike trails without external funding
- Primary infrastructure resource/budget pull (i.e. necessity to divert limited budgets to critical infrastructure – power, waste treatment etc).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Trail upgrades / builds to be considered in conjunction with proposed Baw Baw Epic trail
2. World Trail concept alignment 2011 (section) is revisited – focusing on section from Village to bottom of DH run. Shuttle can service in conjunction with DH schedules.
3. Investigate Baw Baw Epic Adventure Trail alignment heading south-east from bottom of DH (or alternative as per map) to be considered as part of G7 / Baw Baw Bike Park development offering. i.e. Village > Bottom of DH > Buddys Ext or Christmas Ext could be considered as a hero component of Baw Baw Bike Park product as well as Phase One build of Epic trail alignment, serving dual (but related) products. Combined with upgrades to current trails, this radically builds out the trail offering of Baw Baw into a significant ride destination.

TRAIL TYPE / LENGTH

The table below shows the mix of existing trail types at Mount Baw Baw.

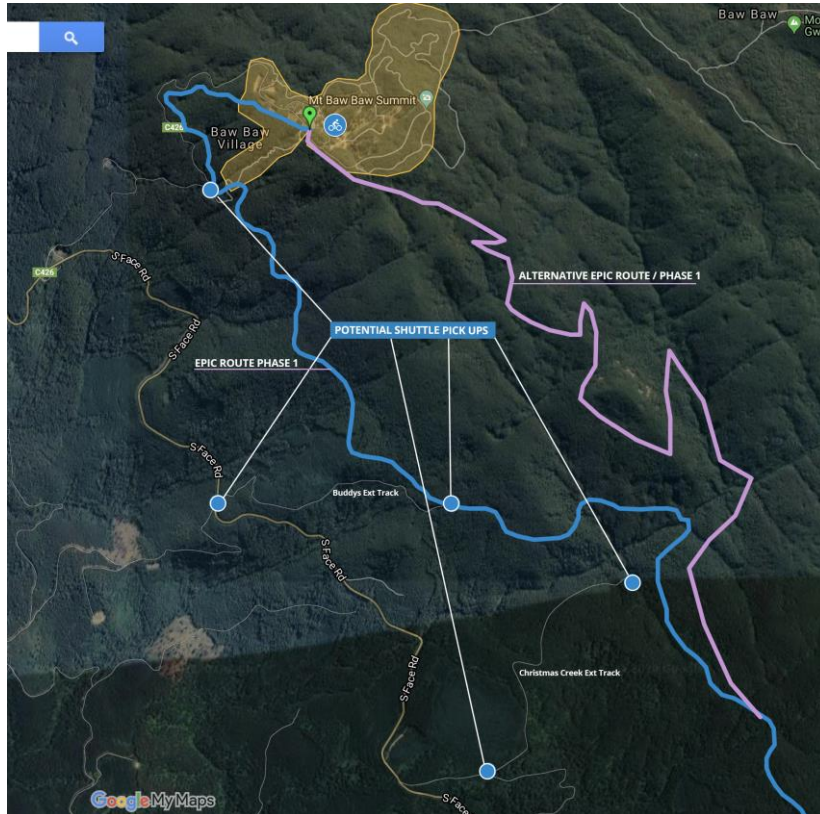
Table 19. Trail Distance Mount Baw Baw

Location	Ride distance from village (approx.)
Village	0km
Shuttle Point 1 - Bottom of DH	2.4km
Shuttle Point 2 – top of Buddy’s Track	7km
Shuttle Point 2B – bottom of Buddys Track	9.5km
Shuttle Point 3 – top of Christmas Creek Ext Track	10km
Shuttle Point 2B – of Christmas Creek Ext Track	13.5km

MAPPING

The following figure shows the relationship between the resort and the proposed Baw Baw Epic Ride.

Figure 21. Baw Baw Resort Trails and Relationship with the proposed Baw Baw Epic Ride



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Existing trails to be upgraded and re-aligned where necessary with a view to creating a more consistent experience, targeting Green and Blue level riders
2. 'Low hanging fruit' = targeting Black-level technical obstacles for removal / B-line alignment around, and other smaller re-alignments to better match lower-middle Blue standard
3. Ascent trails – new alignments considered, built to standard (off / aside XC trails)
4. New descent flow trail alignment / build from summit with consideration to environmental, sustainability and ski-run impacts. Two rough Summit Flow trail alignments suggested by Mt Baw Baw's Amon Bradshaw recommended for further investigation at approx. 1.6km each, adding 3km to overall trail suite*
5. Alignment of Green trail/s making best use of resort land that has less incline / climbing required – refer to World Trail Concept which is inclusive of several green/blue lower loops. This targets the family, children and beginner markets who would initially be wary of significant climbs (i.e. green trails that track to the summit using XC ski trails inclusive poor ride experience and significant physical exertion / likely 'hike a bike').
6. Consideration of a small (easy) skills or pump loop under tree canopy within land parcel to north west of village bowl (south of entrance road) – targeting children and beginner riders.
7. Continued investment in e-Bike hire units.
8. Ensure central village green season signage has mountain bike specific mapping.

**addition of two summit flow trails, Village to Christmas Creek Ext flow trail, plus 1-2 village bowl green trails, along with re-alignments/master planning of current trails would total approx. 30-32km, creating critical mass for significant trail tourism destination status.*

Costs By Park

For the purposes of developing the costs of the proposed G7 MTB Hub, the following costs have been developed based on Gippsland MTB Club Inc and TRC assessments. They have been developed based on experience and current market conditions. They have not been based on any form of master plan and as such may change assuming the G7 concept is developed further for implementation based on more detailed master plans.

Note – some of the costs at Mount Baw Baw have been increased and a different rate applied to reflect the alpine environment and the costs attached to undertaking work above 1200 metres in elevation.

Table 20. Cost per Element and Park

Element	Rate	Erica	Somewhere Good	Haunted Hills	Maryvale Pines	Blores Hill	Mt Baw Baw	Avon/Mt Hedrick	Total
Existing Trails		15	20	14	22	20	6	60	155
New Trails		10	5	15	10	10	20	0	170
Total Trails		25	25	29	30	30	26	60	325
Cost Estimates	p/km								
Native Veg & Offsets	3,000	30,000	15,000	45,000	-	30,000	120,000	??	240,000
Planning Approvals		5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	10,000	5,000	40,000
Trail Design	1,000	10,000	5,000	15,000	10,000	10,000	20,000	-	70,000
Assess, Mapping, Reports	1,000	10,000	5,000	15,000	10,000	10,000	20,000	-	70,000
Other Expert Assessments	3,500	35,000	17,500	52,500	35,000	35,000	140,000	-	315,000
Trail Construction - parks	30,000	300,000	150,000	450,000	300,000	300,000	1,200,000	-	2,700,000
Trail Construction - epic	50,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trail Signage	1,000	10,000	5,000	15,000	10,000	10,000	20,000	60,000	130,000
CGH Signage		5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	35,000
Project Management	3,000	30,000	15,000	45,000	30,000	30,000	60,000	180,000	390,000
Trail Improvements	10,000	150,000	200,000	-	200,000	200,000	60,000	600,000	1,410,000
Toilet		120,000	120,000	-	120,000	120,000	-	120,000	600,000
Carpark (gravel)		10,000	10,000	200,000	10,000	10,000	-	10,000	250,000
Shelters & tables etc		15,000	15,000	100,000	15,000	15,000	-	15,000	175,000
Bike Wash/Repair Station		5,000	5,000	-	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	30,000
Land acquisition						200,000	-		200,000
		735,000	572,500	947,500	755,000	985,000	1,660,000	1,000,000	6,655,000

SOURCE - TRC AND GIPPSLAND MTB CLUB INC



IMAGE 8 TRAILHEAD AT SOMEWHERE GOOD MTB PARK

8. Planning and Strategy Alignment

The proposed Central Gippsland G7 MTB Hub concept takes its lead from, and builds on, numerous relevant government strategies and plans published across tourism and destination management, mountain biking, and regional development sectors.

Several important regional and State-wide reports and strategies have been developed in recent years which provide the strategic context for the proposed Hub. The table below provides a summary of some of those.

Table 21. Previous Reports and Strategic Alignment

REPORT	CONTENT RELATED TO THE PROPOSED CENTRAL GIPPSLAND G7 MTB HUB
Gippsland Tracks & Trails Feasibility Study (2019)	Recommends the development of this feasibility study into the Central Gippsland G7 MTB Hub concept and highlights the need for ‘hero’ or ‘signature’ trail development as a priority for the Gippsland region.
Gippsland Destination Management Plan (2019)	Inclusive of the recommendation to “Develop signature or hero experiences, which will become the lead products for Gippsland as well as supporting experiences and services required to ensure visitor satisfaction.” And “Develop a framework for sustainable growth of the visitor economy, leveraging the attributes, businesses and activities quintessential to Gippsland. Identify potential new opportunities that can assist in growth and yield, have the potential to attract investment and/or revitalise existing assets. The G7 Hub aligns with the DMP’s primary ‘Experience Themes’ including as a Hero Experience and Support Experience under ‘Inspired Adventure’; as a Support Experience under ‘World Class Sanctuary’; and a Support Experience under ‘Vibrant Local Communities’.
Victorian Trail Strategy 2014-2024	Victorian State Government - provides the strategic context for trails and outlines the importance of tourism and nature-based products to Victoria. The strategy provides investment criteria for the guidance on which trails to invest in.
Gippsland Regional Plan – 2015 to 2020	A partnership between the leadership of Gippsland, including all three levels of government, RDA, the Committee for Gippsland, the Regional Managers Forum, GLN and other groups. The plan focuses on Economic Prosperity, Education and Community Wellbeing, Natural Environmental Stewardship, Connectivity. Specific to the trails feasibility studies and reinforcing potential strategic directions are the directives to attract investment in Gippsland’s public parks and the adaptation to climate change.
Central Gippsland Public Land Strategy 2018, DELWP	The Strategy aims to increase tourism-related jobs by 2,600. References Tasmania taking a lead in seeking investment in private infrastructure and trails tourism and recommends Gippsland has the core ingredients to do similar. Recommends two hero products, Walhalla/Baw Baw and Wilsons Prom, in the study area. Recommends Baw Baw Village improve mountain biking and bike lifting options.
Cycle Opportunities Assessment November 2017, Baw Baw Shire Council	Identifies the variety of trails, highly visible signage and infrastructure as three priorities for attracting mountain bikers bike riders.

REPORT	CONTENT RELATED TO THE PROPOSED CENTRAL GIPPSLAND G7 MTB HUB
Cycling in Baw Baw Feasibility Study 2020 Baw Baw Council	The study adopted by Council as a final in June 2020 recognises the opportunities for increased cycling in the Shire. The study references the opportunities for mountain biking – specifically the potential for an increased Erica MTB park and a flow track from Baw Baw to the Latrobe Valley, directly aligning with the intent of this feasibility study.
Mt Baw Baw ARMB Mtn Biking Trails Concept Plan June 2011. Mt Baw Baw Alpine Resort	Identifies mountain biking as a core green season activity on mountain and presents a concept alignment for a flow trail from the village resort to South Face Road, an alignment of some relevancy to Mt Baw Baw’s inclusion in the G7 MTB Hub.
Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride) Feasibility Study (2020 – In Development)	Proposed 100km+ ‘hero’ point-to-point mountain bike trail from Mt Baw Baw to the Latrobe Valley and its terminus at Glengarry. The proposed Ride intersects with three of the proposed mountain biking hubs (Mt Baw Baw, Erica and Somewhere Good). Potential economies of scale suggested in aspects of parallel development.
Draft Public Land Mountain Bike Guidelines 2020. Parks Victoria	The document provides a range of principles and planning guidelines for the development and use of mountain bike trails on public land in Victoria. The DRAFT provides for a strategic assessment of the proposal and looks at each proposal in the context of the underlying land tenure upon which it is built and the need for the trail.

This is a scan of the available high-level strategy and plans that may influence the proposed development of the trail. It is also acknowledged that there are many other ‘Statutory’ approvals that would be required to be achieved for the trails to proceed, assuming that it is taken forward to the next phase. These considerations might include but not be limited to:

- Park Management Plans and their zones and prescriptions
- Native Vegetation Policy and its implications for construction of new trails
- Environmental Considerations including the protection of threatened species
- Cultural Heritage and the need for a Cultural Heritage Management Plan or survey
- Fire and Emergency requirements including building code issues for infrastructure.

Many of these items would need to be considered in the development of a Master Plan for the proposed trail which would consider these ‘approval’ and other regulatory and statutory issues in more detail.

9. Alignment with the Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride Proposal

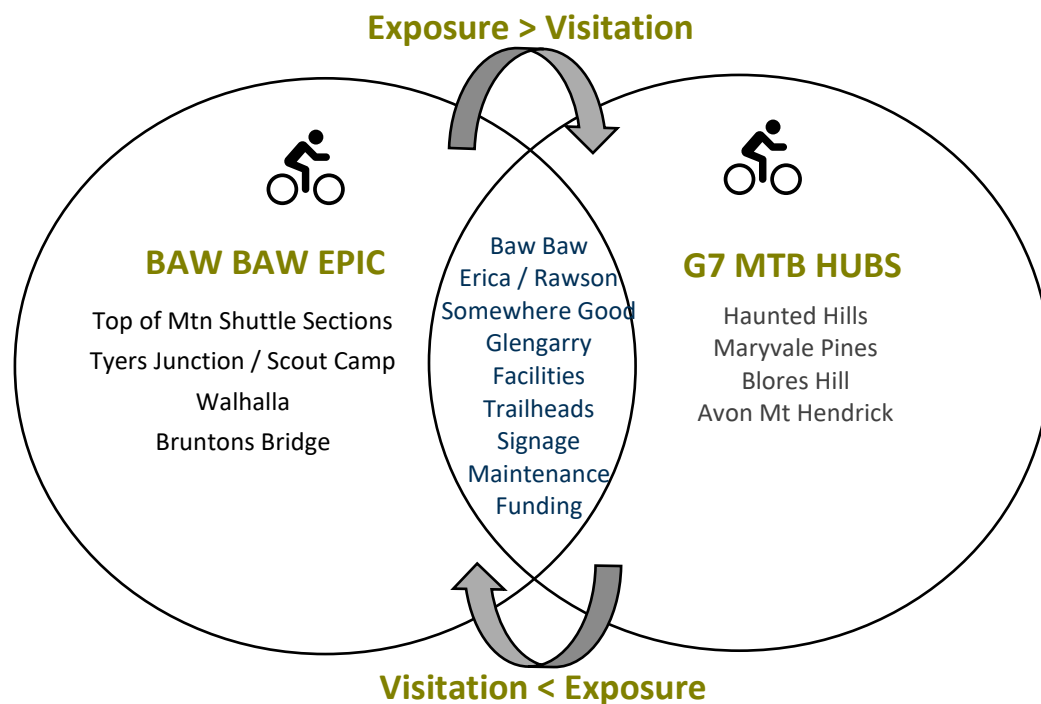
In considering the Central Gippsland 'G7' MTB Hub concept, it is important to investigate the concurrent development of the proposed Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride proposal²³.

The Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride concept centres on a proposed 100+km market-leading ride experience that aims to increased visitation and economic stimulus as it targets the rapid growth in 'outdoor active' travel and the highly-desirable 'adventure ride' mountain biking markets.

Three of the G7 Hub bike parks are located along the proposed Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride draft alignment.

Importantly:

- Three of the G7 bike parks would be intersected by and provide trail alignments, access points and facilities for the proposed Baw Baw Epic. These are: Mt Baw Baw (trailhead + trail sections); Mt Erica (access + trail sections); Somewhere Good (access + trail sections).
- Development of the G7 Hub and associated bike parks will benefit the Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride proposal and influence Epic trail alignment and vice versa.
- Staged sections of the Baw Baw Epic could be pre-developed as part of G7 Hub development, giving best economies of scale / investment returns for both projects and accelerating the three G7 hubs involved.
- Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride funding strategies could leverage broader benefits and infrastructure outcomes for the G7 MTB Hub.



²³ Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride Feasibility and Business Case (TRC Tourism, 2020)

10. Opportunities

This section investigates the opportunities that could arise from the development of the proposed Central Gippsland G7 Hub. The following are not exhaustive, and others will emerge over time.

Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride Feasibility Study

As described, the parallel development of the *Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride Feasibility Study* will create opportunities for better economies of scale and return on investment, with some layering of infrastructure spend serving both projects simultaneously while minimising overall infrastructure spend.

Further, each project will deliver marketing exposure and visitation benefit to the other, with users of the Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride being exposed to the G7 offerings and vice versa, inspiring further exploration of the region's mountain biking offer, repeat and extended visitation.

Gippsland Smart Specialisation Strategy

The scale of the trail design, build, operation and maintenance required by the Central Gippsland G7 Hub bike parks (combined with the Baw Baw Epic Adventure Trail) strengthens opportunity to leverage regional growth initiatives such as the Gippsland Smart Specialisation program (RMIT / Melbourne University / Latrobe Valley Authority) under its innovation stream.

Further, the G7 MTB Hub could contribute to seeding research and development of the first Australian Standards for MTB Park and Trail infrastructure, with the potential based on number and diversity of bike ride products required across the proposed G7 suite and Baw Baw Epic.

The G7 Hub also gives leverage for Gippsland to become a design and build centre for Australia MTB park infrastructure features that might include creating skills capacity to review, design, build and install within G7 parks and the Epic trail. Focusing on 'smart features' that could include removeable/transportable features and bridges, the potential business may lead to opportunity for broader local public/private build/maintenance and skills development to take on innovative MTB feature design and build. Eventually this may lead to other market/export ready status.

Details of the approach can be found at: <https://sustainable.unimelb.edu.au/research/research-projects/gippsland-smart-specialisation-strategy>

Ride Nation / Gippsland Ride Centre

Cycling Australia's strategy to build participation in bike riding has a dedicated participation brand 'Ride Nation' and aims for more people to enjoy riding their bike – regardless of age, circumstance, skill level and location.

The online program endorses current riding programs and activities being delivered around the country and builds value adding partnerships to support these to achieve greater reach. The brand will be realised via digital spaces, physical spaces and school programs. The Ride Nation presents an opportunity for the G7 MTB Hub to engage and achieve exposure to a targeted community, while giving tour operators and coaches a forum to market their experiences. As part of the Ride Nation program, a series of designated physical 'Ride Centres' are being created – currently in Ballarat and Wollongong. It is planned that Warragul will host a centre representing Gippsland as a Ride Centre.

The development of the Central Gippsland G7 Mountain Bike Hub will support the Ride Centre in Warragul.

More information can be found at www.ridenation.com.au/

Other Elements

All season ride visitation

Featuring bike parks set at various altitudes from 1300+ metres down to 150m, located within contrasting geographies and soil profiles, and featuring differing micro-climates, the G7 Hub provides for all-season visitation. Whilst the altitude of Mount Baw Baw makes winter use of this alpine bike park impossible (potentially closed from late May through late September), the remainder of the bike hubs, especially those located in the Latrobe Valley, means the G7 in effect remains open year-round. This extends the useability of and visitation to the G7 bike parks by locals and visitors. This also makes for a more attractive proposition for those businesses invested in servicing mountain bike visitation, smoothing out seasonal variations to some degree. This all-year riding aspect could be a promoted feature of the G7 MTB Hub, given many other MTB trails in Victoria are closed in this period.

Cross-region visitor flow – Warburton Valley

The proposed \$12 million mountain biking trail development underway in the Warburton Valley (approximately 100km to the west via Noojee) presents an opportunity for riders to be inspired to travel further afield across the range, to extend their ride experience. It is noted that the development of Warburton is currently being considered for a full EES process.

Warburton visitation is likely to be day / weekend visitation driven from the Melbourne market. With appropriate communication and marketing of the G7 MTB Hub and associated Baw Baw Epic Adventure Ride, this market (130,000 mountain bike visitors per annum of which 120,000 are day visitors and 10,000 are overnight visitors²⁴) can be tapped in to and inspired to travel further east on their next ride adventure, to experience the variety of offering across the G7 Hub. The growth in the ride market being developed and supported in the Warburton Valley represents flow-on growth for Gippsland with potential users attracted by the hero ‘signature trail’ ride product that will be the positioning of the G7 MTB Hub.

Events & Tours

The potential for events and tours involving all bike parks within the G7 Hub should be integrated into any future brand and marketing strategy, with considerations to further economic stimulus and exposure outcomes. Events drive not only event period visitation and extended visitor stay spend, they also drive return visitation outside of event periods, and create high visibility digital marketing outcomes in terms of social media.

With a well-managed, branded and marketed G7 MTB Hub, tour operators have the foundation product on which to design and operate new tour and school group activity offerings, helping build trail visitation capacity while building local economy and employment via operational spend and local employment (guides etc). This sector is important in considering attracting longer-stay, high-yield, low impact tourism.

PR & Marketing

As with any major nature-based tourism attraction, marketing and PR play a significant role in creating destination visibility, which translates into impacting ‘front of mind’ destination decision making. Traditional media articles, niche media coverage (i.e. MTB) and, specifically, social media user-generated exposure via imagery, commentary and recommendation plays a powerful role in making Gippsland a destination of choice. A product such as the G7 MTB Hub, with inherent inspirational landscapes and associated visual content outputs (above the line marketing and user-generated), provides a collective anchor for online and in-media visibility. It also works to deliver visitation not just directly on trail, but to the broader Gippsland region, with off-trail attractions gaining complementary exposure.

²⁴ Warburton MTB Feasibility Study. TRC Tourism 2017

11. Economic Impact Assessment

Introduction

This report provides an economic impact assessment of the proposed G7 Trails development. The results are indicative of the potential benefits from the development and operation of the trail network. The modelling is based on estimates of annual rides/users (in different categories), and other assumptions utilised in quantifying spending in the region.

For operations, several types of users are identified including locals from the Latrobe Economic Region, visitors from Melbourne and surrounds, and users from other regions.

The economic impacts of the trails arise from:

1. spending by these users/visitors in the towns adjacent to the trail and other spending in the broader region; spending associated with events
2. health benefits of active recreation activities
3. a notional value of the trails to individual users.

Visitors from outside the region (particularly overnight visitors/users) generate significant expenditure covering:

- food and beverage
- accommodation (for overnight stayers)
- recreation and other services
- transport.

Trail Users and Spending

Trail Users / Visitors

There is limited information direct information on trail users for the G7 collectively. G7 Hub user numbers (rides) have been estimated for a 10-year period of operations for several user categories. These user categories include:

- Locals - Latrobe Economic Region
- Visitors from Melbourne and Surrounds and
- Other Regional Users.

Assumptions were also applied to estimate the number of day visits and overnight visits in each category.

The 10-year modelling was based on:

- calculating a base estimate of rides on the trail using the data and assumptions (year 5 of trail operations)
- allowing for establishment of the trail in the market and initial growth in users (60% of base in year 1, 70% in year 2, 80% in year 3, 90% year 4)
- subsequent growth is based on a growth rate of 3% per year from year 6-10.

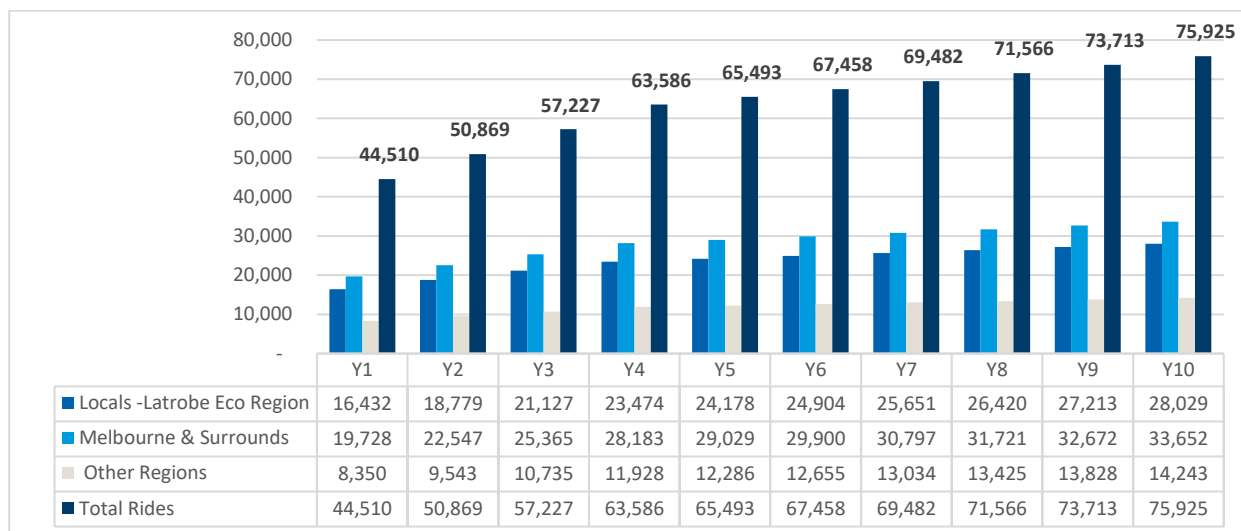
The number of rides on the trail were estimated for the use groups²⁵.

²⁵ User estimates (rides) were obtained from G7 Trail Users and Project Cost Estimates, Gippsland MTB Inc., March 2020

Rides on the trail are projected to increase from 44,510 in Year 1 to 75,925 in year 10.

The figure and table below provide the estimate for the trail user numbers

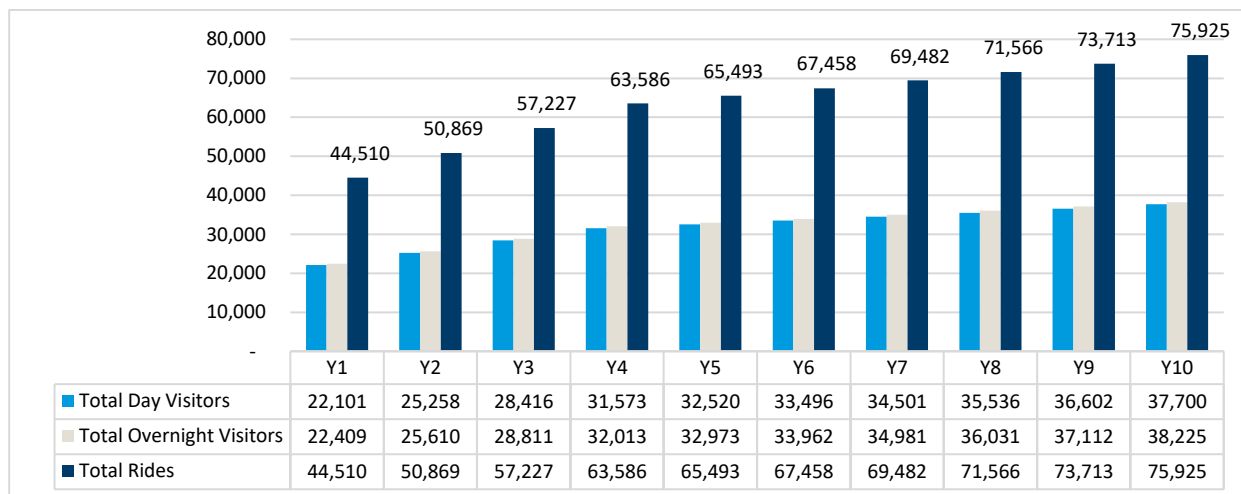
Figure 22. G7 Trail Rides Years 1-10 (annual estimates)



SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Estimates were made of day visitors and overnight visitors based on a number of assumptions in relation to each of the trail user groups. The figure below provides the details.

Figure 23. G7 Trail Rides – Visitor Type Years 1-10 (numbers)



SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

The data is further broken into visitor source and whether they stay overnight or are assumed to be day visitors.

Table 22. G7 Trail Rides User Groups and Visitor Types Estimates Years 1-10 (number)

Rides on Trails										
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Day Visitors/Users										
Latrobe Economic Region	13,145	15,023	16,901	18,779	19,343	19,923	20,521	21,136	21,770	22,423
Melbourne & Surrounds	3,946	4,509	5,073	5,637	5,806	5,980	6,159	6,344	6,534	6,730
Other Regions	5,010	5,726	6,441	7,157	7,372	7,593	7,821	8,055	8,297	8,546
Total Day Visitors	22,101	25,258	28,416	31,573	32,520	33,496	34,501	35,536	36,602	37,700
Overnight Visitors/Users										
Latrobe Economic Region	3,286	3,756	4,225	4,695	4,836	4,981	5,130	5,284	5,443	5,606
Melbourne & Surrounds	15,783	18,037	20,292	22,547	23,223	23,920	24,637	25,376	26,138	26,922
Other Regions	3,340	3,817	4,294	4,771	4,914	5,062	5,214	5,370	5,531	5,697
Total Overnight Visitors	22,409	25,610	28,811	32,013	32,973	33,962	34,981	36,031	37,112	38,225

SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Event Analysis

The follow shows the modelling of events and associated spending in the region. It is assumed that 1 event is held in year 2; 2 events in year 3; and 3 events per year are held from year 4 onwards. All are assumed to attract 500 participants and additional spectators/accompanying persons.

Total spending by participants and spectators/accompanying persons increase from \$340,000 in year 2 to \$1.020 million from year 4 onwards,

Table 23. Assumptions Used in Modelling Events

Event Modelling	Assumptions
Events & Participants	
Number of Events (per year)	Year 1 = 0; Year 2=1; Year 3-10 = 3 All 2-day events
Number of participants	500 per event
Accompanying Persons/Spectators	Average 1.5 per participant
Visitor types	
Day Visitors	20%
Overnight visitors	80% Stay = 2 nights; assume twin share
Average Spending	
Day visitors	\$120 per day (average)
Overnight Visitors	\$280 per day (average)

SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

The events generate regional spending from event participants and visitors as shown in the following table.

Table 24. Spending in Region from G7 Trails Events Years 1-10 (estimates)

EVENTS										
10 Year Analysis	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
No Events	0	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Participants										
Participants per event		500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
Total participants	0	500	1000	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500
Accompanying persons (ave 1.5 per participant)	0	750	1500	2250	2250	2250	2250	2250	2250	2250
Total Participants & Accompanying	0	1250	2500	3750	3750	3750	3750	3750	3750	3750
Visitor Types										
Day visitors (20%)	0	250	500	750	750	750	750	750	750	750
Overnight visitors (80%)	0	1000	2000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Stay overnight (2 nights)	0	2000	4000	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000
Room nights (Assume Twin Share)	0	1000	2000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Spending in Region (\$ 2020 prices)										
Day Visitors	\$0	\$60,000	\$120,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000
Overnight visitors	\$0	\$280,000	\$560,000	\$840,000	\$840,000	\$840,000	\$840,000	\$840,000	\$840,000	\$840,000
Total Spending	\$0	\$340,000	\$680,000	\$1,020,000	\$1,020,000	\$1,020,000	\$1,020,000	\$1,020,000	\$1,020,000	\$1,020,000

SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Spending in Region

Spending in the region was estimated based on a range of information, including the recent TRA Local Government Profiles, combined with a number of assumptions on spend rates and mix of visitors. The table below outlines the assumptions.

Table 25. Assumptions used in Modelling Trail User Spending

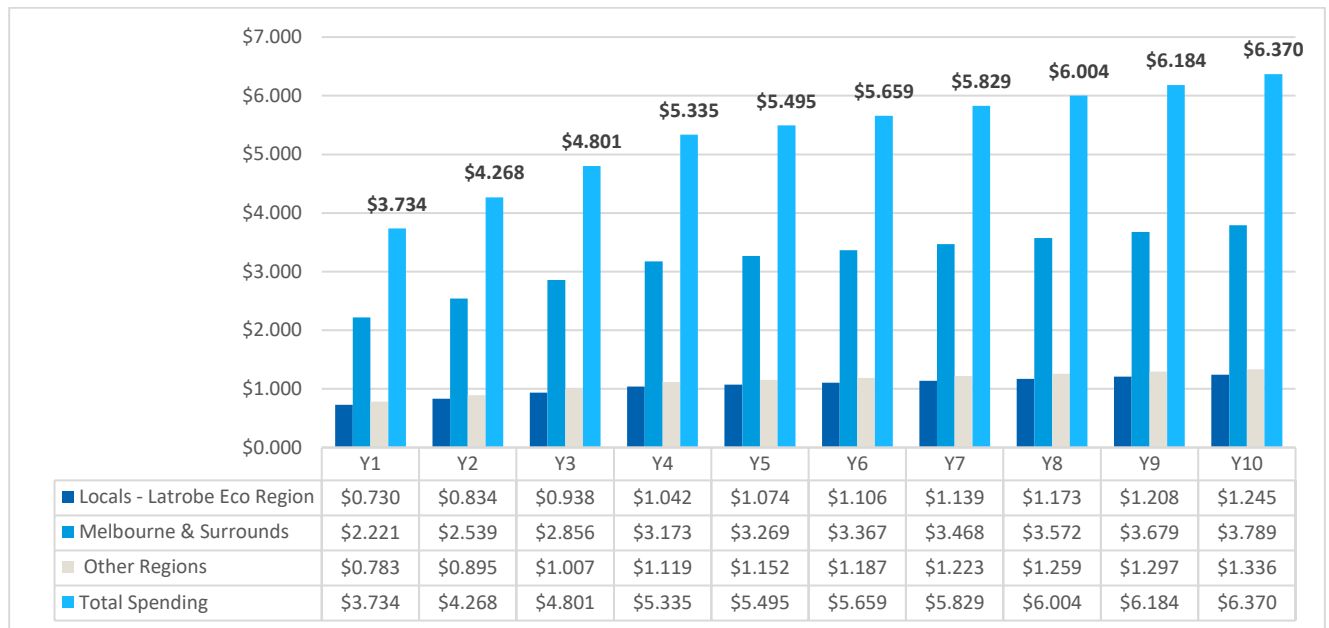
Modelling Assumptions	Users Mix		Overnights Length of Stay			Average Spending (per day) ²⁶	
Rider Categories	Day Visitors %	Overnights Visitors %	1 night	2 nights	4 nights	Overnight Visitors	Day visitors
Locals - Latrobe Eco Region	80%	20%	50%	35%	15%	\$122	\$25
Melbourne & Surrounds	20%	80%	50%	35%	15%	\$122	\$75
Other Regions	30%	70%	50%	35%	15%	\$122	\$75

SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

The combination of user numbers by type, average spending and average length of stay is used to estimate annual spending (in constant 2020 dollars) in the region. The following figure shows annual spending for each of the user types. Spending in the region by trails users increases from \$3.734 million in year 1 to \$6.370 million in year 10.

²⁶ Average visitor spending (overnight \$122 and day visitors \$75) is based on an unweighted average for 3 LGAs – Latrobe LGA, Baw Baw LGA and Wellington LGA (TRA Local Government Profiles 2018). Spending by locals – day visitors \$25 is an assumed amount (e.g. coffee/food).

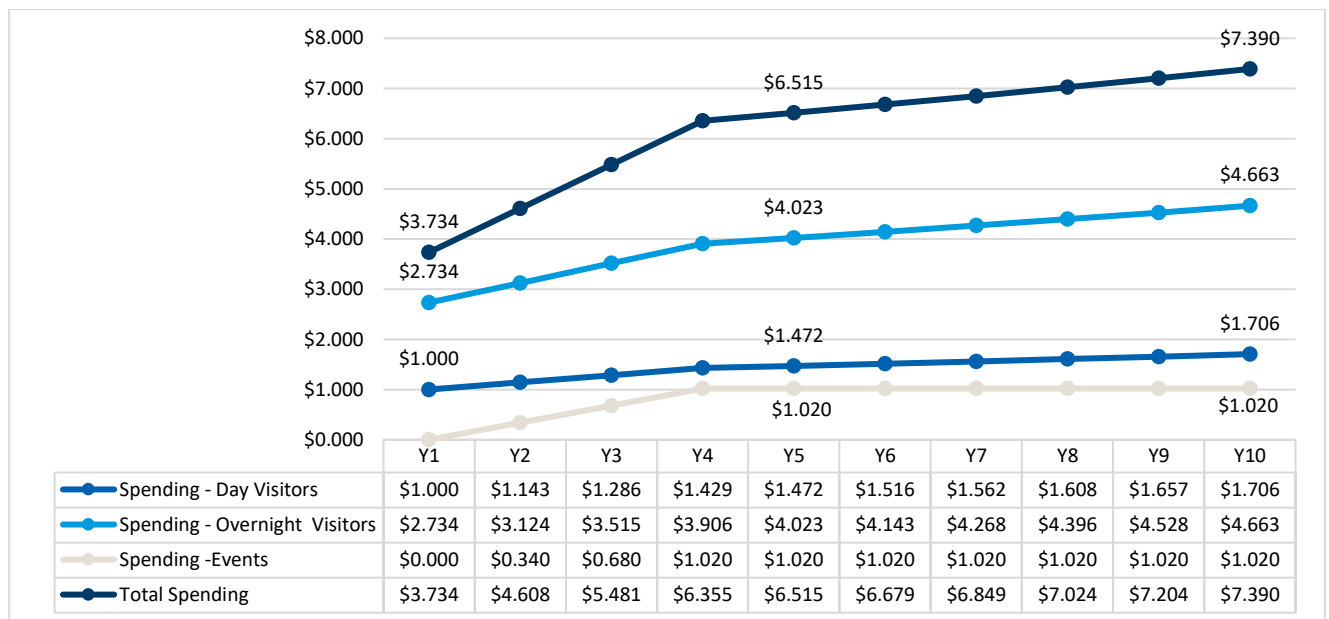
Figure 24. G7 Trails User Spending in Region (\$million 2020 prices)



SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

The figure below includes spending in the region trails users and the events program. Total annual spending associated with the trails increases from \$3.734 million in year 1 to \$7.390 million in year 10.

Figure 25. Total Annual Spending Generated by G7 Trails Users (\$million 2020 prices)



SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

The following table shows indicative estimates of the mix of spending by category for day visitors and for overnight visitors.

Total expenditure comprises:

- spending on trail-linked activities (including spending on bike related expenses and other spending - food and beverage etc.) in proximity to the trails
- spending on accommodation (for overnight stayers) and meals during their stay
- spending on other recreational and tourism services.

Table 26. Spending by Trail Users in Region Year 1-10 Indicative Estimates (\$ million – constant prices \$2020)

Type of Spending (\$ million)	Share of Spending %	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Total Day Visitors											
Food	65%	\$0.650	\$0.743	\$0.836	\$0.929	\$0.957	\$0.985	\$1.015	\$1.045	\$1.077	\$1.109
Bike Hire	15%	\$0.150	\$0.171	\$0.193	\$0.214	\$0.221	\$0.227	\$0.234	\$0.241	\$0.248	\$0.256
Guides	5%	\$0.050	\$0.057	\$0.064	\$0.071	\$0.074	\$0.076	\$0.078	\$0.080	\$0.083	\$0.085
Shuttle	15%	\$0.150	\$0.171	\$0.193	\$0.214	\$0.221	\$0.227	\$0.234	\$0.241	\$0.248	\$0.256
Total Spending - Day Visitors		\$1.000	\$1.143	\$1.286	\$1.429	\$1.472	\$1.516	\$1.562	\$1.608	\$1.657	\$1.706
Total Overnight Visitors											
Food & Accommodation	60%	\$1.640	\$1.875	\$2.109	\$2.343	\$2.414	\$2.486	\$2.561	\$2.637	\$2.717	\$2.798
Bike Hire	20%	\$0.547	\$0.625	\$0.703	\$0.781	\$0.805	\$0.829	\$0.854	\$0.879	\$0.906	\$0.933
Guides	5%	\$0.137	\$0.156	\$0.176	\$0.195	\$0.201	\$0.207	\$0.213	\$0.220	\$0.226	\$0.233
Shuttle	15%	\$0.410	\$0.469	\$0.527	\$0.586	\$0.603	\$0.622	\$0.640	\$0.659	\$0.679	\$0.700
Total Spending Overnights		\$2.734	\$3.124	\$3.515	\$3.906	\$4.023	\$4.143	\$4.268	\$4.396	\$4.528	\$4.663
Total Users											
Food & Accommodation		\$2.291	\$2.618	\$2.945	\$3.272	\$3.370	\$3.471	\$3.576	\$3.683	\$3.793	\$3.907
Bike Hire		\$0.697	\$0.796	\$0.896	\$0.995	\$1.025	\$1.056	\$1.088	\$1.120	\$1.154	\$1.189
Guides		\$0.187	\$0.213	\$0.240	\$0.267	\$0.275	\$0.283	\$0.291	\$0.300	\$0.309	\$0.318
Shuttle		\$0.560	\$0.640	\$0.720	\$0.800	\$0.824	\$0.849	\$0.874	\$0.901	\$0.928	\$0.955
Total Spending Users		\$3.734	\$4.268	\$4.801	\$5.335	\$5.495	\$5.659	\$5.829	\$6.004	\$6.184	\$6.370

SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Economic Impacts of the G7 Trails

The economic impacts of the trail development are modelled for both the construction phase and the operations phase. The impacts are measured in terms of full-time equivalent jobs (FTE) and the increase in regional income that is generated by trail users and their spending in the region.²⁷

²⁷ Regional income is the total net income generated from the activity and covers wages and salaries of employees and profits of businesses within the region. It includes income generated directly within the business and indirect income, which is generated in other regional businesses (wages and profits) from the multiplier impacts of employee spending on the region. In the modelling of income generated, income tax and GST on spending, are both treated as leakages from the region.

Construction Phase

A significant number of jobs and an increase in regional income will be generated during the construction phase of the project.

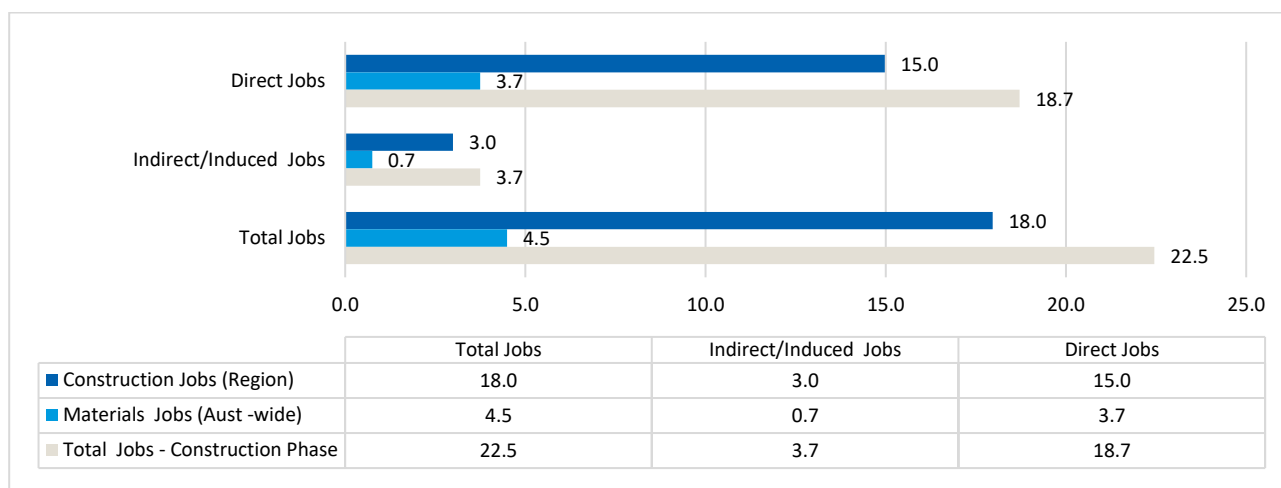
Construction Costs

In modelling construction jobs, we used the cost components that are associated with trail and other facilities construction, and these total \$4.990 million (of a total project cost of \$6.655 million). These estimates were provided by Gippsland Mountain Bike Club and verified by TRC Tourism.

Economic Impacts – Construction Phase

A total of 22.5 FTE jobs (18.7 direct jobs and 3.7 indirect/induced jobs) would be generated during the construction period. The direct jobs comprise 15 jobs in on-site construction and 3.7 jobs in materials/equipment supply. The figure and table below show and provide the details.

Figure 26. G7 Trails Construction Phase Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Jobs (Number)



SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Table 27. Construction Phase – G7 Trail FTE Jobs Generated (number)

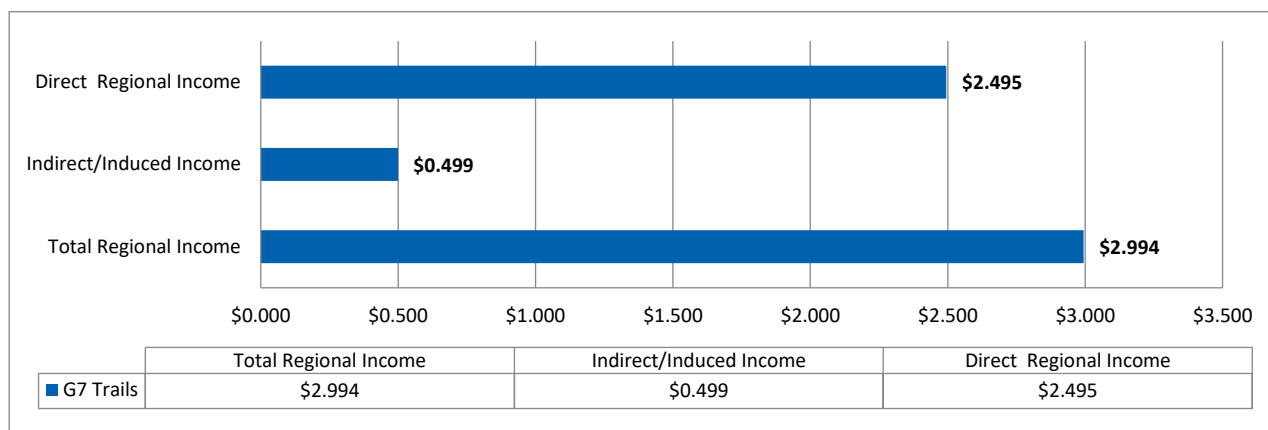
Construction Phase FTE Jobs	Direct Jobs	Indirect/ Induced Jobs	Total Jobs
Construction Jobs (Region)	15.0	3.0	18.0
Materials & Equipment Jobs (Aust - wide)	3.7	0.7	4.5
Total Jobs - Construction Phase	18.7	3.7	22.5

SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

The following chart shows the increase in regional income generated during the construction of the trail.²⁸ During construction a total of \$2.994 million in regional income would be generated (\$2.495 million direct income and \$0.499 million indirect/induced).

²⁸ This assumes the construction workforce would come from Latrobe Region and adjacent areas.

Figure 27. Construction Phase – G7 Trails Increase in Regional Income (\$m 2020prices)



SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Operations Phase

The operations phase economic impacts of the trail are driven by the expenditure of visitors/users in towns adjacent to the trail and in the broader region. MCA's regional economic model is used to estimate the employment and income impacts of the trail. The model allocates spending across relevant industry sectors and takes account of the significant shares of the gross spending by visitors/users, which leaks out of the region.²⁹

Employment Impacts

The charts and tables below show the increase in jobs in the region generated by each of the user/visitor groups.

The operation of the trails would generate a total of 19.7 direct full-time equivalent jobs in year 1, increasing to 33.6 direct FTE jobs in Year 10. Total jobs (direct and indirect/induced) are 23.7 FTE in year 1 increasing to 39.8 in year 10.

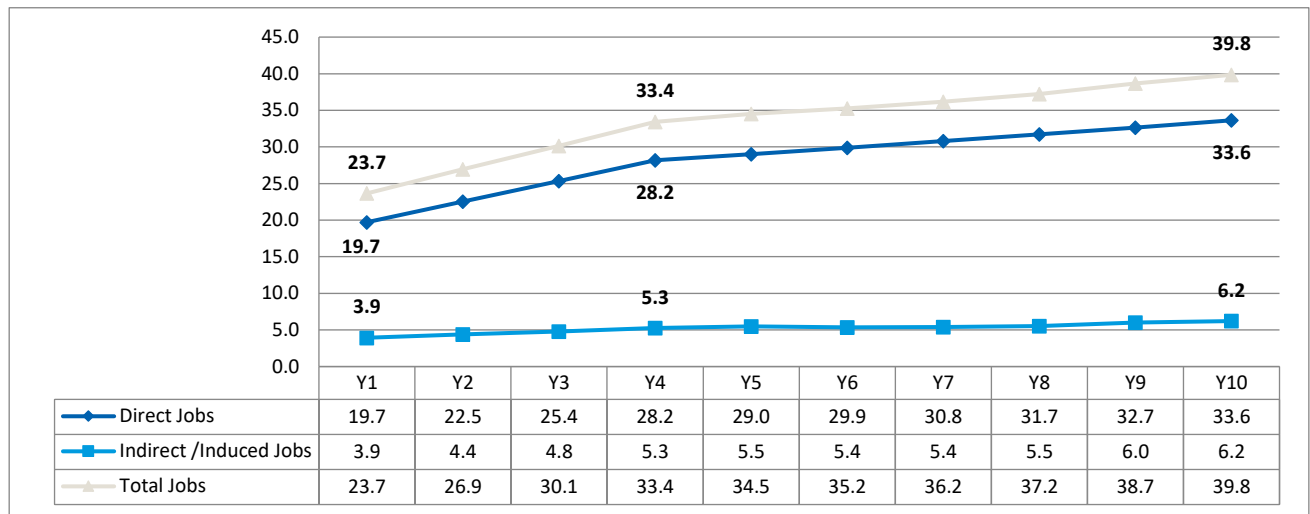
Of the direct jobs in year 10, day visitors would account for 10.2 FTE jobs, overnight visitors for 23.5 FTE jobs.

On a sector basis, the jobs (FTE- direct and indirect) generated by trail users are mainly concentrated in:

- accommodation
- food and beverage
- recreational services and other visitor services
- transport (including shuttles)
- other retail.

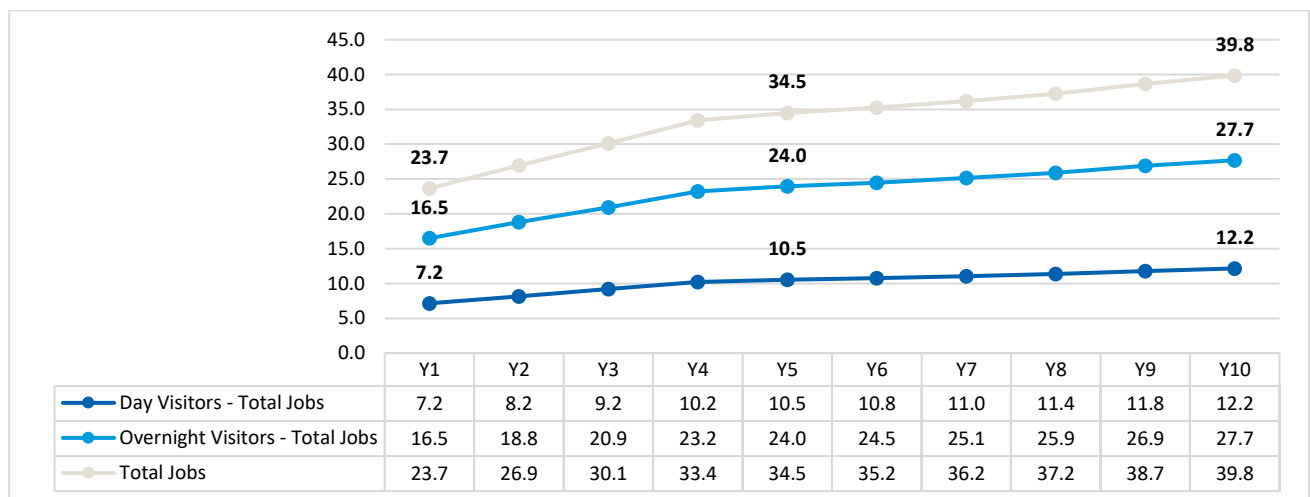
²⁹ The spending by trail users is not the economic impact and does not represent the increase in regional income. There is a major leakage of this spending out of the region due to: the GST (10%); and a significant component of the value of services and products purchased by visitors comes from outside the region (e.g. food ingredients, soft drinks, beer, consumer products bought etc.). The model takes account of these leakages and estimates employment impacts and the increase in regional income.

Figure 28. Total Jobs Generated by Trail Operations – Years 1-10 (FTE no.)



SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Figure 29. Total Jobs in Region Generated by Trail Operations (FTE No.)



SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Table 28. Total Jobs Generated by Trail Operations Years 1-10 (FTE No.)

Operations: Jobs Generated by Trail Users/Visitors	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Day Users/Visitors										
Direct Jobs	6.0	6.8	7.7	8.5	8.8	9.0	9.3	9.6	9.9	10.2
Indirect/Induced Jobs	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0
Total Jobs	7.2	8.2	9.2	10.2	10.5	10.8	11.0	11.4	11.8	12.2
Overnight User/Visitors										
Direct Jobs	13.8	15.7	17.7	19.6	20.2	20.8	21.5	22.1	22.8	23.5
Indirect/Induced Jobs	2.7	3.1	3.2	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.8	4.1	4.2
Total Jobs	16.5	18.8	20.9	23.2	24.0	24.5	25.1	25.9	26.9	27.7
Total All Users/Visitors										
Direct Jobs	19.7	22.5	25.4	28.2	29.0	29.9	30.8	31.7	32.7	33.6
Indirect/Induced Jobs	3.9	4.4	4.8	5.3	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.5	6.0	6.2
Total Jobs	23.7	26.9	30.1	33.4	34.5	35.2	36.2	37.2	38.7	39.8

Source: MCa modelling & estimates, May 2020

The 3 events per year would add an equivalent of 4.8 direct jobs (FTE) in organisation and staging.

The development of the trail will see the development of local MTB service industry. The industry analysis highlights that total full time equivalent (FTE) jobs generated by trail users will be in:

- recreation services/other services (MTB hire, guides, equipment etc.) – 12.9 jobs in year 10
- transport (including shuttles) 4.4 jobs in year 10
- accommodation 7.2 jobs in year 10
- food and beverage 9.6 jobs in year 10.

Table 29. Total Jobs Generated by G7 Trails Users by Industry Years 1-10 (FTE No.)

Total All Jobs Direct & Indirect	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Day Visitors/Users										
Accommodation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Food & Beverage	1.9	2.2	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.2
Recreation Services/Other Services	3.4	3.9	4.4	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.8
Other Retail	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3
Health	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Transportation	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2
Communication	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Education	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Miscellaneous Services	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Total	7.2	8.2	9.2	10.2	10.5	10.8	11.0	11.4	11.8	12.2
Overnight Visitors/Users										
Accommodation	4.2	4.8	5.4	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.0	7.2
Food & Beverage	3.8	4.3	4.8	5.3	5.5	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.4
Recreation Services/Other Services	4.3	4.8	5.4	6.0	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.7	7.0	7.2
Other Retail	1.6	1.8	2.0	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
Health	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4
Transportation	1.9	2.2	2.4	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.2
Communication	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Miscellaneous Services	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6
Total	16.5	18.8	20.9	23.2	24.0	24.5	25.1	25.9	26.9	27.7
Total Visitors/Users										
Accommodation	4.2	4.8	5.4	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.0	7.2
Food & Beverage	5.7	6.5	7.2	8.0	8.3	8.5	8.7	9.0	9.3	9.6
Recreation Services/Other Services	7.6	8.7	9.8	10.8	11.2	11.5	11.8	12.1	12.6	12.9
Other Retail	2.4	2.7	3.0	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.8	3.9
Health	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6
Transportation	2.6	3.0	3.3	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.4
Communication	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Miscellaneous Services	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8
Total	23.7	26.9	30.1	33.4	34.5	35.2	36.2	37.2	38.7	39.8

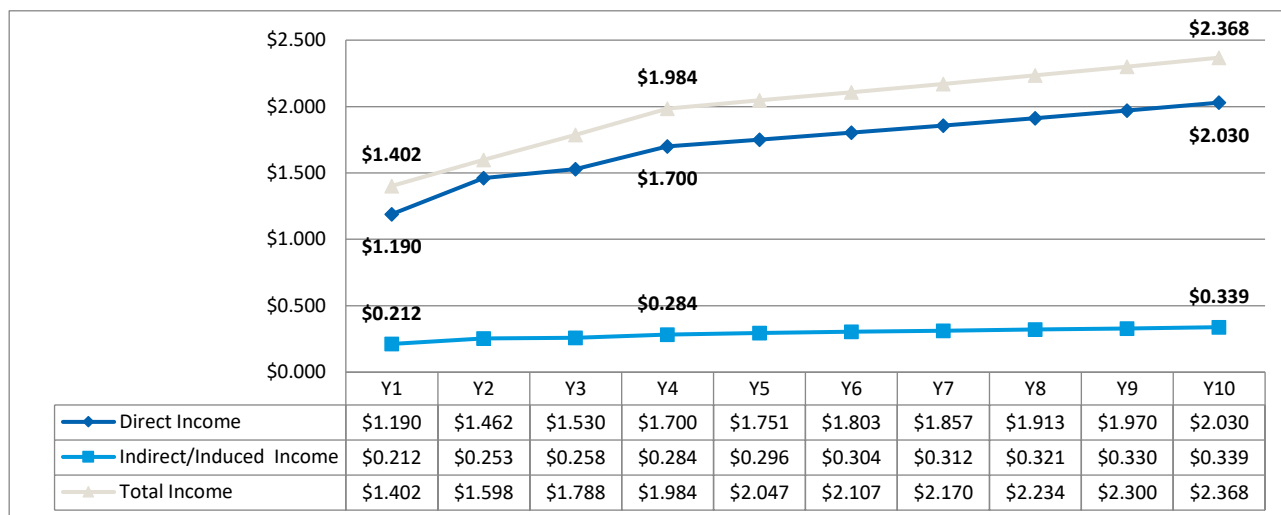
SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Regional Income Impacts

The increase in regional income generated annually by the operation of the G7 Trails and visitor/user spending totals \$1.402 million in year 1, increasing to \$2.368 million in year 10.³⁰

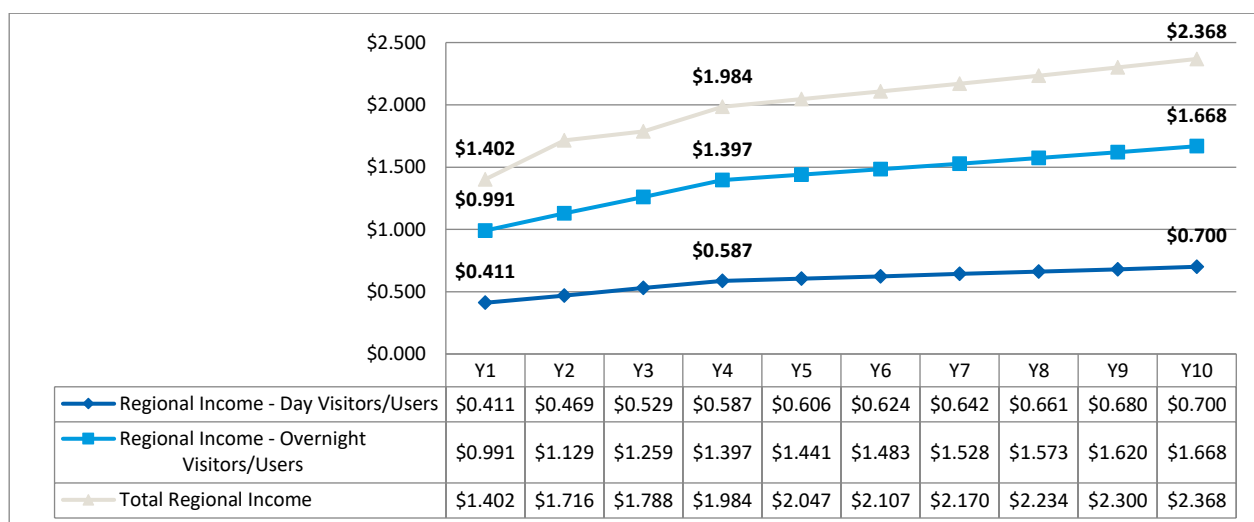
The increase in income (direct and indirect/induced) generated by day visitors/users (including locals and regional users) is \$0.411 million in year 1 and \$0.700 million in year 10. Overnight users/visitors boost total regional income by \$0.991 million in year 1 and \$2.368 million in year 10. The following figures provide the details.

Figure 30. Increase in Regional Income Generated by All Trail Users – Years 1-10 (\$million 2020 prices)



SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Figure 31. Increase in Total Regional Income Generated by Visitor / User Type (annual \$ million – 2020 prices)



SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

³⁰ Regional income is the total net income generated from the activity and covers wages and salaries of employees and profits of businesses within the region. It includes income generated directly within the business and indirect income, which is generated in other regional businesses (wages and profits) from the multiplier impacts of employee spending on the region. In the modelling of income generated income tax and GST on spending, are both treated as leakages from the region.

Trail Benefits and Costs

The benefits and costs of the G7 trails are analysed for a 10-year period.

Trail Costs – 10 Years

The estimated cost of the G7 trails project is \$6.655 million, and the 10-year maintenance costs are \$1.609 million (assumed to be \$160,950 per year over 10 years) for a total 10-year cost of \$8.264million. The cost breakdown is shown in the following table.

Table 30. G7 Trails Development Costs (\$2020 prices)

Project Cost Estimates	G7 Costs \$
Native Veg & Offsets	\$240,000
Planning Approvals	\$40,000
Trail Design	\$70,000
Assess, Mapping, Reports	\$70,000
Other Expert Assessments	\$315,000
Trail Construction - parks	\$2,700,000
Trail Signage	\$130,000
CGH Signage	\$35,000
Project Management	\$390,000
Trail Improvements	\$1,410,000
Toilet	\$600,000
Carpark (gravel)	\$250,000
Shelters & tables etc	\$175,000
Bike Wash/Repair Station	\$30,000
Land acquisition	\$200,000
Total	\$6,655,000

SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Table 31. Total Costs of the G7 Trails Project – 10 Years (constant prices \$2020)

Summary	Trail Development <\$ 2020Prices>
Project Cost	
Trail Construction	\$6,655,000
Maintenance Costs	
Annual Maintenance Cost (3%) ³¹	\$160,950
Total Maintenance (10 Years)	\$1,609,500
Total Project Costs 10 Years	
Total Construction & Maintenance	\$8,264,500

SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Measuring Benefits - 10 Years

The measured benefits of the G7 trails comprise the increase in regional income generated, the health and benefits, and a notional value to users of the trails.

Increase in Regional Income

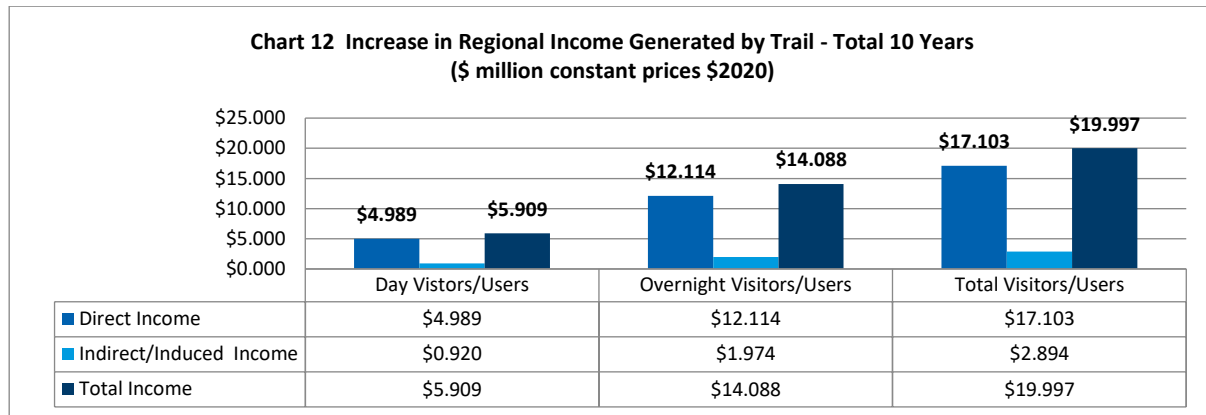
The increase in regional income generated by trail users spending over a 10-year period totals \$19.997 million (in constant \$2020 prices). The following table and figure provide and show the details.

³¹ Annual maintenance costs are estimated at 3% of asset/ facilities costs (\$5,365,000)

Table 32. Increase in Regional Income Generated by Trail Users – 10 Year Period (constant prices \$2020)

Increase in Regional Income -10 Years	Day Visitors \$	Overnight Visitors \$	Total Regional Income \$
Direct Income	\$4.989	\$12.114	\$17.103
Indirect/Induced Income	\$0.920	\$1.974	\$2.894
Total Income	\$5.909	\$14.088	\$19.997

SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Figure 32. Increase in Regional Income Generated by the Trail – Total for 10 Years (\$million constant \$2020)

SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Health Benefits

A report by Marsden Jacobs Associates indicates that exercise of cycling/active walking in Victorian Parks has net healthcare benefits (in terms of avoided health costs) of \$15 per hour in terms of a reduction in lifetime health costs (adjusted for injury).³²

Healthcare benefits are measured as the net (adjusted for injury) avoided costs to the national healthcare system (private costs and government costs) attributable to nature-based outdoor activity.

For the analysis of these trails, we have assumed an average cycle period of 3 hours (and average of \$10 per hour). Health benefits are for local users only (i.e. Latrobe Economic Region users).

This indirect health benefit is estimated at \$7.086 million over the 10-year period. The Table below provides the details.

Table 33. Estimated Health Benefits – Local and Regional Users Years 1-10 (Constant \$2020)

Health Benefits (Local – Latrobe Eco Region Users)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Total 10 Years
Health Benefits (estimate)	\$492,956	\$563,378	\$633,801	\$704,223	\$725,350	\$747,110	\$769,523	\$792,609	\$816,387	\$840,879	\$7,086,216

SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

³² Victoria's Nature-Based Outdoor Economy- Key Estimates and Recommendations, Marsden Jacobs Associates, January 2016 P10 & 21.

Consumer Surplus

There are assumed to be no charges for the use of the trail. However, a valuation can be placed on the experience based on a shadow price or notional charge (what a person may be willing to pay). For the trail we have assumed it to be \$25 per trail ride. This benefit measure totals \$15.995 million over 10 years for all trail users. The Table below provides the details.

Table 34. Estimated Consumer Value – All G7 Trail Users (\$ Constant Prices \$2020)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Total
Consumer value (estimate)	\$1,112,749	\$1,271,713	\$1,430,677	\$1,589,641	\$1,637,330	\$1,686,450	\$1,737,044	\$1,789,155	\$1,842,830	\$1,898,114	\$15,995,702

SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020

Benefit Cost Analysis

The following table and chart show the benefits and costs of the operations of the trail and precinct over a 10-year period. The benefits are measured by:

- the increase in regional income generated by trail users over a 10-year period
- the estimated health benefits
- the user value.

The costs include construction costs, asset maintenance costs and depreciation. For the comparison, the present value of the benefits is calculated using 3 discount rates (4%, 7% and 10%).

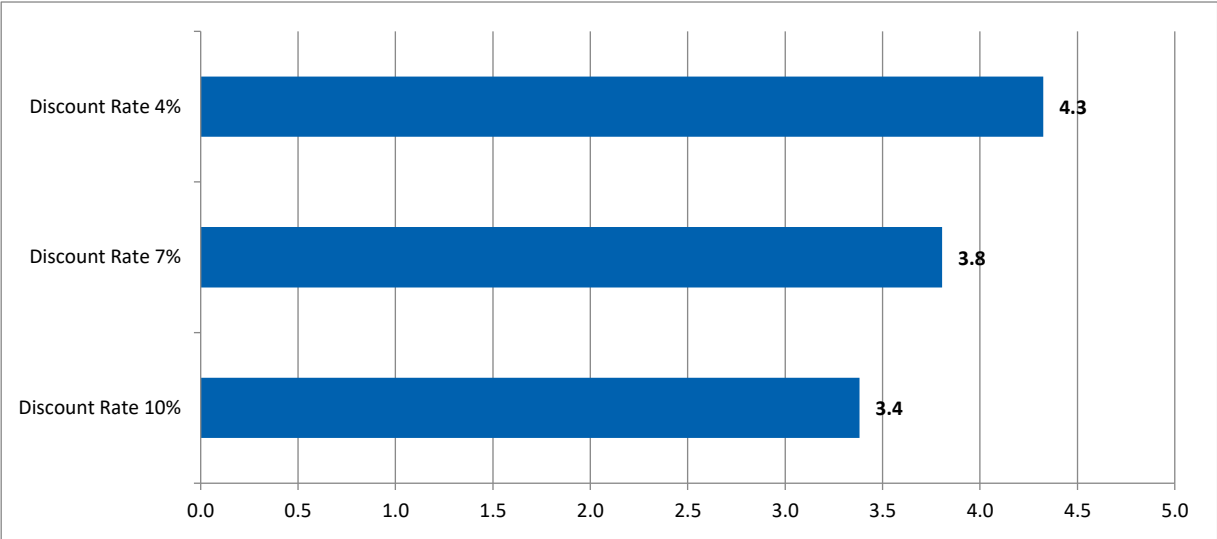
Table 35. Benefits and Cost Analysis – G7 Hub Development – 10 Year Period (Constant prices \$2020)

Trail Development: 10 Year Operations Period	Discount Rate 4%	Discount Rate 7%	Discount Rate 10%
Costs (10 Years)			
Construction Costs (\$) (2019 prices)	\$6,655,000	\$6,655,000	\$6,655,000
Costs - Asset Maintenance (3% per year- 10 years)	\$1,609,500	\$1,609,500	\$1,609,500
Total Capital Costs	\$8,264,500	\$8,264,500	\$8,264,500
Benefits to Region (10 Years) -			
Regional Benefits (increase in regional income generated)	\$19,997,112	\$19,997,112	\$19,997,112
Indirect Benefits (health benefits – local – Latrobe Eco Region & other regional users only)	\$7,086,216	\$7,086,216	\$7,086,216
Direct Benefits - User Value (shadow user price)	\$15,995,702	\$15,995,702	\$15,995,702
Total Benefits (2020 Prices)	\$43,079,030	\$43,079,030	\$43,079,030
Total Benefits (\$) Present Value	\$35,741,498	\$31,453,231	\$27,947,520
Net Present Value (\$)	\$27,476,998	\$23,188,731	\$19,683,020
NPV/ Costs	3.3	2.8	2.4
Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) <Total Benefits: Present Value/Total Capital Costs>	4.3	3.8	3.4

Source: MCA modelling & estimates, April 2020. Note: Direct benefits are the value to users of a facility; usually this is measure by user payments/fees. In this case there are no user charges for the trail and a shadow price has been applied (\$30 per ride) as a measure of user value. Therefore, benefits are the increase in regional income generated by visitor spending, the health benefits of exercise activity and the user value.

The chart below compares Benefit Cost Ratios (BCR) for the 3 discount rates. For a trail project a 7% discount rate is appropriate, and the project yields a positive BCR of 3.8. The present value of total benefits (\$31.453 million) generated by the investment are 3.8 times the total costs of the project (\$8.264 million) over a 10-year period.

Figure 33. Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) – Trail Development



SOURCE: MCA MODELLING & ESTIMATES, MAY 2020



12. Planning and Environmental Approvals Overview

A wide variety of State policy, legislation, strategy, planning and programs intersect with the development, management, maintenance and planning of trails in Gippsland and Victoria.

The section below provides a brief summary of both relevant legislation and plans that would contribute to the development of each bike park within the G7 MTB Hub.

Legislation

The *Local Government Act 2020* and associated Regulations provide the authority for Local Government in Victoria to operate. It also defines the functions and purposes of local government. Within this context, LGAs can undertake planning, provide services and administer businesses in line with the provisions of other Acts in Victoria.

The *National Parks Act 1975* provides for the management of the State's National Parks and various classes of reserves. The Act and its Regulations prescribe the permitted use and regulation of activity in Parks, ensuring the protection of individual park values while providing for safe and enjoyable use.

The *Forests Act 1958* sets the management framework for the State Forest management in Gippsland. The Act includes firefighting and fire management guidance and for recreation activities as well as commercial management of forests.

The *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* and the *Land Act 1958* provide the legislative framework for the management of Crown Land in Victoria. Specifically, they provide for regulations governing use and the provision to create Committee of Management, relevant to Councils for managing rail trails and other areas of Crown Land for recreation or tourism.

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* provides for the protection of Aboriginal Heritage sites of significance in Victoria, as well as the establishment of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council to provide a State-wide voice to Aboriginal people and provide advice to the Minister.

Various other Acts and Regulations apply to the running of businesses and use of Crown Lands.

Parks Victoria manages the Commercial Tour Operator Program for all the public land in Victoria in a bid to streamline the administration and regulation of tour operators, and to encourage the appropriate use of public land.

Plans

A hierarchy of plans apply to this trail feasibility study. These include State-wide, regional and LGA plans, as well as management plans for parcels of land.

Relevant plans include:

Tourism Plans

This includes the Gippsland Destination Management Plan (TRC, 2019) to guide the growth of the industry in Gippsland, including how it is positioned, managed, marketed, and development of projects aligned to the target markets that will support growth in visitation and more broadly the regional economy.

Economic Development Plans

All Council partners in the region have, in one form or another, developed an Economic Development Strategy or plan. In some cases, they are aligned to an overarching Council area plan setting the broader community vision for the LGA. We note in our review of the plans that there are no real conflicting policies between the partners, and in general they support the objectives of growing trail-based tourism and regional economic benefits as well as benefits for communities including commuting, health and activation.

Trail and Path Strategies

All Council partners have some form of trail or path strategy. In most cases the objectives are more aligned to the development of community activation and community connectedness. Many provide for the economic benefit of trails and a healthy lifestyle for their residents and visitors.

In a similar way to the economic development plans, the trail plans and strategies are generally aligned in their principles, directions and intent. Differing approaches to achieving objectives are not considered material to this study.

Specifically guiding the Central Gippsland G7 MTB Hub Feasibility Study is the *Gippsland Tracks & Trails Feasibility Study* (TRC, 2019).

Land Management Plans

National Parks and significant reserves have a plan of management. Many are several years old and may contain policies, actions and provisions that may act to restrict trail-based tourism, while others remain silent on trail development. Relatively new plans exist for the Alpine National Park.

The Gunaikurnai and Victorian Government Joint Management Plan was approved in July 2018. The plan covers the joint management of 10 of Gippsland's important parks and reserves. The plan provides for strategies and actions to deliver the objectives which include management of country and developing appropriate nature-based tourism industries.

Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort has a variety of plans and strategies aimed at managing the underlying Crown Land and at improving the visitor economy outcomes. It is governed by the Southern Alpine Resort Management Board which contains an economic development function in part aimed at developing 'green season' activity.

DELWP manages the State Forest in Gippsland. A recently published DRAFT *Central Gippsland Public Land Strategy* provides strategic direction for the use and management of Central Gippsland Forests and crown lands. It proposes several 'game changing' projects which align to the hero sites of Gippsland at Mount Baw Baw and Walhalla.

State-wide Strategies

A number of relevant strategies and plans exist at a State-wide level. Of relevance despite its age is the Victorian Trails Strategy that provides for a range of relevant directions including a trails hierarchy.

Land Manager Identification

All parcels of land intersected by the proposed alignment would be required to undergo both environmental and cultural heritage assessments. Each would be processed via the relevant land manager with consultation to stakeholders:

LAND MANAGER	BIKE PARK
Parks Victoria	Mt Baw Baw Blores Hill
DELWP	Erica Avon Mt Hendrick Somewhere Good (If formalised)
Latrobe City Council	Haunted Hills
Gippsland MTB Inc	Haunted Hills
Energy Australia	Haunted Hills
Wellington Shire	Blores Hill
Southern Rural Water	Blores Hill
Southern Alpine Resort Management	Mt Baw Baw
HPV Plantations	Maryvale Pines
Australian Paper	Maryvale Pines
LV Sands	Maryvale Pines

Native Vegetation Offsets

This study only seeks to identify the native vegetation offsets as a potential issue for the development of the bike parks and trails proposed for inclusion in the G7 MTB Hub. For areas requiring 'new build', vegetation offsets may be required under the State policy on native vegetation removal.

Bike parks within the G7 MTB Hub that present as potentially requiring notable native vegetation offsets based on the likelihood of needs to develop new or re-aligned trails in significant measure include:

- Mt Baw Baw
- Somewhere Good

Other bike parks may also require lesser measures of native vegetation offsets.

Native Vegetation Offsets are potentially a significant issue and would need to be worked through carefully in the master planning stage for each bike park, in order to reduce any vegetation clearance to the absolute minimum.

13. Governance and Ongoing Management

Governance

Ongoing collaboration, effective decision making and working together to continue to develop and promote a Gippsland G7 Mountain Biking Hub are critical to the success of Gippsland mountain biking. Management of the Gippsland G7 Mountain Biking Hub includes the complexities of balancing demands of seven different bike park sites, seven different (current) management arrangements, competing infrastructure requirements and associated costs and resourcing demands and various states of formalisation of the trails that are on public land.

The G7 Hub as a collective will involve at least 10 agencies plus private landholders involved in the direct management, development and maintenance of trails. This includes the two Local Government Areas, Parks Victoria, DELWP, Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort. This list excludes private businesses and committees of management operating within the study area.

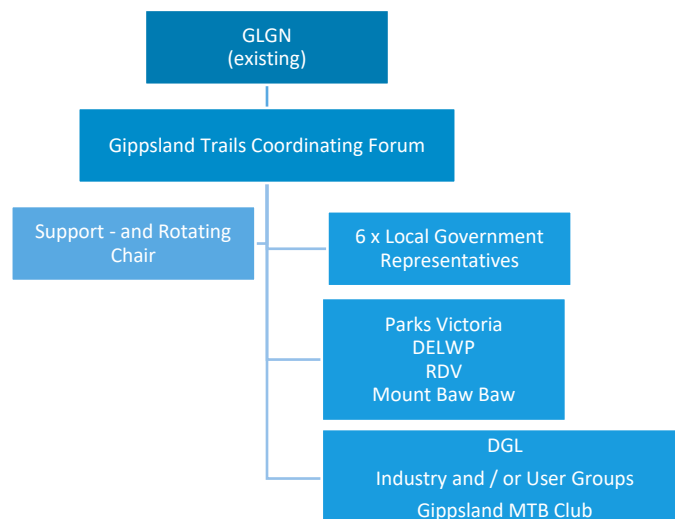
The trail will also be required to operate in the context of the management of other trail assets within the broader Gippsland region, including the proposed Baw Baw Epic Adventure Trail and other bike parks and trails outside the scope of the G7 MTB hub.

In order to take an effective Gippsland-wide view of trail development and management, effective coordination and governance is critical. As described in the Gippsland Tracks and Trails Feasibility Study, a proposed new group aligned to the existing Gippsland Local Government Network (GLGN) is proposed with a charter to collaborate and develop the general (all user) trails-based visitor economy in a systematic and planned way.

The role of the group is not to direct manage trails, but to provide advice on the strategic planning of the network in alignment with the principles and directions of the Gippsland Tracks and Trails Study (TRC 2019).

The following figure provides the recommended model for coordination.

Figure 34. Gippsland Trails Coordinating Forum Model



A governing mechanism is required in order to effectively manage the trails in a way that provides the Hub with the following:

- Consistent marketing and information on the Hub and how to visit, use and enjoy it
- Consistent signs and standards applied to each of the parks
- Consistent visitor servicing guidelines including ensuring the parks deliver what they say they deliver
- Prioritised works and investment across the parks
- Advocacy for the G7 among other trail products within Gippsland (while taking a regional view on prioritisation through the Gippsland Trails Coordinating Forum)
- Effective coordination of volunteer efforts from Gippsland MTB Club and other volunteer sources
- Seeking ongoing funding
- Liaison with stakeholders and user groups, including MTB Australia and other peak bodies
- Promoting commercial opportunities across the Hub including the options for merchandise
- Coordination of outstanding maintenance issues across the network, and
- Effective liaison across land managers.

Governance Options

The following options are considered.

Single Agency Management

Table 36. Single Agency Governance Considerations and Options

ATTRIBUTES	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• One of the existing agencies manages the entire complex. •	• Puts all of the necessary skills and capability into one agency that can then make decisions to help make the destination succeed. • Easier decision-making processes • Can coordinate the activity across all the hub parks, including setting consistent standards and marketing / information provision • Events etc can be essentially organised/allowed permits under one agency, •	• The mechanism to get to a single agency manager of the various Hubs is considered very difficult if not impossible due to the various land tenures and existing management arrangements • The proposed Hub parks are located on State Forest, private land, Alpine Resort, and Parks Victoria managed land including Natural Features Reserves • Different legislation and policy approaches to Crown Land by the managers make this option difficult to implement
• A new or special purpose organisation that becomes the single agency manager.	• There are many strengths to this model, including the ability for it to set its own constitution and purpose directly related to the destination. • The agency or organisation can establish uniform standards and has direct management control of the hub parks therefor	• A single land manager across the 7 hubs is considered very unlikely to be able to be implemented. Different land tenures and existing arrangements, including private land complicate this option significantly.

ATTRIBUTES	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	ensuring consistent application of visitor services	This option should be ruled out as a result of the legal and policy issues likely to be raised.

MOU or Partnership

Table 37. MOU or Partnership Arrangement Governance Considerations and Options

ATTRIBUTES	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Agencies responsible for the Hubs develop an MOU or similar to guide the development and operation of the destination. The agreement can be in the form of a non-binding MOU or more formal agreement that may include licensing provisions under various acts and regulations.	- Relatively easy to put in place once the organisations have determined their role and what the function of the MOU is. - An agency can take a lead with the agreement of the participating partners on elements such as trail maintenance etc. - Can involve the users or possible trail manager such as Gippsland Mountain Bike Club. - Marketing and information on the G7 are essential and this model can unite the land managers behind an agreed information and marketing program which should be led by DGL Ltd.	- MOUs are generally non-binding agreements where parties agree to cooperate around a function or objective. - The powers of the agencies involved in the Hubs remain with the agencies – and may result in duplication for things such as event permits etc.

Multiple Agency Management

Table 38. Multiple Agency Management Governance Considerations

ATTRIBUTES	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
- Essentially this is the do nothing and leave the situation as it is option.	This option is relatively easy to pursue as it leaves agencies and land managers in the position that they know and understand.	- Significant duplication of effort around management of the Hubs. - No one single entity is accountable for the performance and development of the Hubs. - May lead to disagreements between agencies management based on differing priorities. - Does not provide a single point of contact for the community of users to work through development or other issues. - May not result in consistent visitor service standards being applied across the Hubs leading to consumer

		experience or visitors not experiencing what they are expecting.
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Recommended Model

Given the complexity of Victorian land management legislation which for the most part is old (1950s through to the 1970s), and the nature of different land tenures, it is considered highly unlikely that a single entity will be able to be established. This is in part a result of the nature of the various organisations managing or likely to be a manager of one or more of the G7 hubs.

Development of this feasibility study has continued to expose the complexities in Victorian legislation around the potential for governance entities to be developed to cater for multi-tenure, multi-agency management of recreation and in particular mountain biking. This is the case across a number of business case and trail feasibility studies being undertaken across Victoria. Other examples include the proposed development at Warburton and more recently, but in a lesser way, in Omeo (due to DELWP being the majority manager of the proposed trails and the Shire being willing conceptually to become committee of management for the land in question).

It is understood that a review of the Crown Land Acts is underway within DELWP and the government has asked to consider a discussion paper that may lead to a bill before the conclusion of this term of government. This is welcomed and may prove to provide an answer that is better suited to this proposed development, particularly in light of the timeframes for this development and the review of the acts.

There is no clear model emerging from the consultation for the proposed Epic Trail, which has been subject to a separate feasibility study and business case. While the G7 provides a different set of circumstances, the outcome presents the same issues around a single entity and the lack of an agreed pathway to achieve the management objectives.

Notwithstanding the issues discussed, the governance arrangements for the G7 can be overcome by having a coordinating body that help bring together the land managers and users to achieve the objectives outlined above. This could be through the creation of a new entity, or the allocation of new functions to an existing body.

Options for the body include:

1. Create the Entity

This option sees a new coordination committee formed that includes representatives of the land managers (Parks Victoria, Baw Baw Alpine Resort, DELWP, others as required), Destination Gippsland, Gippsland Mountain Biking Club and Local Governments including Baw Baw Shire Council, Latrobe Shire Council, Wellington Shire Council and others dependent upon the scope of work for the committee (i.e. does it include Omeo).

The governance entity could potentially sit under GLGN, or with Destination Gippsland given the role of the committee is a coordinating one, not a direct management one.

Alternatively, the committee could sit under a dominant or logical land manager. The downside of this approach is the potential to have the committee lose its focus on the development, marketing and coordination of the G7.

In some other areas of enterprise, an Incorporated Association would be one vehicle that could be used to help manage and raise the profile of the G7. However, DELWP and Parks Victoria have indicated that it is a policy not to become members of Incorporated bodies due to the issue of Officer and Director liability and risk transfer.

2. Add the Functions to An Existing Committee

Existing multi agency committees do exist in Central Gippsland, but generally not with the intent of the provision of coordination services, marketing and other functions aligned to the successful management of a multi-tenure, multi-location recreation product.

One such committee is the Gippsland Trails Coordinating Forum. The function and structure are outlined above. This committee is recommended to have a clear role in recommending priorities strategies across all trail in Gippsland, including MTB trails, multi-users trails such as Rail Trails, and walking trails. To try to add in the oversight and coordination of one entity (the G7) may conflict the Forum from the original purpose of its establishment.

Other Considerations

Trails are growing in popularity and the demand is leading to the potential for growth in supply. This study, and the aligned Baw Baw Epic Ride feasibility study have shown that the trails are feasible and will produce a positive economic outcome. The question of whether the proposed governance entity recommended for this product should have a broader role or could be expanded as other mutli tenure multi partner also needs to be considered.

It is recommended that the discussions occur with a specific objective of developing a governance framework within Gippsland that enables the objectives of the land management legislation to be honoured, at the same time as providing for the opportunities these trail developments (Epic Trail and G7 Hub) present. The initial discussions could be led by DGL, or LVA and include:

- Latrobe Valley Authority
- Destination Gippsland
- Parks Victoria
- DELWP
- Southern Alpine Resort Management
- Latrobe City
- Baw Baw Shire Council
- Wellington Shire Council.

The remaining Gippsland Councils are not directly involved with the management of the two mountain bike trail developments proposed, yet are beneficiaries of the trails being developed, and would also benefit from a model being developed.

14. Risk Management

This business case demonstrates the potential benefits the proposed Central Gippsland G7 MTB Hub could bring to Gippsland. Coupled with understanding the benefits, it is also important the risks of the project are understood.

Table 38 below has been prepared showing some of the higher-level risks and proposed treatments.

Table 39. Risks Evident in G7 MTB Hub Development

RISK	RATING	RESPONSE / TREATMENT PROPOSED
Only Part Funding is Received	High / Moderate	Develop the Hub Park by Park with the highest priority trails in the highest priority parks constructed/developed/upgraded dependent upon the Master Plan for each Hub. Further funding is applied for in later years of the Hub's development. The BCR is considered high enough that the experience is viable should costs increase or funding is not enough to complete the trail network initially. Consideration could be given to working on parks along the proposed Baw Baw Epic Ride in addition to the Haunted Hills Bike Park as a priority.
Fire or emergency	High	Some of the bike parks within the G7 Hub sit in an environment where fire or winter conditions may interrupt visitors or reduce the amenity of the area. Careful thought to emergency management is important from a visitor safety perspective. Fire may impact the area in a number of ways including devastating large-scale fires such as in 2003, 2009 and 2006/7. The MTB destination may need to be factored into fire management plans. This may include increased prescribed burning and fire breaks. It is noted that these elements cannot eliminate the risk but have been shown to reduce it in many areas. Emergency management planning including risk management should sit within the land manager responsibilities for each of the parks.
Approval for one or more Parks of the Hub is not forthcoming	High	Should one or more parks have formalisation or rail development denied (based on further planning for each), the Hub concept may be significantly delayed or lose critical mass while the issues are resolved. This is considered a high risk for some of the proposed G7 Hub bike parks, as some areas flagged for bike park and trail development are thought to be of high environmental and/or cultural values. The next phase of this proposal would be a master plan to definitively identify specific new build, re-alignment and infrastructure requirements pertinent to each park, for which the environmental and cultural impacts will need to be ascertained on a case-by-case basis. It should consider and more definitively set the route/s and how to minimise disturbance to those values as far as practically possible. The principles of avoidance should be implemented.

RISK	RATING	RESPONSE / TREATMENT PROPOSED
The network and park hub concept are constructed but the visitor numbers are significantly below those forecast	Moderate	The assumptions are thought to be conservative. The trail manager(s) will need to work hard and partner with Mountain Bike Australia and Destination Gippsland on promoting the unique attributes of the G7 Hub. Events and tour operators may need to play a greater role. Partnerships with Yarra Ranges Council, and the G7 will be important in setting a 'Destination' approach to the experience development. Governance of the Hub parks with overall coordination and direction to the standards and experience needs to be strong.
Trail maintenance is not sufficient or effective and the trail experience deteriorates	Moderate	Trail maintenance is a critical component of the experience remaining high quality and attracting people to ride the destination. The bike park manager(s) will need to take a broader economic benefit into account when considering maintenance expenses. Professional design and construction may limit the annual maintenance costs due to the higher quality build.
Business in Central Gippsland does not respond to the opportunity	Low to Moderate	Services such as bike hire, shuttles/transport and rider-friendly accommodation will be important to the success of the G7 Hub. Opportunities at Mt Baw Baw and in other villages and towns including Erica and Rawson and Glengarry will provide for business growth.
Competitor pressure	Low	New mountain bike products are coming onto the market regularly. Pressure from other new entrants drops the interest in visiting the G7 Hub. Marketing of Gippsland needs to carefully position the MTB experience of the G7 Hub, the Baw Baw Epic and Omeo as unique offerings.

15. Conclusion

This report provides a feasibility study and business case for developing the proposed Central Gippsland G7 Mountain Bike Hub, a collective of seven bike parks located across Central Gippsland.

A significant opportunity exists to position the region as a nationally significant mountain bike destination through not only the G7 MTB Hub development, but also leveraging the proposed Baw Baw Epic Adventure Trail and Omeo Mountain Bike Destination (East Gippsland) projects.

The proposed Central Gippsland G7 Mountain Bike Hub presents a very significant mountain bike experience and brand that would position Central Gippsland as an important national mountain biking region with a critical mass of high-quality riding propositions across the seven bike parks. The Hub would leverage the recognised growth in mountain biking and e-MTB participation, encouraging more and longer visitation stays in the Central Gippsland region resulting in increased economic stimulus benefiting associated townships, businesses and communities.

Establishment of the G7 Hub, inclusive of improved quality of experience across all seven bike parks via new and upgraded trails, improved infrastructure and better signage, would also better serve the local community via attractive and fit-for-purpose trail facilities feeding into sport, recreation, health and wellbeing outcomes.

Bringing together the seven bike parks via the creation of a centralised 'umbrella' oversight and branding model, would improve coordination between bike parks encouraging development of shared resources and economies of scale, including building volunteer resource skills and capacity across all parks. It would also help coordinate land management arrangements, environmental stewardship and sustainability.

The G7 MTB Hub will also be a catalyst in creating significant opportunities for organised tours and events, further delivering visitation and exposure for the Gippsland region.

The planning, design, build, maintenance and operation of the G7 MTB Hub and its collective bike parks will create opportunities for skills and business development, along with ongoing employment.

Environmental, sustainability and other land management issues are likely to be significant and would need to be addressed through future master planning should the concept be funded to proceed.

The economic benefits of the proposed G7 MTB Hub are strong. The Hub offers the following:

- A total cost estimated at \$6.655 million producing 22.5 EFT jobs during the construction phase of the trail
- An increase in employment regionally once in operation of 24 EFT jobs increasing to 40 EFT over a 10-year period, mainly in accommodation, food and beverage and recreation service sectors
- A Benefit Cost Ratio of 3.8 assuming a discount rate of 7%.

Governance and environmental issues remain unresolved. Governance of the bike parks and management of the land on which they sit is critical to the success of the G7 Hub concept and there is not one model currently that would seem to fit this trail development. Accordingly, an approach built on discussion and agreement with government is proposed. This approach also sees an opportunity for Gippsland to work constructively with Government and a range of partners to develop the mechanism to allow the Hub to become a significant driver of positive outcomes for the Central Gippsland economy, community and environment.

Master planning for each bike park should be considered essential prior to significant investment, this will help each park develop its own identity, as well as fill an important role within the Hub. It will also help land managers with approval processes.

APPENDIX A: CASE STUDIES

THE GREAT KOALA NATIONAL PARK (PROPOSED) TRAILS, NSW

The Great Koala National Park is a proposed NP located on the northern NSW coast hinterland, anchored by the city of Coffs Harbour. Proponents for the area to become a National Park are also calling for it to include the development of mountain biking within its boundaries.

A key step in this is a \$6 million investment to develop and upgrade existing mountain bike hubs, create new cycling infrastructure, and to link hubs, towns and villages.

Argues the report: “Mountain bike tourism is demonstrated to bring strong economic returns and is a sub-set of nature-based tourism that is currently worth over \$19.6 billion annually to NSW.”¹

The report predicts a return in the order of \$60 million per annum to the region off the back of mountain bike trail upgrade and implementation.

Report excerpt: “The network of hubs would support over 100km of trails catering for riders of differing abilities and would include areas for cross-country, all-mountain, touring, downhill and free riding. Tracks and signage would be professionally constructed in consultation with ecologists in accordance with International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) standards. Hubs are proposed from Woolgoolga in the north (Wedding Bells and Bucca) to South West Rocks in the south (Ingleba) at Nambucca Heads (Jacks Ridge), Urunga (Newry), Coffs Harbour (Mount Coramba) and Sawtell (Pine Creek). We also support the development of a new cycling hub in Bellingen Shire, potentially in Dorrigo, subject to community consultation.

It is proposed that the hubs are linked to each other, where possible via existing forest tracks, and to the existing NSW Coastal Cycle Trail between Woolgoolga and South West Rocks to maximise opportunities for cycling visitors to experience both the coast and mountain bike hubs. Linking hubs to each other and to settlements on the coast and in hinterland valleys will maximise opportunities for visitors to drop off and will help increase stay length.”

The stated budget for this hub-based project is \$6 million³³.



³³ Destination NSW. *Nature-based tourism to NSW*. Year ended September 2017.

CASE STUDY ROTORUA

Rotorua is a mountain bike haven famous for the Whakarewarewa Forest with 180km of diverse and unique mountain bike trails across the full network. These trails have been expertly built and crafted to suit everybody, from complete beginners through to experts. The trail network is well signposted, with the length and grade of the trail clearly visible helping you to choose a track appropriate to riding ability.

Rotorua is also home to a number of international events throughout the year, including the ever popular and community-based Rotorua Bike Festival through to being the first stop on the Crankworx World Tour.³⁴

There are several mountain biking areas in Rotorua.³⁵

Whakarewarewa Forest: known simply as ‘The Redwoods’, the 5600-hectare [Whakarewarewa Forest](#) is a mountain biking mecca. It is also one of the reasons Rotorua was awarded gold-level ride centre status by the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) – one of only six centres in the world.

Skyline Gravity Park: the world’s first year-round, gondola-accessed downhill [mountain bike park](#) features six different trails catering for riders of all abilities, and dedicated gondolas to take the hard work out of getting to the top of the trails’ 200-metre vertical rise. From the top of Mt Ngongotaha, there are panoramic views across Rotorua, its lake, and surrounding countryside.

Rainbow Mountain: less than half an hour south of Rotorua, experienced mountain bikers can enjoy this challenging ride through an amazing geothermal setting with a soak in a natural hot pool afterwards.

Moerangi Track: is all about appreciating the rivers and forests - now protected as the Whirinaki Forest/Te Pua-a-Tāne Conservation Park, the forest is now the realm of the birds, and visited by hikers, hunters and mountain bikers who penetrate this remote wilderness via a network of trails. Passing through the heart of the park, the 35km Moerangi

Mountain Biking Trail follows old hiking routes for much of the way, as well as newer sections built especially for mountain bikers.

Employment Impacts in Region ³⁶

All riders in the forest generated a total of 210.1 full time equivalent jobs (178.5 direct jobs and 31.6 indirect/induced jobs) for the lower estimate of spending and 339.9 full time equivalent jobs (288.8 direct jobs and 51.2 indirect/induced jobs) for the upper estimate.

Direct jobs are those in the businesses (accommodation, food service, MTB services etc.) where initial spending occurs, and indirect/induced jobs are those generated in other sectors by the initial round of spending and multiplier impacts. All these jobs are located in the Rotorua District.

Overnight visitors (domestic and internationals) are a major driver of these jobs because of the breadth of their spending covering accommodation, meals, bike hire and other MTB services. They account for around 75% of the total jobs generated for the lower and upper spending estimates. Local riders provide a base of support for MTB businesses in the region and their spending accounts for around 10% of jobs.

Income Impacts in Region ³⁷

Riders and their spending have a significant impact on regional income in the Rotorua District.

Annual spending in the region by people who mountain bike in the Whakarewarewa Forest:

- For all riders estimated spending ranged from \$29.274 million (lower estimate) to \$47.321 million (upper estimate).
- For riders whose primary reason was to use the forest trails, spending ranged from \$21.521 million to \$37.680 million.
- Spending by locals was estimated at \$2.423 million (lower) and \$3.958 (upper).
- The major contributor to spending was domestic overnight visitors and international overnight visitors.

Estimates of the direct spending by people mountain biking in the Whakarewarewa Forest for the period 1 March 2017 to 28 February 2018

³⁴ <https://www.rotoruanz.com/visit/see-and-do/cycling-mountain-biking>

³⁵ <https://www.newzealand.com/au/feature/top-mountain-biking-tracks-in-rotorua/>

³⁶ Mountain Biking in Whakarewarewa Forest Economic Impact Study. July 2018

³⁷ Ibid

APPENDIX B. – TRAIL DIFFICULTY RATING SYSTEM

Trail difficulty rating system (user)

	Very easy  White Circle	Easy  Green Circle	Intermediate  Blue Square	Difficult  Single Black Diamond	Extreme  Double Black Diamond
Description	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, walkers, runners and horse riders.	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.	Likely to be a single trail with moderate gradients, variable surface and obstacles.	Likely to be a challenging single trail with steep gradients, variable surface and many obstacles.	Extremely difficult trails will incorporate very steep gradients, highly variable surface and unavoidable, severe obstacles.
Suitable for	Beginner/ novice cyclists. Basic bike skills required. Suitable for most bikes.	Beginner/ novice mountain bikers. Basic mountain bike skills required. Suitable for off-road bikes.	Skilled mountain bikers. Suitable for mountain bikes.	Experienced mountain bikers with good skills. Suitable for better quality mountain bikes.	Highly experienced mountain bikers with excellent skills. Suitable for quality mountain bikes.
Fitness Level	Most people in good health.	Most people in good health.	A good standard of fitness.	Higher level of fitness.	Higher level of fitness.
Trail Width	Two riders can ride side by side.	Shoulder width or greater.	Handlebar width or greater.	Can be less than handlebar width.	Can be less than handlebar width.
Trail Surface and obstacles	Hardened with no challenging features on the trail.	Mostly firm and stable. Trail may have obstacles such as logs, roots and rocks.	Possible sections of rocky or loose tread. Trail will have obstacles such as logs, roots and rocks.	Variable and challenging. Unavoidable obstacles such as logs, roots, rocks drop-offs or constructed obstacles.	Widely variable and unpredictable. Expect large, committing and unavoidable obstacles.
Trail Gradient	Climbs and descents are mostly shallow.	Climbs and descents are mostly shallow., but trail may include some moderately steep sections.	Mostly moderate gradients but may include steep sections.	Contains steeper descents or climbs.	Expect prolonged steep, loose and rocky descents or climbs.

Trail difficulty rating system (land manager)

	Very easy  White Circle	Easy  Green Circle	Intermediate  Blue Square	Difficult  Single Black Diamond	Extreme  Double Black Diamond
Description	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, walkers, runners and horse riders.	Likely to be a combination of fire road or wide single track with a gentle gradient, smooth surface and relatively free of obstacles. Short sections may exceed these criteria. Frequent encounters are likely with other cyclists, walkers, runners and horse riders.	Likely to be a single trail with moderate gradients, variable surface and obstacles. Dual use or preferred use Optional lines desirable	Likely to be a challenging single trail with steep gradients, variable surface and many obstacles. Single use and direction Optional lines XC, DH or trials	Extremely difficult trails will incorporate very steep gradients, highly variable surface and unavoidable, severe obstacles. Single use and direction Optional lines XC, DH or trials
Trail Width	2100mm plus or minus 900mm	900mm plus or minus 300mm for tread or bridges.	600mm plus or minus 300mm for tread or bridges.	300mm plus or minus 150mm for tread and bridges. Structures can vary.	150mm plus or minus 100mm for tread or bridges. Structures can vary.
Trail Surface	Hardened or smooth.	Mostly firm and stable.	Possible sections of rocky or loose tread.	Variable and challenging.	Widely variable and unpredictable.
Average Trail Grade	Climbs and descents are mostly shallow. Less than 5% average.	Climbs and descents are mostly shallow, but may include some moderately steep sections. 7% or less average.	Mostly moderate gradients but may include steep sections. 10% or less average.	Contains steeper descents or climbs. 20% or less average.	Expect prolonged steep, loose and rocky descents or climbs. 20% or greater average
Maximum Trail Grade	Max 10%	Max 15%	Max 20% or greater	Max 20% or greater	Max 40% or greater
Level of Trail Exposure	Firm and level fall zone to either side of trail corridor	Exposure to either side of trail corridor includes downward slopes of up to 10%	Exposure to either side of trail corridor includes downward slopes of up to 20%	Exposure to either side of trail corridor includes steep downward slopes or freefall	Exposure to either side of trail corridor includes steep downward slopes or freefall
Natural Obstacles and Technical Trail Features (TTFs)	No obstacles.	Unavoidable obstacles to 50mm (2") high, such as logs, roots and rocks. Avoidable, rollable obstacles may be present. Unavoidable bridges 900mm wide. Short sections may exceed criteria.	Unavoidable, rollable obstacles to 200mm (8") high, such as logs, roots and rocks. Avoidable obstacles to 600mm may be present. Unavoidable bridges 600mm wide. Width of deck is half the height. Short sections may exceed criteria.	Unavoidable obstacles to 380mm (15") high, such as logs, roots, rocks, drop-offs or constructed obstacles. Avoidable obstacles to 1200mm may be present. Unavoidable bridges 600mm wide. Width of deck is half the height. Short sections may exceed criteria.	Large, committing and unavoidable obstacles to 380mm (15") high. Avoidable obstacles to 1200mm may be present. Unavoidable bridges 600mm or narrower. Width of bridges is unpredictable. Short sections may exceed criteria.



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