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Destination
GIPPSLAND

GIPPSLAND LAKES AQUATIC TRAIL PRODUCT TEST EVALUATION REPORT



TRC

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the Indigenous peoples of the lands, waters and communities we work together with. We pay our respects to their cultures; and to their Elders – past, present and emerging.

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Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	GLAT Product Test approach	5
3	Development of the GLAT Product Test	6
4	Itinerary-GLAT Product Test	8
5	Summary Analysis of Feedback GLAT Product Test Participants 12	
	Appendix A GLAT Product test - Itinerary	13
	Appendix B GLAT Product test – Running Sheet	14
	Appendix C Participant Evaluation Survey	17
	Appendix D Further GLAT Resources	23

ACRONYMS

Term	Definition
DG	Destination Gippsland
GLAT	Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail
GLaWAC	Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation
PV	Parks Victoria
TRC	TRC Tourism

1 Introduction

The Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail (GLAT) is an immersive nature-based experience that is expected to position the Gippsland Lakes as Australia's premiere destination for aquatic environment adventures.

GLAT offers a combination of walking, cycling and water-based journeys that can be curated into 'choose your own' adventure itineraries and will feature cultural storytelling of and by the local Gunaikurnai community.

Visitors choose their preferred level of engagement, challenge and means of exploration with the opportunity to undertake fully guided, partly or self-supported trip itineraries according to preference and ability.

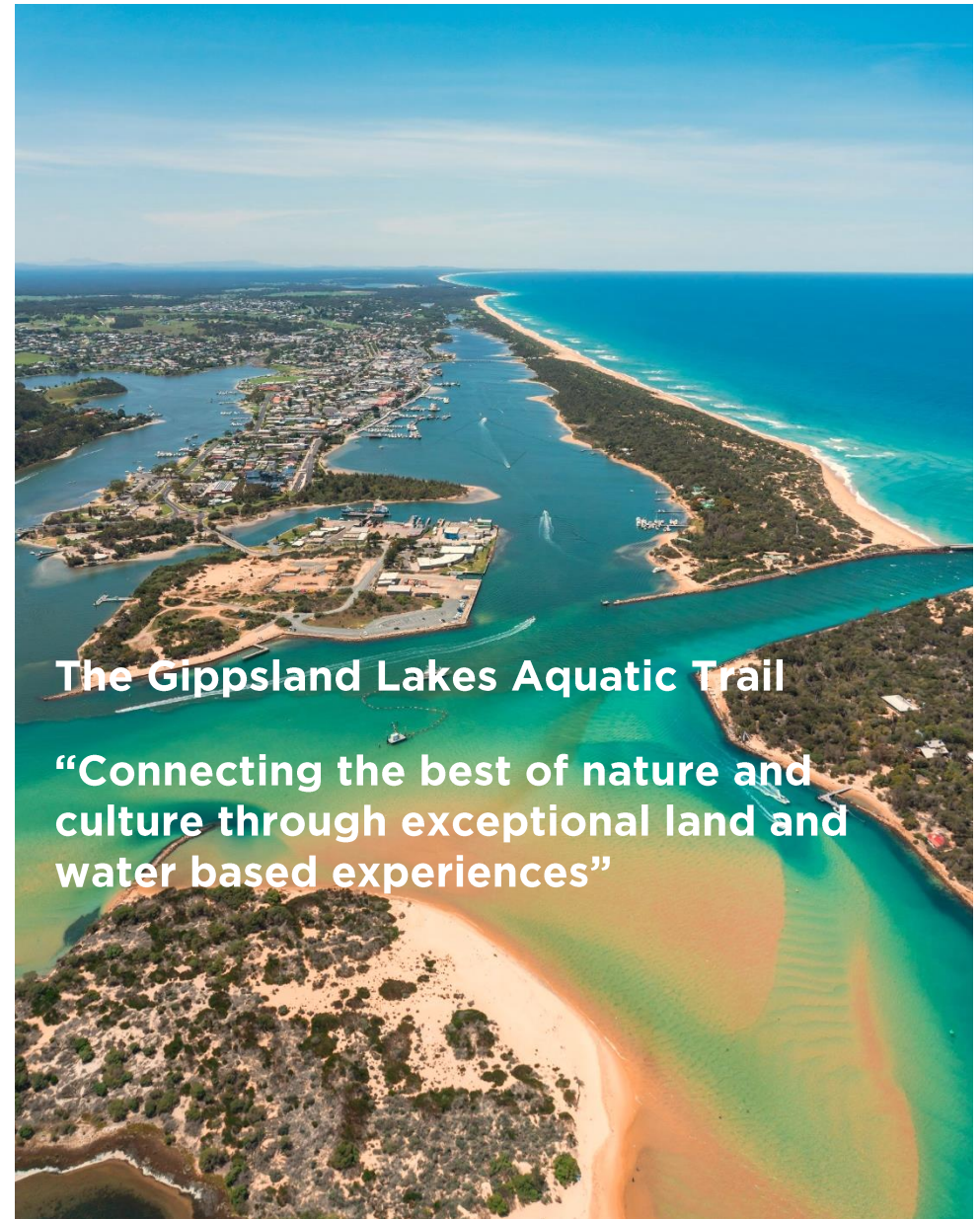
The GLAT highlights the natural, historical and cultural features of the Gippsland Lakes, exploring water-based environments from land and on water using four 'foundation trail' itineraries as a basis for undertaking active and engaging journeys that cater to all levels and a myriad of outdoor recreation interests.

The suite of trails can be explored via short, full- and multi-day trips as suits visitor preferences. Trails are freely accessible for local community use. The coordinated trail network will feature a leading 'Signature Trail' experience with three supporting trail itineraries that deliver visitors meaningful interactions with nature and associated cultural highlights, particularly that of the Gunaikurnai people.

Accommodation options range from existing campsites and facilities en route, to off-trail commercial accommodation catering to all budgets, styles and preferences. It is proposed to establish two new eco-camp accommodations specifically catering to Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail experiences at Nyerimilang and Rotamah Island.

TRC Tourism was commissioned by Destination Gippsland to undertake a 3 day – 2 night GLAT Product Test to immerse target market participants and key stakeholders in a trial of this land and water based experience.

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2 GLAT Product Test approach

The GLAT Product Test was developed by TRC Tourism and commissioned by Destination Gippsland, to immerse a select group of target market participants and stakeholders in the proposed product that has been developed by TRC Tourism for DG in the **Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail – Feasibility and Business Case 2021**¹.

Based on elements of the ‘Signature’ GLAT Itinerary a three day-two night experience was developed for the GLAT Product Test participants by TRC Tourism and is attached at Appendix A and Appendix B.

Participants included:

Destination Gippsland (DG)

Gippsland Lands and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)

Parks Victoria (PV)

Four - dependent people that represent the target market

Three - TRC Tourism consultants



The Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail

“Connecting the best of nature and culture through exceptional land and water based experiences”

¹ [Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail – Feasibility and Business Case 2021](#)

3 Development of the GLAT Product Test

3.1.1 The Signature GLAT Experience

The signature Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail (pp11-13, Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail – Feasibility and Business Case 2021) introduces visitors to the unique landscapes and aquatic environments of the Gippsland Lakes on a three-day, 2 night journey undertaken through a combination of options including walking, cycling, kayaking and boat transfer, staying overnight in comfort at eco-cabins or eco-tents. There is a luxury option of a day spa layover at Metung Hot Springs and finishing with wetland explorations culminating at the historic Port of Sale.

The point-to-point route begins at Forestec– the home of the Gunaikurnai Lands and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) before moving onto Lakes Entrance and nearby Bullock Island. Forestec will offer visitors an introduction to country and a welcome from Gunaikurnai elders or appropriate people. Visitors then continue onto Lakes Entrance west where views are south across the water toward Rigby Island and ‘The Entrance’ for which the area is named. A rock walled footpath leads to Kalimna Jetty and is proposed to extend around the headland to reach a crossing point over the inlet adjacent to Nyerimilang Heritage Park. A new (proposed) pedestrian bridge links to

Nyerimilang Park, featuring a historic homestead, wildlife and walking tracks to be explored, before arriving at a new (proposed) eco-camp accommodation located high on the cliff with expansive views across to French Island and further to the outer sand barriers, a perfect spot for a sundowner drink.

Day Two is spent mostly on water, completing a kayaking loop of Rigby Island, with a stop off to take a short walk out along the western wall of The Entrance where dolphins and seals may be spotted, along with views along the famous Ninety Mile beach. Accommodation is back at Nyerimilang.

A boat transfer on day three includes a morning tea stop-off at the lakeside village of Metung before passengers alight across the waterway at Mosquito Point for a walk across to Bunga Arm where kayaks are moored. A tranquil paddle on the protected waters of Bunga Arm ends at Ocean Grange, a unique seaside community enclave.

For those interested in an alternative experience without paddling, a ride can be undertaken from Mosquito Arm along Jubilee Head Track to the west end of Bunga Arm where a boat transfers to Ocean Grange.

From Ocean Grange, it is a wild walk along famous Ninety Mile Beach, the island is home to prolific bird life with over 190 species recorded. A new (proposed) eco camp is anchored by a refurbished homestead and welcoming communal space.

From Rotamah, visitors are picked up in the morning by boat transfer to Point Wilson on Sperm Whale Head. For those choosing to cycle the remaining leg into Loch Sport, a short loop walk can be taken around Lake Killarney, before riding gravel tracks with views across to Rotamah. For those continuing on foot, a new (proposed) trail routes west along the northern shoreline of Sperm Whale Head, passing through unique environments inhabited by an abundance of wildlife including kangaroos, wallabies and a diverse range of birdlife.

A wild swim can be enjoyed enroute, as the trail dips to pristine beaches and back into hinterland, before rounding Pelican Point and emerging at the sleepy village of Loch Sport. Walkers can continue on an undulating singletrack all the way to the Lakeview Bar and Bistro at Loch Sport and the journey’s end. Guests can opt for an extra night in Loch Sport or choose a luxury package at a nearby (new, proposed) spa and wellness retreat, Nunduk. A night enjoyed here can be followed by an extension

tour with a boat transfer across Lake Wellington and up the Latrobe River, to the Port of Sale, with optional bike ride through wetlands or a short walk through the same.

Day three focuses on exploring the landscapes and aquatic environs of Sperm Whale Head and Rotamah Island, two highlight features of the Gippsland Lakes, along with magnificent paddling up Bunga Arm. This trail can be undertaken in various ways linking walking, paddling and cycling legs, which can be mixed according to activity preference, weather conditions and ideal length of trip.

The route is set up for anything from a 3-day to 5-day excursion, with an extension tour conceivably added to link in the Latrobe River and Port of Sale. Visitors begin in the small village of Loch Sport, choosing to walk or paddle their way to Emu Bight Camp, on the northern shore of Sperm Whale Head. This is the overnight in tented camps (proposed), with an evening swim or relaxing beach visit) nearby. The following day, the paddle or walk is continued along the northern bank of Sperm Whale Head, with a stop at favoured local wild swimming spots Cherry Tree Beach or Trouser Point. Paddling visitors can then take on a short (4km) loop walk around the Pt Wilson environs (which will already be traversed by walking visitors), before paddling [or pre-arranged boat transfer for non-paddlers] across to Rotamah for a comfy night's rest at either an Eco-Camp (proposed) or a regular public campsite.

In the morning, paddlers head towards Ocean Grange and on into Bunga Arm where a selection of campsites can be booked. Those seeking an off-foot experience can spend the day walking in a loop from Rotamah to Ocean Grange, returning on the wild Ninety Mile Beach.

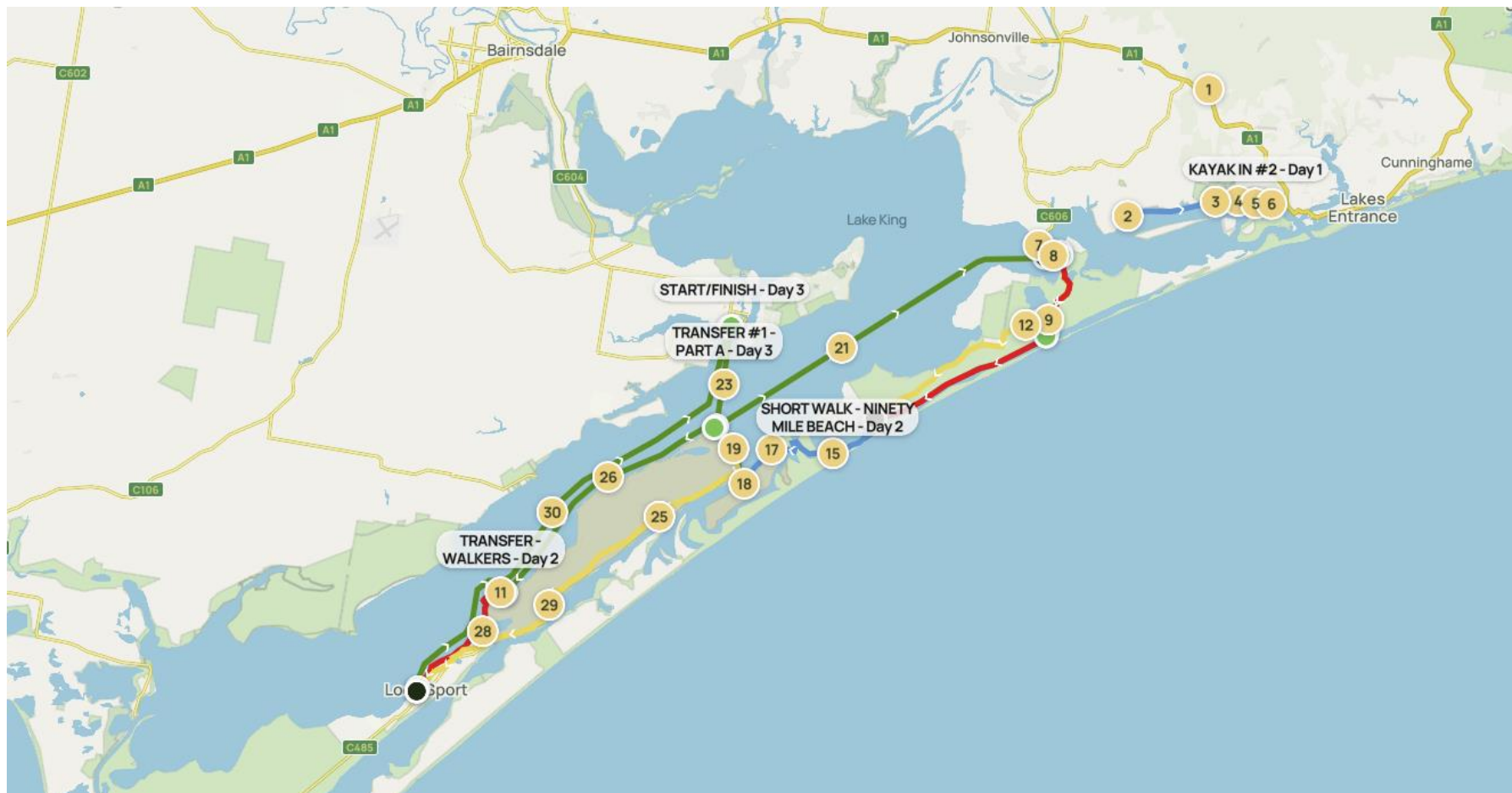
It is proposed that a form of cultural interaction and interpretation be planned for Rotamah Island with Gunaikurnai involvement (subject to Gunaikurnai approval).

On the final day, guests transfer back to Point Wilson where bikes await, for a south-side easy pedal back towards Loch Sport, stopping for a short walk at Lake Reeves Nature Trail. Keen paddlers may prefer to continue paddling south west along protected waterways past remote lakeside beaches enroute to the paddling trail's terminus at Loch Sport.



4 Itinerary-GLAT Product Test

All Trails Link to Maps: [Explore GLAT TOUR TEST - FINAL | AllTrails](#)



Day 1 - GLAT Product Test

1.	Meet at GLaWAC Aboriginal Art Gallery at Forestec - Welcome to Country
	Lunch at Bush Café & Art Gallery
2.	Kayak from Nungurner
3.	Stop at Nyerimilang walk the cliff top, view proposed eco camp site, and paddle to Kalimna Jetty
4.	walk the cliff top, view proposed eco camp site
5.	
6.	paddle to Kalimna Jetty
7.	Overnight at Metung – Dinner at Metung Hotel



Day 2 - GLAT Product Test

8.	Travel to Paynesville Boat transfer to Pt Wilson for a choice of:
9.	walk from Pelican Point to Loch Sport Arrive Loch Sport OR
12	ride to explore Sperm Whale Head or return to Metung via Boat transfer
	Lunch at Paintsville Art Café in Paynesville
	Explore Raymond Koala Walk
	Visit to Metung Hot Springs
	Overnight at Metung – Dinner at The Local



Day 3 GLAT Product Test

	Boat transfer from Metung to Silver Shot Landing, Bunga Arm for choice of:
16.	Walk OR
	Ride at Bunga Arm
15.	Kayak to Ocean Grange from Bunga Arm, walk through Ocean Grange Village, view 90 Mile Beach
.	Morning tea at Ocean Grange
18.	Kayak to Rotamah Island, view homestead and eco camp site
	Return to Metung
	Focus Group and Evaluation of Product Test

Further detail on the GLAT Product Test is provided at Appendix A and Appendix B. Please note, elements of the GLAT product test were altered due to changing weather conditions, switching the Day 2 and Day 3 itineraries to allow for improved conditions and comfort levels for all participants.



5 Summary Analysis of Feedback GLAT Product Test Participants

GLAT Product Test participants were asked to complete an online evaluation survey following an in person focus group feedback session facilitated by TRC Tourism on the final day of the 3-day itinerary. For a more in-depth evaluation, all detailed responses have been included as Appendix D.

Summary Analysis of Feedback

The Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail has definite potential and the blend of adventurous components including kayaking, mountain biking and hiking far exceeded the expectations of all participants during the 3-day itinerary considering most participants had never heard of the term 'Aquatic Trail' before.

The operators engaged in the itinerary were impressed with the components and felt that if operators were to collaborate, the kayaking and walking activities were ready to offer now. This would build demand for the overall infrastructure development.

However, the infrastructure upgrades and links will be critical in making this experience accessible to most people for example boardwalks over tidal areas, steps or stairs with handrails, camping sites with toilet facilities for self-guided explorers with their own tents.

The itinerary allowed for participants to experience the unique nature of the Gippsland Lakes area and gain a varied perspective due to the change of activities and locations where the boat transfer between locations also became a highlight in the journey. Participants considered the value of this experience to be between \$700 - \$1000 per day inclusive of activities, transfers, accommodation and food as a high-level experience or \$700 - \$1000 for all activities components only across a 3-day itinerary.

Positive aspects of the experience highlighted by the participants were as follows:

- The most memorable aspect of the trip for all participants was the immersion in the birdlife with all quite surprised about the abundant nature in the area.
- The inclusion of the cultural element at Forestec including a welcome to country and visit to the gallery was considered high importance.
- Kayaking through wetlands then meandering between quirky beach shacks before being met with the expanse and rugged beauty of the 90-mile beach.
- The birdlife was a standout and kayaking on the lake watching the birdlife was incredibly impactful. (eg I didn't realise the black swans need up to 40m for take-off – watching them paddle flat out across the water per take off was so good.)
- Paddling into lagoons with birdlife abounding and wonderful silence at dusk a highlight.
- Koalas on Raymond Island, Metung Hot Springs, and the food experience at The Local – Metung are highly complementary experiences.
- Guides and local knowledge essential.
- Incredible level of educational value was experienced.

Some considerations for investigation highlighted by the participants included:

- Activities are weather dependent, particularly kayaking, and opportunities for the itinerary to be movable is needed.
- To include bikes there is a need to consider transport on the boat, i.e bike racks, and available water stations to wash bikes post ride.
- To consider the introduction of accessible camp sites on Rotamah Island, Point Wilson and near Nyerimilang Homestead area before glamping and eco tents and look into inclusion of Lake Tyers due to its historical value.
- Consider blending the guide notes (interpretation) and map to accompany the experience. Include signage on the route locations.
- Increase the Indigenous interpretations along the chosen routes.
- Some purpose-built trail, elevated cycleways over low lying water prone areas and signs would improve navigation and accessibility.

APPENDIX A GLAT PRODUCT TEST - ITINERARY

Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail PRODUCT TEST

The Signature Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail introduces visitors to the unique landscapes and aquatic environments of the Gippsland Lakes.

Join us on a 2 night, 3 day journey undertaken through a combination of options including cultural experiences, walking, cycling, kayaking and boat transfers, staying overnight at Metung.

ITINERARY

Day 1 Meet at Aboriginal Art Gallery at Forestec, 27 Scriveners Road Forestec
Welcome to Country
Lunch at Bush Café & Art Gallery
Kayak from Nungurner to Nyerimilang to explore Heritage Park cliff top and Homestead circuit.
Kayak from Nyerimilang Jetty to kayak to Kalimna Jetty
Transfer to Metung accommodation
Dinner at The Local - Metung
Overnight at Metung

Day 2 Boat transfer from Metung to Bunga Arm
Choice of walk or ride at Bunga Arm
Kayak to Ocean Grange and visit 90 mile beach
Kayak to Rotamah Jetty
Boat transfer to Point Wilson for lunch
Boat transfer to Metung for optional Metung Hot Springs
Dinner at The Metung Hotel
Overnight at Metung

Day 3 Boat transfer from Paynesville Progress Jetty to Point Wilson for a choice of ride to explore Sperm Whale Head or walk from Emu Bight to Loch Sport
Arrive Loch Sport for morning tea
Return to Paynesville via Boat transfer
Focus Group and Evaluation of Product Test
Lunch at Paynesville and completion of Product Test



APPENDIX B GLAT PRODUCT TEST – RUNNING SHEET

DAY 1 Tuesday 2 May				
<i>Time</i>	Instructions/Location	Activity	Important Info	What to Bring/wear
11.00am	27 Scriveners Road Forestec, Kalimna West VIC 3909 Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation	Arrive at GLaWAC - Forestec Welcome to Country Uncle Kevin Murray Lunch at – Bush Café	Proceed to Aboriginal Art Gallery and meet group. Take Lunch orders.	
1.00pm	Drive to Nungurner Jetty, Nungurner Jetty Road, Nungurner	Meet Sarah Carlisle – Venture Out for briefing and prepare for Kayak Adventure	Drive to Nungurner Jetty Nungurner Jetty Rd and get ready for kayaking and walking. Note: We may drop cars at Kalimna Jetty and carpool to Nungurner.	• Waterproof spray/shell jacket • Quick Dry Active wear • Hat • Sunscreen • Slides/thongs - ideally water shoes • Hiking boots and dry change of clothes for hike. • Midlayer and/or fleece • Water bottle or pack • Dry bags if you have Have walking clothes/shoes in separate bag car drop at Kalimna Jetty first to shuttle back to Nungurner post kayak.
1.30pm		Paddle from Nungurner Jetty to Nyerimilang Homestead Jetty (approx. 3.5 km)		
3.00pm	<u>Nyerimilang Heritage Park (Lakes Entrance) - All You Need to Know BEFORE You Go (tripadvisor.com)</u>	Arrive Nyerimilang Homestead to look around and walk to visit Eco tent's location.		
		Arrive Maringha Creek for Afternoon Tea and back into Kayaks for paddle part of the creek and final 500m finishing at Kalimna Jetty		
5.30pm		Depart Kalimna Jetty for Metung Accommodation		
7.00pm		Dinner at The Metung Hotel		
		Overnight at Metung	Sunrise Retreat 4 Wood St Metung	

Day 2 Wednesday 3 May

7am		Breakfast at accommodation		
8.00am (for 8.30am departure)		Meet Rob Ashworth at Metung Shaving Point Boat Ramp to load bikes and kayaks and transfer to Silvershot landing -Bunga Arm	Meet at Metung Shaving Point Boat Ramp at 8:15am	• Bike Riding gear • Helmet • Gloves • Kayak clothes as per Day 1 • Dry bag or small pack for clothes • Sunscreen • Hat • Hiking clothes • Midlayers and/or fleece • Water bottle of pack
8.45am		Arrive Bunga Arm for 12km ride or 5km walk		
10am		Arrive Bunga Arm Southern End – Note: Walkers picked up point 9 and transferred to kayak meet point Bunga Arm Southern End		
10am		Kayak (2.5kms) to Ocean Grange Walk to 90-mile beach and have morning tea		
11am		Kayak Ocean Grange to Rotamah Jetty (5km)		
12.30pm		Arrive Rotamah Jetty and brief site inspection of Rotamah Eco Camp site		
12.45pm		Boat transfer (10 pax) to Point Wilson Jetty		
1.00pm		Lunch at Point Wilson and walk around		
2.30pm		Transfer Point Wilson to Metung		
3.30pm		Arrive at Silvershot Landing Metung		
		Optional visit to hot springs		
6.30pm		Dinner at The Local Metung		
		Overnight at Metung Pack up to leave Metung on Thursday morning 7.45am		

Day 3 Thursday May 4

6.30am		Breakfast at accommodation		
7.45am		Depart Metung to Paynesville Progress Jetty Paynesville		
8.30am		Depart Paynesville Progress Jetty to Point Wilson Sperm Whale Head bikes and riders. Proceed to Emu Bight to deliver 5 walkers for walk	Meet at Paynesville Progress Jetty at 8:20am Progress Jetty is located on the southern side of Paynesville on the Gippsland Lakes overlooking the mouth of the Newlands Arm waterway. Follow Main Road to Esplanade	• Bike Riding gear • Helmet • Gloves • Kayak clothes as per Day 1 • Dry bag or small pack for clothes • Sunscreen • Hat • Hiking clothes • Midlayers and/or fleece
10.00am		Arrive Loch Sport morning tea and look around		
11.00am		Depart Loch Sport by boat to Paynesville		
11.30am		Focus Group discussion and evaluation		
12.30pm		Lunch at Paynesville and conclusion of Product Testing. Option for participants to visit Raymond Island		

APPENDIX C PARTICIPANT EVALUATION SURVEY

This is a summary of the GLAT Product Test Participant Evaluation Survey. A detailed summary analysis of these questions and participant responses is provided in the below link is a collation of detailed survey responses by the six participants.



PRE-TRIP FEEDBACK

Think about the leadup to the Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail Product Test and provide your pre trip feedback.

Q1. WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PRODUCT TEST?

Participants were motivated to experience the Gippsland Lakes and were interested in the opportunity to be a part of an Aquatic Trail adventure. Parks Victoria was

invited to participate in the product test and were motivated to experience the potential of the product first hand.

Q2. HAD YOU BEEN TO GIPPSLAND LAKES BEFORE? IF SO, WHAT WAS YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE LIKE?

- Yes, been to Metung, Paynesville, Lake Bunga, Nyerimilang Heritage Area and on the roads in the region on motorbikes, but not on the water or to any of the islands. Have enjoyed walks, meals nights in the area, but wanted to experience more of the actual Lake area rather than the shore but had no means of doing so.
- We have only stayed in Lake Tyers to camp and Lakes Entrance to explore the waterfront.

-
- All participants had been to the Gippsland Lakes before in some capacity generally to do local walks, some boating and visit towns separately however all commented they were keen to experience the lake system more intimately.
- **Q3. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR IMPRESSION OF THE INITIAL PRESENTATION OF THE ITINERARY AND THE OVERALL COMMUNICATION PRIOR TO THE PRODUCT TEST?**
 - Very good, comprehensive, informative and organised.
 - Participants were excited by the itinerary as it presented as a series of point to point journeys that add a sense of adventure and opportunity to immerse yourself in the landscape. The communication was good, I had a good idea of what to expect although the itinerary changed, due to bad weather.

Q4. BASED ON THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, WHAT WERE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR THE GIPPSLAND LAKES AQUATIC TRAIL PRODUCT TEST?

- The main expectation was an opportunity to try some of the proposed trail, noting that new infrastructure has not yet been constructed. While all participants expected it to be enjoyable, the experience far exceeded all expectations.

Q5. HOW FAMILIAR ARE YOU WITH AQUATIC TRAILS? HAD YOU EVER BEEN ON ONE BEFORE?

- Most participants had never experienced an aquatic trail before and were not aware of any formally promoted aquatic trails. The combination of bikes and boats opened up the possibilities to participate in remote walking trails.

OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Q6. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF EACH ELEMENT; CULTURAL, BIKING, HIKING, KAYAKING, NEW INFRASTRUCTURE AND ADDED EXPERIENCES (METUNG HOT SPRINGS, LOCAL DINING) OF THE GIPPSLAND LAKES AQUATIC TRAIL?

- Riding, kayaking, some short walks and a boat ride gave a diversity of experiences in a short space of time. The physical aspect was a good level of exertion to be enjoyable and provide a sense of achievement without being exhausting. The bike ride was a good way to see lots of the bushland, immerse in riding close to wetlands and lake scenery but could be much improved if it included sections of purpose-built trail. The kayaking was brilliant, I felt immersed in nature.
- The variety – kayaking, riding, walking, seeing the 90 mile beach– and the Metung Hot Springs, Aboriginal Art Gallery, and Nyerimilang Heritage Park
- The cultural start at GLaWAC and visit to the gallery was essential to the product along with Uncle Kevin providing a welcome to country.
- Bikes and salt water need to be considered.
- The area offers a number of complimentary experiences that can be hand picked and packaged into the overall product including the Metung Hot Springs, The Local – Metung and Raymond Island - Paynesville

Q 7. WHAT ASPECTS OF THE PRODUCT OR EXPERIENCE WERE MOST MEMORABLE OR IMPACTFUL FOR YOU?

- Kayaking in Bunga Arm was the most memorable for most participants, in particular feeling so close to nature with all the diverse and abundant bird life and visiting 90 mile beach.

*

Q 8. WHAT, IF ANYTHING, DID YOU FIND CHALLENGING OR DISAPPOINTING?

- Kayaking in challenging winds would be concerning for some of the participants.
- Need for a waterproof map and infield direction and facilitation.

- Bikes and salt water was a concern for all who used their own bike.

Q 9. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON A DOLLAR FIGURE COST TO PARTICIPATE IN A 3-DAY / 2-NIGHT SIGNATURE GIPPSLAND LAKES AQUATIC TRAIL EXPERIENCE?

- Most participants were unsure of the cost but hopeful there would be a number of opportunities to participate at different cost levels and to do components self-sufficiently.
- As a stand-alone product as delivered participants expected to pay in excess of \$700 per person.

Q 10. DID YOU FEEL THAT THE PRODUCT ADEQUATELY SHOWCASED THE NATURAL BEAUTY AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GIPPSLAND LAKES REGION?

- Yes, I think if the bike trails end up along the shore more often it will improve the rides.
- LochSport – Not attractive but important for facilitation and access to Point Wilson – (It was noted that the day was windy and cold, the pick up point was the boat storage area – the tour would depart and/or return at a more suitable location at Loch Sport)
- The variety and amount of activities put together in a short time was a positive
- Enjoyed kayaking and immersing in the wildlife in the backwaters. do an itinerary flip to take best advantage of conditions.
- Riding close to wetlands was special important to self navigate – logo and branding would be a fantastic inclusion
- GLAT is a 100% multisport
- Thoroughly enjoyed the whole trail.
- The variety – kayaking, riding, walking – and the hot springs, Aboriginal Art Gallery, and Nyerimilang Heritage Park
- It was great to see 90 mile beach - I've read about it and seen photos of it, but it is a pretty special and unusual beach, so it was really good to see it -

would have been good to go for a quick dip - and especially if the weather is hot.

- The cultural element was introduced thoroughly at the Forestec Centre and followed through at various times during each day at significant points of interest. the biking, hiking and kayaking were all introduced carefully and all safety precautions were covered thoroughly. The time on the kayaks and on the bikes in our case were enjoyable and nicely paced and managed well with some challenging weather conditions. The Metung Hot Springs and local cafes are a real bonus as part of the total experience.

SAFETY AND COMFORT

Q 13. DID YOU FEEL SAFE AND COMFORTABLE THROUGHOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE ON THE TRAIL?

- I think if the wind had been any stronger the kayaking when in the more open areas would have been a mission rather than a cruise.
- There is a need for bike wash down facilities
- Need for a waterproof map and infield direction and facilitation and dilapidated jetties, but I assume the trail would not be finalised with dodgy jetties used, and the operators would have insect repellent for those who like to use it.
- The transfers from bike to kayak and to the Boat and reverse presented some interesting situations with the group needing to collaborate to achieve the desired outcome. This was fun mostly in our case of course and we're aware that these situations will be modified with infrastructure upgrades in the future
- Raised platforms or lower expectations
- Bike wash at determined places and salt water protection and racks for bikes when being transported by boat
- No idea, I could do research and see what these types of things cost and then make up a figure, but basically if I want to do something I do it, unless I think the amount of money is ridiculous, and it depends on what is included and not. Because I haven't been on a package thing, I have always just

organised accommodation and then paid for food, fuel, activities etc and never added up how much a holiday has all cost together.

- Find it difficult to answer this question. All accommodation and food provided OR hire and water transport support to self guided campers?

Q 14.HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THE QUALITY LEVEL OF THE EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES PROVIDED?

- The kayaks, wet bags, life jackets, boats, toilets at various trailheads all perfectly fine. Metung hot springs was an excellent facility and well worth including.
- Yes, I think if the bike trails end up along the shore more often it will improve the rides
- Certainly felt we were shown some outstanding scenery and given an understanding of the importance of the region to the indigenous people.
- self prepare was good – I find when I go away I get really sick of eating café and restaurant meals after a day or so, so it is excellent to have some meals/snacks where you can make your own wrap or choose your own fruit and snacks.
- Accommodation was perfectly suitable.
- For the trail the Glamping sites seemed fine. I think it is important for there to be alternative camping sites and the ability to access the trail from holiday rental or caravan park sites as then it opens up the trail to a lot more users. I think people are more likely to do something different to their norm in the activity space (eg add the kayak when they are normally riders or walkers) than to go the whole hog of a full glamping/hero experience when they are not usually in that market.
- Great equipment in the way of water experiences. we all had our own bikes so not relevant. very safe with the Water transfers.
- Local knowledge is paramount with regards to knowing when to do an itinerary flip to take best advantage of conditions. Did you learn anything new about Gunaikurnai culture, local wildlife, the aquatic ecosystem and the towns visited i.e., Metung, Paynesville Gippsland Lakes region because of your experience on the trail?
- Signage and a map is important to self navigate – logo and branding would be a fantastic inclusion
- As the days had been swapped there was no real feeling of following a trail from A to Z via lots of other letters – it was more like a random event here and a transfer to there to do another activity.I had no idea Raymond Island and the Koala trail existed, and yet I have been to Paynesville several times. Most people have only seen koalas in sanctuaries or zoos or once or twice in their lives in the wild. I'd hate for it to get over-visited, but this was a real gem and rare experience.
- **Kangaroos/Wallabies** – saw quite a few,
- **Emus** – We saw an Emu near the Northern end of Bunga Arm which was great
- I always like to know where I am heading and I found myself asking “is that the jetty we are heading for?” or “how far along here do we ride?” – so a trail map or guide is needed for that Jetty to Nyerimilang Jetty had heaps of crabs, small birds in the shore vegetation and seaweed, mussels etc, it was really interesting – people will need to be told to stick near the shore and look over the side into the clear water. We also saw dolphins.
- As we had guides all the way there was no difficulty ..
- Our experience involved plenty of interesting interps about this area and we feel we were given a pretty good awareness of the history and post colonial development in the whole region.
- **Bush vegetation and insects, reptiles etc** – Different people have different interests and I am sure anyone into ecology or flora or particular fauna would find it really interesting. Without trying to, I noticed several insects I don't see around home and the vegetation was very different.
- The track into Loch Sport – need to decide where the riders are going to ride and mark it. The area is relatively unspoilt and for people coming from cities, towns or other regions the whole experience will be a feast of nature. It is really world class. Just need to make sure people can have the opportunity to slow down and notice it.
- We would have loved a map in our hands . a quick ready reference... as phone service for on line maps was a bit iffy or it wasn't appropriate to carry phones.

- Great interpretation and important information was delivered
- Felt perfectly safe and comfortable, felt like we were in very good hands with Sarah (Kayak) and Rob (boat transfers) as well as Nic and Jo on bikes. All showed they were experienced and aware of potential safety and comfort issues and had it all under control. Safety briefings for the boat, kayak and bike were pitched at exactly the right level. including the structure of the culture with regards to the 5 clans
- I did not have any safety concerns. Some other people may be concerned about wasps, mosquitos and dilapidated jetties, but I assume the trail would not be finalised with dodgy jetties used, and the operators would have insect repellent for those who like to use it.
- Raised platforms or lower expectations
- Bike wash at determined places and salt water protection and racks for bikes when being transported by boat
- Perfectly safe! ..uncomfortable when we had a navigation error .. but that was something unusual.
- Abundance of birdlife was something learned
- It was great to learn about the Nyerimilang Homestead was interesting and to understand the colonial history
- The Art Gallery was good – the possum cloak was incredibly beautiful and the artwork was plentiful and varied.
- The information boards at GLaWAC were good.
- Most people are keen to learn more about the knowledge and experience of Aboriginal People in areas where they travel and I think it is really important to weave this information throughout the whole trail.
- There was another area at Point Wilson (I think) at the start of the ride where there was good information near a lovely picnic area.
- I learned a bit about the 5 clans and their stories, totems and shield designs and would be keen to have more boards or trail notes maybe in other areas of the trail.
- Nyerimilang Heritage Park was good (I've been there a few times so it is hard to remember it as a new experience). It would be good if access to the

homestead was possible – it is well appointed and the library is worth a look.

- Nic's notes about the names and stories of various places we went (eg Shaving Point and Silvershot Jetty) added to the experience.
- The experience we had would give huge value to anyone wanting to learn more about the area – or have experiences the area offers. There is a good variety of educational experiences available and they are very different to those on offer in most areas I have visited.
- The landscapes are wonderful – the wetlands, 90 mile beach, the views over the lake.

Educational Value:

Q 16. HOW VALUABLE DO YOU THINK THIS EXPERIENCE WOULD BE FOR SOMEONE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE GIPPSLAND LAKES AREA?

- Extremely valuable
- There are a number of complimentary products to consider including the Metung Hot Springs and Raymond Island koalas added great value.
- Extremely valuable and an important resource!

Q 17. WERE THERE ANY PARTS OF THE AQUATIC TRAIL OR SURROUNDING AREAS THAT YOU WOULD HAVE LIKED TO EXPLORE FURTHER OR LEARN MORE ABOUT?

- Perhaps we missed out on Lake Tyers .. seems there's a rich history there as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Q18. BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE, ARE THERE ANY CHANGES OR IMPROVEMENTS THAT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND MAKING ELEMENTS OF THE GIPPSLAND LAKES AQUATIC TRAIL EVEN BETTER?

- Deficit of camping in the area
 - It would be good to consider hiker camp sites to get the product started
 - There are currently no campsites on the islands so overnight kayak trips are not currently possible
 - Signage, Information/map pack for participants
 - Integration of more detailed Gunaikurnal cultural information
 - Having had the few days, I would definitely pay to do a GLAT with a group of friends (depending of course on the final offering and price) but it will need good marketing – visual and text storytelling to show people the highlights, so they can tell it is worth going on.
 - Need racks at start and finish points so you don't need to lie your bike down
 - Need washdown stations after areas where the bikes will get salt water or mud on them – or at least at a point at the end of the day.
 - Need bike racks on the boat and possibly covers
 - If it is single track the trails weaving around and through trees are the best experience, but not so much that people take short cuts to make it more direct.
 - It is good to have sections on vehicle tracks so you can ride next to people and chat occasionally.
 - Unobtrusive minor personal coaching by guides when it is judged a participant is receptive (guides can always ask if they would like a few hints or to be left to their own devices)
 - Time to sit in kayaks not paddling to take in the ambience.
- Kayaking seems pretty weather sensitive - might need alternative directions of travel or places to go according to wind direction and strength.
- As discussed while we were on the tour. the infrastructure upgrades and links will be critical in making this experience accessible to the majority of

people.ie Boardwalks over tidal areas, steps or stairs with handrails, camping sites with toilet facilities for self guided explorers with their own tents. Perhaps more birdlife interps, flora as well ... tree identification. A Birds Eye view map to take on the trail or the digital equivalent if carrying phones becomes easier and worthwhile

Q19. DID THE PRODUCT TEST MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS IN TERMS OF YOUR EXPERIENCE ON THE GIPPSLAND LAKES?

- Yes for sure, thoroughly enjoyed it and I am sure that a trail would be very attractive to a lot of people.
- Certainly met our expectations.
- Of course we would love to see GLAT funded and supported so that it can be realised in the near future. it would be something we would recommend to other and bring friends along to experience. would love also to see how it all links to the planned Gippsland Odyssey !

Q 20.HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO RECOMMEND THE SIGNATURE GIPPSLAND LAKES AQUATIC TRAIL TO OTHERS?

I would tell anyone that they would definitely have some new experiences and see some special places.

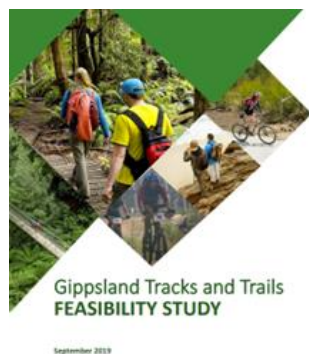
APPENDIX D FURTHER GLAT RESOURCES

Detailed GLAT resources developed by TRC Tourism can be found at Destination Gippsland's Industry webpage here:

[Destination Gippsland - Strategies, Plans and Resources - Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail](#)

A link to each key GLAT resource developed by TRC Tourism can be found here:

[Gippsland Tracks and Trails Feasibility Study 2019](#)



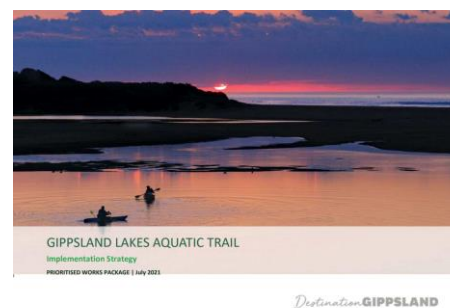
[Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail - Pre Feasibility Assessment 2021](#)



[Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail – Feasibility and Business Case 2021](#)



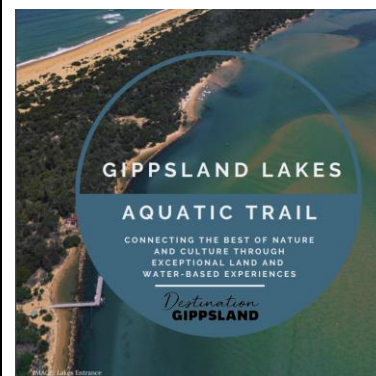
[Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail – Implementation Strategy 2021](#)



Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail – Suggested and Prioritised Staged Works Packages 2021



Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail – Investment Prospectus 2021



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