



TRACKS & TRAILS STRATEGY 2015 - 2018

SHIRE OF STRATHBOGIE

Prepared by: Sense of Place Consulting

June 2015



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Introduction

The Strathbogie Shire Council Plan identifies tourism and cycling as key opportunities to stimulate and develop economic activity in the Shire along with providing local residents with an opportunity to benefit from the health and wellbeing outcomes of outdoor soft adventure activities such as walking, cycling and horse riding.

Strategy 6.4: of the Strathbogie Shire Council Plan recommends that Council *“Investigate and seek funding for the development of a Strategic Walking Tracks, Horse Trails and Bike Routes for the Shire in conjunction with the Action Groups and Goulburn River Valley Tourism (GRVT).”*¹

The purpose of this report is to investigate opportunities to develop walking tracks, horse trails and bike routes within the Strathbogie Shire and to identify the infrastructure and support services required along with identifying potential funding, management and partnership opportunities available to enable the ongoing development and upkeep of these trails.

Tracks and Trails Strategy Methodology

In developing the tracks and trails opportunities study for the Strathbogie Shire Council the following tasks were undertaken:

- Background research and desktop review to identify existing relevant documents, strategies, policies and market potential to support the development of tracks and trails within Strathbogie Shire
- Consultation with members of the Strathbogie community to identify the level of support, current tracks and trails usage, points of interest and potential for further development to support tourism and economic development within the Shire
- Gap analysis to determine support infrastructure and services required to support the development of a tracks and trails network within the Shire
- Identification of potential partnership and funding opportunities to support the development of tracks and trails within the Shire, and the
- Development of a detailed action plan to prioritise and support the ongoing management, maintenance and investment required to realise the recommendations of this strategy.

NB: no consultations were held with residents from Boho and Graytown and represent a gap in this study. It is also recommended that consultation take place with Taungurung and Yorta Yorta Nations.

¹ Strathbogie Shire Council Plan

Strategic Framework

National, state and regional tourism, tracks and trails and cycling strategies have been reviewed to ensure the findings of this report align closely with the strategic directions, themes and principles of peak bodies and potential partners. The report also takes into consideration the priorities and aspirations of the local communities that make up the Strathbogie Shire to encourage the realisation of community goals and to return social and economic benefit directly and indirectly to the host community.

A total of 21 documents were reviewed and analysed to provide a context and understanding of the challenges, best practice models, opportunities, policy and funding considerations for the development of a tracks and trails network in the Strathbogie Shire. A summary of the themes, research and findings of these strategies and reports can be found at *Appendix A*.

About the Strathbogie Shire

The Strathbogie Shire is located in north-central Victoria, approximately 150 kilometres from central Melbourne. Neighbouring shires include the Shire of Campaspe and the City of Greater Shepparton to the north, Benalla Rural City to the east, Mansfield, Murrindindi and Mitchell Shires to the south, and the City of Greater Bendigo to the west. Latest ABS Census data² indicates the Shire has a population of 9,486 people, with the majority of residents living within the townships of Avenel, Euroa, Nagambie and Violet Town. The Shire also includes the smaller towns/villages of Longwood, Ruffy, Strathbogie, Boho and Graytown.

2011 Census QuickStats

All people - usual residents



Australia | Victoria | Local Government Areas

Strathbogie (S)

Code LGA26430 (LGA)



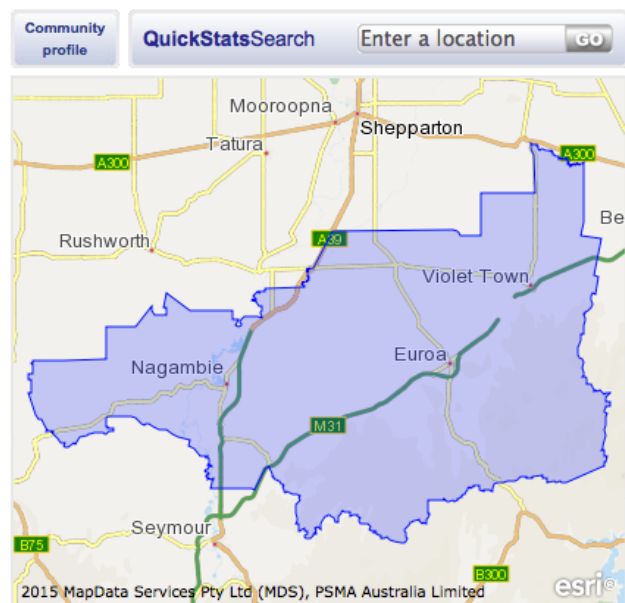
| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| People | 9,486 |
| Male | 4,746 |
| Female | 4,740 |
| Median age | 50 |



| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Families | 2,609 |
| Average children per family | 1.8 |



| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| All private dwellings | 5,025 |
| Average people per household | 2.2 |
| Median weekly household income | \$843 |
| Median monthly mortgage repayments | \$1,104 |
| Median weekly rent | \$152 |
| Average motor vehicles per dwelling | 2 |



² Australian Bureau of Statistics Quickstats 2011 Census data, latest update 28/03/2013

The Shire encompasses a total land area of 3,303 square kilometres, with land mainly used for agriculture, particularly wool, grain, cattle, horse studs and viticulture.

The Strathbogie Shire is classified by Local Government Victoria as a 'Small Rural' Council. It is one of nine councils included in the Hume Region along with the Alpine Shire, Rural City of Benalla, City of Wodonga, Shire of Indigo, Greater Shepparton City Council, Shire of Mansfield, Shire of Towong and Rural City of Wangaratta and actively participates in a number of regional alliances including Goulburn River Valley Tourism and the Goulburn Valley Regional Collaborative Alliance.

Major features of the Shire include the Strathbogie Ranges, Heathcote - Graytown National Park, the Goulburn River, Goulburn Weir, Lake Nagambie (including the Regatta Centre), Mangalore Airport, Mitchelton Winery, Fowles Wines and Tahbilk Winery along with boutique Wineries such as Garners Heritage Wine and Maygars Hill Vineyard both at Longwood East and the Ruffy Produce Store.

The Strathbogie Region has a strong and distinguished military heritage and is home to three Victoria Cross recipients which were recently recognised with the opening of the VC Memorial Park.

The Shire is well positioned within the State of Victoria along the Hume Freeway that connects Melbourne to Sydney and has relatively easy access from Melbourne and surrounding regional centres such as Shepparton and Albury/Wodonga. From the context of the potential of tracks and trails, the Shire benefits from its close proximity to the Great Victorian Rail Trail and position along the Old Hume Highway 31.

Transport connections are important to the current and future population levels of the Shire and also provide connectivity to existing and future tourism markets. When considering the development of tracks and trails for the region, these connections pose both strategic opportunities and challenges as in many cases road and rail infrastructure physically divide and separate access within and between towns, communities and points of interest.

This report takes into account the Shire's Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles when making recommendations for the development of tracks and trails in the Shire. These include:

- Focusing on supporting investment and population growth and contributes to community wealth and wellbeing.
- Collaborative and active consultation with community, industry and other relevant stakeholders
- Delivering quality infrastructure, lifestyle and sustainable economic and community development.
- Values Good Governance in terms of innovation, integrity, accountability, strength, and consistency in leadership and decision making with adherence to robust, transparent and equitable policies and processes.
- Encourages partnerships and collaboration with an engaged community, government, regional bodies and other stakeholders.
- Quality Services – Is based on research, strategic planning, flexibility and innovation to deliver accessible and effective services and regional solutions to enhance the quality of life.
- Social Inclusion – Encourages widespread participation in civic and community life among people of all abilities and backgrounds.
- Environment – Values the Shire's natural and built environment and the importance of local amenity on quality of life.

-
- Stability – Financial recommendations take into account the financial and resource planning and management required to ensure long term sustainability and quality infrastructure.

Existing Tourism within the Strathbogie Shire

Tourism within the Strathbogie Shire is supported within the Council Plan and Economic Development Master Plan and is seen as a driver of economic development, liveability and community wellbeing through encouraging community pride of place and social connectedness.

The Shire values the role of tourism and encourages tourism development and the hosting of events in the region. It operates two visitor information centres – in Nagambie and Euroa. A total of 1.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) is dedicated to supporting the tourism development function within the Shire.

In 2009 Strathbogie Shire Council joined a cooperative regional tourism alliance with Mitchell, Murrindindi and Greater Shepparton Councils. Collectively known as Goulburn River Valley Tourism (GRVT), this peak regional tourism body is responsible for supporting the destination management, advocacy, marketing and industry development of tourism within the region.

The key target markets for the Goulburn River Valley region are families, older travellers / couples, socially aware and experience seeking/ self-drive international visitors. Other niche markets for the GRV region include sports and backpacker markets³.

A snapshot of visitation trends for the year ending December 2014 indicates strong opportunities for tourism within the Strathbogie and Goulburn River Valley region providing insights into current visitor preferences, profiles, purpose of visit, length of stay and points of origin⁴.

Visitation trends for the Mitchell and Strathbogie local government areas of the Goulburn River Valley Tourism region indicate an average length of stay of between 1.7 to 2.5 nights for the year ending December 2014.

The vast majority of overnight and daytrip visitors are from Melbourne (48.1% and 68.2% respectively) and largely an older visitor market with 57.4% of day trippers and over 50% of overnight stays aged 45 years and older.

Of overnight visitation, private vehicle is the most popular form of transport, however 4.5% indicated train (railway).

In 2014 GRVT commissioned the development of a Destination Management Plan for the region as part of an Australian pilot to implement best practice Destination Management Planning. The DMP identified over 120 development opportunities across the region that have the potential for the greatest economic and tourism benefit to the region and supporting host Councils.

3 Goulburn River Valley Destination Management Plan 2014

4 Goulburn River Valley Tourism National Visitor Survey (Strathbogie & Mitchell) YE Dec 2014

Ten key strategic development themes were identified to provide a framework for the development of tourism in the region. Of these ten key themes, four directly relate to and support the development of tracks and trails within the region.

- **Theme 1:** Delivering strategic development opportunities & catalyst projects; New catalyst opportunities – including projects which are not currently offered in the region and have the potential to diversify the product and experience offer in the GRV region.
- **Theme 6:** Defining new touring routes and linkages – including rail trail and township linkages, history, heritage and military history, food, wine and local produce and nature/water based assets
- **Theme 9:** Place making - Improvements to amenity including public toilets, public spaces and general visitor amenity. Streetscape improvements – including building facades, tree planting, public realm etc. Signage and wayfinding – to investigate ways to improve accessibility and awareness of destinations and tourism product. Utilising heritage buildings and underutilised sites for tourism product. Visitor information – enhancing either existing or new visitor information services.
- **Theme 10:** Improving accessibility and transport infrastructure.

Budget and Council Plan

According to the Council 2015/16 report, a high level Strategic Resource Plan (SRP) has been developed for the years 2015/16 through to 2018/19. The emphasis of the SRP is to achieve the Council's strategic objectives as identified in the Council Plan along with financial sustainability over the medium to long term.

A key element of the Council's 2015/16 budget and Strategic Resource Plan is infrastructure renewal.⁵ The Council is committed to the strategic allocation of financial resources based on sound business case development. This report should be considered as part of that strategic planning and business case development and inform future budget allocations and grant funding submissions.

Priorities for the 2015/16 year in order of budgeted expenditure include:

- Infrastructure – Provide well maintained, affordable and appropriate infrastructure
- Community wellbeing – Plan, support and/or deliver a broad range of responsive and accessible services to the diverse community
- Environment – Continue to protect and enhance the natural and built environment for current and future generations
- Financial – Provide best practice management and administration systems and structures to support the delivery of Council services and programs

⁵ Strathbogie Shire Budget Report 2015/16

-
- Industry, Business and investment – Pursue opportunities to increase the range of business and industries in the Shire to further strengthen the economy
 - Tourism and Hospitality – Ensure a coordinated and effective approach to economic and tourism development is maintained at all times, and
 - Governance – Provide all stakeholders with consistent and timely decision making.

The Strathbogie Shire has recognised within its Council Plan the importance of connectivity within the Shire and the role that paths, tracks and bridges play in connecting communities.

The Council Plan identifies the following priorities for Council:

- Review the management plan for Kirwan’s Bridge including funding opportunities
- Investigate and consult in relation to providing a link bridge from the Friendlies Reserve to Memorial Oval over the Seven Creeks
- Support community initiative in securing funding to link the Apex Walking Track across the Seven Creeks near the Rockies
- Investigate options to provide a shared pathway connecting the Regatta Centre to the Nagambie Town Centre
- Investigate options to provide a shared pathway connecting Kirwan’s Bridge Community to Nagambie Town
- Subject to funding extend landing in front of rowing club around to staged area at Buckley Park and back to walking bridge at boat ramp area
- Investigate and seek funding for the development of a Strategic Walking Tracks, Horse Trails and Bike Routes for the Shire in conjunction with the Action Groups and Goulburn River Valley Tourism (GRVT)
- Advocate for a pedestrian crossing at the railway gates on Birkett Street, Euroa
- Investigate and communicate with the community the development of pedestrian crossings in Brock Street, Railway Street and Binney Street area
- Investigate improved signage and road condition of Muller’s Road Nagambie in line with Council’s Road Management Plan

In addition the Council Plan recognises the importance of consistent branding and marketing of the Shire and the opportunity to promote the Shire to visitors and locals via technology (in the development of an app) supported by signage at key landmarks.

Community Consultations

In keeping with the Shire's community based planning objectives a series of dedicated community consultations and one on one sessions were held with representatives from the Community Action Groups, Tourism and Business Enterprise Groups, Special Interest Groups such as Cyclists, Walkers, Horse Riders, Council's Access and Inclusion Officers, Event Organisers, Goulburn River Valley Tourism, Vic Roads, V/Line, Parks Victoria, Goulburn Murray Water, Councillors and Council Officers.

A total of nine community consultations were held over two rounds in February/March and May to ensure the community had sufficient time and opportunity to be involved and contribute to the opportunities study. The consultations were open to any members of the local community to attend.

Meetings were held in Nagambie, Violet Town, Avenel, Strathbogie and Euroa. One on one sessions were also held with residents from Ruffy and Longwood⁶.

A total of 90 participants attended the sessions and contributing valuable input and feedback to the development of this Strategy and Action Plan.

The community consultations were promoted in the following ways:

- direct email invitations sent out to town action groups, business & tourism groups, community groups
- Promoted via the Council website
- Listed in the following publications and notice boards; The Euroa Gazette, Nagambie Voice, Granite News (Ruffy), Strathbogie Tablelands Talk.

Specific objectives of the consultations were to:

- Provide the community with access to relevant information about the scope of the study
- Enable the community to raise issues, questions and concerns, express their views and actively contribute to the identification of opportunities for the development of tracks and trails within the Shire
- Enable the community and interested parties to provide feedback on the findings and draft recommendations of the study and have these views incorporated into the decision making process

To ensure consistency in the approach, participants were asked to consider and identify the following:

- Current community priorities
- The desire to attract tourism to their town - barriers to achieving this goal, any concerns
- The willingness to encourage walkers, cyclists and/or horse riders
- The desire to host events
- The level of existing tracks and trails and amenities - formally and informally recognised
- Local Stories - local history of the tracks

⁶ It is noted that no residents from Boho or Graytown were consulted during this study and could represent a gap in the findings

- Required support services
- Seasonality - is there any time that is more or less suitable to host visitors
- Existing active community groups
- Any competing interests or uses that should be considered
- Any potential environmental impact

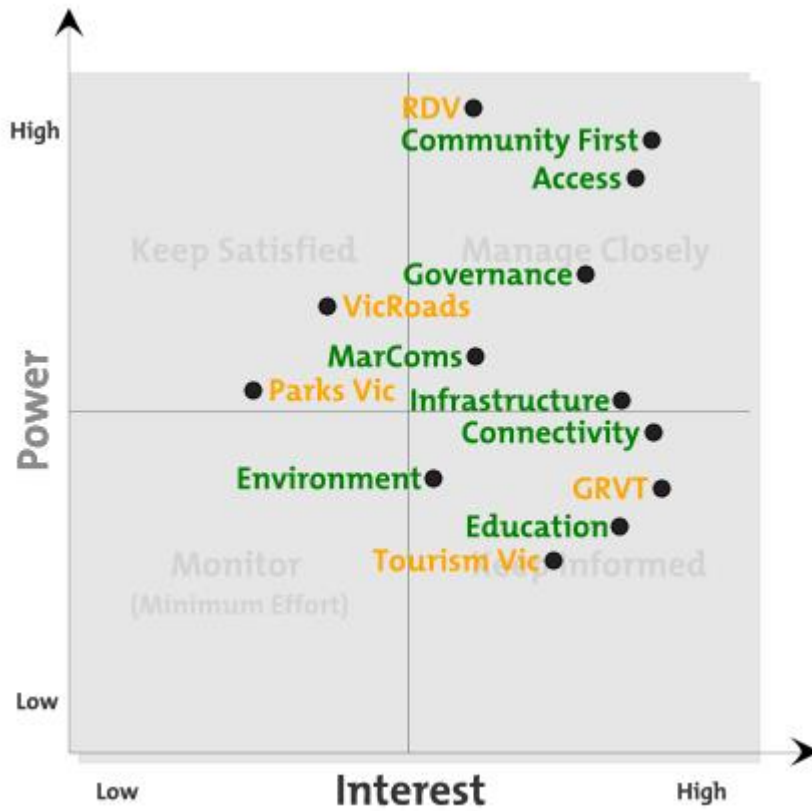
Summary of Identified Themes

The priorities and themes identified in the consultations largely represent the key priorities identified within the Shire’s Council Plan.

Below is a summary of the key themes identified during the consultation phase and the key stakeholder area of influence. Full details of the findings including priority order, council plan objective and stakeholders can be found with the Action Plans.

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility • Equity • Community First • Rural Roads • Agricultural use • Waterways • Safety | <p>Connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Township connectivity • Intershire connectivity • Linkages to surrounding regions • Linkages to existing trails of significance within the State |
| <p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and maintenance of Trails • Signage • End Use Facilities • Grant Funding • Creek and Road Crossings | <p>Marketing and Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maps • Visitor information Centres / Service Centres • Website • Launch/Track Events • Social Marketing Opportunities • Events • Promotion |
| <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation • Education | <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement • Safety |
| <p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracks and Trails Advisory Group • Development and maintenance • Research | <p>Tourism & Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open • Willingness • Economic & social benefits |

The below table demonstrates the level of influence and control the Council, Community and other key stakeholders have over identified priorities. Elements in Green represent Council's area of influence.



Strategic Opportunities

Benefits of Tracks and Trails

The benefits that can be achieved through the development of tracks and trails in a community are considerable and include:

Health and Wellbeing - increased cardio-vascular capacity, weight loss, improved muscle tone, improved self-esteem, increased confidence, improved body image and a reduced risk of contracting various diseases such as type two diabetes, cardio-vascular diseases and various forms of cancer.

Well-designed tracks and trails have the capacity to be used by people of all ages and abilities and can be used at almost any time of day, with limited equipment, at limited expense and without the need to form a team.

Social Connectedness - people are able to develop and enhance friendships and networks with fellow participants, resulting in enhanced social interactions and greater community connectedness. Community based working groups responsible in partnerships with local government bodies for the development and upkeep of tracks and trails, and special events have the ability to create pride in their town or area bringing local residents together to work towards common goals for the betterment of their community.

Environmental - activities such as walking and cycling are considered environmentally friendly activities when confined to existing tracks and trails, due to the minimal impact they have on the environment and the low level of greenhouse gas emissions produced in comparison to other leisure activities for example trail bike riding and four wheel driving.

In addition the Shire benefits from an abundance of wildlife including native animals, birds and a diversity of plant species that attract recreational visitors and locals alike.

Environmental awareness, heritage appreciation and education can also be achieved through the development of tracks and trails. Interpretive signage and awareness programs can educate trail users in regards to the history of an area or region, bring attention to issues such as endangered flora or fauna and/or water quality and assist in raising awareness of conservation efforts.

Economic – While there is very limited data around the economic impact and benefits of tracks and trails⁷, existing research into the benefits of cycle tourism indicates the potential to deliver growth for tourism in regional Victoria and stimulate regional and rural economies through contributing to length of stay and dispersal throughout a regional destination.

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that collectively tracks and trails users have the ability to stimulate increased spending in a region and contribute both directly and indirectly to a regional economy through trail users purchasing goods and services to support their journey and that the development of a trail can

⁷ Victorian Trails Coordinating Committee – “Victorian Trails Strategy – 2005-2010” (2005)

also stimulate local businesses opportunities, improve the viability of existing businesses and create employment as a result of demand for additional services by cyclists and walkers.

According to the Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy⁸ overnight recreational cyclists spend approximately \$250 per day in the region and day recreational cyclists spend around \$50 per day.

According to Tourism Victoria, the diverse scenery and terrain, sealed roads, close proximity of villages and towns and existing tourism infrastructure gives the state a competitive advantage for road cycling and hosting cycling events⁹.

The Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) along with a number of Regional Tourism Bodies (RTBs) (including Tourism North East and Goulburn River Valley Tourism) are collectively working with VLine to try and develop a workable solution to enable to safe and effective transport of bikes on trains and buses. The Government acknowledges the current difficulty in transporting bikes on public transport and has committed to work via Tourism Victoria in partnership with relevant government agencies and public transport operators to increase the accessibility of cycle tourism experiences and increase the current capacity. Currently there is no easy solution to these issues and it may take some time to resolve.

Specific Markets/User Groups

Short Walks

People who undertake walks of less than four hours generally require:

- Short, accessible trails
- Return / loop trails
- Secure car parking at trip beginning / end
- Directional signage
- Access to drinking water
- Safe trails that are well maintained
- Information about the trail both in advance and along the route
- Suitable amenities that reflect the purpose and length of the trail, e.g. seats, picnic areas, toilets, etc.

Short Walks (under four hours in duration) around the townships that highlight the unique cultural heritage and natural environment of the towns are seen as an opportunity to support community connectedness and health and wellbeing but was also seen as a good way to encourage visitors to increase their length of stay in the towns and Shire overall. Increased length of stay will encourage additional expenditure in the towns and contribute to the economic development of the Shire.

Within the Shire a number of short walks are currently being utilised by the community and visitors both on formal and informal paths. These include:

- Avenel town loop, including Stewart Park to Hughes Creek – Avenel
- Apex Track - The Seven Creeks Walk – Euroa
- Balmattum Hill walk - Euroa
- Euroa township to the Arboretum walk - Euroa

⁸ Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy 2013-2011

⁹ Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-2015, Tourism Tasmania

- Longwood town loop including linkages to the Recreation Reserve - Longwood
- Lake Nagambie foreshore walk (not currently a loop) - Nagambie
- Tahbilk Wetlands and Wildlife Reserve Eco Trail - Nagambie
- Informal short walks (challenges with access to public land) - Ruffly
- Bridges Walk and a number of walks of varying levels/difficulties within the Strathbogie National Park - Strathbogie
- Honeysuckle Creek walk - Violet Town
- Honeysuckle Creek to Shadforth Reserve walk - Violet Town

Long Walks

Classified as over four hours in duration, long walks can be enjoyed predominantly in the Strathbogie Ranges and are largely carried out in the State and National Park reserves.

According to Bushwalking Victoria¹⁰, people who undertake a day walk or extended day walk have the following preferences and requirements:

- Off-road tracks – tracks next to roads are the least appealing of all options
- More rugged, unformed bush tracks (not solid formed tracks used by motorised vehicles as these can cause blisters on feet)
- Some variability to the track, i.e. some bends in the track, rises, etc
- Changing scenery, e.g. vistas, wildflowers, historical features, rivers, wildlife
bushland, rivers and wineries are of most interest, with farming land offering the least interest
- Tracks that have a level of challenge and a sense of ambience associated with them, i.e. interest levels are sustained to encourage the walker to want to see what is over the next rise or around the next bend
- Tracks with some signs along them, but not too many signs
- Use a variety of different tools to find out about trails, e.g. websites, maps, brochures, Park Notes, Bushwalking Victoria information, word of mouth, noticeboards at trail heads, etc
- Potentially would use trains as a means to get to the starting point of a trail

Within the Shire a number of longer walks are currently being utilised by the community both on formal and informal paths. These include:

- Graytown – Mt Black walk along with other walks of varying levels/difficulties within the Heathcote/Graytown National Park
- Strathbogie – walks of varying levels/difficulties within the Strathbogie National Park

With the recent release of the Victorian State Government's *Trails Strategy 2014–2024*¹¹ the Government has committed to a whole of government approach to have Victoria recognised as a leading trail-based destination that provides a diverse range of quality trail experiences for visitors, while strengthening the State's economy and improving the health, wellbeing and lifestyle of the community.

Five key strategic directions have been developed to build Victoria's trails experiences. These are:

¹⁰Bushwalking Victoria Tracks and Trails Development 2008

¹¹ Victorian State Government Trails Strategy 2014-2024, July 2014

-
1. Provide a strategic framework for trail investment
 2. Support effective planning, development and maintenance of trails
 3. Provide high quality information on trails
 4. Create better trail experiences
 5. Market trails

Opportunity – Support the development of a Great Walk

This strategy recommends a coordinated approach to working with Parks Victoria to encourage the staged development of an iconic trail within the Strathbogie Ranges. Given the presence of existing trails within the management of Parks Victoria it is recommended that focus be first placed on the development and capture of high quality information regarding the existing trails and works required to improve the quality of tracks and trails on offer and that Parks Victoria dedicate resources to maintain and market the existing trails.

Cycling

While research into the travel behaviours of cycle tourist is limited, learnings from other Cycling Tourism investigations¹² indicates an expectation from cyclist of the following services and infrastructure:

- Mobile phone coverage
- Well maintained road surfaces (both sealed and unsealed)
- Town beautification efforts
- Access to shops, cafes, restaurants and service stations and extended trading hours (ie weekends)
- Access to public facilities and clean drinking water along the trail
- Safe road cycling
- A variety of trail standards from beginner to experienced
- Bicycle Racks and Lockers
- Change Facilities
- Stop Over Points
- Signage - Directional, Interpretive, Informational and Safety
- Access to short and 'epic' trails
- Where possible access to National Parks and points of interest

Cycle tourists will stay in a variety of accommodation types - both paid and unpaid including: with Friends and Relatives (VFR), in hotels, motels, caravan parks and camping grounds, are significantly less likely to travel alone, have higher disposable income and are likely to stay longer in a destination.

Trends in cycling tend to emerge similar to fashion. In the 1980's BMX was the rage, then in the 1990's Mountain biking was on trend. In the 2000's there has been a steep growth in the popularity of road cycling.

Road Cyclists

Cycling – particularly road cycling was recognised as a popular and growing past time enjoyed by both residents and visiting groups/clubs to the Shire.

¹² Southern Flinders Ranges preliminary cycle tourism study

Anecdotally it was noted that in recent times there has been a continued growth in road cycling especially in and around Euroa, Violet Town, Avenel, Strathbogie, Longwood, and Ruffy. This growth can be attributed to the relative safety and quality of surrounding roads (mainly due to limited road traffic), quality of visual amenity (scenery), variety of terrain (hills and flat country) and the emergence of quality end use facilities and services including cafes and coffee, toilet infrastructure and access to clean drinking water.

Nagambie does currently benefits from road cycling predominantly amongst the local host community and visiting event cyclists such as those attracted for the Herald Sun Tour, Green Edge Cycling Ride, River to Ranges and Winery Rides.

Opportunity – Develop Violet Town and Euroa as cycle training camp bases

The Shire's diverse terrain including flat lands and hill climbs within the Strathbogie Ranges coupled with the close proximity to Melbourne make it an ideal location for road cycling training camps. Recent success with the GreenEdge recreational ride, River to Ranges Ride, Herald Sun Tour, Ride the Ranges and Winery Riders have demonstrated a willingness for people to travel to the Shire for road cycling events and team training. The circular nature of the positioning of the towns of Violet Town and Euroa at the foothills of the Strathbogie Ranges make both towns the ideal location for cycling clubs to base themselves for weekend riding camps.

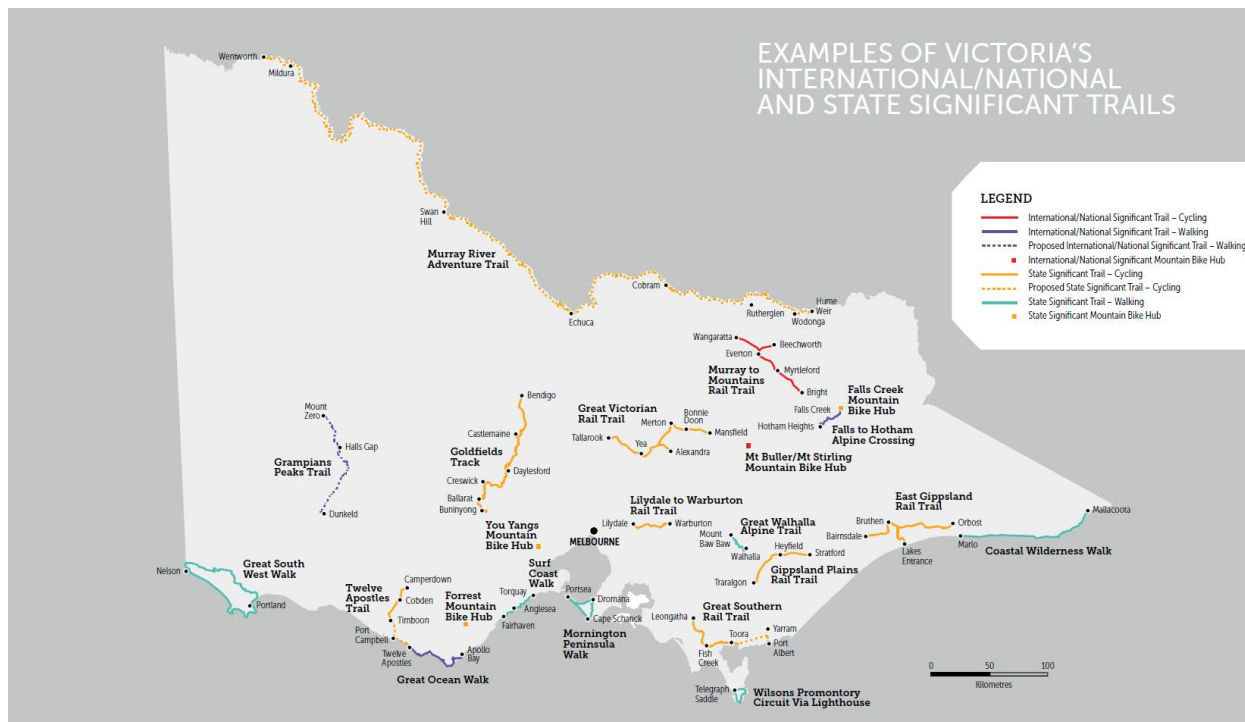
Some work is needed to assist with the crossing of the Hume Freeway. Currently mountain/hybrid style bikes and horses may access stock crossings and public pathways, however options for road bikes should be explored in consultation with other users of these crossings (ie landowners).

Currently there are over 20 metro based cycling clubs in Victoria. Each host regular events, day rides and weekend training camps. Key to the selection of a location for coordinated rides is the easy of access, topography, terrain, points of interest and availability of good food, coffee, beer and wine.

In the development of this study a number of metro based cycling clubs were contacted to gauge their interest and willingness to consider the Strathbogie region for annual training camps. All expressed strong interest for both senior and junior camps along with the annual women's only rides.

Opportunity – Connecting Victoria’s Significant Tracks and Trails

The Hume Region Tracks and Trails Strategy identifies 10 existing tracks and trails of significance¹³. The following map identifies the locations of significant tracks and trails within Victoria.



While no tracks or trails of significance are identified within the Strathbogie Shire itself, the advantageous location of the Shire means it is well placed to provide key linkages between trails including the O’Keefe Rail Trail (with linkages to the Goldfields Track), the Great Victorian Rail Trail and the Murray Adventure Trail via Greater Shepparton.

Opportunity – Develop an Iconic Winery Cycle Route

Given the quality and profile of the wineries within the region there is a strong opportunity and desire to develop an iconic winery ride centred around the Nagambie Lakes region with linkages to the Strathbogie Ranges and surrounding area. This has the potential to be a game changing product for the region and generate significant economic, wellbeing and brand benefits for the community, Shire and overall region. The development of such a trail has strong potential to develop into a trail of State Significance.

This route would have broad appeal and could cater for families and more niche cyclists including the ‘Fixie’ (a subculture within the Road Cycling fraternity popular amongst the millennials).

¹³ Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy 2013-2011

Opportunity – Supporting the restoration of iconic tracks and trails

The Major Mitchell and Old Hume Highway (Hume and Hovel Trail) both travel through the Shire and include camps and monuments along the journey. Initially established as rough tracks between Sydney and Melbourne in 1842, the track laid many of the foundations for the establishment of the Shire's towns.

Recently Old Hume Highway 31 has been formed as an organisation to jointly preserve and promote the history of the old Hume Highway and encourage the development of a dedicated tourist trail. The group has been raising the profile of the old route and is actively working with Local, State and Federal government to develop the Old Hume Highway as an iconic Australian touring route. Such a route would be of particular interest to not only self-drive visitors but also cyclists and potentially organised horse rides.

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is a relatively new recreational activity that developed around the 1970s and early 1980s, but since that time has experienced rapid growth world-wide.

Mountain bikers typically prefer off-road riding. Without dedicated mountain bike trails or areas to ride, mountain bikers find their own places to ride including four-wheel drive tracks, fire trails and walking tracks.

While mountain biking is an activity that riders can do independently, mountain biking events are also growing in popularity.

In Victoria, research has revealed that cyclists in the annual Audax Alpine Classic (a two day, long distance cycling event, running for 24 years and capped at 2000 cyclists) spend more than \$814,000. The total benefit to the region of this event is closer to \$1.5million (as the figure is based on cyclists and not their family, friends and general spectators).

"The interesting statistic for us is that more than 75% of respondents said they were 'likely' or 'extremely likely' to return to Bright for a holiday and nearly 40% stay for three nights."¹⁴

Growth of mountain biking through the integration with other sporting activity

Orienteering clubs have recently held mountain bike orienteering events that combine aspects of traditional orienteering with mountain biking. Similarly, multi-sport and adventure racing combine mountain biking with other activities such as running and kayaking also continue to grow in popularity. These examples demonstrate the increasing popularity of mountain biking and demand for appropriate venues.

Opportunity – Support the development of iconic annual cycle and adventure events

Triathlon, Rogaining, Adventure Racing all have the ability to attract strong visitation to the region by both the competitors, officials and support persons. The extended nature of the events also encourages

¹⁴ Chair of the Alpine Region Toursim Board, John Kroeger commented on the research undertaken at this year's Audax Alpine Classic by Southern Cross University, the University of Canberra and the University of Queensland.

overnight stay in the region along with higher yields. The Nagambie community have expressed a strong desire to host an Ironman style triathlon event in the region.

Efforts are also being made by the Australian Rogaining Association to host their annual Australasian Championships in the Strathbogie Ranges. Rogaining is a team sport centred on long distance cross-country navigation. The traditional rogaine is 24 hours in duration. However, there are also shorter events of 6, 8 and 12 hours. Most events are located within a two hour drive of major cities. Rogaines are held on foot in picturesque bush and farmland locations. The Strathbogie Ranges have hosted State and National Rogaining titles since the introduction of the sport to Australia in the late 1970s. Typically events take place across private land and public forests. Consultation with representatives from the Victorian Rogaining Association has indicated a strong interest in hosting more regular events in the Strathbogie Ranges and broader region. Participants are often involved in course design, land management and maintenance and the delivery of team building activities.

Horse Riding – Trail Riding and Equine Events

Despite the Shire being named the equine capital of Victoria with the presence of many successful equine studs and the linkages to Black Caviar, opportunities for horse riding within the Shire on tracks and trails is currently limited and did not present as a high priority in the consultations held within the communities. It was recognised that the townships of Violet Town, Longwood, Strathbogie, Ruffy and Euroa could benefit from the further development of horse facilities including safe loading and unloading bays and yards to support the equestrian events held in the townships and support trail riding in the Shadforth Reserve at Violet Town and within the Strathbogie Ranges. In keeping with the equine capital theme there may be some merit in exploring the installation of hitching rails and horse troughs in some of the towns including Ruffy, Violet Town, Euroa, Avenel and Longwood.

Consultation with existing equine groups suggested the opportunity for more regular horse rides (both organised and independent) within the Strathbogie Ranges and Ruffy and that these could be encouraged through the development of safe loading bays and the provision of day yards. There was reservation from community groups to encourage horse riders using shared pathways within townships due to the surface damage that can occur through the use of horses (ie granitic sand) as evidenced in places along the Great Victorian Rail Trail. There was openness in both Longwood and Violet Town to encourage additional horse events and the potential to house overnight stays at the recreation reserves.

Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market

Benefits of the VFR market to a region are two fold:

- 1 - Generates new money in the economy by attracting visitation, and
- 2 - Prevents leakage as locals stay and participate in activities locally rather than travelling outside the region to spend their disposal income.

Local hosts are often 'to blame' when VFR travellers under-utilise local attractions and activities due to their lack of awareness of local tourism products.

Research into the VFR market indicates that the number one key factor influencing the activities and expenditure of the VFR market is to influence the host.

Strong VFR marketing that sets out to positively influence the mindset and behaviours of the hosts has the desired result of influencing visitor behaviour.

Benefits include;

- Increased yield and visitor dispersal throughout the region
- Generates civic pride and community confidence
- Encourages ownership of the visitor experience by the community
- Stronger engagement and participation in community life
- Engages 'real people' – authentic, trust and third party endorsements

Action Plans

The following action plans have been developed based on the level of priority for the region, recommended timeliness and location. Some elements of the Action Plans are applicable Shire Wide while others have specific actions for individual townships and localities.

A. Shire Wide

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Relevant Stakeholders |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Representation & Governance | <p>In consultation with the relevant Community Action Group (CAG), form a sub committee to engage with the community and gain their ongoing input and feedback for the development of Tracks and Trails within Strathbogie Shire. Representation should be sort from all communities within the Shire. The plan and progress made should be reviewed annually.</p> <p>Provide outcomes of Strathbogie Shire's Tracks and Trails Strategy to the Hume Region's Tracks and Trails Steering Committee in order to progress the development of tracks and trails in the regional meetings and peak regional, state and national bodies.</p> <p>Present the Tracks and Trails Strategy to relevant bodies and authorities to gain their support in the implementation of the recommended actions.</p> | Shire Wide | Financial Infrastructure Governance Community Wellbeing Environment Financial | High | 2015-18 | Council CAGs GRVT Hume Region VicRoads Parks Vic Tourism Victoria RDV |
| Funding | <p>Work with RDV and other potential funding partners to identify and seek grant funding to develop, construct and maintain infrastructure and tracks and trails within the Shire.</p> | Shire Wide | Infrastructure Financial Community Wellbeing Tourism & Hospitality | High | Ongoing | RDV Council GMW Vic Roads GRVT |

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Relevant Stakeholders |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mapping | Verification and correction of mapped routes and detailed descriptions for already identified tracks & trails, including cycling routes, walking trails. This should be done in consultation with Yorta Yorta Nations and the Taungurung people. | Shire Wide | Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2015 | Council VicRoads GRVT Bicycle Victoria Yorta Yorta Nations Taungurung |
| Connectivity | Progress the construction of suitable, safe and accessible (in keeping with Universal Design Principles) shared pathways, bridges and road crossings in and around each township linking recreational areas to community hubs. Where possible separate from road reserve. Granitic surfaces suitable in most instances. Ensuring at least one short to medium length loop or return trail is developed in each township. Specific features include: - Nagambie Lake, Regatta Centre, High Street and Wineries - Avenel Primary School, Creeks and Railway crossings (town loop) - Euroa Seven Creeks, VC Park, Memorial Oval and Balmattum Hill - Longwood Town Loop and Recreation Reserve - Strathbogie's Mount Wombat, Polly McQuinns | Shire Wide | Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Financial | High | 2016-18 | Council CAGs VicRoads Bicycle Victoria GRVT RDV |
| Safety | Improve road safety. Identify existing popular road cycling routes. Council to work with VicRoads to install 'Share the Road – Cyclist' signage | Shire Wide | Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2015/16 | Council VicRoads CAGs Local Cycling Clubs |

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Relevant Stakeholders |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Marketing & Communications | <p>Collate and document all existing tracks and trails within the Shire. Develop promotion and communication tools to raise awareness and usage of existing tracks and trails via online, social and printed media channels.</p> <p>This should be done in consultation with Yorta Yorta Nations and the Taungurung people.</p> <p>Develop a marketing plan, including theme options and points of interest on each trail and cycling route and recommendations on the timelines for the rollout of the plan ensuring opportunities to link to other regional paths, tracks and trails. Communication channels should include, web, social media, printed brochures and maps along with interpretive signage and markers.</p> <p>Develop a dedicated local community engagement communication strategy to encourage local first time and repeat visitation and to support the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market</p> <p>Compile a high quality image library to ensure consistent branding of tracks and trails and cycle tourism offerings and events for all relevant marketing activities</p> <p>Develop a regular (quarterly) electronic newsletter to distribute to all walking and cycling clubs, associations and social groups keeping them up to date with events and experiences on offer in the Strathbogie Shire. Creating regular front of mind awareness of the Strathbogie Shire as a cycling and walking destination.</p> <p>Encourage visiting journalist programs via Tourism Victoria and Goulburn River Valley Tourism</p> | Shire Wide | Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment Community Wellbeing | High | 2016/17 onwards | Council Tourism Victoria VicRoads Bicycle Victoria GRVT Visitor Information Centre Network CAGs |

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Relevant Stakeholders |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Events | <p>Further develop hallmark cycling events to build a calendar capable of capturing state and future national recognition. Events should draw visitation across a minimum two day period to encourage increased tourism visitation. Consideration should be given to time of year in order to maximise visitation and sponsorship opportunities. Seek funding support from financial partners such as Tourism Victoria's regional events program, and council.</p> <p>Support existing events series and work with existing (ie Ride the Ranges) and potential event organisers to develop additional events for the region i.e. Triathlon, Adventure Cycling, Rogaining, Charity Rides etc.</p> <p>Explore partnership opportunities with Cycling Australia, Cycling Victoria and the Department of Economic Development to become an emerging tourism road cycling destination for independent visitors, groups and club events.</p> <p>Develop partnerships with existing Walking, Trail Riding and Cycling Clubs to encourage the usage of the existing tracks and trails as a regular club meeting locations and lobby networks to host annual events.</p> | Shire Wide | Infrastructure Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016-18 | Council Tourism Victoria VicRoads Bicycle Victoria GRVT Events Victoria Service Clubs Adult Riders Cycling Clubs Walking Clubs |
| Signage | <p>Map, seek funding for and install road signage, wayfinding (in keeping with Council's adopted guidelines) and interpretive signage along routes.</p> | Shire Wide | Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016-18 | Council Vic Roads Bicycle Victoria GRVT Visitor Information Centre Network |

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Relevant Stakeholders |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Research | Develop a regular bicycle count program on popular cycling routes to determine the change in user volumes, facility capacity and develop business cases for additional facilities. | Shire Wide | Infrastructure | Low | 2016-18 | VicRoads Bicycle Victoria |
| Investment | Private Sector Investment Encourage the development and investment by the private sector in services to support the development of tracks and trails tourism to the region including: accommodation, transport, food and beverage, bike storage, bike hire, bike repairs, retailers, bike racks, bike washing facilities, horse yards, stables and loading bays. | Shire Wide | Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016-18 | GRVT Council CAGs Cycling Victoria Small Business Victoria Private industry |
| Industry Development | Promote and develop the region as a cycle friendly destination. Develop a business and community tool kit to assist in meeting the needs of cyclists i.e. accommodation operators, cafes, retailers, event organisers. Encourage the development and documentation of safe connections between towns for cyclists taking into account the needs of all road users and Freeway, railway and waterway crossings. | Shire Wide | Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2015/16 | Council GRVT Cycling Victoria Tourism Victoria |
| End Use Facilities | Support the installation of end use facilities including drinking water, bike racks, seating (in keeping with Universal Design Principles). Consider working with local artists, Men's Sheds and schools to come up with innovative and creative designs and construction. Promote the Shire as a rail and ride friendly destination. Work with V/Line to develop suitable scheduling, bike transport and platform operations to support rail and ride visitation. Lobby for suitable end use facilities such as bike racks, water, signage, seating, and locker storage. Develop suitable suggested itineraries and mapping. | Shire Wide | Community Wellbeing Tourism & Hospitality Infrastructure Financial Industry, Business & Investment | High Medium | 2016-18 | Council CAGs Service Clubs (ie Rotary, Apex, Mens' Shed) GRVT V/Line Tourism Victoria Hume Region |

B. Avenel

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Key Stakeholders |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pathways | <p>Progress the construction of suitable, safe and accessible shared pathways, bridges and road crossings in and around the township linking recreational areas to community hubs (in keeping with Universal Design Principles). Where possible separate from road reserve. Granitic surfaces suitable in most instances.</p> <p>The Avenel community have specified a preference for curved or windy pathways rather than straight. Ensuring at least one short to medium length loop or return trail is developed in each township. Avenel Primary School, Creeks and Railway crossings (town loop).</p> | Avenel | Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Financial | High | 2016 - 18 | Council CAGs Vic Roads Bicycle Victoria |
| Points of Interest | Connect Avenel to at least one nearby attraction such as Fowles Wine and the Upton Circuit. Where possible connect trails along existing low use municipal roads and ensure appropriately maintained and signposted. | Avenel | Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016 - 18 | CAGs Council Vic Roads RDV Special Interest Groups |
| Connectivity | <p>Game Changer Develop link to the Great Victorian Rail Trail. Explore options to link region to the Great Victorian Rail Trail. Potential to link to Tallarook via Dysart Road (Old Hume Highway). Work with Tourism North East, Goulburn River Valley Tourism and Tourism Victoria to promote connections to this iconic Rail Trail.</p> | Tallarook to Nagambie and or Avenel | Infrastructure Finance Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016 - 18 | Tourism Victoria RDV Tourism North East Hume Region GRVT Council Mitchell Shire |

C. Euroa

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Key Stakeholders |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Safety, Signage & Maintenance | Safely connect Euroa to nearby attractions such as the Arboretum and Balmattum Hill. Where possible connect trails along existing tracks and low use municipal roads. Ensure these paths are appropriately maintained and signposted. | Euroa | Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016 - 18 | CAGs Council Vic Roads RDV Special Interest Groups |
| Pathways & Theming | In partnership with local community (ie Apex and Rotary Clubs) upgrade the existing track surface to support accessible shared use of the track. Themes include: History & Heritage (including Military and Ned Kelly), Nature, Arts & Culture | Euroa | Infrastructure Financial Community Wellbeing | High | 2015/16 | Euroa Apex Euroa Rotary Council CAGs |
| Bridges & Funding | Secure funding to develop, design and implement the installation of an accessible bridge at The Rockies (develop in stages). As funding becomes available, install dedicated accessible shared pathway bridges over creek crossings and railway lines to link communities and create engaging extended trails. | Euroa | Infrastructure Financial Community Wellbeing Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016 - 18 | Council CAGs Parks Vic RDV Friends of the Sevens |
| Signage | Install wayfinding and interpretive signage to enhance the visitor experience on the trail. In developing the signage, consider the naming of the trail for promotion ie The Apex Seven Creek Trail. | Euroa | Infrastructure Financial Community Wellbeing Tourism & Hospitality | High | 2015/16 | Council |
| Connectivity | Working with developers, Rotary Club of Euroa and the Arboretum, link the Euroa Arboretum to the township with an all-weather shared path way giving consideration to floodways and the safe crossing of Euroa Main Road. | Euroa | Infrastructure Financial Community Wellbeing Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016/17 | Vic Roads Euroa Rotary Friends of Arboretum |

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Key Stakeholders |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Events | Continue to support and promote in partnership with service clubs existing events such as the Ride the Ranges charity event | Euroa | Community Wellbeing Tourism & Hospitality | High | Ongoing | Council Euroa Rotary |
| Game Changer Connectivity between Violet Town & Euroa | Encourage the development and promotion of Euroa and Violet Town as bases for cycling camps to access the Strathbogie Ranges. In consultation with the agriculture sector and land holders, consider the sealing of a section of McDiarmids Road between Euroa and Violet Town to support the safe and most direct route. | Euroa | Infrastructure Financial Community Wellbeing Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016 - 18 | Council State Government (details pending) |
| Game Changer Balmattum Hill | Work with local community and special interest groups to develop walking and mountain biking trails on Balmattum Hill. Redevelop road access and carpark to enable safe access. | Euroa | Infrastructure Financial Community Wellbeing Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment Environment | High | 2016 - 18 | Parks Vic Council State Government |

D. Longwood

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Key Stakeholders |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pathways | Connect Longwood to at least one nearby attraction such as the Big Hill Reserve and Wallaby Gully etc. Where possible connect trails along existing forest tracks and low use municipal roads, and ensure appropriately maintained and signposted. | Longwood | Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016-18 | Council CAG Vic Roads RDV Special Interest Groups |
| Points of Interest | Work with local artists to design, develop, construct and install a range of arts installations along the town loop to create an interpretive walk that tells local stories and shares local characters that will encourage people to stop and explore the town. | Longwood | Financial Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment Community Wellbeing | High | 2015-18 | CAG Community Matching Grants Council |
| Events | Encourage and support the development of Equine events in Longwood | Longwood | Community Wellbeing Tourism & Hospitality | Medium | 2016-18 | CAG Council Events Victoria |
| Connectivity | Explore opportunities to gain access to Mount Teneriffe nature reserve for walking and adventure racing. | Longwood | Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | Medium | 2016-18 | Parks Vic Council Special Interest Groups |

E. Nagambie

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Key Stakeholders |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Game Changer Connectivity & Accessibility | <p>Showcase Nagambie as a lakeside town, opening up the foreshore to commercial activity and creating a Waterside shared pathway in commercial centre of Nagambie.</p> <p>Create safe, accessible shared pathway either along the lake frontage or via Vickers Road and to extend the waterside shared path behind the commercial centre of Nagambie. between High Street and Nagambie Lakes Leisure Park and Regatta Centre (including pedestrian crossing at High Street).</p> <p>Investigate the development of a complete shared pathway (loop) around the Lake with the construction of a bridge at the end of Lobbs Lane across the Lake to the Leisure Park.</p> <p>Investigate options to provide a shared pathway connecting Kirwan’s Bridge Community to the Nagambie township.</p> | Nagambie | <p>Infrastructure</p> <p>Financial</p> <p>Tourism & Hospitality</p> <p>Industry, Business & Investment</p> | High | 2015-18 | <p>Tourism</p> <p>Victoria</p> <p>RDV</p> <p>Hume Region</p> <p>GRVT</p> <p>Council</p> <p>GMW</p> |
| Game Changer Great Victorian Rail Trail | <p>Develop link to the Great Victorian Rail Trail.</p> <p>Explore options to link region to the Great Victorian Rail Trail.</p> <p>Potential to link to Tallarook via Dysart Road (Old Hume Highway). (see map)</p> <p>Work with Tourism North East, Goulburn River Valley Tourism and Tourism Victoria to promote connections to this iconic Rail Trail.</p> | Tallarook to Nagambie and or Avenel | <p>Infrastructure</p> <p>Financial</p> <p>Tourism & Hospitality</p> <p>Industry, Business & Investment</p> | High | 2016-18 | <p>Tourism</p> <p>Victoria</p> <p>RDV</p> <p>Tourism North East</p> <p>Hume Region</p> <p>GRVT</p> <p>Mitchel Shire Council</p> |

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Key Stakeholders |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Game Changer Winery Cycle Route | <p>Develop an iconic winery cycle route. Work with wineries to develop route (could include Murchison as well).</p> <p>Address current road surface issues on Muller Road. Consider staged approach with white road surfacing (gravel) followed by sealed road. Where possible include dedicated cycling path.</p> | Nagambie to Avenel | Community Wellbeing Financial Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016-18 | Wineries Vic Roads RDV Tourism Victoria GRVT Council Bicycle Victoria Hume Region |
| Connectivity | Investigate options to provide a shared pathway connecting Kirwan's Bridge Community to the Nagambie township. | Kirwan's Bridge - Nagambie | Community Wellbeing Financial Tourism & Hospitality Infrastructure | Medium | 2017 - 18 | Vic Roads RDV GRVT Council GMW |
| Events | Investigate hosting an Ironman style event in Nagambie to build on the existing events held within the town and Shire. | Nagambie | Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2017/18 | Vic Roads GMW GRVT Sport & Rec Council McPherson Media |

F. Ruffy

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Key Stakeholders |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Points of Interest | <p>Connect Ruffy to at least one nearby attraction such as the Eddy's Lane Tourist Walk and the Snowgum Reserve etc. Where possible connect trails along existing forest tracks and low use municipal roads, and ensure appropriately maintained and signposted.</p> <p>Support the installation of hitching rails and water troughs for horse riders along with suitable loading areas.</p> | Ruffy | <p>Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment</p> | High | 2016-18 | <p>CAGs Council Vic Roads RDV Special Interest Groups</p> |

G. Strathbogie

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Key Stakeholders |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Points of Interest | Connect Strathbogie to nearby attractions such as Polly McQuinns, Gooram Falls, Mount Wombat and the State Forest etc. Where possible connect trails along existing forest tracks and low use municipal roads that are appropriately maintained and signposted. | Strathbogie | Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016-2018 | CAGs Council Vic Roads RDV Special Interest Groups |
| End Use Facilities | Identify access options for drinking water in Strathbogie. Explore opportunities for suitable loading and yard facilities to encourage horse riding in permitted areas. | Strathbogie | Financial Community Wellbeing Tourism & Hospitality | High | By Nov 2015 | CAG Council Parks Victoria |
| Game Changer Great Walks | Work with Parks Victoria to develop one of Victoria's Great Walks through the Strathbogie Ranges. | Strathbogie | Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016-2018 | Tourism Victoria Parks Victoria CAGs Council RDV Special Interest Groups |
| Events | Explore opportunities to host events in Strathbogie including Rogaining, adventure racing, horse riding and cycling events. | Strathbogie | Community Wellbeing Tourism & Hospitality | Medium | 2016-2018 | CAG Council Special Interest Groups |

H. Violet Town

| | Action | Location | Council Plan / Objective | Priority (H, M, L) | Timing | Key Stakeholders |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Points of Interest | Connect Violet Town to at least one nearby attraction such as the Shadforth Reserve in Violet Town etc. Complete Honeysuckle Creek Walking path with an accessible granitic sand path. Install directional and interpretive signage along the path along with additional public art that relates to the town. | Violet Town | Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment | High | 2016-18 | Council CAG Vic Roads RDV Special Interest Groups |
| Connectivity | Game Changer Encourage the development and promotion of Euroa and Violet Town as bases for cycling camps to access the Strathbogie Ranges. In consultation with the agriculture sector and land holders, consider the sealing of a section of McDiarmids Road between Euroa and Violet Town and access to stock crossings/public paths to support the safe and most direct route. | Violet Town | Financial Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment Community Wellbeing | High | 2016-18 | Council State Government |
| Events | Encourage and support the development of Equine events in Violet Town | Violet Town | Community Wellbeing Tourism & Hospitality | Medium | 2016-18 | CAG Council Events Victoria |
| Points of Interest | Game Changer Work with local community and special interest groups to develop walking and mountain biking trails at the Shadforth Reserve in Violet Town. Progress the development of end use facilities including upgrade of toilet and change facilities along with access to water in Cowslip Street. | Violet Town | Infrastructure Financial Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Business & Investment Community Wellbeing Environment | High | 2016-18 | Council RDV CAG |

Funding Opportunities

In order for many of these projects to eventuate, Council will need to use its designated financial commitment to leverage additional revenue from external funding opportunities wherever possible. The development of strategic partnerships with other organisations (government, community and private) should also be encouraged in order to best utilise limited funds and resources to achieve desired outcomes.

The 2015/16 Council Plan update identifies the role of government grant funding in supporting the Capital Works Program for the Shire and states that the Council will target major Capital Works Projects to seek government funding to reduce Councils cost and seek grant funding opportunities wherever possible.¹⁵

Trail Investment

The Victorian Government acknowledges that limited resourcing and funding for planning, development and maintenance of trails has been a major impediment to the management of existing trails and development of stronger trail product throughout the State¹⁶. The Victorian Trails Strategy states that Victoria has an extensive and well established network of trails and that with the support of relatively modest investment in specific elements of the trails network and new links with towns and transport, the State could benefit from increased demand and use and compete with other trail based destinations interstate and overseas.

Regional Development Victoria (RDV) - Visitor Economy Program Stream

On July 1st, 2015 the State Government published details of the State's regional development infrastructure programs and grants¹⁷. The Visitor Economy program stream is of particular relevance to this strategy with funding available for infrastructure grants for major tourism projects including:

- projects that showcase nature-based experiences including opportunities in state and national parks
- multi-use and single use trails in regions with an existing tourism sector
- new adventure or experiential tourism opportunities
- projects that enhance existing tourism experiences or remove barriers to growth of the tourism sector
- projects that support regional Victoria's development as a year-round destination.

This funding is subject to a competitive process and requires matched funding from local government and/or private partners. Funding ratios are as per previous years with Strathbogie eligible for funding on a \$1:\$3 value.

¹⁵ Strathbogie Shire Council Plan 2013-17 (2015-16 Review)

¹⁶ Victoria's Trails Strategy 2014-2014, Victorian Government, July 2014

¹⁷ Regional Development Victoria's website, July 2015

The following table provides a summary of potential funding opportunities that may be available to further the development of tracks and trails within the Shire.

| Grant Name | Funding Available | Description | Department | Timing | Eligibility | Potential Project |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Significant sporting events | Event Assistance Grants Up to \$20,000 Event Development Grants Up to \$300,000 | The Significant Sporting Events Program helps sporting, community and event organisations to deliver significant sporting events in Victoria. | Victorian Government Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure | Currently open and will close on 28 February 2018. | Private event organisations, National and State Sporting Associations, venues, Local Government authorities and not for profit organisations | Triathlon in Nagambie Ride the Ranges New Hallmark Event |
| Visitor Economy | Total funding pool available is \$250 million. | For projects that create jobs, support population growth, grow the economy and meet the needs of both regional cities and rural communities. It will include dedicated streams to support the 10 regional cities and 38 rural council areas. | Regional Development Victoria | Fund effective from 1 July, 2015. | Local Government | Connecting Regatta Centre to Township Winery Touring Route Linking Violet Town and Euroa |
| Rural Development | Total funding pool available is \$250 million. | For investing in local infrastructure that create opportunities for economic growth and enhance the appeal and liveability of rural towns and surrounding areas. | Regional Development Victoria | Fund effective from 1 July, 2015. | Local Government | Accessible tracks and signage within communities End use facilities in towns – ie drinking water Strathbogie, Change facilities Violet Town etc. |

| Grant Name | Funding Available | Description | Department | Timing | Eligibility | Potential Project |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Community Capacity Building Program | Total funding pool available is \$250 million. | Aims to develop and strengthen local people's capacity to make a difference in their communities. It will do this by increasing participation and diversity in priority projects, processes and planning that address local challenges. | Regional Development Victoria | Fund effective from 1 July, 2015. | Local Government | End use facilities and public art development |
| Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) Culture, Arts Tourism & Community Heritage | Not Currently available to Victoria. | For rural communities with a population of under 10,000 people. Grants of up to \$15,000 are available for projects with a clear public benefit that make a direct contribution to the economic fabric of the community, and/or encourage a sharing of assets. | N/A | TBC | Currently only open to NSW, QLD and NT. | |

Appendix

A. Relevant Strategies and Plans

National

Tracks and Trails tourism is a growing market within the Australian tourism sector, aligning well with the nature-based tourism segment. Available research demonstrates that cycle tourism in particular has the potential to make an active contribution towards the economic revitalisation of regional Australia as well as improve the quality of life for its residents through improved health, wellbeing and social connectedness. The environmentally friendly nature of tracks and trails tourism means it is a relatively ecologically sustainable product, and is expected to continue to grow in popularity¹⁸.

Domestic Visitation

In 2010, approximately 1 million domestic overnight visitors in Australia participated in cycling during their trip¹⁹. These visitors spent over 5.7 million nights in Australia.

In 2010, 280,000 domestic overnight visitors participated in cycling in Victoria. These visitors spent approximately 1.5 million nights in the state. Victoria received an estimated 27 per cent share of domestic overnight cycle visitors in Australia behind New South Wales (35 per cent) and followed by Queensland (17 per cent). Approximately 141,000 daytrips were undertaken by domestic visitors participating in cycling in Victoria during the year ending December 2010.

Domestic overnight visitors to Victoria that participated in cycling on their trip stayed longer and did more while on holiday when compared with other tourists, making them a stronger source of income for regional economies. The average length of stay for domestic overnight cycle visitors to Victoria was 5.3 nights, higher than the average overnight visitor to Victoria at 3.1 nights.

International Visitation

In 2010, Australia recorded approximately 258,000 international overnight visitors who participated in cycling. Of these overnight visitors to Australia, approximately 100,000 travelled to Victoria.

International cycle visitors to Australia who travelled to Victoria in 2010 were predominantly from Europe (27 per cent), the United Kingdom (20 per cent) and North America (11 per cent).

Supporting the potential of cycle tourism and tracks and trails are Tourism Australia's identification of the top travel trends for Australian Travel in 2015²⁰. These include Gourmet Travel - Food and Wine Tours, Soft Adventure Travel and Events Travel.

¹⁸ Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-2015, Tourism Victoria

¹⁹ National Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia, Canberra

²⁰ Tourism Australia, Top 10 Travel Trends for Australia in 2015, December 2014

Australian National Cycling Strategy 2011-2016

Developed by the Australian Bicycle Council the core vision of this strategy is to double the number of people cycling in Australia. Six priority actions were identified to achieve this vision:

- **Priority 1: Cycling Promotion:** Promote cycling as both a viable and safe mode of transport and an enjoyable recreational activity.
Action: Develop marketing and educational programs that promote the benefits of cycling, especially for underrepresented groups and other road users.
- **Priority 2: Infrastructure and Facilities:** Create a comprehensive and continuous network of safe and attractive routes to cycle and end-of-trip facilities.
Action: Continue to invest in developing bicycle networks and commit to the identification of required funds in the relevant budget processes. Where possible, the provision of facilities, be they paths, lanes or end-of-trip facilities, should be mandated and they should all be in line with recognised best practice design.
- **Priority 3: Integrated Planning:** Consider and address cycling needs in all relevant transport and land use planning activities.
Action: All states and territories should develop cycling action plans, and set targets and specific actions through a commitment to integrating cycling. Also, consideration should be given to incorporating active transport needs into all land use planning and infrastructure strategy documents and projects.
- **Priority 4: Safety:** Enable people to cycle safely.
Action: More and specific monitoring and analysis of crash data involving cyclists is required to develop appropriate counter measures. These, where significant, can be developed and implemented as targeted programs, such as bicycle skills training programs for school students aged between 10 and 14.
- **Priority 5: Monitoring and Evaluation:** Improve monitoring and evaluation of cycling programs and develop a national decision-making process for investment in cycling.
Action: Develop and agree on a national approach to data collection, which in turn will enable states and territories to set existing baselines and future targets. Also, it enables the ability to assess benefits and develop robust decision-making processes and assessments of future projects and funding.
- **Priority 6: Guidance and best practice:** Support the development of nationally consistent guidance for stakeholders to use and share best practice.
Action: Development and support of coordinated publications of best practices.

Victoria

Tourism Victoria attributes Victoria's key competitive strengths in the cycle and tracks and trails market to the relative compact nature of the state and close proximity to natural landscapes, small towns/villages, climate and diversity of terrain. These competitive strengths align well with the Strathbogie region with its small towns, access to national and state parks, high country, flat land, waterways and agricultural landscapes including wineries, orchards and pastoral farming lands.

Within the Victorian context, Victoria's High Country is currently identified by Tourism Victoria as the State's 'Hero' regional cycling destination due to its range of cycling experiences including mountain biking, tracks and trails, road cycling and events. Although the Strathbogie Shire actively and financially participates as one of four founding member councils in the Goulburn River Valley Tourism Region, the Strathbogie Shire is currently identified by Tourism Victoria as being a part of the High Country and Murray regions. This provides the Strathbogie region with the opportunity to partner with both North East Tourism, Murray Regional Tourism and Goulburn River Valley Tourism to gain leverage from the current profiles both the High Country and Murray enjoy as a cycling and tracks and trails destination.

Victoria's 2020 Tourism Strategy, July 2013

Victoria's 2020 Tourism Strategy is a whole-of-government document providing a clear vision of how the tourism industry can increase its economic and social contribution to the State. Through seven priority areas, this strategy outlines how Tourism Victoria, working with key stakeholders, will implement identified actions to realise the potential of the tourism market. The major directions identified in this strategy include: increasing focus on growth markets, such as China, India, Malaysia and Indonesia; building stronger collaboration between the Victorian Government and regions to ensure growth in visitation; increasing the tourism benefits of major and business events; and identifying and realising key tourism investments.

Victoria's Regional Tourism Strategy 2013–2016

Victoria's Regional Tourism Strategy 2013-2016 is the key medium term strategy for realizing the directions for regional tourism identified in Victoria's 2020 Tourism Strategy. The Regional Strategy outlines how Tourism Victoria will address challenges confronting regional tourism in the period of 2013 to 2016.

Victoria's Trails Strategy 2014–2024

The strategy was developed by the Victorian Trails Coordinating Committee in consultation with industry and key stakeholders to provide a whole-of-government approach and clear vision to inform and support the planning, management and promotion of trails in Victoria. It outlines a plan to achieve Victoria's vision to be recognised as a leading trail-based destination that provides a diverse range of quality trail experiences for visitors, while strengthening the State's economy and improving the health, wellbeing and lifestyle of the community.

Victoria's Trail Strategy 2014 - 2024 presents five key strategic directions to build Victoria's trails credentials. These are:

1. Provide a strategic framework for trail investment
2. Support effective planning, development and maintenance of trails
3. Provide high quality information on trails
4. Create better trail experiences
5. Market trails

Cycling into the Future 2013–2023

This Cycling Strategy recognises the important role that cycling plays in Victoria – as part of the transport system, an enjoyable recreation activity, a healthy form of exercise and a tourism draw card.

Six directions were identified:

1. Build evidence – build a stronger evidence base for the Victorian Government to make more informed decisions
2. Enhance governance and streamline processes – clarify accountability and improve co-ordination, planning and delivery
3. Reduce safety risks – reduce conflicts and risks to make cycling safer
4. Encourage cycling – help Victorians feel more confident about cycling and make cycling more attractive
5. Grow the cycling economy – support opportunities to grow and diversify Victoria's economy through cycling
6. Plan networks and prioritise investment – plan urban cycling networks to improve connectivity and better target investment in urban networks, regional trails and specialist cycle sport infrastructure.

The Strategy is supported by a series of Action Plans and commits the Victorian Government to a whole of Government approach to coordinating, monitoring and reporting on the progress of the action plan. As a result Tourism Victoria developed *Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-15* with the aim to position Victoria as the leading state for cycle tourism²¹.

Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-2015

The Cycle Tourism Action Plan has been developed by Tourism Victoria to position Victoria as the leading State for cycle tourism, as well as outlining how the government will leverage and enhance opportunities in cycle tourism.

Victoria's Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan 2009-2012

Recognises that cycle tourism plays a key role in offering sustainable transport and tourism experience options to visitors to and within the state. The plan encourages a shift towards the use of more environmentally friendly forms of transport for tourism (train, buses, bicycles, foot) both to and within tourist destinations'.

²¹ Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-15, Tourism Victoria

Hume Region Tracks and Trails Strategy

In 2012, consultants Community Vibe were commissioned with funding through federal, state and local governments to develop the Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy 2013-2022²². The purpose of the study was to identify opportunities for the development of regionally significant tracks and trails throughout the Hume Region.

The strategy defines a regionally significant track or trail as one that:

- connects users to an area of significant cultural, natural or economic importance
- is likely to appeal to international visitors, and
- is likely to attract economic, social, health and environmental benefits from its development and ongoing use

In addition the study developed a planning framework to determine the potential for a track or trail to be considered significant or have the potential to become significant. The planning framework focused on seven key areas:

- Support by key stakeholders
- Appeal to potential and existing track/trail users
- The extent to which the track/trail strengthens the tourism potential of a region and creates opportunities for economic development
- Protects and enhances the natural environment and/or cultural heritage of a region
- Support through planning
- Designed in accordance to industry standards and current best practice methods, and
- Connected to communities, transport and other tracks/trails

The Strategy identified specific issues that needed to be addressed to further advance track and trail development and to best improve the visitor experience and maximise opportunities for economic and business development through tracks and trails.

The Strategy identifies the development of a new mountain biking park at Balmattum Hill as an opportunity and priority for the Shire.

While no significant tracks and trails were identified for the Strathbogie Shire area and Strathbogie was not directly represented on the Steering Committee, the learnings of this strategy present a relevant framework for the Shire to consider in developing its own tracks and trails. It also represents a sound opportunity to link into other regionally and locally significant tracks and trails (including the Great Victorian Rail Trail) to capture visitation from the increasing tracks and trails visitor market. In order to progress the development, implementation and promotion of tracks and trails in the Strathbogie Shire it is recommended that Strathbogie join the regional steering committee and actively participate.

Universal Design Principles

The Strategy outlines Universal Design principles to encourage the development and design of tracks and trails to ensure that tracks and trails are usable by as many people as possible. Universal design

²² Hume Region Significant Tracks and Trails Strategy 2013-2022, Community Vibe, Holland, Quayle and Trompp, September 2013

principles refers to equitable use; flexibility in use; simple and intuitive use; perceptible information; tolerance for error; low physical effort; and size and space approach and use.

Recommendations include the following works and considerations:

- Relatively flat tracks/trails with a compacted or hardened surface (asphalt, concrete or granitic sand). Any granitic sand should be cement stabilised, be well drained to avoid erosion and corrugations and be regularly maintained
- Signage should be clear and easy to read using simple English and recognised symbols with contrast luminance of greater than 30%
- Directional signage at intersections
- Use architectural statements/public art to assist with wayfinding
- Toilets are suitable for people with mobility aids and which provide baby change facilities
- Bollards are easily distinguishable from the track / trail with luminance contrast of greater than 30%
- Picnic tables are designed to allow a person in a wheelchair to sit at the table
- Seats have arm rests and backs
- Parking at track / trail access points are suitable for mini buses and vehicles requiring extra space
- Tracks / trails are sufficiently wide to allow people to pass oncoming users

Goulburn River Valley Destination Management Plan 2014

The Goulburn River Valley Destination Management Plan (DMP) has been developed to provide a strategic approach to growing tourism in the Goulburn River Valley (GRV) region; aligning with key visitor needs and building on the GRV region's existing strengths.

Research has highlighted the importance of food, wine and the availability of local produce; and the importance of an accessible and well recognised nature based tourism product.

Key visitor experience gaps include: equine product, music/arts/culture and history and heritage product.

Key infrastructure gaps include: transport infrastructure such as the capacity and frequency of rail services, access to waterways, and access to State/National Parks via trails.

The DMP sets the following ten strategic development themes which provide a framework for growing tourism in the region:

- Theme 1: Delivering strategic development opportunities & catalyst projects;
New catalyst opportunities – including projects which are not currently offered in the region and have the potential to diversify the product and experience offer in the GRV region.
- Theme 2: Accessing and utilising the region's water and nature based assets;
Providing the necessary infrastructure to access key assets – with a particular focus on accessing water based assets, but also providing the infrastructure to fully access other significant nature based assets, such as National Parks and Forests, and unlocking nature based and adventure experiences.
- Theme 3: Supporting and delivering new events;
- Theme 4: Capitalising on the equine sector;
- Theme 5: Destination positioning;
- Theme 6: Defining new touring routes and linkages – including rail trail and township linkages, history, heritage and military history, food, wine and local produce and nature/water based assets
- Theme 7: Improving the accommodation offer;
Improving accommodation quality – providing an overall improvement in the standard of accommodation in the region by providing new accommodation and supporting existing providers in developing and enhancing their accommodation offer.
- Theme 8: Enhancing the food and dining offer;
- Theme 9: Place making - Improvements to amenity including public toilets, public spaces and general visitor amenity. Streetscape improvements – including building facades, tree planting, public realm etc. Signage and wayfinding – to investigate ways to improve accessibility and awareness of destinations and tourism product. Utilising heritage buildings and underutilised sites for tourism product. Visitor information – enhancing either existing or new visitor information services.
- Theme 10: Improving accessibility and transport infrastructure.

The growth of tourism in the GRV region is dependent on having strong individual destinations with a critical mass of product and experiences aligned to the destination's existing and emerging strengths.

Strathbogie Shire

At the localised level the following plans and strategies support the pursuit of tracks and trails in the Strathbogie Shire:

Strathbogie Shire Economic Development Master Plan

The Economic Development Master Plan²³ clearly identifies the opportunity and role of tourism in the sustainable development of the Shire.

The Master Plan identifies that the dedicated development of an integrated tracks and trails network throughout Strathbogie Shire will not only link the region to the surrounding trail network, but will also support the sustainable development of tourism in the Shire, and will further the development of a vibrant community and improved quality of life by stimulating economic activity.

In addition the Master Plan recognises the role of tourism in:

- Stimulating private and public investment in infrastructure,
- Increasing employment opportunities through creating and retaining jobs
- Highlighting the importance of the natural and built environment
- Encouraging more people to live in Strathbogie due to lifestyle and work opportunities; and
- Encouraging more people to visit and spend money in Strathbogie on tourism and recreation.

Strathbogie Shire Council Plan – 2015 revision

The relevant objectives are:

- PRIVATE ENTERPRISE: An environment which provides opportunity and supports for sustainable investment.
- TOURISM: A desirable destination which attracts visitors to enhance the economic and recreational opportunities for our community.

Strathbogie Planning Scheme

The Strathbogie Planning Scheme includes the following objectives that support the development of tracks and trails within the Shire in line with the Municipal Strategic Statement:

- To facilitate further business, industry and tourism investment which reinforces the role of the local towns, increases local employment opportunities and makes productive and sustainable use of the Shire's resources.
- Encourage development of the equine industry and associated input and output products and services.
- Encourage viticulture development within the Strathbogie Ranges and along the Goulburn River/Lake Nagambie Wine region area.

The above objectives are followed by a series of economic development strategies at clause 21.03-11 of the Planning Scheme, namely:

- Encourage tourism related development that promotes employment, tourism and recreational opportunities.
- Strengthen the retail and business sector of the service towns.
- Promote and encourage the ongoing growth of the food and wine sectors.
- Promote and encourage the ongoing growth of the Equine Industry.

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- Facilitate development of the tourism sector through strategies that protect the natural environment, heritage and town character, promote tourist related industries and strengthen tourism links with surrounding municipalities located in the region.
 - Encourage the use and development of land for tourist activities in rural areas that are associated with or complement the use of land for agricultural purposes.
 - Enhance the tourism potential of major urban centres including Euroa, Nagambie, Avenel and Violet Town by facilitating improvements to the functions, design and presentation of these town centres and entrances.

Nagambie Growth Management Strategy

The 2008 Nagambie Growth Management Strategy comprises the following sub-components:

- Main Street Plan
- Lakeside Connectivity Plan
- Lake Activities and Access Framework
- Nagambie Style Guidelines/ Neighbourhood Character Assessment

These plans identify and make recommendations in regards to the issues related to the town's substantial growth projections and the impacts of the bypass of the township.

Bike and Walking Strategy 2009

In 2009 the Shire commissioned the development of a Bike and Walking Path Strategy largely focused on the needs and priorities of the local community and towns. The Strategy was centred on encouraging cycling and walking to be considered as viable modes of transport and recreation given the associated health and wellbeing benefits. It touched briefly on the potential for tourism and identified estimate costs of approximately \$2.9million to construct paths in the townships of Avenel, Euroa, Nagambie and Violet Town, in a mixture of concrete and gravel.

Be Extraordinary Euroa – Draft Tourism Strategic Plan 2015 – 2013

Developed in 2015 for Business Enterprise Euroa, the plan focusses on developing the tourism potential of Euroa in partnership with the Shire, GRVT and Hume Region. It supports the development of tracks and trails within the Shire and Euroa and suggests linkages to key themes such as the natural environment, Balmattum Hill, The Ned Kelly Story and authentic and engaging connections to the town's history and heritage. It also supports the coordinated approach to signage installation around the Shire.

Community Action Plans

Avenel Community Action Plan 2014
Euroa Community Action Plan 2011-2012
Graytown Community Action Plan 2010
Longwood Community Action Plan 2010
Nagambie Community Action Plan 2014-17
Ruffy Communication Action Plan 2009
Strathbogie Community Action Plan 2012
Violet Town Community Action Plan 2014-18

B. Definitions

For the purpose of this report the following definitions are used:

- **Road cycling:** Riding on sealed roads, using road cycles, including cycle touring
- **Mountain biking:** Riding mainly off-road and on dirt trails, including cross country, downhill, free riding, dirt jumping
- **Leisure biking:** Riding on a mix of sealed and dirt roads and trails
- **Trails:** Established path, route or track which often traverse natural areas and is used by people for non-motorised recreation, such as walking, running, cycling, mountain biking and horse riding. They may be of single use (ie walking, cycling or mountain biking) or shared use (any combination of walking, cycling, mountain biking or horse riding)
- **Rail Trail:** a trail that closely follows or is on a former railway line or runs beside an active railway for the majority of its length. Rail Trails are typically suitable for walking and dependent on the surface can also be used by mountain bikes, hybrid bikes, prams, wheel chairs, and motorised scooters.
- **Major event:** An event that attracts a large number of participants and/or spectators
- **GRVT – Goulburn River Valley Tourism**

C. Questions for Consultation groups

- Indicate the level of bike riding and walking within your town.
- Are there existing pathways that your community and visitors use?
- What are the most popular attractions within your town?
- Rate in priority order the attractions/points of interest you would like to see included in the tracks and trails around your town?
- What are the current barriers to the development of tracks and trails in your community?
- If you were hosting visitors or proposing to ride/walk between your town and the next, which route would you take/recommend?
- What barriers or issues are there to be addressed prior to promoting these trails?
- What is the most effective route for a trail linking township to township?
- Who is the main target audience for the trail?
- Are there any specific requirements needed to support the development of tracks and trails?
- Who are the regular users if any of these trails?
- What points of interest already exist on the trail? (i.e. toilets, camp sites, historical markers etc)
- What themes exist?
- How are trails currently maintained and promoted?

D. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Close proximity to Melbourne and other large populations centres
- Existing transportation links via road and rail
- Existing events including Ranges, Green Edge,
- Natural environment - Nagambie Lakes, River, Creeks, Heritage Towns and Villages, close proximity of towns, Strathbogie Ranges
- Wineries
- Equine Industry
- Existing investor and relationships

Weaknesses

- Currently limited active promotion of tracks and trails in Shire
- Limited resources both financial and staffing
- Lack of recognition of GVRT as a Tourism Region by Funding bodies (ie Tourism Victoria)

Opportunities

- Provide linkages to existing trails of significance within the Hume Region
- Tap into Visiting Friends and Relatives market through engagement with locals
- Develop an iconic annual event
- Develop a series of touring routes that includes various themes, durations and ability levels ie Military, History & Heritage, Food and Wine, Nature based, township based etc
- Link in with the existing cycling events calendar to create opportunities for media exposure and cross promotion to local and visiting events audiences ie Challenge Shepparton, Shepparton Festival, Regional Living Expo etc.
- Host annual famils (familiarisations) with the local tourism and hospitality industry, cycling clubs and walking groups.
- Packaging with local wineries - ie Tabhilk, Longleat, Mitchellton, Fowles etc
- Inclusion of indigenous tourism and interpretation on tracks & trails

Threats

- Changes and uncertainty in State and Federal funding for tourism based projects
- Potential for conflict with recreational vehicle users degrading tracks and trails
- Highly competitive events environment could result in loss of existing events

E. Map

The attached map indicates tracks and trails currently in use within the Shire along with areas for potential further development to indicate the level of tracks and trails based activity available within the Shire. More work needs to be done to ensure accuracy and to capture suitable areas for horse riding. It should be used as a guide only.