

Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail

23 December 2011

Project Overview

The Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail (GRHCRT) will be a shared pathway for cyclist, walkers and horses. The GRHCRT is to follow the disused rail line for 134km from Tallarook through Yea to Mansfield with a link between Cathkin and Alexandra. Mansfield, Mitchell and Murrindindi Shire Councils have received \$13m funding from the Federal Government and \$1m funding from the State Government to complete trail construction by December 2011.

Rail Trail Opening

Close but not quite yet is how you would describe the opening of GRHCRT. With maximum effort and good intentions the official opening of the GRHCRT will not happen until March 2012. But it will be well worth the wait.

Mitchell Shire Council has approved the opening of the trail from Tallarook to Trawool Resort. This 11 kilometre section crosses Bridge 0 at Tallarook then meanders through picturesque countryside following the heritage-classified Goulburn River and passes through the Trawool Valley, classified by the National Trust for its scenic beauty.

Murrindindi Shire Council has approved the opening to the Molesworth to Yea and Yea to Homewood sections.

Last week I was fortunate enough to have a preview of what is to come. I accompanied a group that did a test bike ride from Molesworth to Yea, approximately 17 kilometres. Not having ridden on the granitic sand surface prior to this I was very impressed, there are still a couple of short rough sections that will be graded again however this did not take away from the lovely ride we had. Leaving Molesworth this section is a continuous climb, but not steep, to Cheviot Tunnel.

From Molesworth to Yea the trail is surrounded by farming land well away from the highways and quite a hidden treasure. The group I was with hadn't been through Cheviot Tunnel before and there was quite a lot of whooping and screams of delight as they cycled from end to end and for some back again.

The boys roused the girls by insisting that Aussie drop bears live in the tunnel - it was great to watch their interaction whilst out in the country side exercising - on good advice from our contract ecologist there hasn't been any formal sightings of drop bears in Murrindindi Shire!



One big critter who is giving us a hard time in Murrindindi is the resident wombats - we love them but the buggers insist on testing their digging skills out on the newly laid granitic sand. Hopefully we'll convince them to leave the trail to walkers, cyclists and horses!

After the tunnel it is easy riding for the next 9 kilometres back into Yea. It is worthwhile stopping at the Yea River to look for platypuses in the water. This section will be very popular, the short ride out to Cheviot from Yea is an easy ride for families and fairly flat for those of us who don't like hills.



The following outlines the four sections that are open to the public from **FRIDAY 23 DECEMBER 2011**.

First-time visitors to the region should be aware that, in the main, locations are sign posted but local knowledge will be required to find where some of the locations are situated. Works are still continuing in all other sections and are closed to the public.

Enjoy exploring the Trail but please remember you are entering sections where the final "polish" is yet to take place. Think safety first and remember that all road rules apply in any situation.

Under no circumstances should you enter private property.

Mansfield, Yea, Seymour and Alexandra Visitor Information Centres can of course assist with local knowledge and conditions as could the many businesses en-route.

Trail Section	Status	Important Information	Approx Distance
Mansfield to Bonnie Doon (vice versa)	Open		22kms
Bonnie Doon to Merton	Closed	Under construction	
Merton to Yarck	Closed	Under construction	
Yarck to Cathkin	Closed	Under construction	



MANSFIELD SHIRE



Cathkin to Alexandra	Closed	Under construction	
Cathkin to Molesworth	Closed	Under Construction	
Molesworth to Yea (vice versa)	Open	Some works to complete Caution where pathway surface rough	17kms
Yea to Homewood (vice versa)	Open	Some works to complete Caution where pathway surface rough	8kms
Homewood Road to Kerrisdale	Closed	Under construction	
Kerrisdale to Trawool Resort	Closed	Under construction	
Trawool Resort to Tallarook (vice versa)	Open	Some works to complete Caution where pathway surface rough	11km

Did you know?

Several minor rail accidents occurred at Suicide Bend (near Sheepwash Lagoon) as trains descended from Cheviot Tunnel at speed to Molesworth. Molesworth Station opened 10 June 1890 and closed 8 November 1978.

www.victorianrailtrails.com.au will link you to Mitchell, Murrindindi or Mansfield Shire websites which can direct you to tourist information for the preferred area.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter onto any other interested parties
Look forward to speaking to you in a couple of weeks.

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Merry Christmas and have a safe and happy 2013 from all of us on the Project Team.