



Yarra Ranges Council

DRAFT Paths and Trails Plan 2025–2035



Acknowledgement of Country

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region.

We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4	Trail Infrastructure Level of Service	23
Yarra Ranges Council Overview	6	Trail Furniture & Structures	23
Background Information	7	Trail Signage	24
Eastern Regional Trails Strategy 2018	7	Trail Lighting	25
Why do we need Paths and Trails?	8	Action Areas & Implementation	26
Factors influencing Path and Trail usage	9	Project Prioritisation	30
Activation of our Paths and Trails Network	9	Upgrades to Existing Trails	31
Community Consultation	10	Upgrades to Existing and Construction of New Road Crossings	32
How we engaged	10	New Trails/Missing Links	34
Consultation summary	11	Investment	36
What are the different Paths and Trails?	12	Funding	36
Mountain Bike Trails	13	Conclusion	37
Equestrian Trails	13	Appendix 1	38
Canoe Trails	14	Trail Infrastructure Levels of Service	38
Strategic Cycling Corridors	16	Hills	41
Gravel Riding	17	Urban	43
Destination Trails	17	Upper Yarra	46
Levels of Service	18	Yarra Valley	48
Footpaths	21		

Introduction

Vision: People in Yarra Ranges can easily access and use our paths and trails network for active transport, recreation, and relaxation. Our trail network includes a range of different trail types that connect our communities, facilitate connection to our unique natural environment and help our communities to be active.

Paths & trails are essential components of the municipality's open spaces, streetscapes, and road network. These linear movement corridors connect places and people, as well as benefit the community by encouraging active lifestyles and outdoor exercise, promoting sustainable modes of transport, supporting tourism outcomes, and stimulating local businesses. Yarra Ranges Council plays an important role in creating a healthy and connected community through the provision and management of a diverse paths and trails network. The network will assist people to get from A to B within their neighbourhood, provide opportunities for recreation and engagement, relaxation, and encourage people to connect with nature. The purpose of this plan is to facilitate a diverse and accessible path and trail network that caters for a variety of user groups. The plan's objectives are:

- Establish trail upgrade priorities and develop an advocacy program for the next 10 years,
- Establish a program of new trails in response to community consultation and feedback,
- Establish clear and transparent processes and frameworks for Council to develop, deliver, promote and maintain paths and trails within each category.

To deliver the above objectives, a series of actions and opportunities for Yarra Ranges to improve the delivery of paths and trails has been developed. In addition to these actions, a priority program for both upgrades to existing trails and construction of missing links is provided within this plan. The funding required to deliver priority projects identified in this plan will be sourced from Council's annual budget process, as well as suitable grant opportunities for trail developments that support recreation, active transport and economic development.

The planning of paths and trails are integrated with bike lanes, this plan does not include street bike facilities. For this information please refer to Yarra Ranges Council's '*Connected*' *Integrated Transport Strategy: 'Connected'*.

The Paths and Trails Plan will be reviewed annually and updated every 10 years. An assessment tool has been developed so new trails presented to Council within this period can be assessed against consistent criteria (this can be found on page 30) and be added to the program where appropriate.

We will achieve the vision through consideration of the following principles:



Connectivity

Trails provide links between key destinations such as townships, employment hubs and public transport.



Connection to Nature

Trails showcase and allow users to connect and engage with the natural environment.



Tourism

Trails attract visitors from all over Australia and internationally, encouraging tourism spend in the local townships.



Health and Wellbeing

Trails enable and encourage more people to get active.



Accessibility

Trails are easily accessible, free to use and safe.



Environment Protection

Planning for new trails will consider the impact on the natural environment.



Cultural Significance

Trails provide opportunities for greater cultural heritage connection.

Yarra Ranges Council Overview

Yarra Ranges is home to over 150,000 people and covers approximately 2,500km². The municipality stretches from the densely populated outer suburbs into the foothills, agricultural valleys and forested areas of the Great Dividing Ranges.

Around 70% of the population lives in urban areas, which represent only 3% of the Yarra Ranges' landmass.

Yarra Ranges has long been recognised for its natural beauty and diverse habitats. The combination of national parks, state forests, private gardens, and its proximity to Melbourne makes the area unique.

Some of Victoria's most environmentally important areas are located in the Yarra Ranges. The mountainous landscapes and Yarra Valley contain significant native vegetation and provide important habitats for wildlife.

The *Council Plan 2021-25* highlighted the importance of paths and trails to the community. The strategic objective of Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places referencing that 'Our townships are designed to improve liveability and support health and wellbeing through improved footpaths, trails, lighting and infrastructure.'

This is reinforced with the inclusion of the following major initiative that is to "Become a world class trails and eco-tourism destination through project development, delivery, advocacy and partnerships, including the delivery of the Ridges and Rivers projects."





Background Information

Eastern Regional Trails Strategy 2018

The Eastern Regional Trails Strategy (ERTS) 2018 noted the vision of Yarra Ranges Council to create world class trails-based tourism destinations in the Yarra Ranges. Currently there are seven regional trails (existing and proposed) in the Eastern Regional Trails Strategy that are either entirely or partially located within Yarra Ranges. Yarra Valley Trail is the highest ranked new trail in the Strategy. The other priority regional trails are:

- Box Hill to Ringwood Rail Trail (extension to Lilydale)
- Heathmont to Belgrave (Belgrave Rail Trail)
- O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail
- Tarralla Creek Trail (Carrum Warburton Trail)
- Lilydale Warburton Rail Trail
- Yarra Valley Trail
- Yarra River Paddle Trail

Why do we need Paths and Trails?

Paths and trails play a crucial role in shaping the way we interact with our environment and each other. Beyond their practical function of facilitating navigation and ensuring safety, these routes serve as conduits for various aspects of human life. They provide a structured means of connecting locations, fostering connectivity within communities. Well-designed trails contribute to environmental conservation by directing foot traffic away from fragile ecosystems, reducing soil erosion, and preserving biodiversity. Additionally, paths offer opportunities for recreation, promoting physical health and well-being through activities such as hiking, biking, and jogging. Many trails have historical or cultural significance, preserving traditional routes and connecting us to our past. From a tourism perspective, trails can attract visitors, contributing to local economies and encourage the development of supporting infrastructure. Trails also create communal spaces that promote social interaction and a sense of community. In essence, paths and trails are not merely physical routes but integral components of a healthier, more connected, and sustainable living environment.



Factors influencing Path and Trail usage

Various factors, such as age, gender, ability, disability, cultural background, socio-economic status, and personal preferences, impact the use of paths and trails. Research and participation data primarily focus on age and gender, recognising that these factors intersect with others, shaping people's identities and experiences. All of these factors collectively influence how people get active in the Yarra Ranges. Yarra Ranges Council is committed to providing equitable access to opportunities and resources, as stated in the *Council Plan 2021-25* and other strategic documents. This plan considers the various factors influencing trail use, aiming to make paths and trails accessible, safe, and appealing to all members of the community.

Under the Gender Equality Act, Council is required to undertake Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) to ensure we think critically about how Council's policies, programs and services will meet the different needs of women, men and gender diverse people. A GIA has been completed and is considered a supporting document for this plan.

Activation of our Paths and Trails Network

Identifying gaps and areas for new and upgraded trails and supporting infrastructure within the network is one way of improved experiences across paths and trails within Yarra Ranges. Further to this, improved trail experiences can occur in the form of enhanced trail activation. Paths and trails can be activated through various ways that enhance their accessibility, appeal, and utility. Socially, activated paths become communal spaces that foster a sense of belonging and community interaction. They serve as meeting points, encouraging socializing, and creating a shared experience among residents. Additionally, activated trails can boost local economies by attracting tourism and supporting nearby businesses.

Yarra Ranges Council currently hosts several events utilising the paths and trails network including park runs, walking groups, trail runs and organized bike rides.

Community Consultation

How we engaged

Community consultation has been an integral part of developing this plan. Yarra Ranges Council has provided opportunities for the community to engage and be involved in assisting in the determination of priorities for paths and trails within the municipality across a number of different projects. Previous consultation that has been undertaken over a 5 year period has included;

- **1,234** Community Surveys and 11 Listening Posts - Recreation and Open Space Strategy (2019)
- **137** online survey responses, survey sent to a sample of schools and 4 on-street pop-up events - Paths and Trails Survey Phase 1 (2019)
- **469** online survey responses - Paths and Trails Survey Phase 2 (2019)
- **596** online survey responses, community pop-ups, external reference groups and Councillor sessions- Integrated Transport Strategy (2019)

- Intercept surveys were conducted at **8 locations** over 8 days - Trail Evaluation and Monitoring Pilot Project (2020)
- Trail Satisfaction Report 2022
 - Lillydale Lake Trail **36** surveys
 - Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail **91** surveys
 - Yarra Valley Trail **62** surveys

More recently, a community survey was undertaken through July - August 2024. This survey asked the community for suggestions on how Council can improve and enhance the Paths and Trails network throughout the Shire of Yarra Ranges, with a particular focus on identifying missing trails and connections.

Overall, 145 responses were received through this process. The most popular suggestions related to New Trails/Paths (38%), Trail Connections (26%), Trail Surfaces and Maintenance (17%) and Concerns with Trail Safety (17%).

Consultation summary

Feedback collected has been summarised into four key focus areas. The following are examples of comments received relating to the importance of usability, exercise, natural environment, and social connection when it relates to paths and trails.



Exercise

- Walking/cycling trails are the most frequently visited open spaces on a daily occurrence within the municipality.
- Walking to services/townships is too hard because the distances are too great and gradients too steep.



Social Connection

- Public art opportunities with nodes that promote gathering and meeting are valued along paths and trails.
- Paths and trail networks service social interactions by providing recreation activities, modes of transport and social spaces.



Usability

- Wayfinding is poor and more information/education along the trails is required.
- Community expectations include better connections, amenities, safety measures, and targeted local initiatives that have shown improvements.
- Challenges to accessing the trails include network gaps, terrain, and conflicting needs of different trail users.
- Information about paths and trails needs to be easier to find (i.e. promoted on Yarra Ranges Website).
- Concerns regarding the condition of pathways, and the need for regular cleaning and repairs to damaged sections.



Natural Environment

- A high portion of respondents believe the provision of trails is the most important aspect to their health and wellbeing providing them an important connection to the environment.
- Nature and scenery were the most frequently cited responses to the most enjoyable aspects of the trail/s.
- Vegetation management throughout the network should be prioritised to enhance the user experience.

What are the different Paths and Trails?

Yarra Ranges has an extensive network of 866 kilometres of paths and trails, including 661 kilometres of footpaths and 205 kilometres of recreational trails used for activities such as hiking, cycling, and horse-riding. The existing network connects various townships and neighbouring Councils, emphasizing the need for regional amenities. The vast majority of paths and trails in the Yarra Ranges can be grouped into the following three categories: *shared trails*, *walking trails* and *footpaths*.

Beyond these commonly used trail categories, this plan also considers trails that serve a unique purpose, such as Equestrian Trails, Mountain Bike Trails and Canoe Trails. These paths and trails cater to the preferences and needs of different user groups. The variety allows communities to enjoy diverse outdoor activities while promoting healthy lifestyles and connecting with nature.

 Shared Trails	 Walking Trails	 Footpaths
<p>Shared trails are designed for multiple user groups, accommodating activities such as walking, jogging, cycling, and horse riding. These trails are inclusive and intended for a diverse range of recreational purposes. Users are expected to share the trail space responsibly, following guidelines for safety and courtesy.</p>	<p>Walking trails are dedicated paths primarily designed for pedestrians in open space. These trails offer a peaceful and scenic environment, encouraging individuals to engage in walking for exercise, relaxation, or nature appreciation. Walking trails may vary in difficulty, providing options for people of different fitness levels.</p>	<p>Footpaths are typically urban or suburban pathways designed for pedestrians. They are commonly found in residential areas, road reserves, and urban landscapes. Footpaths are essential for promoting safe and convenient walking within communities, connecting residential areas to amenities like schools, parks, and public spaces.</p> <p><i>Council's Integrated Transport Strategy – "Connected" identified a key action to expand the footpath network using a footpath prioritisation framework.</i></p>



Mountain Bike Trails

Mountain bike trails are specifically designed for off-road cycling, typically in natural or wooded areas. These trails often include features such as challenging terrain, obstacles, and elevation changes to provide an exciting experience for mountain biking enthusiasts. Mountain bike trails are marked to indicate difficulty levels.

Mountain bike trails are categorised by a rider's skills level. The grading system allows you to choose a track that matches your skill level, fitness, and experience.

The mountain bike trail grading system considers trail width, trail surface and obstacles, trail gradient, and fitness and skill level required to ride the trail. Each of these factors contribute to the trail's overall grade.

Yarra Ranges Council provides mountain bike infrastructure at Lillydale Lake and as part of the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination. Council also supports trail connections to other facilities in Silvan and Lysterfield.

Equestrian Trails

A range of equestrian activities occurs at public and private facilities, riding grounds, showgrounds, and racecourses. This activity is generally self-sufficient due to the specialised nature of the requirements, however, some funding support is provided by Council primarily to pony clubs to support local-level facilities.

Trails used by equestrians range from purpose-built trails, such as Lillydale Warburton Rail Trail, designed to accommodate equestrians to more informal roadside trails and verges. The more informal mixed-use trails are used for both recreational purposes and to gain access to equestrian facilities. Many riders enjoy the natural environment and require safe riding routes. Examples of the more informal routes include the Wellington Road Trail and the local roadside trails in Macclesfield. Equestrian use of trails also brings the potential for economic benefit through commercial operators providing tourism experiences based around horse riding on the trails.



Canoe Trails

The ERTS found that paddle-sport activity in the eastern region is largely confined to the Yarra River. This includes use by youth-focused groups, such as Scouts, as well as dedicated paddle clubs. The 2010 *Participation in Exercise Recreation and Sport Survey* estimated that 0.8% of the Victoria population participated in some form of canoeing and/or kayaking activity within the preceding year, and Maritime Safety Victoria estimates that 352,100 Victorians, or approximately 5% of the population, own at least one paddle craft. The frequency of use is also low with 93% of ERTS survey respondents who indicated involvement in paddle sports, undertook the activity 'a few times per year' or less.

The *Canoeing Victoria Strategic Facilities Plan* recognises Lilydale Lake as a venue for introduction to canoeing and recreation and the Lower Homestead Road to Wittons Reserve section of the Yarra River, and the Yarra River around Warburton as priority wildwater canoeing locations. Popular one-way canoe trails between Yarra Glen and Mount Lofty include:

- Yarra Glen to Spadoni's Reserve offering 7 km of flat water through farming land with carparking and canoe launching ramps at each end.
- Spadoni's Reserve to Lower Homestead Road offering 15 km of flat water for more experienced canoeists with occasional rapids through Yering Gorge bushland with carparking and canoe launching ramps at each end.
- Lower Homestead Road to Wittons Reserve offering 5 km of popular wildwater canoeing with several grade 2 rapids.

Factors preventing more widespread use of the Yarra River include:

- A lack of easy river access/launch points with gaps of up to 15 km between public river access points between Wonga Park and Yarra Glen. These distances mean that large sections of the river are suited only to confident and experienced paddlers.
- A wide variety of hazards and obstacles including rapids, snags, and willow infestations. It is noted that snags are an important part of river ecology, and removal of all snags to aid easy and safe navigation would come at an environmental cost.
- Water quality concerns, particularly after rain.

The ERTS recommended actions aimed at strengthening the role of the Yarra River as a paddle trail be targeted to shorter lengths where limiting factors such as poor scenic value, lack of infrastructure, and user safety can be avoided or more easily addressed. The ERTS also found that there are opportunities to take advantage of any potential synergies between water and land-based trails as land-based trails, in accessing waterways, often share the same river corridors.

The Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo (*Yarra Strategic Plan 2022–32*) recognises the Birrarung (Yarra River) as a living and integrated natural entity, it gives effect to the community's 50-year vision for the river and supports collaborative management of the river and its lands. The Plan recommends identifying and mapping locations and options for improved on-water experience for kayak/canoe and boating access points at key locations (considering health and safety and being fit-for-purpose) and providing signage and information for on-water journeys. Boat launching sites identified in the Plan include:

- Spadonis Reserve
- Yarra Glen Recreation Reserve
- Everard Park
- Launching Place
- Warburton



Strategic Cycling Corridors

The *Strategic Cycling Corridor Network Overview 2020* identified a Strategic Cycling Corridors (SCC) network that supports the needs of commuter trips (to work or education) and other important transport trips such as to stations, shops or schools. The five key principles that underpin the SCC network are trails that are destination focused, safe, direct, connected and integrated. The SCC identified ‘specialised cycling’ classifications and mapped C1 and C2 routes. Within Yarra Ranges several C2 routes, which provide additional connections to state significant destinations, as well as connections to major activity centres and key railway stations, were identified including:

- Green Spine Trail (including an extension to Lilydale)
- Box Hill to Ringwood Rail Trail (including an extension to Lilydale)
- Carrum Warburton Trail
- Lilydale section of Lilydale Warburton Rail Trail
- Heathmont to Belgrave Rail Trail

As part of “Connected” a comprehensive framework tailored for the development of bicycle paths, particularly within the road reserve is being established. This framework is designed with a broader scope, enabling the identification and prioritisation of linkages outside of the scope of this project.

Gravel Riding

Gravel Riding has emerged as a popular activity amongst the cycling community. It is commonly undertaken on unsealed roads and trails, with participants often seeking experiences with natural settings. Existing unsealed trails and gravel roads within Yarra Ranges are popular options for Gravel Riding, further emphasising the need for sound trail construction methodology and regular trail upkeep to accommodate this emerging activity. As Gravel Riding comes in many forms and uses existing unsealed trails and roads, no grading system has been developed specifically for Gravel Riding in this plan.

Destination Trails

Yarra Ranges Council prides itself on being a trail destination, which is showcased through the Ridges and Rivers program. These trails are a celebration of all that makes the Yarra Ranges one of Victoria's most iconic and popular destinations.

Consisting of three signature outdoor attractions – the Yarra Valley Trail, ngurrak barrinj RidgeWalk and Warburton Mountain Bike Destination, – Ridges and Rivers takes locals and visitors alike from the forested ridges of the Dandenongs and Yarra Ranges, through to the lush pastures and alpine fresh rivers of the Yarra Valley.

Through an increased network of improved trails and walking tracks, Ridges and Rivers will help to connect local townships and provide convenient, easy access to walking, cycling and mountain biking opportunities, delivering significant economic and health and wellbeing benefits for Yarra Ranges communities.





Levels of Service

To ensure paths and trails in the Yarra Ranges adequately service trail users, this plan documents the aspired targets as level of service, based on the best practice suggested by the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA):

- Provision
- Development
- Operations

The provision level of service determines the amount and type of paths and trails in the Yarra Ranges and its townships, with municipal and township targets calculated per capita or by proximity. The development level of service outlines the quality and quantity of path assets, while the operation level of service sets standards for path maintenance. This approach enhances planning and management, providing a clear framework for paths and trails across the community. The following pages will outline the level of service for the different path and trails categories in the Yarra Ranges that Council will transition to over time.

Quality Standard	Description
Shared Trail	
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical combined pedestrian & cyclist peak usage over 200 per hour at any point. • 3.0m – 4.0m path width. • Signed as a shared use path as per Victorian Road Rules and designed to AustRoads 6A Guideline for a Regional Path • Flat to steep grades over short distances (1:20 gradient preferred). • Concrete is preferred with asphalt or high quality stabilized crushed rock also permitted. • High maintenance level. • <i>Furniture, drinking fountains and lights are examples of trail infrastructure that may be found on sections of a Level 1 Shared Trail.</i>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical combined pedestrian & cyclist peak usage less than 200 per hour at any point. • 2.0m – 3.0m path width. • Signed as a shared use path as per Victorian Road Rules and designed to AustRoads 6A Guideline for a Local Path • Flat to steep grades over short distances (1:20 gradient preferred). • Concrete is preferred with asphalt or high-quality stabilized crushed rock also permitted. • <i>Furniture and drinking fountains are examples of trail infrastructure that may be found on sections of a Level 2 Shared Trail.</i>
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-urban mixed-use trails in road verges or parks. Low traffic (>50 per hour). • 1.0m – 2.0m width. • Flat to steep grades over short distances (1:20 gradient preferred). • Toppings (or approved equivalent) is the preferred surface. • Vegetation on trails with equestrian use managed to provide adequate clearance for horses and riders • <i>It is unlikely that any trail infrastructure would be located along a Level 3 Shared Trail however in sections of high usage furniture or drink fountains may be appropriate.</i>
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earth surface mixed use trail. • 0.6m – 1.5m wide. Minimal vegetation management to keep corridor accessible. • Generally, no crushed rock surface and minimal drainage works. • Grades are dependent on topography, soil stability and steps to be avoided. <i>It is unlikely that any trail infrastructure would be located along a Level 4 Shared Trail.</i>

Quality Standard	Description
Walking Trail	
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking trails that are also suitable for children's cycling. • 1.0m - 1.5m width. • Flat to steep grades over short distances (1:20 gradient preferred). • Concrete preferred with asphalt or high-quality stabilized crushed rock also permitted. • Cyclists can select travel speeds freely, and bypass other users. • <i>Furniture, drinking fountains and lights are examples of trail infrastructure that may be found on sections of a Level 1 Walking Trail.</i>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.0 – 1.2m width. • Flat to steep grades over short distances (1:20 gradient preferred). • Toppings is the preferred surface. • Minimal use of steps. • <i>Furniture and drinking fountains are examples of trail infrastructure that may be found on sections of a Level 2 Walking Trail.</i>
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for visitors to explore and discover relatively undisturbed natural environments along defined and distinct tracks with minimal (if any) facilities. • 0.6m - 1.0m width. • Grades limited to environmental and maintenance considerations. • Toppings is the preferred surface. • Steps may be common. • <i>It is unlikely that any trail infrastructure would be located along a level 3 Walking trail.</i>
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for visitors to explore and discover relatively undisturbed natural environments along defined and distinct tracks with minimal (if any) facilities. • Grades are limited to environmental and maintenance considerations. • No surface treatment, unless required due to topography / drainage. • Steps may be appropriate and used to stop erosion. • <i>It is unlikely that any trail infrastructure would be located along a level 4 Walking trail.</i>



Footpaths

For this project, it's important to clearly distinguish between footpaths and trails.

A footpath refers to a pathway within a township that helps residents reach key community facilities. These are usually located within the road reserve and run alongside roads.

In contrast, a trail connects different townships or parts of a township and is mainly used for tourism or recreational purposes. Trails are often found in open spaces or reserves, although many of the connections identified in this study are also within road reserves.

To give some perspective, the cost of a single trail project can be similar to the total annual budget for the footpath program, which typically covers one to two years.

In 2020, Council adopted the *Integrated Transport Strategy 2020-2040 – “Connected”* which made the following recommendations:

- Expand the footpath network across Yarra Ranges, using a prioritisation framework,
- Capitalise on large infrastructure projects which may include installing safer crossing and wider footpaths,
- Continue the footpath building program – to provide a complete network of footpaths in the built-up areas of Yarra Ranges and connect into the trail network, using the Footpath Prioritisation Framework prepared as part of ‘Connected’.

To prioritise the many requests for new footpaths which are received every week, a Footpath Prioritisation Framework has been developed. The framework identifies projects which are of higher priority or overall benefit for the community. The consideration and priority of projects depends on the following factors:

Project ranking	Higher ranked projects are generally prioritised to be delivered earlier. Footpath prioritisation is based on a range of criteria including proximity to public transport, schools, shops and other key facilities.
Delivery efficiencies	If two high-priority projects are near each other they will be delivered together. This will bring delivery efficiencies and enhance connectivity in the local area.
Adjacent projects	Where other capital works projects or development projects are likely to induce pedestrian demand. The projects will be brought forward to be delivered in conjunction with those projects.
Funding availability	The availability of funding in any year may determine the projects that are recommended for delivery in any given financial year.
External funding opportunities	Projects that meet the relevant criteria for external grant fund funding may be elevated in priority for delivery.

The highest priority projects each year will be scoped and forwarded for consideration for Council's Capital Expenditure Program. Along with this program Council has an annual budget for the maintenance of both gravel and sealed footpaths.

Trail Infrastructure Level of Service

Trail Furniture & Structures

All trail furniture and structures should be installed in line with Yarra Ranges Council Landscape Design Guidelines for Council Managed Open Space. The location of all furniture must be assessed based on the specific site conditions. When allowing for seats within public areas, consideration should be made to provision at frequent intervals and in positions where space is provided on at least one side for wheelchairs and prams. Depending on the intended location and furniture provision of surrounding areas, the selection of seat type may require the inclusion of features such as seatbacks and armrests to meet the access needs of a wide range of users.

Public toilets are unlikely to be located along the trail network, however, they may be appropriate at starting points or at nodes on Level 1 trails. The length of the trail network means that the provision of shelter needs to be focused on points where it is most needed. These points logically include trailheads, key destinations and stopping points. Where shelters are provided, other facilities are also likely to be appropriate, including seating, drinking fountains and bins. Where bins are located, the number and types of bins provided will be determined in consultation with Council's Resource Recovery team.

Drinking fountains provide opportunities for trail users to rehydrate while using the trail. They are particularly popular with people undertaking exercise on trails during warmer weather. Walkers and joggers are more likely to use them than cyclists, who have more opportunity to carry their own water bottles. Drinking fountains are most efficiently provided when they are associated with parks, where water connections are likely already in place.

Bike racks should be provided along or near shared paths and trails. The location of bike racks should not impede pedestrian movement. Ideally, spread the location of bike rack 'hubs' along streetscapes or at multiple locations within reserves to give users a broader choice of access. If bike racks are to be included within open space or streetscapes, it is preferred that multiple racks are installed, as space permits. Where appropriate, bike repair and E-bike charging stations may also be installed.

There are a wide range of outdoor exercise equipment options available that may be appropriate supporting infrastructure to Level 1 trails. The determination of these trails, along with the location and type of equipment, should be considered in consultation with the *Active Recreation Plan (2023-2033)*.

Trail Signage

A sign provides information related to a path or trail and its use, including directional signs, advisory signs, descriptive signs, interpretive signs, regulatory signs, and warning signs.

The types of informational signs and their purposes are detailed below:

Advisory	A sign which specifies recommended equipment and safety precautions for using the trail.
Descriptive	A sign which specifies the characteristics of a track and is generally placed at the starting point of the trail.
Interpretive	A sign which conveys educational material about a natural, cultural or heritage feature of the trail.
Regulatory	A sign which conveys legal requirements and regulations associated with use of the trail including shared use path signage.
Warning	A sign which warns users of a particular danger or hazardous condition.
Trail Marker	A sign or object (arrow or MTB colour code/shape) which identifies the direction of a trail.

Below is an example of the standard signage guidelines to be applied to Yarra Ranges Council's paths and trail network.





Trail Lighting

Lighting of trails may be considered where a trail is a Shared Trail level 1 and 2, or a Walking Trail level 1, and also meets one or more of following conditions:

- The trail is already well-used outside daylight hours.
- The trail is within 1 km of, and a direct connection to, railway stations, major bus stops, or activity centres.
- The trail lighting is associated with other night-time sport or recreation use of a park.
- The trail has an identified safety risks for trips, falls, collisions, or potential personal security risks.
- The trail is not located amongst, or near to, natural bushland habitats.

The decision to install trail lighting needs to include a case-by-case analysis of whether lighting would encourage use of an area that is isolated or unsafe at night, or indirectly lead to an increase in antisocial behaviour in the area at night-time. The design of the trail lighting should also consider:

AS/NZS 1158.3.1 Road Lighting – Part 3.1: Pedestrian area (Category P) lighting. Choosing the right lighting standard for the location and use. This will impact on the pole height and spacing and the lux level of the light.

Using the lowest level lighting compatible with human safety and navigation.

Directing light downwards and only where it is needed; avoid light spill into nearby habitat and tree canopies.

Turning off, or dimming, lights outside of peak periods and using motion sensors to increase illumination when required.

Using Solar LED lights, connected to a desktop monitoring system, where lights are not easily connected to the electricity grid or where trenching of power supply would impact natural bushland habitats.

Appendix 1 highlights proposed levels of service for trail infrastructure on shared and walking trails.

Action Areas & Implementation

This plan identifies a broad range of opportunities to expand the path and trail network. All identified action areas will be further examined during implementation phases with the development of individual projects and programs. High-level cost estimates are allocated to each recommendation to help with long-term financial planning.

Recommendation	Actions	Priority	Est. Resource
Review and maintain existing paths and trail network Continue funding of operations, maintenance and renewal of existing paths and trails network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit and review conditions of the paths and trails network Implement consistent trail standards across the network as per levels of service Carry out required maintenance to improve safety and accessibility 	Ongoing	Internal resources
Improve safety and accessibility of existing shared use paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement proposed program of priority works Identify and provide supporting infrastructure 	Ongoing	Scope and budget to be determined through capital delivery programs
Provide missing links in paths and trails network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above Support delivery of Integrated Transport Strategy Recommendations relating to footpaths 	Ongoing	Scope and budget to be determined through capital delivery programs

Recommendation	Actions	Priority	Est. Resource
Provide local walking circuits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a 1000 m walking trail for each township and population cluster, preferably looped, level 1 and within 800 m of town centres. Identify and promote an accessible 20 minute short walking circuit for each township. Identify a 5km walking trail for each township, preferably looped and within 2km of town centres or well serviced by accessible car park. Signpost and upgrade the selected paths and promote walking trails on the website, including interactive map and printable maps. 	Medium	<p>Internal resources to identify loops and develop promotional material through websites/mappings</p> <p>Any upgrades/ maintenance required for establishment of loops to be determined through operational/capital works programming</p>

Recommendation	Actions	Priority	Est. Resource
Activating existing trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equip existing trails with proper signage and safety measures. Organize community events, guided walks, or outdoor fitness classes along the paths in line with the Yarra Ranges Active Recreation Plan (2023-2033). Integrate public art installations, murals, or landscaping along the level 1 shared trails to create visually appealing surroundings (as demonstrated in projects such as ngurrak barring/Ridge Walk). Utilize technology such as mobile apps or QR codes to provide information about the trails, share stories, or offer virtual tours. Develop marketing campaigns to raise awareness about the trails and their benefits. Incorporate educational components along the paths to raise awareness about local flora, fauna, and ecosystems. Interpretive signs, educational displays, or guided nature walks can make the trails both recreational and educational. Continue to grow the number of events utilising Yarra Ranges paths and trail networks. 	Ongoing	<p>Internal resourcing</p> <p>Funded through recreation activation programming and other grants/funding opportunities</p>

Recommendation	Actions	Priority	Est. Resource
Destination Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue delivery and advocacy for Council's Ridges and Rivers projects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Yarra Valley Trail → ngurrak barring/Ridge Walk → Warburton Mountain Bike Destination → Investigate opportunities for future expansion of key destination paths and trails projects. 	Short - Medium	Projects funded through Ridges and Rivers program
Community led trail projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to investigate community initiated trail proposals. Advocate for community proposals that align with council objectives. These projects include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Birrarung Valley Walk, → Melbourne to Marysville, → Olinda Creek Extension, → Warburton to Upper Yarra, → Warburton to Walhalla. 	Ongoing	Internal Resources
Agency Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate Investigate opportunities for paths and trails across multi land tenures. Support land use agreements as required. 	Ongoing	Internal Resources

Project Prioritisation

There are twelve evaluation criteria assessed against each priority trail to determine the total priority outcome. These are:

Improve access to regional open space & community facilities	Improve access to natural landscapes	Enables active trips long enough to generate user health benefits
Improves access to train station or bus stops	Improves network connectivity	Connecting town centres/ activity centres/ industrial precincts
Improves access to primary/ secondary/ tertiary education	Improves access to cultural heritage	Provides service to disadvantaged residents
Inclusive of all abilities	Size of population catchment within 1km of path	Generates visitors from outside the municipality

The tables below outline the proposed program of works for upgrades to existing paths and trails, crossing works as well as a list for new paths and trails, or missing links.

Upgrades to Existing Trails

Trail	Suburb	Existing LOS	Proposed LOS
Belgrave Rail Trail	Belgrave	Shared Trail 2	Shared Trail 1
Lovers Lane	Belgrave	Walking Trail 2	Walking Trail 1
Switchback Road Trail	Chirnside	Shared Trail 3	Shared Trail 2
Badger Creek Road Trail	Healesville	Shared Trail 3	Shared Trail 2
Lilydale Warburton Trail (Lilydale Recreation Reserve)	Lilydale	Shared Trail 2	Shared Trail 1
Lilydale Warburton Trail (Mt Lilydale College)	Lilydale	Shared Trail 2	Shared Trail 1
Old Gippsland Road	Lilydale	Shared Trail 3 & 4	Shared Trail 3
David Hill Road Trail	Monbulk	Shared Trail 3	Shared Trail 2
Cambridge Road Trail	Mooroolbark	Shared Trail 2	Shared Trail 2
Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail	Mount Evelyn	Shared Trail 3	Shared Trail 2

Upgrades to Existing and Construction of New Road Crossings

Lilydale Warburton Trail	Suburb	Recommendation
Anderson Street	Lilydale	New zebra crossing
Old Gippsland Road	Lilydale	Island/raised pavement
Monbulk Road	Mount Evelyn	Zebra crossing upgrade
Warburton Highway	Wandin North	New signalised pedestrian-operated signal (POS) crossing
Sebire Avenue	Wandin North	Raised pavement
Wellington Road	Wandin North	Raised pavement
Warburton Highway	Yarra Junction	Signalised POS crossing
Corduroy Road	Yarra Junction	Raised pavement
Park Road	Yarra Junction	Raised pavement
Settlement Road	Yarra Junction	TBC
Station Road	Warburton	Realigned crossing
Warburton Highway	Warburton	New signalised POS crossing
Little Yarra Trail Connection	Suburb	Recommendation
Warburton Highway	Yarra Junction	New signalised POS crossing
Yarra Valley Trail Connection	Suburb	Recommendation
Bell Street	Yarra Glen	Refuge & line marking
Symonds Street	Yarra Glen	Upgraded refuge & line marking
Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail	Suburb	Recommendation
York Road	Mount Evelyn	Signalised POS crossing
Olinda Creek Trail	Suburb	Recommendation
Swansea Road	Lilydale/Mt Evelyn	Signalised POS crossing

Morrison Reserve Connection	Suburb	Recommendation
Hereford Road	Mount Evelyn	TBC
Brushy Creek Trail	Suburb	Recommendation
Maroondah Highway	Chirnside Park	At grade crossing
Pembroke Road	Mooroolbark	Signalised POS crossing
Cambridge Road	Mooroolbark	Refuge & line marking
Cambridge Road Trail	Suburb	Recommendation
Lawson Road	Mooroolbark	Raised pavement
Cambridge Road (Pembroke Road)	Mooroolbark	Refuge & line marking
Durham Road	Kilsyth	Realigned crossing & refuge
ngurrak barring / RidgeWalk Connection	Suburb	Recommendation
Mt Dandenong Tourist Road (Kalorama Oval)	Kalorama	Refuge & line marking
Kallista Roundabout	Kallista	Signalised POS crossing
Mt Dandenong Tourist Road	Mt Dandenong	Refuge & line marking
Mt Dandenong Tourist Road (Olinda Township)	Olinda	Signalised POS crossing
Mountain Highway (Sassafras Township)	Sassafras	Signalised POS crossing
Belgrave Rail Trail	Suburb	Recommendation
McNicol Road	Tecoma	Raised pavement & trail realignment
Ferny Creek Trail (Birdsland connection)	Suburb	Recommendation
Glenfern Road	Upwey	Pedestrian Refuge

New Trails/Missing Links

Trail Name	Area
Ringwood to Lilydale Rail Trail	Urban
Carrum Warburton Trail (Melba Park section)	Urban
Little Yarra River Trail (Stage 1B)	Upper Yarra
Brushy Creek Trail (missing sections)	Urban
Olinda Creek Trail (Swansea Road section)	Urban
Little Yarra River Trail (Pipe Track section)	Upper Yarra
Mooroolbark to Doongalla Trail	Urban
Lincoln to Manchester SUP (bike lane connection)	Urban
Liverpool Road Trail	Urban
Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (East Warburton extension)	Upper Yarra
Mount Evelyn to Monbulk Trail	Hills
Don Road Trail (Stage 2)	Yarra Valley
Little Yarra River Trail (Little Yarra River Crossing)	Upper Yarra
Healesville Station / Lilydale Road Shared Use Path	Yarra Valley
Green Spine Trail (Lilydale extension)	Urban
Canterbury Road Trail	Urban
Nelson Road (missing section)	Urban
Puffing Billy Trail (Belgrave to Menzies Creek)	Hills
Black Springs Road Trail	Urban
Carrum Warburton Trail (Kipling Avenue section)	Urban
O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Don Road connection)	Upper Yarra
Swansea Road Trail (Leith Rd extension)	Urban
Glasgow Road Trail	Urban

Trail Name	Area
Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (Doon Road connection)	Upper Yarra
Little Yarra River Trail (Warburton Highway section)	Upper Yarra
Big Pats Creek Trail (Walk into History Trail connection)	Upper Yarra
O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Dalry Road connection)	Upper Yarra
O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Dee Road connection)	Upper Yarra
O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Yuonga Road connection)	Upper Yarra
York Road Shared Use Path (extension)	Urban
Birmingham Road Trail	Urban
Ferny Creek Trail (Birdsland connection)	Hills
Maroondah Reservoir Circuit	Yarra Valley
Launching Place Yarra River Trail	Upper Yarra
Steels Creek Trail (Old Kinglake Road extension)	Yarra Valley
Bailey Road Trail	Urban
Olinda Creek Trail (Quinn Reserve connection)	Urban
Chirnside to Wonga Park Trail	Urban
Kilsyth Pipe Track Trail	Urban
Montrose Pipe Track Trail	Urban
Maroondah Aqueduct Trail (Sugarloaf section)	Yarra Valley
Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail (Swansea Road section)	Urban
Old Gippsland Road Trail (extension)	Urban
Old Gippsland Road Trail (Jurat Road connection)	Urban
Water Race Trail (York Road extension)	Urban

Investment

The estimated costs for the implementation programs include:

- Upgrades \$10M
- Crossings \$5M
- New/Missing links Approximately \$39.9M

In addition to the initial capital cost to build trails, operational budget needs to be allocated to maintain new and increased levels of service within our paths and trail network. As part of capital works planning, projects should have an endorsed operational plan and budget before commencement.

Funding

Not only is sourcing funding for the construction of trails crucial, but ongoing funding for maintenance and renewal of the trail network is equally vital.

It is typically easier to seek funding for capital development of a trail than it is for ongoing operational funds.

Potential avenues to seek development funding for trails include:

- federal, state and local government
- regulatory bodies
- community organisations / partners
- grant funding
- commercial sponsorship
- commercial ventures
- philanthropic donations

Given the close links that trails have with the health, tourism and natural environment, funding from federal and state governments is becoming increasingly common.

Conclusion

Yarra Ranges boasts many high-quality paths and trails within the municipality. The projects identified within this plan will significantly enhance connection and contribute to community health and wellbeing outcomes.

This Plan identifies a broad range of opportunities to improve and expand our paths and trails network. Investing in the priority projects identified will provide a connected and accessible trail network, showcase and protect the natural environment, and will increase visitation to the region through the delivery of key destination projects, such as projects linked to the Ridges and Rivers initiative.



Appendix 1

Trail Infrastructure Levels of Service

Shared and Walking Trails	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Bike Racks	High quality, provided where required to meet demand at nodes.	Standard quality, provided where required to meet demand at nodes.	X	X
Car Parking Onsite	Where appropriate at access points. Kept to a minimum. Unsealed or sealed.	Where appropriate at access points. Kept to a minimum. Unsealed.	X	X
Drinking Fountains	Where appropriate. High quality, functional design, located near shelters and meeting/ access points.	Where appropriate. Standard quality, functional design, located near shelters and meeting/access points.	X	X
Entrance Sign	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.	X	X
Exercise Equipment	Permitted where demand supports installation.	Permitted where demand supports installation.	X	X
Fencing and Barriers	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.
Footbridges	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.
Gardens	Where appropriate at nodes.	X	X	X
Interpretive / Educational Signs	High quality sign/s where appropriate and in accordance with Yarra Ranges signage guidelines.	Standard quality sign/s where appropriate and in accordance with Yarra Ranges signage guidelines.	X	X

Shared and Walking Trails	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Lighting	Where appropriate, of high quality, functional in design. Located at nodes and access/ meeting points and where trails connect directly to public transport.	Where appropriate, of standard quality, functional in design. Located at nodes and access/ meeting points and where trails connect directly to public transport.	X	X
Public Use Mains Power	If supporting other infrastructure such as E-bike charging stations.	X	X	X
Paths	Sealed in urban areas, un-sealed in rural or natural settings.	Sealed in urban areas, un-sealed in rural or natural settings.	Sealed in urban areas, un-sealed in rural or natural settings.	Sealed in urban areas, un-sealed in rural or natural settings.
Public Art	Permitted where project intent supports installation (i.e. ngurrak barring RidgeWalk).	(May be considered in specific circumstances)	(May be considered in specific circumstances)	X
Public Toilets	Where appropriate at trail nodes.	X	X	X
Rubbish bins	Pedestal or Metal Surround bins (dependent on location/ township) where appropriate/ required to meet demand at nodes/ access points. Must be in consultation with Resource Recovery Team.	X	X	X

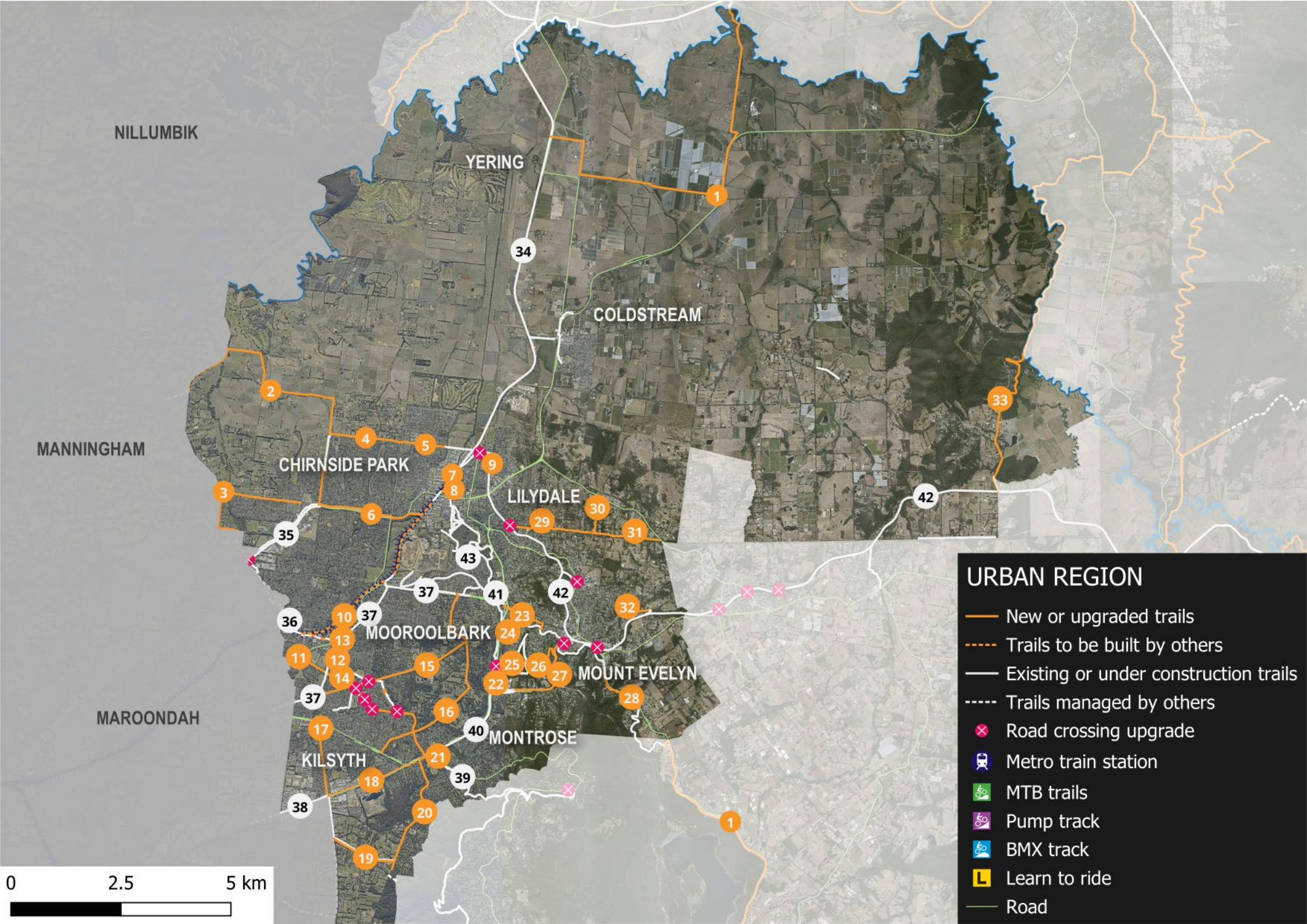
Shared and Walking Trails	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Seats	2 high quality seats per lineal kilometre and where associated with shelters, located at each node.	1 standard quality seats per lineal kilometre and where associated with shelters, located at each node.	1 standard quality seats per lineal kilometre and where associated with shelters, located at each node.	1 standard quality seats per lineal kilometre and where associated with shelters, located at each node.
Shelters	High quality functional shelter for 8 people, located at each node.	X	X	X
Picnic Setting	1 high quality picnic setting located at each node.	1 standard quality picnic setting located at each node.	X	X
Trees	Minimum of 30% of site covered by tree canopy.	Minimum of 30% of site covered by tree canopy.	Minimum of 30% of site covered by tree canopy.	Minimum of 30% of site covered by tree canopy.
Viewing Platforms	Permitted where appropriate. High quality materials.	Permitted where appropriate. Standard quality materials.	X	X
Water Points	At nodes.	X	X	X
Wayfinding Signage	Where appropriate. High quality.	Where appropriate. Standard quality.	Minor as required.	Minor as required.

The following maps highlight the shared trail network across the Yarra Ranges including existing trails and the proposed new/upgrades.



Hills

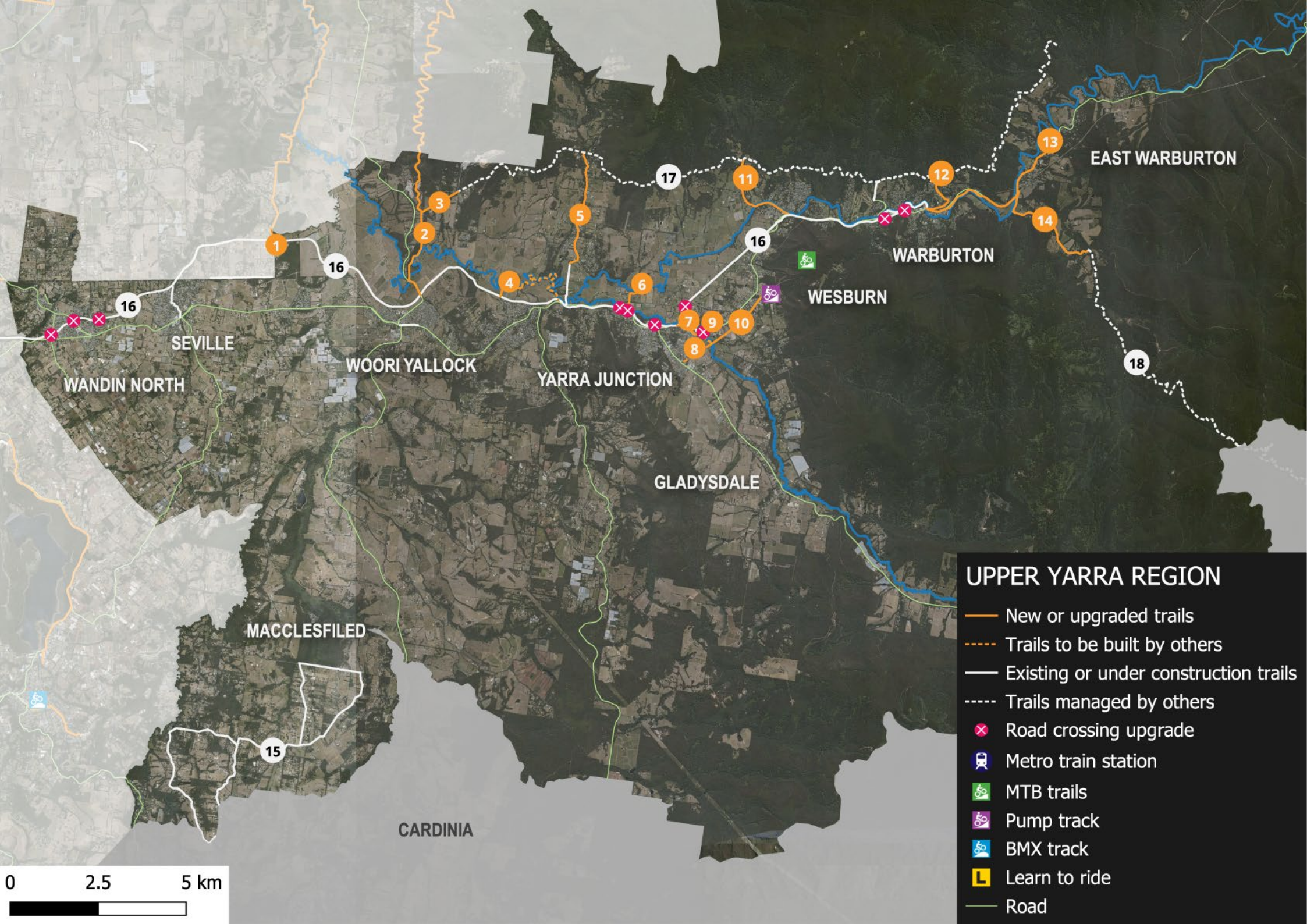
Map Ref	Name	Status
1	Mount Evelyn to Monbulk Trail	New
2	David Hill Road Trail	Upgrade
3	Belgrave Rail Trail	Upgrade
4	Ferny Creek Trail (Birdsland connection)	New
5	Lover's Lane	Upgrade
6	Puffing Billy Trail (Belgrave to Menzies Creek)	New
7	ngurrak barring RidgeWalk	Existing
8	Birdsland Reserve	Existing
9	Dargon Track	Existing (managed by others)
10	Logan Park Track	Existing (managed by others)
11	Wellington Road Horse Trail	Existing
12	Eastern Dandenong Ranges Trail	Existing
13	Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail	Existing



Urban

Map Ref	Name	Status
1	Yarra Valley Trail Southern Loop	New
2	Chirnside to Wonga Park Trail	New
3	Black Springs Road Trail	New
4	Switchback Road Trail	Upgrade
5	Nelson Road Trail (missing section)	New
6	Green Spine Trail (Lilydale extension)	New
7	Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (Lilydale Recreation Reserve)	Upgrade
8	Carrum Warburton Trail (Melba Park section)	New
9	Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (Mount Lilydale Mercy College)	Upgrade
10	Ringwood Lilydale Rail Trail	New (to be built by others)
11	Lincoln to Manchester SUP (bike lane connection)	New
12	Brushy Creek Trail (missing sections)	New
13	Carrum Warburton Trail (Kipling Avenue section)	New
14	Cambridge Road Trail	Upgrade
15	Kilysth Pipe Track Trail	New
16	Montrose Pipe Track Trail	New
17	Liverpool Road Trail	New
18	Canterbury Road Trail	New (to be built by others)
19	Glasgow Road Trail	New
20	Mooroolbark to Doongalla Trail	New
21	Swansea Road Trail (Leith Rd extension)	New
22	Olinda Creek Trail (Swansea Road section)	New (to be built by others)

Map Ref	Name	Status
23	Birmingham Road Trail	New
24	Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail (Swansea Road section)	Upgrade
25	Olinda Creek Trail (Quinn Reserve connection)	New
26	Water Race Trail (York Road extension)	New
27	York Road Shared Use Path (extension)	New
28	Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail	Upgrade
29	Old Gippsland Road Trail (extension)	New
30	Jurat Road connection	New
31	Old Gippsland Road Trail	Upgrade
32	Bailey Road Trail	New
33	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 3A	New
34	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 1	Existing
35	Green Spine Shared Path	Existing
36	Brushy Creek Trail	Existing
37	Carrum Warburton Trail	Existing
38	Canterbury Road Trail	Existing
39	ngurrak barring RidgeWalk	Under Construction
40	Swansea Road Trail	Existing
41	Olinda Creek Trail	Existing
42	Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail	Existing
43	Lillydale Lake Circuit	Existing



UPPER YARRA REGION

- New or upgraded trails
- - - Trails to be built by others
- Existing or under construction trails
- - - Trails managed by others
- ✕ Road crossing upgrade
- 🚆 Metro train station
- 🚲 MTB trails
- 🚲 Pump track
- 🚲 BMX track
- 🚲 Learn to ride
- Road

Upper Yarra

Map Ref	Name	Status
1	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 3A	New
2	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 3B	New
3	O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Dalry Road connection)	New
4	Launching Place Yarra River Trail	New
5	O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Don Road connection)	New
6	Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (Doon Road connection)	New
7	Little Yarra River Trail (Warburton Highway section)	New
8	Little Yarra River Trail (Stage 1B)	New (to be built by others)
9	Little Yarra River Trail (Little Yarra River crossing)	New (to be built by others)
10	Little Yarra River Trail (Pipe Track section)	New
11	O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Dee Road connection)	New
12	O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Yuonga Road connection)	New
13	Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (East Warburton extension)	New
14	Big Pats Creek Trail (Walk into History Trail connection)	New
15	Macclesfield Equestrian Trail	Existing
16	Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail	Existing
17	O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail	Existing (managed by others)
18	Walk Into History	Existing (managed by others)

NILLUMBIK

MURRINDINDI

STEELS CREEK

CHUM CREEK

TARRAWARRA

YARRA GLEN

HEALESVILLE

BADGER CREEK

YARRA VALLEY REGION

- New or upgraded trails
- - - Trails to be built by others
- Existing or under construction trails
- - - Trails managed by others
- ✕ Road crossing upgrade
- 🚆 Metro train station
- 🚴 MTB Trails
- 🚴 Pump Track
- 🚴 BMX Track
- 🏠 Learn to ride
- Road

0 2.5 5 km

Yarra Valley

Map Ref	Name	Status
1	Steels Creek Trail (Old Kinglake Road extension)	New
2	Maroondah Aqueduct Trail (Sugarloaf section)	New
3	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 2B	New
4	Healesville Station / Lilydale Road Shared Use Path	New
5	Maroondah Reservoir Circuit	New
6	Badger Creek Road Trail	Upgrade
7	Don Road Trail Stage 2	New
8	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 3A	New
9	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 3B	New
10	Mount Jerusalem Track	Existing (managed by others)
11	Steels Creek Trail	Existing
12	Yarra Valley Trail Northern Loop	Under construction
13	Breakneck	Existing
14	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 1	Under construction
15	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 2A	Under construction
16	Chum Creek Trail	Existing
17	Maroondah Reservoir Park	Existing (managed by others)
18	Don Road Trail	Existing

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