# Appendices



# Appendix A: Regional Context

## THE REGION'S RESIDENTS

Residents live in the Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire, Corangamite Shire, Moyne Shire and Warrnambool City.

The region has a population of 131,030.[2] The majority of residents live in Surf Coast Shire and Warrnambool City.

An analysis of population data[3] indicates:

- 23.95% of the population is aged under 19.
- 27.10% is aged between 22-44.
- 27.12% is aged between 45-64.
- 21.84% is aged over 65.
- 5.55% of people in the region need help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication.
- 3.52% speaks a language other than English at home.

Interestingly, 31.09% of the population aged 15 or over did voluntary work through an organisation or group in the 12 months prior to the 2021 Census – though recently there has been a significant decline in volunteering across Australia.[4] This is higher than the state average of 19%. This is a potential opportunity for land managers and organisations to mobilise community in delivering services or experiences.

This diversity is particularly relevant for trail managers as many visitors to the region are from Melbourne and likely to come from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## FORECAST POPULATION GROWTH

Victoria is projected to add 4.7 million people from 2018 to 2056, reaching a population of 11.2 million. This represents annual average growth of 125,000 people, at a rate of 1.5% per annum. Base-case population estimates project Melbourne's new growth areas to rapidly increase in coming decades, with around 770,000 more residents between 2018 and 2036. The region will also experience growth, particularly in Surf Coast Shire (refer Table 7). This will place increasing pressure on the trail network.

**Table 7: Study Area Population Change[5]**

| LGA | Population (2023) | Average Rate p.a. (to 2036) |
|---|---|---|
| **Surf Coast Council** | 39,290 | 1.6% |
| **Colac Otway Council** | 22,270 | 0.5% |
| **Corangamite Council** | 15,950 | -0.3% |
| **Warrnambool Council** | 35,910 | 0.6% |
| **Moyne Shire** | 17,610 | 0.7% |
| **TOTAL** | **131,030** | |

## TOURISM AND THE REGION

The visitor economy is a dominant driver of the region's economy. In 2022/23 the Great Ocean Road region had a Gross Regional Product of $1,221 million (+73% change from 2018/19 estimates). The region had 13,800 filled tourism jobs (-2.1% change from 2018/19 estimates), which represents over 17% of the state's regional tourism jobs.[6]

[2] https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/demography-map/

[3] https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/information-portal/regional-snapshot

[4] https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/volunteers

[5] https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/703453/DTP0552-Victori-in-Future-2023-report.PDF, and https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/demography-map/

[6] https://tourism.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2297068/2022-23- Value-of-Tourism-to-Victoria-and-its-regions-SUMMARY.pdf

In year ending September 2024, the region had 5.5 million domestic visitors (6.61 million visitor nights) with $1.92 billion in expenditure. The Great Ocean Road and the Twelve Apostles is regional Victoria's top attraction.[7]

The region's most popular visitor activities are:

- Going to the beach.
- Eating out.
- Bushwalking.
- Sightseeing.
- Visiting friends and relatives.
- Visiting National Parks.

## FORECAST TOURISM GROWTH

Total visitor spend in Victoria is forecast to reach $50.9 billion in 2029, with growth of 27% over the next 5 years. Visitors to Victoria are expected to reach 105.2 million in 2029, up 21% from 2024 estimates. Visitors are projected to be back above 2019 levels by 2028, with domestic visitor demand projected to be softer than previously expected due to household budget pressures and increased outbound travel.[8]

## GLOBAL TRAIL TRENDS

With the arrival of specialised equipment (such as e-bikes) and improved comfort and the functionality of walking/hiking gear, a greater demand for trail-based recreation has emerged over the past decade. World-wide trends around being active in nature indicate this demand will continue to grow.

With trails now an integral part of many community lifestyles and tourism destinations, user expectations have changed. They expect trails to be accessible, to connect them to the places they wish to visit, to be an engaging experience (whether for a leisurely stroll or a longer journey), to be safe, and to be sustainably designed, managed and maintained. Importantly, people also expect trails to deliver what they promise, whether it be through consistent application of standards, good signage and navigation aids, or products and services that enhance their experience. They are anticipating ease of planning and fact finding, accessible, high quality, regularly maintained infrastructure, facilities and services, and complementary packaged options, including accommodation, food and beverage and other value-add activities. As such, it is important that the user experience is central to each element of trail design and management.

Globally, trails and trail networks are being offered as 'total experiences', in which the visitors' use, and enjoyment of a trail and its distinctive character is facilitated by quality information and signage, booking and support services, accommodation, linked activities and attractions.

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRAIL EXPERIENCES

The experiences offered to trail users will inform the type of access, materials, trail width, design and grading. The overall trail experience will need to be carefully packaged with trail and user type at the front of mind. This includes facilities, signage, products and services and value-add activities. It is likely that there won't only be one type of user on the trails, and it is important to cater for the needs of multiple user groups and user capacity where appropriate.

[7] business.vic.gov.au - Regional-Victorias-Top-Attractions-year-ending-December-2019.pdf

[8] https://tourism.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/2334637/Victorias-Tourism-Forecast-2024-to-2029.pdf

## TRAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

The various types of trails and their respective markets are discussed briefly below. Horse trails and water trails are not covered, due to the emphasis of this Strategy on walking, running and cycling. They are, however, important from a local community perspective.

## THE WALKING MARKET

### Bushwalking

- Bushwalking is currently rated in sixth position of the top 20 physical activities undertaken by Australians.
- 1.3 million Australian adults (6.4% of the population) and 21,000 children participate in bushwalking activities annually, with 18% of participants undertaking bushwalking activities at least once per week.
- Peak participation age for men is 55-64 years and for women is 25-34 years.
- 50% of Australian bushwalking participants walk for three hours or more on average.[9]
- From an international perspective, overseas visitors engaging in bushwalking and rainforest walks increased by 7% to 1.9 million per annum (2018).[10]

### Recreational Walking

- Recreational walking is currently rated in first place of the top 20 sports and physical activities undertaken by Australians.
- 8.9 million Australian adults (44.4% of the population) and 18,900 children participate in recreational walking activities annually, with 91% of participants undertaking recreational walking activities at least once per week.
- Peak participation is by women 65+ years (closed followed by women 55-64 years) and men over 65 years.
- On average, most walkers spend 62 minutes on each walking occasion.
- Since 2001, participation in recreational walking by Australians has increased by 14.4%.[11]

### The Running Market

- Estimated at 20 million participants since 2010, trail running is one of the world's fastest growing sports, according to the International Track and Field Federation.[12] Since the mid-1990s, the popularity of trail running has grown at a rate of 15% each year.[13]
- Records show a 1,000% increase in trail running events in the last decade.[14]
- The largest trail running event in Australia (Ultra Trail Australia, 7,000 participants) is seven times as big as the largest mountain biking event (Otway Odyssey, 1,000 participants).
- There are four times as many trail running events (450-500) as mountain biking events in Australia and the average trail running event attracts 2-4 times participation (600-800).
- A report in 2021 showed that entry fees for trail running events alone generated approx. $13 million in direct entry fee revenue across 331 trail running events, accounting for 154,113 registrations.

[9] Ausplay National Sports and Physical Activity survey, Bushwalking Participation December 2020

[10] TRA International Visitors in Australia – Year ending September 2018.

[11] Ausplay Participation Trends since 2001

[12] https://theconversation.com/the-trail-running-community-faces-its-biggest-challenges-yet-156260

[13] https://www.worldathletics.org/disciplines/trail-running/trail-running

[14] https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/apr/02/ultrarunner-ultramarathon-racing-100-miles

## New Walking Experiences in Australia

New walking experiences in iconic and scenic locations are under development in nearly every state and territory, and increasingly from international destinations. In the Eastern States, in addition to Queensland's plans for the introduction of five new signature walks, the Tasmanian government is introducing a sixth new premium walk, and the NSW Government has committed to bringing forward nine new major trail experiences.

This is also the case for mountain biking, with new developments in recent years in Tasmania (Derby, Maydena, Hollybank) Victoria (Warburton, Creswick, Omeo) as well as NSW (Mogo, Tathra, Eden).

**Key Points**

- Population growth in the region will drive demand for trails, noting the demographic of the population represents an active cohort.
- Increasing populations across the region create a strong argument for investment in regional trails and trails that connect with existing facilities and attractions.
- The growth of visitors to the region will also increase demand for high quality trail experiences.
- Consideration should be given to prioritising regional trail connections between existing trails to reduce vehicle use and increase length of stay, particularly in high growth areas.



## THE CYCLING MARKET

- Shared paths are the most common form of off-road cycling facility in Australia.[15]
- While over a third of Victorians have cycled in the last year, most of them did so for recreational purposes rather than transport.[16]
- The popularity of electric bikes, or e-bikes, is growing rapidly. An e-bike allows people of various fitness levels to cycle together and take on greater distances and inclines with ease.[17] Furthermore, e-bikes may also suit people who have stopped cycling because of injury, illness or age.
- Research suggests that cycle visitors stay longer. On average, cycling tourists also spend more on their visit when compared to all visitors, and this pattern has continued throughout recent years.[18] [19]

### Mountain Biking

In Australia, the mountain biking (MTB) market size has been estimated at 388,900, just under 2% of the population. Almost 3 million people (14% of the population) participate in cycling of some sort[20] and around 4 million overnight trips including cycling are made each year.[21] Of these, just over 1 million trips were made that include MTB.

The Victorian population engages in cycling at a greater rate when compared to other states and territories. An estimated 34% of Victorian residents spent money on cycling in 2020, compared to the national average of 29%.[22] Over 30% of all cyclists chose to ride off-road on a mountain bike trail.

From a tourism perspective, the MTB market of those who travel to mountain bike is broadly divided into:

- 'Holiday first' Holiday Mountain Bikers. This is the market of people who go on holiday for any reason other than the express purpose of mountain biking, and then, whilst on holiday or during their overall planning, decide to mountain bike as part of a broad holiday experience.
- 'Passion first' Destination Mountain Bikers.[23] This market includes those who travel for their passion first – for the express purpose of mountain biking. Typically, but not always, they will bring their mountain bikes with them on their trip and will value transport and accommodation that provides safety and security for their bikes.

Although the travel and biking behaviour of these two segments are considerably different, they are both important to the success of a destination.

Electric mountain bikes (e-bikes) have been gaining serious traction in the mountain biking world. They have been credited with a second wave in popularity of mountain biking, as riders are reinvigorated to get back on trails without worrying about fitness levels or their capacity for uphill efforts. E-bikes encourage users who would otherwise not have considered cycling as a preferred recreation due to concerns about age or fitness. Further, they are significantly extending the upper age limit of riders and increasing their overall average usage, leading to health and wellbeing gains. E-bike riders typically seek a recreational experience, more than a competitive one, valuing high-quality, accessible, nature based experiences that offer some degree of support (via township and service integrations, and inclusive charging points for longer-distance journeys). One in three bikes sold in Europe is an 'e bike'.[24] It is estimated that more than 40 million e bikes are expected to be sold each year by 2023 in Europe.

[15] Victoria Walks (2015). Shared paths – the issues, Melbourne, Victoria Walks

[16] Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-2028. Transport for Victoria

[17] https://worldexpeditions.com/2019-adventure-travel-trends

[18] https://www.tourismnewzealand.com/media/1764/cycling-tourism_profile.pdf

[19] https://www.tourismnewzealand.com/markets-stats/sectors/special-interest/cycling-and-mountain-biking/

[20] AusPlay (2020)

[21] Until 2019. Tourism Research Australia (2021)

[22] WeRide: The Australian Cycling Economy Report 2020

[23] TRC (2017)

[24] www.abc.net.au/news/2019-07-06/electric-motors-might-change congestion-cycle/11282384

**Figure 4: Summary of Different Types of Trail Experiences**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Walking/Hiking**  | This can vary from a leisurely stroll to enjoy the coastline and forests to a more intense and strenuous hike through rugged terrain. Walking can be done for commuting or exercising with the dog, in urban areas or in national parks and reserves. It can also offer an overnight experience. Walkers undertaking a more remote activity are generally looking to immerse in nature or challenge themselves on an adventure hike. |
| **Running**  | As with walking, runners can use a range of trail types, from urban and hard settings to more remote and wild settings, running through challenging terrain. Trail running continues to grow in popularity, with new trail running events occurring internationally. Trail running adventures can also include orienteering and rogaining challenges. |
| **Cycling**  | Cyclists may use urban trails for commuting, however, they may also enjoy longer cycle trails for short breaks and weekends, independently or with family and friends. There are also cycle tourists (domestic and international) who travel from place to place with their bicycle to better explore a region. |
| **Mountain Biking**  | Mountain biking applies to a range of users, from beginners and family groups to more adventurous cross-country and downhill riders. Mountain biking may be done for leisure locally or can also attract major international competitions and visitors. |
| **Horse Riding**  | Horse riding users can also be categorised into short recreational riders, undertaking a few hours' ride on a weekend; endurance riders, who participate in riding competitions and may use trails for training purposes; and long-distance riders, who enjoy an overnight experience or longer journey on horseback. |

## LEGISLATION

The management and operation of the trail network is governed and informed by a range of legislation outlined below.

The *Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020* and associated regulations legislates for the management responsibility of approximately 1,000 parcels of Crown land and their associated assets to be transferred to the Authority across five Local Government Areas and three other crown land managers. This is set to be completed by 1 November 2025.

The vision is for a thriving Great Ocean Road region through integrated land management and infrastructure planning, and a strategic approach to visitation, environmental forces, severe weather events and climate change along the stretch of coastline.

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

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

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

*The Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (VIC)* and the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)* both apply to the study area, along with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

Various other acts influence land use planning, including the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018 (Vic), Climate Change Act 2017 (Vic), Heritage Act 2017 (Vic), Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth), Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic), and the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic)*.

## STRATEGIES AND PLANS

### Country Plans

The Eastern Maar Country Plan – Meerreengeeye Ngakeepoorryeeyt 2015 contains goals relating to Country which includes strengthening culture and identity, ensuring healthy Country and natural resources, thriving communities, and creating a future for young people.

The EMAC would like to see its people employed in the care and management of Country and other enterprises such as tourism. The regional trails network can support inter-generational knowledge transfer and the sharing and strengthening of cultural identity. The development of the Regional Trails Strategy is the vehicle for Eastern Maar, the Authority and its partners to co-design these opportunities and to offer outstanding experiences for trail users.

The *Wadawurrung Country Plan: Let's Make Country Good Together 2020-2030* outlines the shared vision and aspirations for the future of Wadawurrung people and Country. It reflects what matters most to the Wadawurrung community, providing a roadmap for preserving cultural heritage and advancing broader Caring for Country goals. The plan emphasises strengthening cultural knowledge and education to guide sustainable land development. Through this framework, the Wadawurrung people aim to actively participate in the management of all known cultural sites, while fostering enterprise and creating meaningful employment opportunities.

### Victoria's Resilient Coast – Adapting for 2100+

*Victoria's Resilient Coast – Adapting for 2100+* provides a framework, guidelines, and support for Local Government, land managers and their communities to enable place-based, best practice and long-term coastal hazard risk management and adaptation. It also builds on the directions in the Marine and Coastal Policy 2020.

### Tourism Plans

The Visitor Economy Master Plan for the Great Ocean Road region 2021-2030 provides a roadmap for regional visitor economy recovery from Covid-19 from 2024 to 2030. The planning pathway builds on recovery, to foster growth in the visitor economy. The plan emphasises that the high volume in visitation has significantly under delivered in-region yield and has resulted in congestion and poor visitor experience. It specifically refers to Twelve Apostles revitalisation.

### Land Management Plans

Parks Victoria's relevant plans and strategies include the Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park Management Plan 2009, amended 2019. The plan contains policies, actions and provisions for protection of the park and for the provision of recreation activities and associated infrastructure. Other documents relevant to trails include Parks Victoria Signage Manual 2022 and the Track and Trail Grading Manual.

The Authority's current plans and strategies include the Great Ocean Road Action Plan and the Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2020–2025, that aim to establish an integrated and coordinated approach to protecting and managing coastal Crown land and the adjacent marine environment.

The vision is to create world-leading environmental protection and coastal experiences for all.

**Figure 5: Strategies and Plans Impacting the Great Ocean Road Region**



# Appendix B: Assessment of the Trail Network

## TRAIL NETWORK OVERVIEW

| TRAIL NAME | DESCRIPTION | LAND MANAGER | OTHER ASSOCIATED |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Anglesea MTB Trail Network (incorp. Anglesea Bike Park).** | Located on Wadawurrung Country, the Anglesea MTB Network is an extensive collection of formal (sanctioned) and informal (unsanctioned) mountain biking trails encircling the township of Anglesea. The formal network consists of the 'Eumeralla Trails – Hurst Road' network which is approx. 25km of predominantly International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) blue-rated trails complemented by a number of green shared-use (walk/run) trails, and another 46kms of tracks, trails and management vehicle only (MVO) tracks of varying rideability and appeal to riders. Within the total of 71kms formal trails, 65km are managed by Parks Victoria with trail maintenance, volunteer engagement and support via the Surf Coast Mountain Bike Club.<br>The Anglesea MTB Trail Network Concept Plan, developed in 2021, highlights the potential for an expansion to the existing formal network and an enhancement to the quality of trail provision including rideability and connections. The proposed network includes 36 trails and 107km of dedicated and shared use trails, spanning from Aireys Inlet to Torquay, with Anglesea in the centre. The scope of the Plan would deliver new trails (approx.16km), formalise illegal trails (approx. 19km), improve existing trails, improve/create new trail heads, develop supporting amenities, ensure closure of illegal trails, and implement signage and promotion of the network. The use of the formal Eumeralla Trails network has increased significantly over recent years. Runners, walkers and hikers also enjoy the existing shared-use trail sections and many more will enjoy a vastly improved network.<br>It should be noted that the Anglesea Mountain Bike concept is located within the Anglesea heathland which contains vegetation of high quality. Infrastructure siting is to avoid as best possible areas of importance and minimise infrastructure in sensitive areas.<br>Funding is essential for the Concept Plan project, with the next key stages prior to construction being to undertake vegetation and cultural heritage assessments (including wider community consultation), determine the feasibility of all new trails, and obtain Land Manager approval for all trails. Given the size of the network and the number and location of trails across different areas, there is potential to undertake the project in stages.<br>The popular Anglesea Bike Park, located on the outskirts of the township, is on Alcoa freehold land, with a lease provided to the Surf Coast Shire as land manager up to June 2024. The long-term future of the bike park in its current location remains unresolved. | Eumeralla is managed by Parks Victoria with trail maintenance volunteer engagement and support via the Surf Coast Mountain Bike Club.<br><br>Surf Coast Shire is the land manager for the bike park.<br><br>This trail may be subject to transitional arrangements with GORCAPA | WTOAC<br>Surf Coast Mountain Bike Club<br>Anglesea Bike Park Community Asset Committee |

| TRAIL NAME | DESCRIPTION | LAND MANAGER | OTHER ASSOCIATED |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Forrest MTB Trail** | Located on Eastern Maar Country, the Forrest MTB (FMTBT) trails showcase the natural beauty of the Otways, passing through tall eucalypt forests, dry heathy scrub and dense fern gullies. The trails have been designed around the village of Forrest and offer experiences for beginners as well as more experienced MTB fanatics.<br>The trails have traditionally been cross country (XC) in riding style, however a recent revitalisation project has increased sustainability outcomes while broadening the rider demographic, with wider, more groomed trails, suitable for all skill levels, including family, beginner and all abilities adaptive MTB access.<br>The trails also host Australia's largest MTB event and generate considerable returns to the Otway region. | DEECA (primary maintenance)<br>Barwon Water | EMAC<br>Forrest MTB Club<br>Colac Otway Shire |
| **Great Ocean Walk** | Located on Eastern Maar Country, the Great Ocean Walk (GOW) is a 110 km walking trail with a promoted east to west end-to-end walk, shadowing the Cape Otway coastline and the Great Ocean Road. GOW was Victoria's first appointed and promoted Great Walk. The entire point to point journey takes walkers 2–7 days, showcasing a range of coastal environments, flora and fauna, and European pioneer heritage with a strong (but underrepresented) Aboriginal cultural heritage. Many walkers take on shorter sections, from half to full day walks, often out and back from an access car park, as there are limited loop walks. | Parks Victoria<br><br>This trail may be subject to transitional arrangements with GORCAPA | EMAC |
| **Otway Walks and Waterfalls** | Located on Eastern Maar Country, the Otway Waterfall and Walks Network (OWWN) is a set of trails exploring the valleys, ridges, canyons and waterfalls of Otway Ranges hinterland. Walks include short nature walks, loop walks and longer point-to-point walks, many interacting with 13+ feature waterfalls dotted across an area bounded by Lorne, Cape Otway/Lavers Hill and Forrest. Several trailheads located along the Great Ocean Road make for easy access, including direct from the Lorne township. There are also numerous major trailheads located inland and picnic grounds and some campsites. Waterfalls or water bodies (i.e., Lake Elizabeth) form the focal destination features for the walks, however they also showcase a range of unique landscapes and ecological environments including canyons, fern and moss jungles, historical tramways and lookouts.<br>This collection of short walks provides significant benefits to visitors allowing exploration of the region's outstanding natural environment. | Parks Victoria<br>DEECA<br><br>Trails within the Otway Walks and Waterfalls may be subject to transitional arrangements with GORCAPA | EMAC |

| TRAIL NAME | DESCRIPTION | LAND MANAGER | OTHER ASSOCIATED |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Old Beechy Rail Trail** | Located on Eastern Maar Country, the Old Beechy Rail Trail (OBRT) is a shared use trail following one of the state's former narrow-gauge railways from Colac to Beech Forest and Ferguson, located high in the Otway Ranges. The trail journeys through scenic forest, rich farmland and rolling hills, with the coast relatively close. There is excellent bird life, rainforest pockets, magnificent eucalypts and blackwoods shading the lush understorey, and plenty of railway history enroute. The route begins with 12km of road riding (from Colac) before joining the railway alignment. Reaching the small township of Gellibrand, the line begins a long climb up the range, reaching for Beech Forest, before a dash down to Ferguson and its café (often closed). The Trail is located on a combination of Council owned land, private land and Crown Land. | Colac Otway Shire | EMAC<br>Colac Otway Shire<br>Friends of Old Beechy Rail Trail |
| **Port Fairy to Warrnambool Rail Trail** | Located on Eastern Maar Country, the Port Fairy – Warrnambool Rail Trail (PWRT) is a continuous 37km shared use walking/cycling pathway, making its way through rural landscapes and farming communities between Port Fairy and Warrnambool. It journeys through remnant forest, skirts nearby a 25,000 year-old volcano (Tower Hill) and traverses wetlands and coastal sand dunes. It encompasses the historic towns of Port Fairy and Koroit, rural countryside, woodlands and native vegetation, extensive sea views of Killarney, extensive woodlands, coastal sand dunes, the Merri River wetlands and Warrnambool breakwater precinct. The trail has a gentle gradient and is suitable for use by cyclists and walkers of all ages and levels of fitness. Township sections are bitumen, allowing for use by mobility scooters, wheelchairs and the elderly. | Port Fairy to Warrnambool Rail Trail CoM | EMAC<br>Moyne Shire<br>Warnambool Shire |
| **Camperdown to Timboon Rail Trail** | Located on Eastern Maar Country, the Camperdown to Timboon Rail Trail (CTRT) runs from Camperdown, through Naroghid, Cobden, Glenfyne and Curdies to Timboon. Over 34kms, riders and walkers traverse volcanic features, farmland, wooded grassland and tall wet forest on descent into the wooded Timboon valley. Many original historic features remain along the trail, including brick culverts and remnants of the many bridges. The Curdies River pile (trestle) bridge has undergone some restoration and is listed with Heritage Victoria. The trail now directly connects to the recently opened Twelve Apostles Trail, enabling users to reach Port Campbell. | DEECA and Camperdown Timboon Rail Trail CoM | EMAC |

| TRAIL NAME | DESCRIPTION | LAND MANAGER | OTHER ASSOCIATED |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Surf Coast Walk** | Located on Wadawurrung Country and Eastern Maar Country, the Surf Coast Walk (SCW) is a 44km multi-use trail located at the start of the Great Ocean Road Region, stretching from Torquay to Aireys Inlet. Following clifftops beyond the edge of Victoria's Great Ocean Road with meandering hinterland forest sections, the trail's easy access with twelve trailheads makes it perfect for short, long or multi-day village to village walks or rides. Features the Torquay promenade, Anglesea River mouth, Jan Juc's clifftop lookouts, the world-famous surfing mecca Bells Beach, eucalypt forests of Ironbark Basin, wild beach sections, and the historical Split Point Lighthouse, on family-friendly, easy to navigate shared paths. The Surf Coast Walk is also host to a number of high-profile pedestrian (walk and run) events, including Surf Coast Trail Marathon, Surf Coast Century, Surf Coast Walk, Roo Run and Bells Bash. | GORCAPA<br>Parks Victoria<br>Surf Coast Shire<br><br>This trail may be subject to transitional arrangements with GORCAPA | WTOAC<br>EMAC<br>Bells Beach Committee |
| **The Twelve Apostles Trail** | Located on Eastern Maar Country, the Twelve Apostles Trail is a recently completed (Stage 1) 20km shared use trail linking Timboon to Port Campbell with an all off road alignment taking in forest reserves, farmland and ocean vistas on approach to the terminus at Port Campbell. The trail links directly to the Camperdown to Timboon Rail trail, effectively offering a total 60km journey. The planned Stage 2 will pass beyond Port Campbell to link to the Twelve Apostles Visitor Information Centre and potentially other visitor nodes (i.e., Loch Ard Gorge). Completion of Stage 2 would likely create a State significant trail. | Corangamite Shire<br>Parks Victoria<br>GORCAPA<br><br>This trail may be subject to transitional arrangements with GORCAPA | EMAC |
| **Warrnambool Foreshore Promenade** | Located on Eastern Maar Country, the Warrnambool Foreshore Promenade (WFP) is a 7km dual direction shared use concrete pathway that runs parallel to the beaches from the Warrnambool Breakwater in the south to Point Ritchie in the north. It diverts inland to cross the Hopkins River, before tracking Logans Beach Road to finish at the popular Logans Beach Whale Watching Platform. A popular recreational trail for walkers, runners, riders, scooters and those with prams, the trail makes most of spectacular lookouts as it gently climbs into the dunes and back down to Point Ritchie. There are numerous access points to the popular Warrnambool Beach, including at the Surf Lifesaving Club. Facilities enroute include lookout platforms, showers, water bubblers, seating and picnic spots on the hinterland side. The trail accesses popular Warrnambool recreation and conservation reserves along with family friendly attractions such as the Adventure Playground and associated trails. It has numerous car parking zones along its length and within walking distance to various accommodation (including two holiday parks), catering and other township services. | Warrnambool City Council | EMAC |

| TRAIL NAME | DESCRIPTION | LAND MANAGER | OTHER ASSOCIATED |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail** | Located on Eastern Maar Country, the Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail (GORCT) is a planned trail along the Otway coast, with views from suspension bridges and lookouts, as well as boardwalks, river crossings and day visitor areas. Sections of new trail will connect with existing walking and management vehicle tracks that will provide a 6-day 5-night hike, day walks, half-day walks and create shorter loop walks. The State government has invested $25.5 million to plan the new trail between Fairhaven and Grey River and construct the new trail between Fairhaven and Jamieson Creek. | GORCAPA<br>Parks Victoria<br><br>This trail may be subject to transitional arrangements with GORCAPA | EMAC<br>DEECA |
| **Otway Hinterland Horse Trail (proposed)** | Located on Eastern Maar Country, the proposed Otway Hinterland Horse Trail (OHHT) is a 105km long-distance lineal trail that passes through public land in the Great Otway National Park, Otway Forest Park and other land managed by Parks Victoria, DEECA, Surf Coast Shire and Colac Otway Shire. Open Trails Australia (OTA) completed an audit assessment of the route in April 2022, that focused on the requirements to enable the trail to be operational and promoted for use by horse riders for single or multi day experiences. The audit identified potential risks to all OHHT users and provided recommendations on how to best manage those risks. The OHHT route alignment was provided by Parks Victoria based on advice by key horse riding advocates. It was assessed as a dual direction lineal trail and subsequently classified as an advanced horse riding trail given the gradients, distances and remote location. The route follows public open roads, and seasonal management tracks of varying surface qualities. | Parks Victoria, DEECA, Surf Coast Shire and Colac Otway Shire<br><br>This trail may be subject to transitional arrangements with GORCAPA | EMAC |

## INDIVIDUAL TRAIL ASSESSMENT

A high-level assessment of each of the region's existing trails and trailheads was undertaken as part of this project.

The trail assessment found that the region features a diverse variety of long and short distance trails.

The condition of the trails vary, with most requiring some level of maintenance and improvement to infrastructure and signage to meet Australian Standards requirements and enhance trail safety and sustainability. The summary results are presented below. Specific actions for each trail to address the issues and opportunities identified are also provided.

**Table 8: Summary of Trail Assessment**

| TRAIL | CHALLENGES |
|---|---|
| **Anglesea MTB Trail Network Approximately 71km of formalised trails.** | Erosion and water impact on some sections. Cinnamon (*Phytophthera Cinnamomi*) Fungus spread. Car parking limitations. Limited stock of trails restricting overall appeal for inter-regional riders. No capacity for event staging on site. No toilets associated with Eumeralla MTB Network. No picnic or rest areas within park. No water supply. |
| **Forrest MTB Trail 26 trails over 70km.** | Build complexity with sensitive wet-ground environment. Rising cost of infrastructure. Requires new funding streams. Old school style of trails (XC), contrasting with new market demand for flow and gravity (some attendance to this in new trails for Forrest network). |
| **Camperdown to Timboon Rail Trail Rail Trail multi-use over 40km point to point.** | A connection between Naroghid (current trail head) and Camperdown that allows users to access the trail without travelling on road should be considered. Trail widening between Glenfyne and the Trestle Bridge would benefit users. The Trestle Bridge is a significant asset for the trail and will require funding to maintain it to an appropriate standard. Major trailhead and wayfinding signage would improve the user experience. |
| **Great Ocean Walk 98km (105km inc alternatives) one way** | Lack of adequate maintenance capacity. Ageing infrastructure – campsites, car park, toilets, boardwalks, stairs bridges all require replacement now or in near future, etc. Full infrastructure asset condition audit is required. Concentrated use and impacts on popular/accessible sections. |
| **Otway Waterfall Walks Network Approx 60km of single walks with fire track access links.** | Ageing infrastructure – campsites, bridges, walkways, some damaged by treefall / weather events. Rapid degradation of infrastructure due to environment. Lack of adequate maintenance capacity. Adequate access for maintenance. Some sites are at capacity (e.g. Erskine Falls). |
| **Old Beechy Rail Trail 50km Point to point rail trail.** | Lack of major trailhead, toilet and picnic facilities at Maggios Road (start point for car-based visitation). 12km of alignment prior is undesirable road section only suited for train-based rider access. Road section from Colac Train Station to Maggios Road (start of railway alignment) is a poor experience. Steep sections/climbing profile places this trail in a different category (more challenging) than most rail trails. |
| **Otway Hinterland Horse Trail 105km horse riding on road verges.** | Motor bike and 4WD interactions and other user interactions raises safety and potential conflict for riders, walkers, runners. 1km section of road between Deans Marsh township and the Bambra Cemetery Road and Winchelsea Deans Marsh Road intersection is not safe for horse and rider to traverse. Lack of water or specific facilities for horses. |

| TRAIL | CHALLENGES |
|---|---|
| **Surf Coast Walk**<br>**44km point to point shared use trail.** | Clifftop degradation risks (Rocky Point, Anglesea, Aireys Inlet). General erosion (trails and clifftops), guttering and trail degradation due to trail inundation and rain events. High season trail user conflict, especially in township areas (i.e., bikes, walkers, runners, dog walkers). |
| **Twelve Apostles Trail – Timboon to Port Campbell**<br>**Shared use trail – 20km linking to rail trail.** | No audit undertaken as this trail was under construction during this time. |
| **Warrnambool Foreshore Promenade Walk**<br>**Walk and ride – 7.5km point to point.** | Popular trail with potential safety issues between bikes and walkers. Maintenance costs are high due to infrastructure exposed to ocean air environment. Limited online information/directives regarding trail use. Full extension of pathway not shown on most online mapping. |

## SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL TRAILS

**Table 9: Forrest Mountain Bike Network Actions**

| ACTION NUMBER | ACTION | PRIORITY AND ACTION TYPE | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **FMTB1** | Seek funding for Yaugher network of trails and upgrade Tiger Rail Trail. | High Action | Colac-Otway LGA and GORRTF |
| **FMTB2** | Develop collective Beach to Bush MTB marketing plan in cooperation with Anglesea MTB destination. | High Enabling | GORRT in collaboration with GORRTF |
| **FMTB3** | Encourage more event operators to consider Forrest as a suitable staging ground. | Medium | Colac Otway LGA and GORRTF |
| **FMTB4** | Investigate curation of long-distance ride route to link Anglesea (without requiring new trail build, i.e. gravel grind). | Medium Enabling | GORRTF |
| **FMTB4** | Investigate and encourage further connectivity between Forrest and Anglesea MTB including shuttle services between the two parks to improve regional positioning. | Medium Enabling | GORRTF |

**Table 10: Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail (Planned) Actions**

| ACTION NUMBER | ACTION | PRIORITY AND ACTION TYPE | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **GORCT1** | Undertake detailed design and planning preparation and submission. | High | DEECA supported by GORCAPA and EMAC |
| **GORCT2** | Continue community consultation and communication as project proceeds. | High | GORCAPA supported by DEECA and EMAC |
| **GORCT3** | Commence new trail construction following completion of detailed design and existing trail upgrades. | High Enabling | DEECA supported by GORCAPA and EMAC |
| **GORCT4** | Develop and implement branding and signage along route. | High Enabling | GORCAPA supported by DEECA and EMAC |
| **GORCT5** | Early-stage risk management planning for trail operations. | Medium Enabling | GORCAPA supported by DEECA and EMAC |
| **GORCT6** | Early-stage development of trail specific maintenance and operations plan. | Medium Enabling | GORCAPA supported by DEECA and EMAC |
| **GORCT7** | Identify and implement priority actions from the Business Activation Plan. | Medium Enabling | GORCAPA, EMAC supported by DEECA |
| **GORCT8** | Review options to connect GORCT with GOW including coastal and non-coastal options. | High Enabling | GORRTF |
| **GORCT9** | Continue investigating new trail opportunities in the Apollo Bay region including the proposed Les Noseda Highview Trail. | Medium Enabling | Colac Otway Shire in collaboration with GORRTF |

**Table 11: Great Ocean Walk Actions**

| ACTION NUMBER | ACTION | PRIORITY AND ACTION TYPE | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **GOW1** | Revisit RDV Business Case for realignment of dirt roads. | High Enabling | GORCAPA supported by the GORRTF |
| **GOW2** | Improve engagement with, and operational trail planning alongside EMAC. | High Enabling | Parks Victoria, GORCAPA, EMAC |
| **GOW3** | Develop short walk offerings/curation including identification of viable loop walk experiences from trailheads. | High | GORCAPA supported by the GORRTF |
| **GOW4** | Develop a strategic plan for off trail-adjacent nodes: Cape Otway Lightstation and Princetown precincts. | Medium Enabling | GORCAPA supported by the GORRTF |
| **GOW5** | Promote new Fiji Monument Trail (potential for short walk in/out visitation). | Medium Enabling | GORRT in collaboration with the GORRTF |
| **GOW6** | Establishment of a Climate Change Impacts – Trail Management, Resilience and Retreat Plan. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with the GORRTF |

**Table 12: Otway Waterfall Walks Network Actions**

| ACTION NUMBER | ACTION | PRIORITY AND ACTION TYPE | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OWWN1** | General review/trail audit and maintenance requirement report for all trails included in the network/ | High Enabling | Parks Victoria supported by GORRTF |
| **OWWN2** | Sabine Falls upgrade identified including review of viewing platform experience. | High | Parks Victoria supported by GORRTF |
| **OWWN3** | Kalimna Falls Walk/s trail upgrades identified, including boardwalks. | High | Parks Victoria supported by GORRTF |
| **OWWN4** | Include Little Aire Falls as focus promotion target (already linked to Triplet Falls via short out and back). | High | GORRT in collaboration with GORRTF |
| **OWWN5** | Investigate scope for sensory walks for people with disabilities, 'curated' around sound, smells, touch. | High Enabling | GORRTF |
| **OWWN6** | Investigate potential parking expansion (trail linked) above Erskine Falls to north. | High | Parks Victoria supported by GORRTF |
| **OWWN7** | Investigate linking Allenvale Mill Site to Sheoak Picnic Area. Likely delivered by Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail alignment. | Medium Enabling | DEECA |
| **OWWN8** | Increase promotion of walk to Erskine Falls from Lorne township and/or investigate solutions for support transfers. | Medium Enabling | GORRT supported by the GORRTF for actions |

**Table 13: Surf Coast Walk Actions**

| ACTION NUMBER | ACTION | PRIORITY AND ACTION TYPE | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **SCW1** | Initiate 10–20 year trail management plan including climate change response. | High Enabling | GORCAPA supported by GORRTF |
| **SCW2** | Implement planning and accountability structures for new maintenance guidelines and programming. | High Enabling | GORCAPA supported by GORRTF |
| **SCW3** | Formalise and structure process for engaging volunteer groups for defined maintenance roles. | High Enabling | GORCAPA supported by GORRTF |
| **SCW4** | Upgrade trail infrastructure to integrate more sustainable and maintenance-friendly design solutions. | High | GORCAPA supported by GORRTF |
| **SCW5** | Review Interpretation Signage and focus points for development of cultural interpretation i.e., Point Roadknight. Investigate interactive experiences along the walk to enhance and diversify the user experience. | Medium | WTOAC, EMAC supported by GORCAPA and GORRTF |
| **SCW6** | Investigate primary SCW trailhead at Whites Beach/terminus of Esplanade – better end-to-end experience. | Medium | GORCAPA supported by GORRTF |
| **SCW7** | Investigate options for improving shuttle service offerings along SCW. | Medium Enabling | GORCAPA supported by GORRTF |
| **SCW8** | Develop missing trail alignments linking to Torquay addressing connectivity and safety concerns. | High | GORRTF |

**Table 14: Anglesea MTB Trail Network Actions**

| ACTION NUMBER | ACTION | PRIORITY AND ACTION TYPE | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **AMTN1** | Progress Anglesea MTB Trail Network Concept Plan – undertake required assessments, engagement and approvals, re-assess for alignment revisions, secure project funding, progress to formalisation and build phases (potential for a staged approach). | High Enabling | Surf Coast Shire, DEECA, GORRTF, Alcoa and Anglesea Mountain Bike Park Community Asset Committee |
| **AMTN2** | Develop missing trail alignments linking to Torquay addressing connectivity and safety concerns. | High | GORRTF |
| **AMTN3** | Confirm long-term future of Anglesea Bike Park | High Enabling | Surf Coast Shire, DEECA, GORRTF and the Alcoa and Anglesea Mountain Bike Park Committee of Management |
| **AMTN4** | Accessibility trail audit to identify appropriate adaptive MTB routes within network. | Medium Enabling | GORRTF |

**Table 15: Camperdown to Timboon Rail Trail Actions**

| ACTION NUMBER | ACTION | PRIORITY AND ACTION TYPE | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CTRT1** | Complete replacement of 5 bypass bridges: | High Enabling | DEECA/CoM and GORRTF |
| **CTRT2** | Curdies Trestle Bridge – obtain funding to enable assessment and repair. | High Enabling | DEECA/CoM |
| **CTRT3** | Track Surface upgrade between Curdies Trestle Bridge and Timboon – grant for funding (RDV) has been submitted. | High Enabling | DEECA/CoM |
| **CTRT4** | Upgrade Trail surface and increase trail width between Bridges 11 and 15. | Medium Enabling | DEECA/CoM |
| **CTRT5** | Re-investigate and develop a strategy for realignment of trail alongside Lake Bullen Merri (west side), linking to lake facilities (noting current private landholder status and associated Doctorate of Accretion). Further connection link west alongside Naroghid Rd (southern side). | Medium Enabling | DEECA/CoM and GORRTF |
| **CTRT6** | Identify potential participatory walk/ride events linking towns. | Medium Enabling | DEECA/CoM supported by GORRT |
| **CTRT7** | Identify and install major trailhead signage and in/out township wayfinding at and in Cobden. | Medium Enabling | DEECA/CoM |
| **CTRT8** | Seek improved bike hire options for Camperdown. | Medium | DEECA/CoM – trailhead signage<br><br>Cobden Progress Association – wayfinding signage |

**Table 16: Old Beechy Rail Trail Actions**

| ACTION NUMBER | ACTION | PRIORITY AND ACTION TYPE | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OBRT1** | Resolve closure of Wimba to Beech Forest section. | High | Colac Otway Shire Council |
| **OBRT2** | Assess potential for development of Maggios Road as primary user trailhead including car park and facilities. | High | Colac Otway Shire Council |
| **OBRT3** | Assess location and potential for picnic facility between Gellibrand and Beech Forest. | High Enabling | Colac Otway Shire and GORRTF |
| **OBRT4** | Identify and support potential event activations, recreational and/or competitive. | Medium | Colac Otway Shire and GORRTF |
| **OBRT5** | Identify and promote potential gravel grind route connection to Forrest. | Medium Enabling | Colac Otway Shire and GORRTF |
| **OBRT6** | Update marketing material for better promotion and facilitation. | Medium | GORRT in collaboration with Colac Otway Shire |
| **OBRT7** | Identify relevant tour operations with potential to leverage the trail for new experiences. | Medium | Colac Otway Shire and GORRTF |

**Table 17: Port Fairy to Warrnambool Rail Trail Actions**

| ACTION NUMBER | ACTION | PRIORITY AND ACTION TYPE | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **PWRT1** | Improve user safety and develop new parallel route from Koroit Township to lip of Tower Hill Reserve to add connectivity and significant tourism value. | High Enabling | Moyne Shire supported by the CoM |
| **PWRT2** | Assess and rectify trail levels to solve current inundation issues on outskirts of Warrnambool (from Millers Lane through Swinton Street and Merri River alignment). | High | Warrnambool City Council |
| **PWRT3** | Identify feasible and appropriate picnic facility sites outside township nodes. | Medium | CoM supported by LGAs |
| **PWRT4** | Identify potential event concepts and operators. | Medium | CoM supported by LGAs |
| **PWRT5** | Promote route and attractions to gravel grind and bikepacking markets. | Medium | GORRT in collaboration with CoM and LGAs |

**Table 18: Twelve Apostles Trail Actions**

| ACTION NUMBER | ACTION | PRIORITY AND ACTION TYPE | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TAT1** | Confirm alignment and experience design of missing link Port Campbell to Princetown. | High Enabling | GORCAPA and Corangamite Shire Council |
| **TAT2** | Explore on-trail accommodation options including farm stay or public recreation reserve repurposed – i.e., Paaratte Recreation Reserve | Medium Enabling | Corangamite Shire Council supported by GORRT |
| **TAT3** | Identify potential pathway to establishing hire bike operations including e-bike charter. | Medium Enabling | Corangamite Shire Council |
| **TAT4** | Ensure future promotion planning accounts for extension of trail to Princetown. | Medium Enabling | Corangamite Shire Council supported by GORRT |
| **TAT5** | Seek funding to activate research findings and interpretation potential from Indigenous culture studies/data set. | Medium Enabling | Corangamite Shire Council |
| **TAT6** | Identify potential opportunities for and operators of events suitable for trail experience (likely non-competitive given road crossings). | Medium Enabling | Corangamite Shire Council supported by GORRT |

**Table 19: Warrnambool Foreshore Promenade Actions**

| ACTION NUMBER | ACTION | PRIORITY AND ACTION TYPE | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **WFP1** | Redevelop Surf Lifesaving Club. | High Action | Warrnambool City Council |
| **WFP2** | Assess trail section Blue Hole Rd to Whale Watching for realignment or improved experience. | High | Warrnambool City Council |
| **WFP3** | Identify relevant proximal events and opportunities for activating trail. | Medium Enabling | Warrnambool City Council |
| **WFP4** | Develop improved online information pertaining to trail. | Medium Enabling | GORRT in collaboration with Warrnambool City Council |

**Table 20: Otway Hinterland Horse Trail Actions**

| ACTION NUMBER | ACTION | PRIORITY AND ACTION TYPE | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OHHT1** | Undertake a feasibility study to address the challenges identified in trail audit. | Medium Enabling | PV and GORRTF |
| **OHHT2** | Assess capacity for shared use with gravel grind (noting majority on road alignment). | Medium | PV and GORRTF |
| **OHHT3** | Consider production of stage one digital route guide with relevant pre-trip information and safety caveats. | Medium Enabling | PV and GORRTF |

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## ASSESSMENT OF TRAILS AGAINST THE KEY CRITERIA

The following table assesses the region's trails and trail experiences against the key criteria for an outstanding trails destination.

| CRITERIA | RANKING | GAPS AND ISSUES | OPPORTUNITIES |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. Performs well \| 2. Average performance with room to improve. \| 3. Significant improvements required. | | |
| **Diversity of Trail Types** | **1** | • Diversity in the network is good, including 'top end' trail experiences designed to bring visitors to the region, family friendly options (rail trails) and cycling/shared use trails.<br>• Two mountain bike parks tend to have limited diversity.<br>• Lack of a high-quality MTB multi-day experience.<br>• Shorter walks are appealing for broad market – but some are not maintained to high standard.<br>• Accessibility across the network is limited and patchy. | • Marketing more-easily accessible walks to help disperse visitors across the region.<br>• Connecting trail network with local communities and other trails/attractions.<br>• Implementation and development of the Mountain Bike Master Plans and Concept Plans, to provide a strong mountain bike trail offering. |
| **State/National Trails** | **1** | • GOW and the proposed GORCT and other signature trails identified will require ongoing funding to support the visitor economy.<br>• Lack of a regional approach to trail classification. Signature trail experiences are not agreed across the region or promoted as visitor drawcards.<br>• Strong mountain bike networks provide a strong regional trail offering and could be leveraged further.<br>• Existing rail trails offer a strong product, but they are not linked and, in most cases, have large expanses between products and services. | • Adopt an agreed regional classification of trails as national, regional and local, as a basis for experience development prioritisation and promotion.<br>• Focus on development of smaller number of great experiences.<br>• National trails investment needs to be increased, protected and maintained.<br>• Revitalise the GOW and planned GORCT offering and other signature trails with improved maintenance and infrastructure upgrades.<br>• Create a 'GORR Rail Trail Product' that provides a consistent high-class multi-use rail trails network linking attractions. |
| **Concentration of Trails** | **2** | • The region has a good concentration of trails and visitors can stay in one place to enjoy several days of trail use.<br>• The Rail Trails are poorly connected around the region and offer disparate experiences to different standards. | • Connectivity of the rail trail and 'multi-use' trail network would improve usage from visitors and communities.<br>• Continue to develop trail 'clusters' where market demand continues to grow. This includes day walk hubs in Otways.<br>• Develop the concept of a marketing MTB experiences together – Forrest, Anglesea and potentially |

| CRITERIA | RANKING | GAPS AND ISSUES | OPPORTUNITIES |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. Performs well \| 2. Average performance with room to improve. \| 3. Significant improvements required. | | |
| | | | You Yangs to give critical mass to offering combined with other trail experiences in the region to increase length of stay. |
| **High Quality Infrastructure** | **2** | • Trail infrastructure varies by trail type and across the region.<br>• Inconsistent trail standards (difficulty, use) and signage across the region.<br>• Some trail standards differ across the region for similar type trails and similar users.<br>• Ageing infrastructure across most trails.<br>• Different quality and level of interpretation. | • Trail head facilities and visitor information can be improved - some newer trails have high quality infrastructure.<br>• Develop innovative models to assist land and trail manager with trail maintenance.<br>• Consider closing or rehabilitating several lower priority trails to enable a focus on the trails with the highest visitor economy and community outcomes.<br>• Consider a design or brand to help with market penetration and an understanding what the region can offer to trail users. |
| **Accessibility** | **2** | • Public transport connecting trails is lacking.<br>• Many trails are not accessible by all ability standards. | • Work with transport authorities to develop a walk/bike friendly transport service on buses and trains on selected routes in peak periods.<br>• Use strong design guidelines to develop all-ability trail and trail infrastructure where appropriate and as a general rule.<br>• Develop a regional map and approach to all abilities access. |
| **Distinctive Experiences** | **1 for walking 2 for MTB** | • Mountain bike trails are generally of a regional level.<br>• Many walking trails are unique and showcase the environment of the region.<br>• The rail trail and multi-use trails are variable and have sections that are unique to the region while other sections are variable. | • The trails would significantly benefit from exceptional interpretation and cultural experiences.<br>• The ability to connect into other trails from existing trails would make the region an outstanding trails region. |
| **Attractive Natural or Cultural Context** | **1** | • Coastal and hinterland trails pass through sensitive environments and volume of use places pressure on these values. Managing use and dispersal of visitors to ensure protection of the important values is critical.<br>• Aboriginal cultural heritage is paramount to First Nations Peoples in the region and decisions | • Signature experiences to be constructed and developed in outstanding natural areas.<br>• Developing a strong partnership with the Aboriginal corporations and communities in the region to bring culture alive on the trails and to include the community in associated enterprises and management. |

| CRITERIA | RANKING | GAPS AND ISSUES | OPPORTUNITIES |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. Performs well \| 2. Average performance with room to improve. \| 3. Significant improvements required. | | |
| | | on any impact or interpretation need to be made by those groups. | |
| **Quality Pre-Trip Information** | **3** | • Parks Victoria and DEECA have information on walks and trails on their land within their corporate websites.<br>• A search of trails, national parks and walks (attractions) on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (Australia's online marketplace for tourism information) shows limited trails listed. Parks Victoria have a number of listings; however, the hierarchy is unclear and there are some key products missing.<br>• Individual Councils have their own information through printed material, and websites.<br>• There is no central source of information on regional trails easily accessible in one location for consumers and visitors.<br>• There is little, if any, mobile digital information that enables storytelling or support for experiences. | • A single source website that had information on trail tourism in the region – even with links back to detailed information on the individual land manager's websites – would be a significant improvement for visitors being able to find information.<br>• A regional brand for the significant trails and experiences in the region might be a valuable tool to enable visitors to seek out relevant information more easily and to know what to expect within that branding. |
| **Range of Quality Support Services** | **3** | • The region has several commercial operators using the trail network.<br>• Many of the best-known attractions of the region can be linked to tracks and trails.<br>• In addition to outdoor recreation, the region offers a variety of non-commissionable and commissionable activities for residents and visitors. There are several organised walking and cycle tour opportunities. | • Investigate a 'Regional Trail Friendly' accreditation scheme to help encourage and promote trail visitor friendly businesses. |
| **Support Businesses in Food, Beverage etc.** | **3** | • There are very few trail-specific food and beverage businesses and products.<br>• Most of the services are in towns and can be some distance from trail-based experiences.<br>• Some farm gate and small producers are close to trails and could be aligned to trail visitors. | • Economic development activation across the trail network (at scale) will benefit all areas and connect to marketing approach of GORRT as a trails destination. |

| CRITERIA | RANKING | GAPS AND ISSUES | OPPORTUNITIES |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. Performs well \| 2. Average performance with room to improve. \| 3. Significant improvements required. | | |
| **Strong Regional Positioning and Marketing** | 2 | • Many sources of information about trails in the region – often conflicting.<br>• Generally, there is no region-wide alignment of trail-based experiences.<br>• GORRT provides regional products on their website without significant branding and positioning of the region. | • One regional owner promoting and business activation of trails-based experiences and products.<br>• Develop a single portal/website for trails-based information. |
| **Effective Governance** | 3 | • Limited funding means all trail managers are competing for funds. Collaboration occurs between land managers and Councils on a local level.<br>• Limited connection with EMAC and WTOAC<br>• Rail Trails are reliant on Committees of Management with limited succession.<br>• There's no formal mechanism to develop a regional approach to trail management and development. | • Develop and implement a region-wide governance structure that enables strong regional decision making on strategic priorities.<br>• Hold a regular regional trails forum and encourage private industry to seek out business opportunities on trails.<br>• Formal governance structure involving Traditional Owners. |
| **Community Engagement** | 2 | • Strong community engagement occurs at local government level particularly around individual Council trail and pathway plans, and economic development plans.<br>• Land managers undertake community engagement and develop stakeholder relationships with trail user groups around specific parks or trails. | • With the development of an agreed region-wide governance mechanism, develop community information and consultation forums that do not override the need for Councils or land managers to undertake this. |
| **Events** | 1 | • High number of trail-based events – there remains capacity in low and shoulder season for events. | • Develop a regional umbrella event to celebrate trails and align it to the Regional Events Strategy. |

## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

### STRENGTHS

- The natural and cultural landscapes and seascapes are outstanding.
- Diverse range of trails.
- Active and supportive community.
- The opportunity to capitalise on strengths.
- Strong and well-known offerings.
- Close to Melbourne visitor markets.
- Great Ocean Road touring route acts as main route to access trails.
- Different markets, with some served well.
- Large number of existing gravel tracks suitable for riding and touring.

### WEAKNESSES

- Lack of consistent standards and resources to support quality network.
- Lack of data on use, and therefore its values and threats are underestimated.
- Region positioning as trail destination does not exist.
- Accessibility patchy and not visible to market.
- Trail and transport connections between trails are poor and often bike unfriendly.
- Many existing trails are struggling to receive the necessary maintenance and governance.
- Many existing trails are not mapped.
- No single source of information – confusing.
- Many entities and complex bureaucracy.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- A sustainable funding model.
- Climate adaptation strategy for trails across the region.
- Rationalise investment to bring a smaller number of trails to a higher standard.
- Income streams to finance trail maintenance.
- Bring together trail community for more effective resource coordination.
- Capacity building and resource support for volunteers.
- Connect the trail community to improve linkages existing products, infrastructure, and trails.
- Partner with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation, promote respect and understanding of Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar knowledges, cultures and values, and to create economic opportunities.

### THREATS

- Climate change.
- Emergencies, including fires, close areas or destroy infrastructure.
- The region falls behind other Victorian regions and destinations that offer high quality market-aligned products due to lack of funding for maintaining trails to a quality standard.
- Complexity of land management across boundaries and the regulations that apply.
- Lack of funding, capital and operational.
- Diversity (lack of, or not focusing on, product strengths).
- Policy differences between partners.
- Threat of lack of funding resulting in a poor user experience and future lower visitation.

# Appendix C - Actions in Order of Priority

## ACTIONS FOR INTERGRATED GOVERNANCE, PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

| ACTION NO. | ACTION | PRIORITY | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| Action 1.1 | **Coordinating Body:** Formalise the structure of the Regional Trails Forum and include regional representation as well as community organisations that support the trails sector across the region.<br><br>Establish the Terms of Reference and embed the implementation of the Regional Trails Strategy as the key role of the Great Ocean Road Regional Trails Forum (GORRTF) under the leadership of the Authority. | High Foundational | GORCAPA in collaboration with EMAC, WTOAC, LGAs, Trail and Land Managers and GORRT |
| Action 1.2 | **Strategy Implementation:** Establish and implement regular reporting of progress in the implementation of the Strategy and provide feedback to stakeholder organisations at agreed times. | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 1.6 | **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a region wide monitoring and evaluation system to measure the success of the trails network through usage monitoring (i.e. observations, trail counters), user experience surveys and assessment of the achievement of trail management objectives. | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 1.3 | **Trail Stewardship:** Host, on an as-needs base, a regional trails forum that includes industry and community groups to discuss and enable implementation of elements of the Strategy. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 1.4 | **Trail Capacity:** To enable coordinated implementation of the Great Ocean Road Regional Trail Guidelines, develop and present trail design, construction, visitor risk management and maintenance workshops to trail management organisations and user groups across the different types of trails and uses. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 1.5 | **Integrated Planning:** Embed the vision and goals of the Strategy into broader regional planning and budget processes (e.g. tourism plans/destination management plans, strategic plans, development plans, open space plans, transport plans). | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |

## ACTIONS TO ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE FUNDING MODEL & INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

| ACTION NO. | ACTION | PRIORITY | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| Action 2.1 | **Funding Model:** Institute a funding model that:<br>• Reflects the many benefits of trails and their role in advancing the objectives and priorities of government.<br>• Provides dedicated sources of funding, allocating them based on clear criteria that are consistent with the goals of the Strategy.<br>• Ongoing management including maintenance, long term sustainability and the promotion of trails.<br>• Responds to the need for large infrastructure projects. | High<br>Foundational | GORCAPA in collaboration with the GORRTF |
| Action 2.2 | **Cost/Benefit Analysis:** Undertake a cost benefit analysis of trails to further develop advocacy material for the reinvestment of funds trail development and maintenance. | High<br>Foundational | GORCAPA in collaboration with the GORRTF |
| Action 2.3 | **Advocacy Platform:** From the analysis produce an advocacy document that succinctly and powerfully, informs decision makers of the evidence-based case for public support of trails development and maintenance. It should describe the economic, environmental, community, health and cultural benefits of supporting a varied and quality trails network. | High<br>Foundational | GORCAPA in collaboration with the GORRTF |
| Action 2.4 | **Prioritisation of Investment:** Implement the region wide trail categorisation system for trails to define their relative state and regional significance and broad developmental needs. | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with the GORRTF |
| Action 2.5 | **Investment Partnerships:** Assist trails organisations and managers to identify appropriate partnerships for trail development, experiences, maintenance and management. Investigate philanthropic opportunities. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with the GORRTF |
| Action 2.6 | **Investment Support:** Provide trail organisations with access to a centralised pool of research and information to assist in the assessment of trails development needs, the preparation of funding applications and seek investment partners. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with the GORRTF |
| Action 2.7 | **Trail Categorisation Review**: Ensure that the Regional Trails Strategy recognises and integrates new trails and GORRTF revises the trail categorisation as required. | Ongoing | GORCAPA in collaboration with the GORRTF |
| Action 2.8 | **Volunteer Programs**: Develop and support programs for community and user group involvement in trail development, maintenance and management. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with the GORRTF |

## ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE EASTERN MAAR AND WADAWURRUNG PARTNERSHIP

| ACTION NO. | ACTION | PRIORITY | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC)** | | | |
| Action 3.1 | **GORRTF**: Ensure EMAC are a partner in the Great Ocean Road Regional Trails Forum (GORRTF). | High Foundational | EMAC supported by GORCAPA and GORRTF |
| Action 3.3 | **Storytelling:** Establish EMAC priorities for helping visitors understand Country through interpretation and storytelling | High Foundational | EMAC supported by GORCAPA and GORRTF |
| Action 3.4 | **Cultural Sensitivity**: Build a joint understanding of where trails may be impacting Country or places of significance for EMAC and remove the threats wherever possible. | High Foundational | EMAC supported by GORCAPA and GORRTF |
| Action 3.5 | **Direct Involvement and Capacity Building:** Seek opportunities for involving EMAC in all aspects of trail planning and management and build capacity together. | High Foundational | EMAC supported by GORCAPA and GORRTF |
| Action 3.2 | **Tourism Operations**: Seek to work with EMAC on the development of tourism operations according to their assertions. | Medium | EMAC supported by GORCAPA and GORRTF |
| **Wadawarrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC)** | | | |
| Action 3.6 | **GORRTF**: Ensure WTOAC are a partner in the Great Ocean Road Regional Trails Forum (GORRTF). | High Foundational | WTOAC supported by GORCAPA and GORRTF |
| Action 3.8 | **Storytelling:** Establish WTOAC priorities for helping visitors understand Country through interpretation and storytelling. | High Foundational | WTOAC supported by GORCAPA and GORRTF |
| Action 3.9 | **Cultural Sensitivity**: Build a joint understanding of where trails may be impacting Country or places of significance for WTOAC and remove the threats wherever possible. | High Foundational | WTOAC supported by GORCAPA and GORRTF |
| Action 3.10 | **Direct Involvement and Capacity Building:** Seek opportunities for involving WTOAC in all aspects of trail planning and management and build capacity together. | High Foundational | WTOAC supported by GORCAPA and GORRTF |
| Action 3.7 | **Tourism Operations**: Work with WTOAC on the development of tourism operations according to their assertions. | Medium | WTOAC supported by GORCAPA and GORRTF |

## ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE HIGH QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE TRAILS

| ACTION NO. | ACTION | PRIORITY | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| Action 4.2 | **Trail Audits:** Conduct regular trail audits to determine the physical condition and maintenance issues across the regional trail network. | High Foundational | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Acton 4.9 | **Safey Information:** Engage trail users and the community through regular trail 'bulletins' and media informing people of planned actions, risks, issues and opportunities for volunteerism | High Foundational | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.1 | **Implement Priority Actions:** For individual trails (Appendix B) as resources allow. | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.3 | **Regional Trail Guidelines:** Implement the Great Ocean Road Trail Management Guidelines and the Wild Otways guidelines for Phytophthora Management for trail design, construction management and maintenance of trails across the region (where existing guidelines do not apply). | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.5 | **Maintenance and management program:** Identify funding opportunities for ongoing maintenance budget allocations and advocate where required. | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.8 | **Trail Safety and Risk Management:** Ensure that safety signage is installed at hazardous locations along recreational trails and that trail infrastructure aligns with AS2156.2 | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.10 | **Emergency Planning:** Seek to better utilise the existing Emergency Management Planning Committees at a Regional and Municipal level for planning for emergency response, including trigger level standardisation. | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.11 | **Trigger Points:** Through the existing emergency planning forums, coordinate and standardise trigger points for public land closures and trail-use restrictions across all LGAs and public land managers. | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.13 | **Unplanned Trails:** Reduce the number of unplanned trails and work with MTB groups to stop the development of, and to decommission, unplanned MTB trails. | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.17 | **Ensure supporting infrastructure is thoughtfully designed, well-constructed, and regularly maintained** to prioritise user safety and enhance the visitor experience. This includes well-maintained bridges, steps, amenities, watering points, rest areas, lookouts, transport and parking facilities. | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |

| ACTION NO. | ACTION | PRIORITY | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| Action 4.4 | **Capacity Building:** Ensure that information and training on the regional guidelines and best practice sustainable trail design. construction and maintenance is available to current and potential trail developers, managers and organisations. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.6 | **Trail Maintenance Sub Committee:** Establish a Trails Maintenance subcommittee from the GORRTF to address and trail maintenance actions and issues. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.7 | **Trail Condition Reporting:** Investigate and, as appropriate, implement trail user/community social media 'app' or mechanism (such as snap send solve) for reporting trail conditions and issues (risks). | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.12 | **MTB Safety:** Continue to improve MTB safety through skills development in skills parks, and by good trail design, including trail filters near the beginning of trails. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.14 | **Compliance and Enforcement:** Develop a compliance approach to stop illegal trail creation in protected areas including National Parks. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.15 | **Visitor Safety:** Provide visitor information on trail routes, conditions, and emergency access points in in a way that is accessible to all trail users including non-English speaking visitors. Ensure trail markers are well placed and easily identified. Reduce interactions between trail users and vehicles and bikes where necessary. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 4.16 | **Trail connectivity:** Investigate options to link hinterland and coastal trails at key locations including Lorne, Apollo Bay and Forrest. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |

## ACTIONS FOR INFORMATION AND MARKETING

| ACTION NO. | ACTION | PRIORITY | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| Action 5.1 | **Regional marketing:** Include regional trails as part of the region's tourism offering and include in regional marketing initiatives. | High Foundational | GORRT in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 5.2 | **Consumer Website:** Include as part of the existing consumer website information about trail opportunities across the region. Consideration to be given to the development of well-designed and consistent downloadable resources and interactive mapping and access via mobile apps. | High | GORRT in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 5.5 | **Trail Related Businesses:** Develop a 'trail friendly business program' with industry, including presentation of commercial opportunities around the continued development of trails-related businesses. | High | GORRT in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 5.7 | **Foster business opportunities:** including travel packages, ecotourism, low-impact services, and shuttle bus operations, through collaboration with local tour operators. | High | GORRT in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 5.8 | **EMAC Business Enablement:** Support and partner where appropriate the EMAC in developing tourism offerings on and around the trail network. | High | EMAC in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 5.9 | **WTOAC Business Enablement:** Support and partner where appropriate the WTOAC in developing tourism offerings on and around the trail network. | High | WTOAC in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 5.3 | **Digital Maps/Information:** Develop and maintain a contemporary trail resource which details the trail network in line with the region's branding. Include clearly articulated trail information (including maps and safety advice). | Medium | GORRT in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 5.4 | **Third-party Information platforms:** Where possible work with third-party information platforms (e.g. Strava, Trailforks, Maps, Google Maps) to ensure consistent factual information on the current status of all trails. Regularly assess relevance and reliability of information provided by users, and engage with new and emerging platforms as appropriate. | Medium | GORRT in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 5.6 | **Trail-related programs and events:** Support service providers and the community to consistently manage the range of trail-related programs and events offered across the region (e.g. parkrun, charity events, fun runs, programs promoting walking/cycling/trail running etc.). | Medium | GORRT in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 5.10 | **Education and Awareness:** Develop information on respecting wildlife, reducing litter & protecting the natural environment. | Medium | GORRTF in collaboration with GORRT |

## ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE GREATER ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

| ACTION NO. | ACTION | PRIORITY | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|
| Action 6.3 | **Conduct an accessibility audit of all trails, facilities, and services:** to identify any opportunities to access and inclusion for people with disabilities or limited mobility, priority population groups and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. | High Foundational | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 6.5 | **Provide accessibility training:** for all staff and volunteers to ensure that they are aware of accessibility and inclusion issues and how to provide inclusive services to visitors with disabilities or limited mobility, priority population and CALD backgrounds. | High Foundational | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 6.2 | **Provide trailheads and associated facilities:** that are easy to locate and ideally serviced by public transport, are welcoming, safe, maintained to accessibility standards, provide relevant information and utilise digital applications and are relevant to, and accommodating for, a diversity of users from different backgrounds and with differing abilities. | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 6.4 | Based on the findings of the accessibility audit, **implement prioritised improvements to make trails, facilities, and services more accessible and inclusive** for people with disabilities or limited mobility, priority population groups, and CALD backgrounds. | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 6.6 | **Provide trail communication information and pre-trip planning information materials that are accessible and inclusive:** ensuring that adequate information is provided so people with disability can have choice and control over their trail experience. Ensure alternative formats for websites and social media channels are accessible to people with disabilities or limited mobility, priority population groups, and CALD backgrounds. | High | GORRT in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 6.7 | **Utilise an Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Group:** on an as needs/project basis. Actively seek feedback from visitors with disabilities or limited mobility, priority population groups and CALD backgrounds to identify areas for improvement, ensure that accessibility remains a priority, and ensure that any issues or concerns are addressed promptly. | High | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 6.1 | **Trail Classification:** Ensure that all trail information sources classify the correct Trail Classification System (i.e. Australian Walking Track Grading System) to allow prospective users to make an informed decision to enter the trail with knowledge about the trail's level of difficulty and risks. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |
| Action 6.8 | **Investigate opportunities to improve the public transport system:** that services trails in the Great Ocean Road region. | Medium | GORCAPA in collaboration with GORRTF |



GREAT OCEAN ROAD
COAST & PARKS AUTHORITY