



Crossing Borders Tracks and Trails: Volume 2 Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail



Final Report

July 2013



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1. Introduction

The Crossing Borders Tracks and Trails project is a joint initiative of Hepburn Shire Council, Ballarat City Council, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Central Goldfields Shire Council, Department of Planning and Community Development and Department of Transport.

Tracks and trails are recognized as important community assets that offer a broad range of physical activity participation opportunities, with a strong focus on recreational walking, bushwalking, running, cycling and mountain bike riding.

The Crossing Borders Tracks and Trails project provides an integrated and coordinate approach to major trail master planning and maximise opportunities for social, recreational and tourism benefits from each of the selected projects.

There are four individual projects that are considered in the Crossing Borders Tracks and Trails project, these are:

- The *Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail* which aims to provide an on-road cycling connection utilising back-country roads between Maryborough to Ballarat (via Creswick and other small towns);
- The Daylesford to Macedon Ranges Rail Trail, linking Daylesford to Woodend utilising a combination of rail corridor and (where required) alternative routes;
- The Black Hill Mountain Bike (MTB) Park (e.g. municipal MTB Park); and
- Creswick Trails Initiative which includes a combination of mountain bike trails, shared trails and walking paths throughout the Creswick forest.

The aim of the project is to establish a strategic action plan for each of the four identified projects in order to guide further implementation of each, including identification of key priorities, indicative costs, benefits and ongoing management options.

This report relates to the *Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail*.

1.1 Report Format

The project reports have been presented in the following volumes:

- Volume 1: Summary Report:
 - Description: Overall synopsis of key findings and summary action plan for each of the four selected projects.
- Volume 2: Selected Project Report (x4):
 - Description: Stand alone overview of key findings and directions for each individual project.
- Volume 3: Background Reference Material:
 - Description: Selected support material and reference documents, including design guidelines.

2. Background

The Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail is a proposed on-road cycling route from Maryborough to Ballarat via Creswick, Talbot and Clunes. It is a linear, point-to-point ride rather than a loop, with no recommended direction of travel (that is, it is dual direction).

Key stakeholders for the project include Central Goldfields Shire Council (CGSC), Hepburn Shire Council (HSC) and the City of Ballarat (CoB), as the trail passes through these three local government areas and the management of the trail will ultimately fall to these three organisations. Other stakeholders include:

- Vic Roads – some of the roads proposed for use along the route are managed by Vic Roads.
- Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) – where the route passes through State Forest, it does so on roads managed by DSE.
- Local cyclists and the wider public.

The concept of developing the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail was previously examined in the *Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Trails Strategy* released in August 2010. The table below highlights the findings of this report in relation to the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail (NB: referred to as the Cobb & Co Trail in the *Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Trails Strategy*):

Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail: Findings from the <i>Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Trails Strategy (2010)</i>	
LGA Regions	Central Goldfields Shire, Hepburn Shire (outside study area) and City of Ballarat (outside study area)
Closest Towns	Maryborough, Talbot, Clunes, Ballarat
Status of Trail	Very early planning stages
User Groups	Cyclists (road bikes and hybrid bikes)
Length	86km
Loops	Linear trail with side spurs
Surface	Dirt, gravel and asphalt roads
Potential for Off-Road	The trail is proposed as an on-road trail
Links to Existing Trail Networks	Would link in with existing township networks in Maryborough, Talbot, Clunes and Ballarat – with an onward connection to the Skipton Rail Trail or the Goldfields Track to Bendigo
Grading / Standard	Grading will vary. Some sections will be quite flat, whereas others may be quite hilly.
Key Stakeholders	Central Goldfields Shire Council
Existing Plans	No formalised plans exist for the establishment of the trail
Cultural and Environmental Features	Maryborough Railway station, antique shops, historic buildings, Paddy's Ranges State Park, historic townships of Talbot and Clunes, Stoney Creek Oils, Beckworth Court, Mt Beckworth, Coghills Creek, Miner's Rest, Lake Wendouree, farm land, bush
Supporting Infrastructure	Supporting infrastructure such as toilets, rest stops, bins, etc are found

Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail: Findings from the <i>Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Trails Strategy (2010)</i>	
	in Maryborough, Talbot, Clunes and Ballarat
Public Transport Linkages	A train link will be provided to Maryborough in the near future, and may incorporate a stop at Talbot and Clunes.
Opportunity for Business Development	There is potential for the establishment of bicycle hire, attached to an existing business. Potentially farms along the way could develop produce for sale or establish a small scale business such as a Devonshire Tea venue. There may also be potential for an existing transport operator, such as a local bus company, a courier service or a taxi operator, to increase their existing service by offering transfers of passengers and luggage between towns.
Accommodation Options	A range of accommodation options are available in Maryborough, Talbot, Clunes and Ballarat.
Potential Number of Users	4,000 annually. May vary according to tourism growth, marketing, trail standards, etc.
Management	Central Goldfields Shire, Hepburn Shire (outside study area) and City of Ballarat (outside study area), DSE, Parks Victoria and VicRoads will be responsible for managing this trail. It is recommended that a suitable management committee is formed, along with a joint use agreement outlining management, operational and maintenance roles of all parties
Maintenance	As this trail will use existing secondary roads and gravel roads / tracks, Councils will primarily be responsible for maintaining the surface and signage. Any tracks through state parks will be maintained by DSE or Parks Victoria. It is recommended that a maintenance plan is developed to identify appropriate levels of maintenance and responsibilities.
Economic Benefits	\$120,000-\$150,000 annually (based on \$10-\$25 day visitor, \$50 per overnight and \$2-\$5 local user per day). This excludes the Ballarat section. Potentially 1.2-1.5 full time jobs created.
Environmental Benefits	Trail will encourage non-motorised forms of transport and potentially greater use of public transport, thereby saving energy and protecting air quality. Trail may encourage greater protection of natural environment through establishment of working bees to remove weeds
Interpretive Opportunities	Cobb and Co, gold history, local flora and fauna, indigenous history, early settler history.
Social and Community Benefits	Local residents will have access to new trails in their towns, which will not only bring in economic benefits from other trail users, but also provide an additional recreation facility for local residents. Community strengthening possible through formation of management committees and working bees.
Indicative Costing	\$350,000 for signage.
Opportunities & Challenges	As this is proposed as an on-road trail, it does not meet the criteria of a regionally significant trail. However, it is likely to become a popular on-

Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail: Findings from the <i>Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Trails Strategy (2010)</i>	
	<p>road municipal level trail for touring cyclists, with some great scenery.</p> <p>The return of passenger rail between Maryborough and Ballarat will allow trail users to potentially travel one section by rail and the other by road. If passenger rail is also able to be returned to Talbot and Clunes, the potential use of this trail, using a combination of foot / bicycle and train, will further increase.</p> <p>It may be possible to develop sections of this trail as an off-road experience in the future if funds are available and if potential demand exists.</p>
Verdict	This trail will be of municipal significance.

3. Name of the Route

The term *Cobb and Co Cycle Trail* was the name originally put forward for this project on the loose basis that the route might follow the same routes travelled historically by Cobb and Co stagecoaches. The historical accuracy of this claim is unclear, and lies beyond the scope of this project to determine, but most people tend to agree that Cobb and Co stagecoaches travelled all over the State and had many varied routes depending on the cargo being delivered.

Another complicating factor is that there are already a number of other *Cobb and Co Trails* in existence elsewhere in Australia, including the Bathurst to Bourke Cobb & Co Heritage Trail and Cobb & Co Tourist Drive in Queensland. In other words, the use of the term *Cobb and Co* is relatively common and already exists in the marketplace. Therefore branding this trail *Cobb and Co* will add to competition in the market and may contribute to market confusion or dilution.

In light of the above information, and given that the accuracy of the historical link to the original Cobb and Co route from Maryborough to Ballarat is questionable, it was recommended that an alternative name for the proposed trail be considered.

Any new name should be in keeping with the names of other cycle touring routes in the Cycle Central Goldfields brochure that generally incorporate the town, forest or region, with some kind of historical reference, and presumably were developed with consideration for the history of the areas through which they pass. Existing trail names include:

- Dunolly/Havelock Gold Rush Trail.
- Timor Grand Duke Trail.
- Carisbrook Settlers Trail.
- Majorca Kong Meng Trail.
- Talbot Heritage Trail.
- Paddy's Ranges Trail.

- Craigie Forest Trail.
- Avoca Mountain View Trail.

The CGSC Bicycle Reference Group met to consider a preferred name and recommended the trail be identified and promoted as the *Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail*. Therefore this is the name adopted for use in this report.

4. Vision and Aspirations

The vision for the project, as articulated by the CGSC Bicycle Reference Group, is for the establishment of a cycle touring route connecting the major township of Maryborough and Ballarat via a collection of smaller townships, settlements and points of interest along the route. The vision is for a country cycle on quiet, unsealed roads that take in some of the most attractive towns in the Goldfields region including Talbot, Clunes and Creswick. The route progresses through scenic, relatively flat (gentle gradient) country with views of rolling hills and farmland.

Key aspirations for the route include:

- Promote / facilitate tourism and economic benefits for smaller townships.
- Promote / encourage recreational use of the trail by residents and visitors.
- Establish safe cycling connections (i.e. use of relatively quiet back-country roads) between townships to encourage active transport.
- Encourage physical activity participation and health outcomes for residents.
- Raise awareness of the natural beauty and attractions within the region.
- Build on the CGSC existing cycling initiatives (e.g. Cycle Central Goldfields Brochure) to further establish the Shire as a cycle friendly tourism destination.

The route is proposed as a 3-4 hour trip (one way) in addition to breaks between Maryborough and Creswick. It could be conducted as a return trip (same roads) or involve a public transport option for the return trip (e.g. train). It suits day trips ex-Maryborough, or an overnight stay ex-Creswick. There are good train connections to Ballarat and Melbourne for a multi-night experience of the route.

The route is suitable for hybrid bikes or mountain bikes. It is likely to appeal to a cycling market interested in a leisurely cycle rather than a particularly challenging ride, and those interested in exploring a range of nature-based and cultural attractions.

It could appeal to individuals, a couple, or group of independent riders, or a recreational cycling club. It could also form part of a cycling event or triathlon.

5. Proposed Route

Section 1 – Maryborough To Talbot

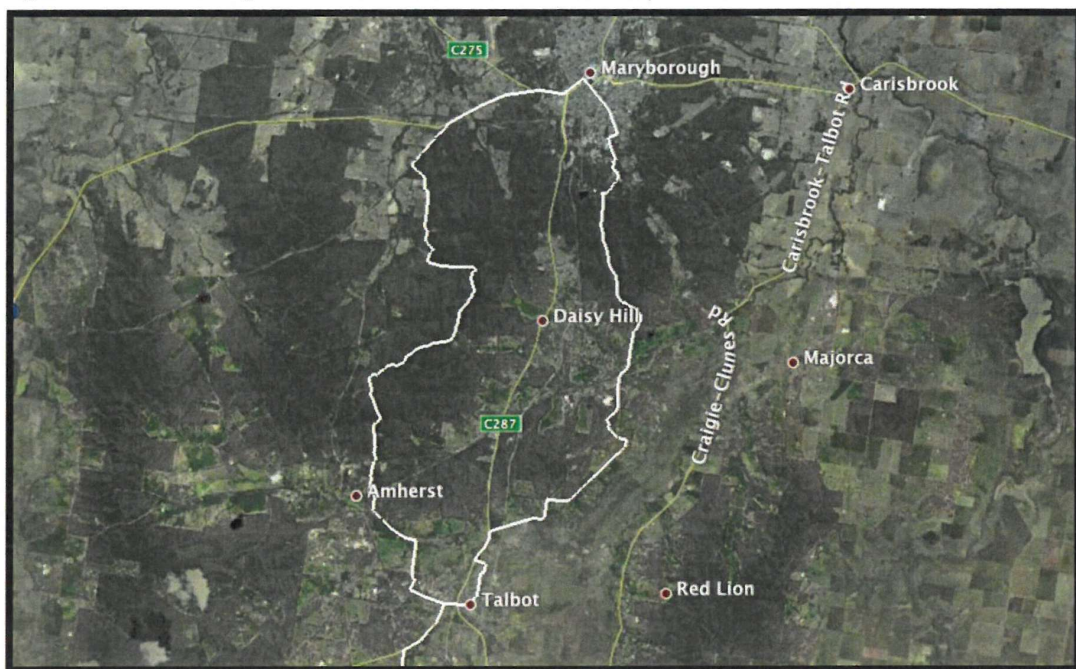
The Cycle Central Goldfields brochure includes eight rides that start in Maryborough. One of these, the Talbot Heritage Trail, extends all the way to Talbot. It could be described as a 45km loop ride, starting and finishing in Maryborough and passing through Talbot about halfway around the loop. The description provided in the brochure is simply:

'Slightly steep hill through mostly forest'.

'A picturesque early goldmining town with a unique streetscape of heritage sites and buildings.'

While the project brief for this project stated that the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail would link Maryborough and Ballarat via Creswick, Clunes and Talbot, it did not include any specific information or guidance on the proposed route between Maryborough and Talbot. Initial discussions with personnel from Central Goldfields Shire Council suggested that Talbot Heritage Trail could be used for this section in order to minimise unnecessary duplication. This route has already been researched and presents the best option in terms of rider safety (quiet forest roads rather than busy highways) and user experience (the brochure lists seven major trail features along this route). Figure 1 below shows the route of the Talbot Heritage Trail.

Figure 1. Talbot Heritage Trail



There are two ways in which the Talbot Heritage Trail could be used within the context of the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail:

1. The Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail and the Talbot Heritage Trail both start in Maryborough and follow exactly the same route to Talbot. Under this option, both the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail and the Talbot Heritage Trail effectively occupy the same space, co-existing side by side and following the same route from Maryborough to Talbot. This would require the 're-branding' of any existing Talbot Heritage Trail signs, to include Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail directional markers/information on the same signs.

One potential drawback with this option is that the looped one-direction design of the Talbot Heritage Trail does not match the linear single-direction design of the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail. By using the Talbot Heritage Trail for the northern section of the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail, it effectively means splitting the route for southbound and northbound riders – southbound riders take the western half (i.e. left hand side) of the Talbot Heritage Trail loop, while northbound riders take the eastern half (i.e. the right hand side) of the loop. While this is not a significant problem, it does present some difficulties in terms of directional signage. The signage in and around Talbot would need to be clear and concise and provide directions to the following three groups of riders:

- Riders entering Talbot from the northwest, and planning to continue following the Talbot Heritage Trail to the northeast;
- Riders entering Talbot from the northwest, and planning to continue following the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail south;
- Riders entering Talbot from the south, and planning to continue following Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail northeast.

2. The Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail starts in Talbot, not Maryborough. Riders follow the existing Talbot Heritage Trail from Maryborough to Talbot and then commence on the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail from there. This option simplifies the potential signage issues and retains a distinct identity for both the Talbot Heritage Trail and the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail, without any confusing cross-over. Under this option, the existing Talbot Heritage Trail signs would not need any modification. The existing Cycle Central Goldfields brochure will need to be modified to accommodate the new Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail, however this will need to be done regardless of which option is chosen.

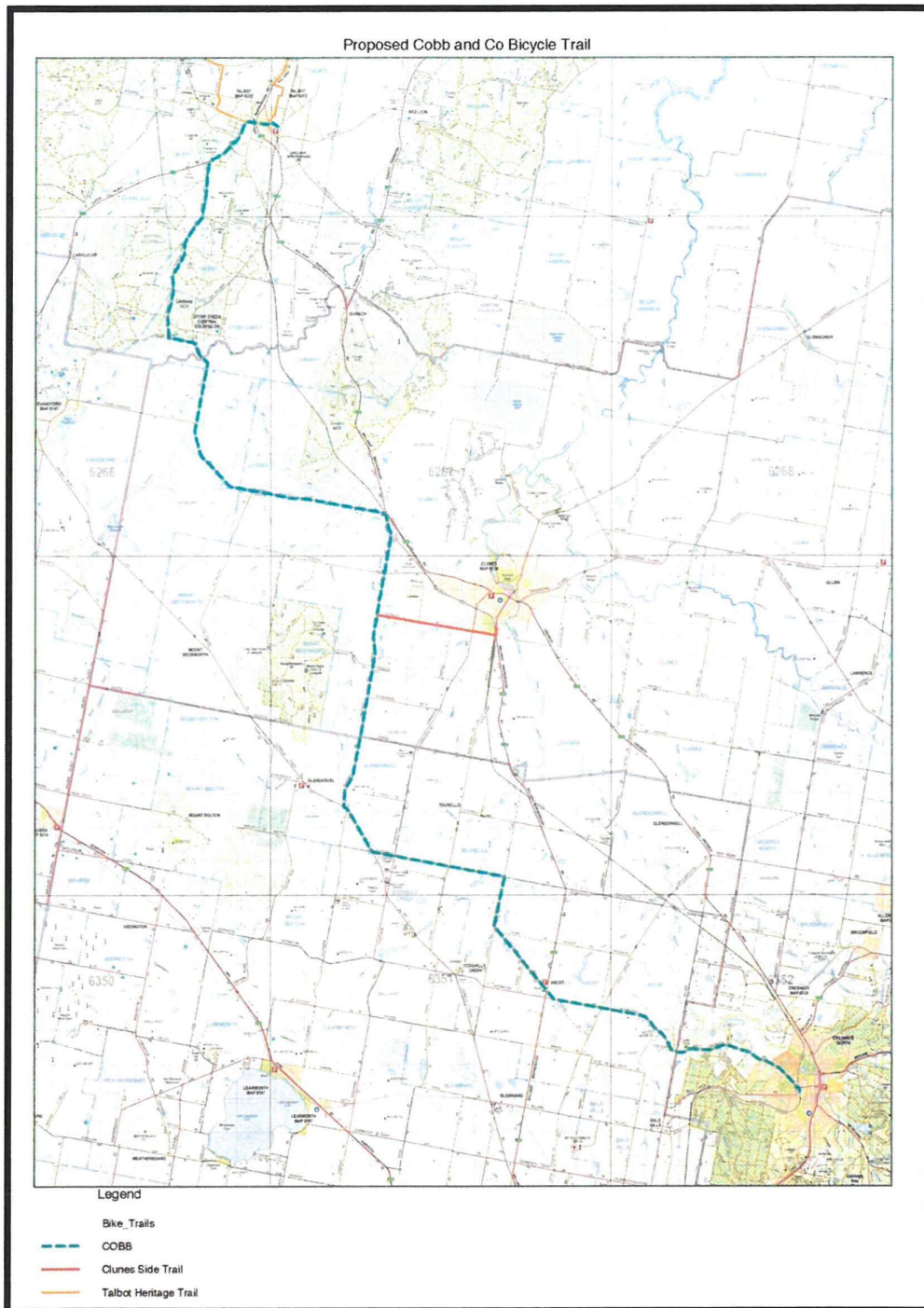
While these two options may seem like semantic distinctions between what are essentially the same thing, it is important to consider these aspects from the rider's perspective. Having two 'rides' follow the same route can cause confusion and creates complexities for signage and maps, especially given one is a single direction loop ride, while the other is a dual direction, linear, point-to-point ride. The second option above, to have the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail actually start in Talbot is the preferred option of the project team. That is not to suggest that riders have to start in Talbot –

riders can still start/finish in Maryborough, they would just follow the Talbot Heritage Trail for the section between Talbot and Maryborough.

Section 2 – Talbot To Creswick (Via Clunes)

At the commencement of this project, CGSC provided a map showing the preferred route for the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail (formally referred to as the *Cobb & Co Trail*), from Talbot to Creswick (see Map 1 on the following page).

Map 1. Initial proposed route from Talbot to Creswick



This initial proposed route was mapped by the project team using a Magellan 510 Explorist handheld GPS.

It was found to be 54.5km long. The maximum gradient recorded was approximately 8%, while the average gradient for the entire route was about 1.8%. The elevation profile of the entire route is shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Elevation profile of initial proposed route



While mapping the initial proposed route, the project team identified two sections that presented some concerns about the safety and experience of the proposed route. These sections were:

- Section A – The first 8km of the initial proposed route, via Lexton - Talbot Rd and Caralup Nature Conservation Reserve.

The first 1.7km of the route follows the moderately busy Lexton – Talbot Rd, which is not entirely in keeping with the proposed experience. Then, from 1.7km to 8km, the route follows Nuggety Gully Rd through the Caralup Nature Conservation Reserve. The roads in this forest are unsealed, reasonably rough and poorly maintained. Furthermore, this section includes a 3km long sustained gradient of up to 5%. While this is not excessively steep, in combination with the rough roads, it presents a less than ideal route – those riders heading south will find the climb difficult and un-enjoyable over the rough terrain, while those riders heading north will face a long, fast descent over rough terrain, which presents a significant safety risk given the intended audience (cycle tourists rather than mountain bikers).

- Section B – The optional side route to Clunes.

The initial proposed route does not go through Clunes directly. Rather, riders need to follow an optional side route that branches off from the main route into Clunes and back the same way. It is approximately 5km each way from the main Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail, a 10km round trip. Given the distance of this side route, the project team believes that there is a very good likelihood that many riders would choose not to go into Clunes, but continue along the main route of the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail. As one of the main intentions of this project is to create greater opportunities for tourism visitation and spending, this represents a substantial missed opportunity to showcase the unique architecture and history of Clunes and potentially create a more interesting and enjoyable cycle touring experience.

Final Proposed Route:

In response to these two problematic sections identified while assessing the initial route suggestion, the project team sought to identify alternate routes to avoid these sections.

For Section A, an alternative route was found using Argyle St, Halls Rd, Old Ballarat Rd and a short section of unnamed maintenance track beside the rail line. Unfortunately, subsequent conversations with Vic Track, the authority responsible for the management of Victoria's railways, revealed that this section of maintenance track cannot be used for the purposes of the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail. While there are circumstances where Vic Track will allow the use of their land for cycling and walking, in this example the corridor of land available in this area is not wide enough to accommodate their requirements for a buffer zone and fencing. While other routes were available, each presented greater problems and issues than those presented by the initial proposed route. Given this, the project team decided to retain the initial proposed route in this area, despite it not being the ideal alignment.

For Section B, an alternative route was found that includes Clunes as a central stop on the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail, rather than just an optional side route. The new route for this section can be described as follows (travelling in a north – south direction):

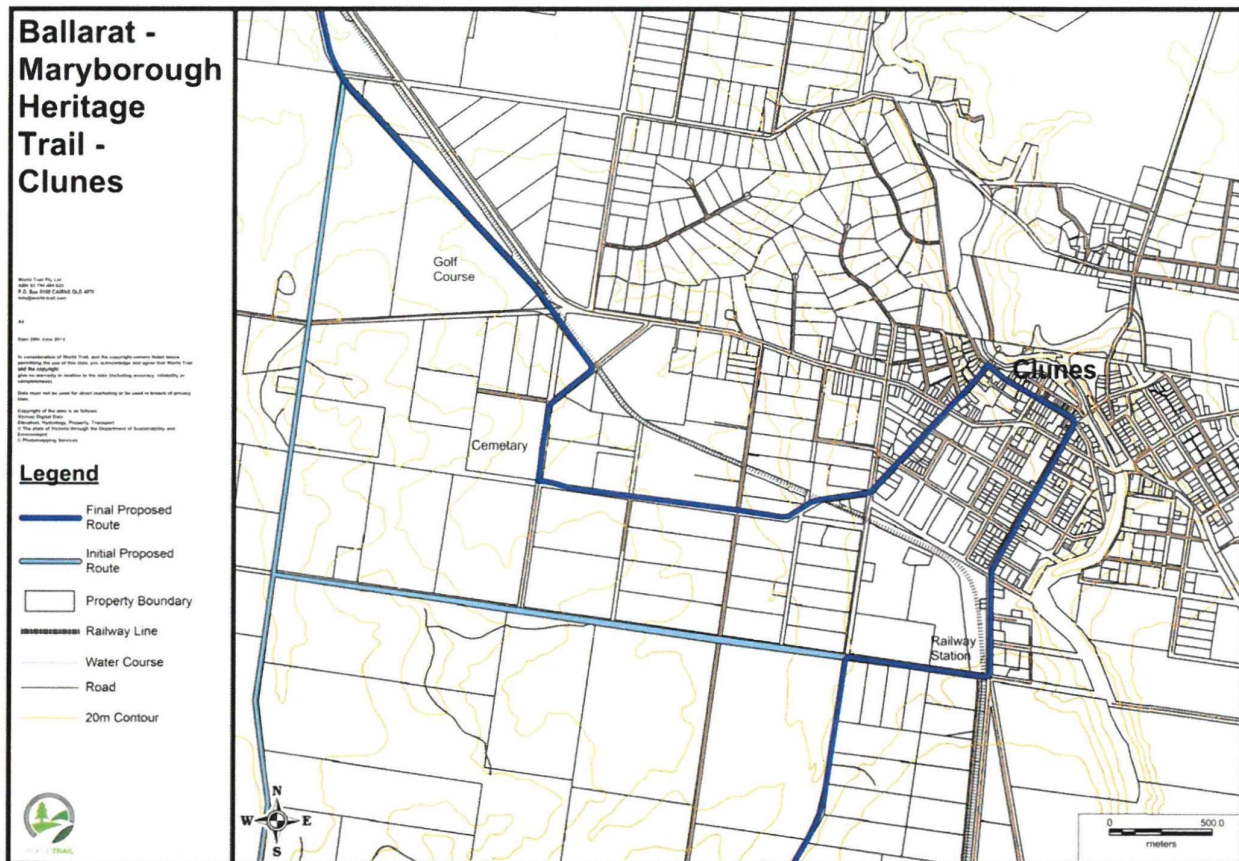
- Instead of turning right off Golf Course Rd onto Kierce's Rd, remain on Golf Course Rd and follow it for 1.8km, past the Clunes Golf Club;
- Turn right into Beckworth Court Rd and follow it for about 800m south, going past the Clunes Cemetery;
- Turn left into an unnamed dirt road and follow it east for 900m to Roses Lane;
- Cross over Roses Lane and continue straight ahead to the east for another 300m to the train line;
- Cross over the train line and continue straight ahead for another 300m until reaching the intersection of West St and Suburban St;
- Travel northeast along Suburban St for 600m until reaching the Ballarat Maryborough Rd;
- Turn right onto Ballarat Maryborough Rd and travel eastwards for about 500m until reaching the centre of Clunes;
- Turn right onto Service St and follow it 1.2km south;
- Turn right into Boundary St and follow it for 700m;
- Turn left into Learmonth Rd. Follow Learmonth Rd (which later becomes Pickfords Rd) for 7.1km to the intersection with Glendonald Rd (the original route).

Map 2 on the next page shows a close up of this alternate route for Section B.

Using this alternate route shortens the overall route by 5.5km.

This realignment presents significant benefits over the initial route, especially in terms of providing a better experience for riders and a better linkage to Clunes. Further thought may need to be given to the exact route that the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail takes through the centre of Clunes, in particular, whether there are particular businesses, or points of interest that should be highlighted by the route and the use of interpretive signage. The change of route to accommodate Clunes not only enhances the riding experience, but will also helps to spread any tourism spending across a broader area.

Map 2: Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail, including Clunes connection.



In summary, the final proposed route incorporates one minor modification to the initial proposed route. Map 3 (page 14) shows both the initial proposed route and the final proposed route.

At 49km, the final proposed route is 6.5km shorter than the initial proposed route. Figure 3 on the following page shows the elevation profile for the proposed final route. The maximum and average

gradients on the final proposed route are approximately 7.4% and 1.8% respectively – almost identical to the gradients observed on the initial proposed route.

Figure 3. Elevation profile for final proposed route



Although the final proposed route traverses over both sealed and unsealed roads and does include some sections of moderately rough dirt roads/tracks, there were no major infrastructure or engineering barriers to possible development, e.g. bridges etc.

Any future promotional material for the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail should include a full description of the route and warn riders that it does include unsealed roads, some of which may be moderately rough.

The final proposed route for the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail primarily connects Talbot to Creswick, however the concept of broader connections to Maryborough and Ballarat are not lost. As outlined, it is recommended that the Talbot Heritage Trail be used to provide the connection from Talbot to Maryborough. At the other end of the Trail, it is recommended the connection from Creswick to Ballarat pick up the proposed Creswick Trails Initiative by upgrading connections to the Goldfields Track from the Creswick Visitor Information Centre, and then utilising the Goldfields Track to connect into Ballarat. This option is preferred as it provides a link to the strategically important Goldfields Track and maximises use of existing resources.

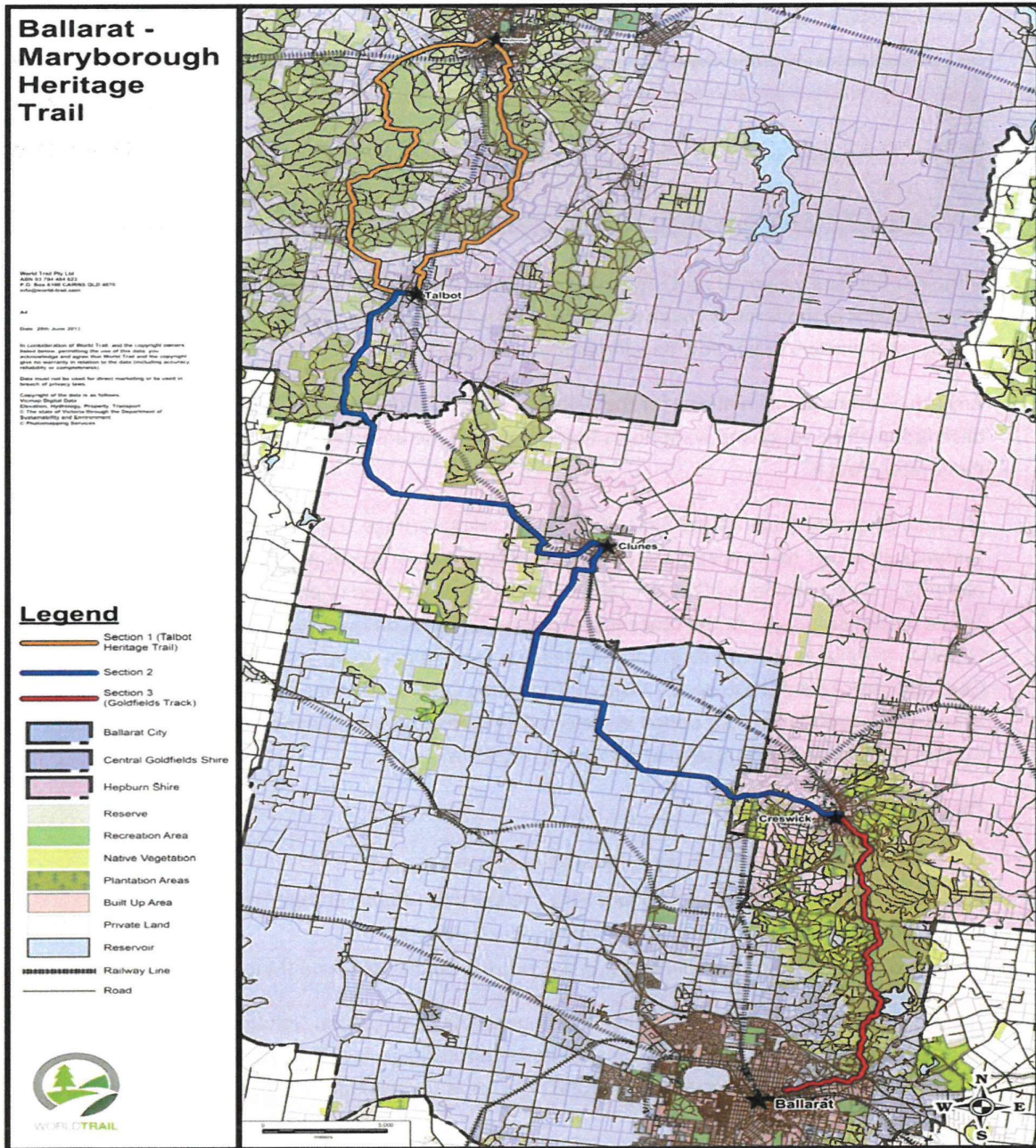
The following four maps show:

- The preferred overall route, Maryborough to Ballarat (Map 3)
- Section 1: Maryborough to Talbot (using the existing Talbot Heritage Trail) (Map 4).
- Section 2: Talbot to Creswick (new trail product) (Map 5).
- Section 3: Creswick to Ballarat (using the existing Goldfields Track) (Map 6).

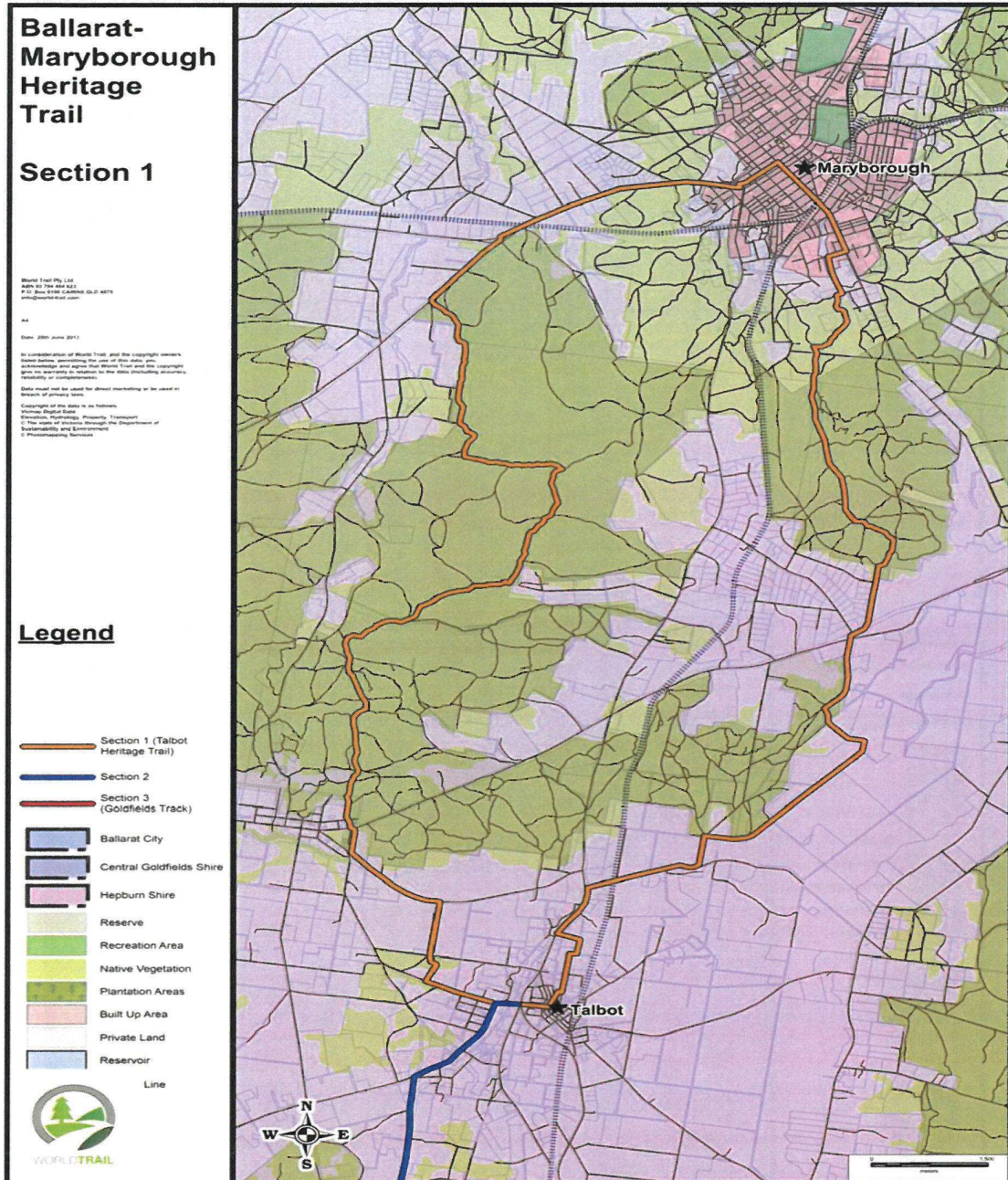
The preferred route passes through the three municipalities of Central Goldfields Shire, Hepburn Shire and City of Ballarat. Including the existing Talbot Heritage Trail (Maryborough-Talbot) and Goldfields Track (Creswick - Ballarat) the total distance is approximately 115kms with the breakdown as follows:

- CGSC = 49.8km (43% of total trail).
- HSC = 31.3km (27% of total trail).
- CoB = 34.1km (30% of total trail).

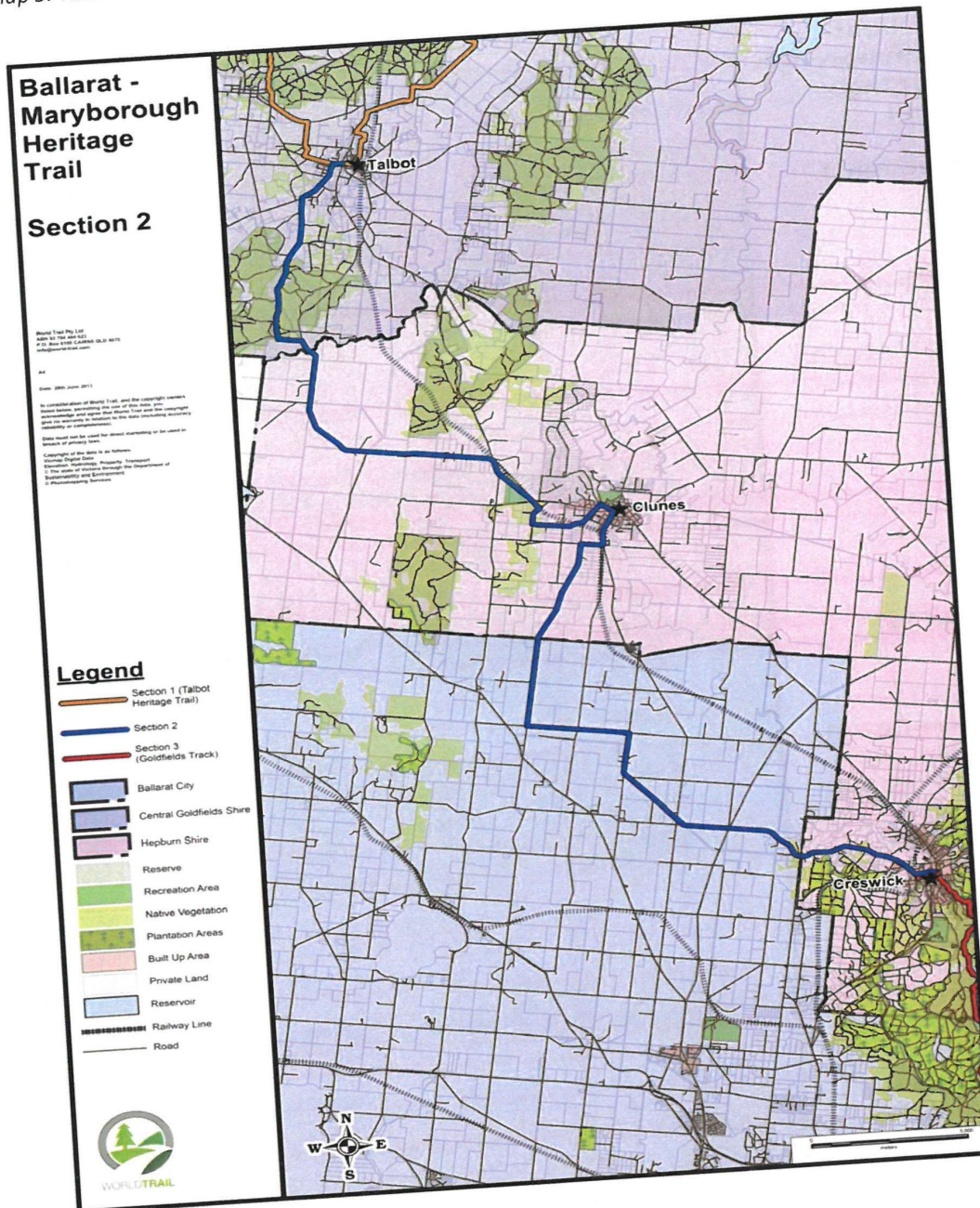
Map 3: Preferred Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail Route - Maryborough to Ballarat



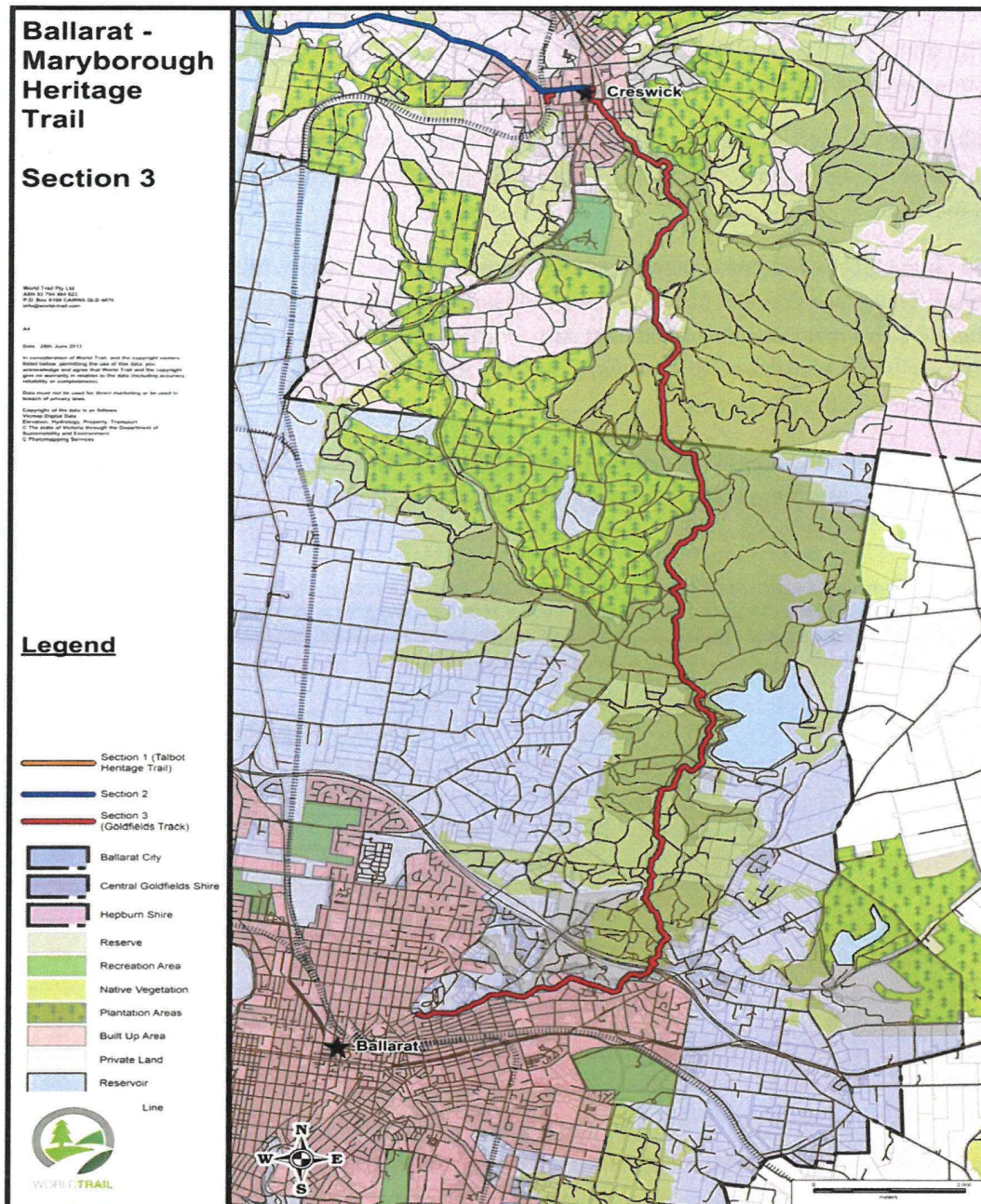
Map 4: Maryborough to Talbot (using the existing Talbot Heritage Trail)



Map 5: Talbot to Creswick (new trail product)



Map 6: Section 3: Creswick to Ballarat (using the existing Goldfields Track)



6. Tourism Attractions

Commencing in Maryborough, the route passes through the villages of Talbot, Clunes and Creswick, the highlights of the journey. Each town is steeped in goldfields heritage and features distinctive 19th century architecture in its main streets and homesteads, museums and galleries, a quirky and interesting range of retail outlets, and good cafes and hotels.

Talbot has a farmers market on the third Sunday of each month between 9am and 1pm, and there are several wineries and food producers, such as Stoney Creek Oils, along or within a short distance of the route.

Maryborough has a variety of accommodation, mostly motels, cottages, B&Bs and caravan parks. Talbot, Clunes and Creswick have B&Bs, self-contained cottages, hotel / motel and camping facilities. There is also a range of dining facilities at each location, including cafes, hotels and restaurants. Camping is also available at Mt Beckworth Reserve. Ballarat has a wide spectrum of tourism services that can meet all requirements.

The proposed trail passes in close proximity to a range of different tourism attractions and services. Table 2 below lists these attractions by category (NB: some attractions may fit into more than one category).

Table 2. Sample of tourism attractions and services along the route

Category	Name
Accommodation	Albion Hotel Motel
	Bristol Hill Motor Inn
	Golden Country Motel, Cabin & Caravan Park
	Maryborough Junction Motel
	Wattle Grove Motel
	Chesterfield House B & B
	St Andrews B& B
	Gayfords Cottages
	The Dukes B&B
	Ella's Cottage
	Ligar House
	Clunes Cabin
	Sleepy Hollow Self Contained Accommodation
	Thoreau's-Talbot
	Keebles Country House
	Clunes Motel
	Gayfords' Cottages @ Clunes
	Fraser Street Bungalow
	Rossmore Cottage

Category	Name
	American Hotel
	Calembeen Lake Caravan Park
	Creswick Motel
	Novotel Forest Resort
	Tait's Cottage
	Heatherington cottage
	Clunes Club Hotel
	Endcasa B&B
	Court House Hotel / Motel
	Bella's B&B
Artist Studios / Gallery / Museum	Central Goldfields Arts Gallery
	Possum Gully Fine Arts Gallery
	Maryborough Flour Mill Gallery
	Talbot Arts & Historical Museum
	Talbot Railway Station
	Talbot Library
	Creswick Woolen Mill
	Creswick Museum
	Twin Needles and Cascade Threads Craft shop
	The Elephant Patch craft shop
Attractions	Mistydowns Nursery at the Tangled Maze
	Tinakori Animal Farm
	Beckworth Court Estate
	Talbot Post Office
	William Coghill Monument
Farm gate / local producer	Stoney Creek Oils
	Talbot Farmers Market
Food stores / cafes	Fairytale Frostings
	Poppa's Restaurant
	Class Kitchen
	Station Antiques & Cafe
	Stoney Creek Oils
	Court House Hote Motel
	Bryce's Bistrot @ London House
	Widow Twankeys café
	National Hotel
	O'hara's @ Clunes Café Bakery
	Cocoa Chy Chocolatier & Café
	Lemon Tree Café

Category	Name
	Smokeytown Café
	Red Fox DELI
	Le Péché Gourmand
	Harvest 383 Restaurant at Novotel Forest Resort
	Springs Bar and Terrace at Novotel Forest Resort
Heritage features	Gold Tours
	Maryborough Railway Station
	Aboriginal Wells
	Amherst Cemetery
Natural attraction	Paddys Ranges State Park
	Amherst Quartz Reef Mountain
	Aboriginal Shelter Tree
	Park Lake
	St Georges Lake Waterfall
	Landcare Trail
	La Gerche Forest Walk
	St George's Lake
	Eaton's Dam
	Koala Park
	Calembeen Park.
	Dunach Nature Conservation Reserve
	Caralulup Nature Conservation Reserve
	McDermid Bushland Reserve
	Sorrensens Bushland Reserve
	Mullins Bushland Reserve
	Amherst Bushland Reserve
	Amherst H59 Bushland Reserve
	Tunnel Hill Bushland Reserve
	Talbot Bushland Reserve
Mount Beckworth Scenic Reserve	
Nursery / Garden	Railway Station Nursery
	London House Community Garden
	Lambley Nursery
Winery	Amherst Winery
	Eastern Peake Winery
	Mount Beckworth Wines
	Mt Coghill vineyard
	Captains Creek
	Romantic Vineyard

The following photographs provide a selection of attractions available on the route.

Talbot Post Office



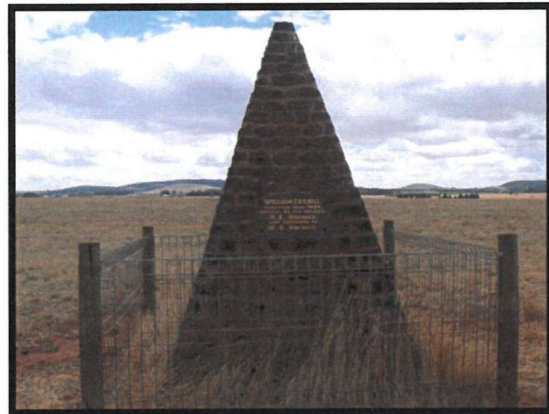
Beckworth Court



Eastern Peake Winery and Cellar Door



William Coghill Monument



7. Potential Cycle Tour Structure

Daytrips Ex-Maryborough or Creswick:

The trail could be cycled as a return trip in a day departing Maryborough or Creswick. However, at 3 ½ hours ride each way plus breaks, this is likely to appeal to only a very small percentage of the market interested in the trail.

More appealing may be to arrive in Maryborough by car the night prior, cycle to Creswick during the day, and return to Maryborough on the evening train at 5.51pm (Saturday and Sunday; 5.36pm Monday-Friday).

The trip could be conducted in reverse by arriving in Creswick in the morning, cycling to Maryborough during the day, stay overnight in Maryborough and then return to Creswick on the 7am morning train from Maryborough.

Talbot Farmers Market could prove to be a particular drawcard for cyclists.

A cyclist could also conduct a return daytrip along a part of the route when departing from one of the towns along the route (e.g. Clunes-Creswick, Maryborough-Talbot), but they would obviously not visit the full scope of attractions along the route.

Overnight Train and Bicycle Travel Options Ex-Melbourne:

Travel options ex-Melbourne have been selected keeping in mind the following market preferences:

- Rides should be no more than 4-5 hours per day (as the trail is less likely to appeal to a fitness-driven cycle market).
- Cycling between Ballarat and Creswick along the Goldfields Track is an option. However, this stretch of the track is quite rough and arguably only suited to mountain bikes, rather than hybrid bikes. It would also extend the riding period to around 5.5 hours in a day.
- Touring options fully serviced by public transport would appeal to those who want to minimise the impact of their leisure activities on the environment.
- The route is not a looped concept as the most appealing product within a day's leisurely ride is the recommended Maryborough-Talbot-Clunes-Creswick journey. There are no other towns within a reasonable proximity to provide a similar quality of experience for a return journey.
- Some of the options listed below provide connections with public transport so the cyclist is not required to undertake the return journey.

Option 1: Train to Maryborough- Cycle to Creswick (2 nights / 3 days):

Day 1

- Depart Melbourne by train (4.00pm Monday to Friday, 4.08pm Saturday to Sunday)
- Arrive Maryborough by train (6.12pm Monday to Friday, 6.27pm Saturday to Sunday) - overnight

Day 2

- Cycle to Creswick - overnight

Day 3

- Depart Creswick by train (8.04am Monday-Friday, 7.39am Saturday, 8.44am Sunday)
- Arrive Melbourne by train via Ballarat (9.52am Monday-Friday, 9.23am Saturday, 10.45am Sunday)

Option 2 (if only 2-3 people travelling): Train to Maryborough - Cycle to Creswick - Taxi to Ballarat - Train to Melbourne (1 night / 2 days)

Day 1

- Depart Melbourne by train (4.00pm Monday to Friday, 4.08pm Saturday to Sunday)
- Arrive Maryborough by train (6.12pm Monday to Friday, 6.27pm Saturday to Sunday) - overnight

Day 2

- Cycle to Creswick
- Catch taxi to Ballarat Station (Creswick Taxis Service can carry up to 3 bikes in the boot, fare \$37)
- Train to Melbourne (services every 1-2 hours ex-Ballarat)

Option 3: Train to Creswick - Cycle to Maryborough (2 nights / 3 days)

Day 1

- Depart Melbourne by train (4.00pm Monday to Friday, 4.08pm Saturday to Sunday)
- Arrive Creswick by train (5.36pm Monday to Friday, 5.51pm Saturday to Sunday) - overnight

Day 2

- Cycle to Maryborough - overnight

Day 3

- Depart Maryborough by train (7.31am Monday to Friday, 7.06am Saturday, 8.11am Sunday)
- Arrive Melbourne via Ballarat (9.52am Monday-Friday, 9.23am Saturday, 10.45am Sunday)

Option 4 (if only 2-3 people travelling): Train to Ballarat - Taxi to Creswick - Cycle to Maryborough - Train to Melbourne (1 night / 2 days)

Day 1

- Depart Melbourne by train (morning, services to Ballarat every 1-2 hours)
- Catch taxi from Ballarat Station to Creswick (Creswick Taxis Service can carry up to 3 bikes in the boot, fare \$37)
- Cycle to Maryborough - overnight

Day 2

- Depart Maryborough by train (7.31am Monday to Friday, 7.06am Saturday, 8.11am Sunday)
- Arrive Melbourne via Ballarat (9.52am Monday-Friday, 9.23am Saturday, 10.45am Sunday)

Option 5: Public transport only ex-Melbourne (1 night / 2 days)

A one-night trip using public transport is only possible if the cyclist arrives by train and overnights in Maryborough in the evening, the next day rides all the way from Maryborough to Ballarat, then returns to Melbourne in the evening. The trip could also happen in reverse training from Melbourne to Ballarat, and cycling to Maryborough in a day, then overnights in Maryborough and returning to Melbourne the following day.

NB. The concepts above can be modified for departure from Ballarat using a similar structure.

8. Target Markets

Cycling markets generally prefer not to use road bicycles on unsealed roads which limits this trail to hybrid bike riders and mountain bike riders seeking an easy, relatively flat ride. This is likely to be a small part of the cycling market.

The Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail is likely to appeal to families, younger professional couples and groups of friends, as well as an older semi-retired market 55-65 markets who are relatively fit and interested in the outdoors. In summary:

- Groups of family and friends, couples, individuals
- Recreational cycling clubs
- Event participants

Visitor Origin:

- Regional Victoria, especially Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong
- Melbourne

9. Shire and Regional Tourism Priorities

Although the project is not listed in the *Central Goldfields Shire Council Bicycle Strategy Plan 2004-2013*, cycle tourism is mentioned as a priority in the *Destination Central Goldfields: Strategic Tourism Plan 2010-2020*:

“Central Goldfields Shire is well positioned to become a ‘Centre of Cycling’ which in turn would further enhance its reputation for liveability. With predominantly flat and easily accessible road scapes and a range of short distance historic towns, cycling tours around the Shire would appeal to Families, Young Optimists and Eco tourist segments.

Maryborough Railway Station is well placed to provide a ‘Cycle for Hire’ depot allowing visitors to hire bicycles for rides around Maryborough’s Arts Precinct and other historic attractions. A Bicycle Trails brochure would be available for visitors to access at the bicycle depot.”

The strategy also supports initiatives that establish movement of traffic / people between towns, such as cycling routes.

The project is listed in the *Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Trails Strategy, 2010*, as a trail of municipal significance. (NB. Because it involves on-road cycling, it was not eligible to be a trail of regional significance.)

Cycle tourism is not mentioned as a priority in the *Goldfields Regional Marketing and Development Plan 2011-2012*. However, priority projects for infrastructure and investment include the Goldfields Track.

Central Goldfields Shire is part of the new Bendigo Regional Tourism Board which has not yet developed its strategic plan. Hepburn Shire is part of the Daylesford Macedon Ranges Regional Tourism Board which does not specifically include cycle tourism as a strategic priority but considers it to be consistent with its ‘health and wellbeing’ based positioning.

Tourism Victoria has not identified any on-road cycle touring strategies for development / promotion in *Victoria’s Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-2015*, with the exception of strategies to promote-road cycle racing events.

10. Significance to the Local / Regional Tourism Industry

While goldfields heritage is still a drawcard and a competitive strength for the region, each town needs to develop contemporary experiences to appeal to a broader range of markets rather than just those who are interested in heritage, such as segments interested in health and wellbeing, outdoor adventure and cultural activities. The cycle route will have some appeal for families and younger professionals. As cycle tourists tend to spend more per day than most other segments, it is likely to provide some economic benefits to the townships on the route.

While other cycling experiences proposed for Hepburn Shire as part of the Crossing Borders project are likely to be more popular, i.e. Daylesford-Macedon Ranges Rail Trail and the Creswick Trails Initiative, these activities are not likely to provide benefits to other towns in the region including Clunes, Talbot and Maryborough.

As noted above, cycling on unsealed roads is a niche market within the cycle touring segment. In the absence of any reliable research, it would appear that this market is very small.

11. Current Cycle Touring Activity

In 2011, a brochure titled, Cycle Central Goldfields, was released which contains 15 on-road / off-road, looped cycling routes emanating from Maryborough and Dunolly to various towns and features in the Shire. The trails are of varying levels of difficulty and designed to appeal largely to families and fitness-oriented people.

While the brochure is considered to be reasonably popular by the Maryborough Visitor Information Centre (67 copies sold in the 12 months to September 2012), there is no statistical data relating to the level of cycling in the Shire and the specific types of cycling that are most popular.

Anecdotal evidence from the bike shop in Maryborough, Dragon Cycles, and the Maryborough Visitor Information Centre indicates there is a low level of bicycle touring through the Shire (i.e. people conducting a holiday solely by bicycle). However, no statistical data is available.

The 'Creswick Walking and Cycling Map', a comprehensive brochure of walking and cycling trails produced by Hepburn Shire, is considered to be popular by the Creswick Visitor Information Centre. However, data is not available on the number of people who cycle in the area or the type of cycling they are most interested in.

Maryborough has an annual major event, *RACV Energy Breakthrough*, which attracts around 15,000 people, mostly students and teachers from across the State, who work together to design and construct a vehicle or innovation that represents an 'energy breakthrough'. It involves some 'pedal power' entries.

There is also some use of the sealed road network in Central Goldfields for veteran cycling events and cycle training by individuals.

12. Competitive Strengths

While many Shires in Victoria promote cycling trails along quiet sealed and unsealed roads, the appeal of this trail is the linkage of Maryborough to Talbot, Clunes and Creswick, with the potential to catch a train from Melbourne and Ballarat to Maryborough. The Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail will potentially provide a more interactive way to experience the villages and towns along the route and encourage visitors to stay longer.

Wherever these towns are promoted, the cycling route should also be promoted to give people an alternative way of experiencing the area.

Potential Linkages with Existing or Proposed Trails:

The Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail could potentially link to the proposed Creswick Trails Initiative to experience a series of more challenging MTB trails. However, the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail is likely to attract a different market to those interested in dedicated MTB trails. Some types of bicycles that are suitable for on-road touring would not be suitable for MTB trails.

The Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail could also link from Creswick to Ballarat via the Goldfields Track and onwards to the Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail, or from Creswick to Daylesford via the Goldfields Track and on to the proposed Daylesford-Macedon Ranges Rail Trail. Another option is to take the Goldfields Track from Creswick all the way to Bendigo.

While it is anticipated that the rail trails would appeal to the cyclists who use the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail, the Goldfields Track is quite rough in the sections and is possibly better suited to MTB cyclists interested in a more challenging ride. An upgrade of these sections of the Goldfields Track would enhance connection opportunities for Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail cyclists and potentially provide options for longer touring experiences.

13. Estimated Tourism Demand and Economic Impact

NB: Please refer to Volume 3: Background Reference Material for comprehensive details, methodology and assumptions used in estimating *Usage of the Proposed Trails*, and *Economic Impacts of the Proposed Trails*.

Findings of the estimated demand and economic impact analysis of the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail include:

- Local residents are expected to conduct 343 to 514 visits on the trail per annum.
- Between 1,023 and 2,046 visitors are expected to use the trail per annum.
- The trail is expected to generate between \$70,000 and \$130,000 per annum in direct and indirect expenditure, which would support between ½ and 1 ½ new jobs in the local economy. (These results are comparable to the findings in the *Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Trails*)

Strategy (2010), which estimated the economic benefits at around \$120,000-150,000 p.a., supporting creation of 1.2-1.5 full time jobs).

New Tourism Business Opportunities:

While it is anticipated that most people interested in cycling the route would bring their own bicycles, a small proportion of the market may require bike hire when they arrive in Creswick or Maryborough, or organise bike hire in advance. If the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail and other cycling opportunities are promoted sufficiently, they may generate enough demand to warrant bike hire services in both towns through existing businesses. Dragon Cycles in Maryborough used to offer bike hire but dropped the service recently due to a lack of demand.

It is unlikely that visitation to the trail would warrant the establishment of new businesses along the route due to a lack of critical mass. However, businesses already located at Maryborough, Talbot, Clunes, Creswick and potentially Ballarat, should receive some economic benefit.

14. Other Benefits

Aside from the anticipated tourism and economic benefits outlined in Section 12, the proposed trail is also likely to facilitate a range of social, recreational and health benefits for residents and visitors.

Social:

- Participating in physical activities brings people together; it enhances opportunities for social connections, gatherings and informal interaction.
- Encouraging use of the trail will help address social isolation, disadvantage (i.e. through provision of a low cost, informal physical activity participation opportunity) and enhance community connectedness, pride and belonging.
- Facilitating community events around the trail will provide opportunities for community gatherings, volunteerism and positive social outcomes.
- Attracting additional tourism expenditure will support local businesses, helping to revitalise small towns and encourage community pride and secondary investment.

Recreational:

- The proposed trail will provide a low cost, informal physical activity participation opportunity for residents and visitors. Sections of the trail could also be used for active transport between townships.
- Walking, cycling, running and bush walking all rank in the top-ten most popular physical activities undertaken by Victorian adults aged 15 years and over¹. Development of the trail will facilitate opportunities for increased participation.

¹ Australian Sports Commission, *Exercise Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS)*, 2010.

- Trail users are also likely to participate in other related recreational activities including, picnicking, bird watching and camping.

Health Benefits:

- There are a range of mental and physical health benefits associated with regular contact with nature and participation in physical activities, including (but not limited to) reduced incidences of:
 - Cardio vascular disease,
 - Cardiopulmonary disease,
 - Obesity,
 - Diabetes,
 - High blood pressure,
 - Anxiety, and
 - A range of mental illnesses.

15. Signage

There are four types of signs that could potentially be required for the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail:

1. Directional signs – provide directional guidance to riders.
2. Warning signs – warn riders of dangerous conditions – e.g. train level crossing, gaps in bridge decking etc.
3. Interpretive signs – provide interpretive information to riders about the landscape, history, environment or other aspects of the route.
4. Tourist attraction signs – provide distances and directions to tourism attractions or features nearby.

Each of the signage types are discussed in detail below.

As the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail crosses from Central Goldfields Shire into Hepburn Shire, it is likely that the two Councils may have different protocols with regard to signage. It is important for the success of this project that the signage for the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail remains consistent across the municipalities and is implemented to the same standard across both. This will require further cooperation and collaboration between CGSC and HSC to ensure that the signage for this project is designed to meet the needs of both Councils.

Directional Signs:

The purpose of these signs is to assist riders to follow the proposed route. As such, a directional sign must be erected at any point where a rider might potentially go off route – generally intersections with other roads or tracks.

The directional signs need to be easily visible from a distance and should also be visible from both sides, as this route is dual directional. As this route is entirely comprised of existing vehicle roads and tracks, it is essential that the directional signs do not impede management and maintenance of these roads or interfere with driver safety in any way.

As CGSC has already installed signage for the rides detailed in the Cycle Central Goldfields brochure, it is recommended that the protocol for the placement and the design of the directional signs should follow that put in place by CGSC.

The Cycle Central Goldfields brochure states that:

'Tracks are signposted in the direction of travel indicated on the map. If there are no track markers present, continue travelling straight.'

This suggests that directional signs have only been placed at points where the route turns off the road or track that is currently being followed. It suggests, that a sign is not required at every road or track intersection – *only those where riders need to turn off the road or track they are following*. Applying this protocol, it is estimated that about 25 directional signs are required for the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail.

However, the project team believes that the route would benefit from additional directional signs, especially at major road crossings and on very long, straight sections where it would be suitable to provide periodic reassurance that riders are still on the correct route. An additional 10 directional signs should suffice for this purpose.

In total, approximately 35 directional signs are required.

Warning Signs:

The erection of warning signs will need input from Vic Roads and Council road engineers. A review of the route should be conducted by qualified personnel to ensure that any necessary signage is identified and installed prior to the formal opening of the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail.

An estimate of 20 such signs has been used for cost estimate purposes.

Interpretive Signs:

While interpretive signs provide additional elements of interest to a walk or ride, the identification of suitable locations along the route and the development of any interpretive sign content lies beyond the scope of this report.

Although this work lies outside the scope of this report, the project team supports the development of interpretive signs along the route. To achieve this, the route would need to be carefully reviewed to identify any sites of cultural (European or indigenous) or environmental significance, which could then be researched and incorporated into interesting and relevant sign content.

An estimate of 15 such signs has been used for cost estimate purposes.

Tourist Attraction Signs:

While every effort has been made to identify a route that incorporates as many tourism attractions/services/businesses as possible, there are a number of locations where it was not possible to pass directly by such attractions. Where this is the case, the use of signage to indicate nearby attractions is recommended.

Such signs should be erected at the closest point to the relevant attraction (provided that the route to that attraction from that point is suitable).

In 2009 Tourism Victoria and Vic Roads published a signage protocol for these type of signs, called 'Tourist Signing Guidelines'. This document provides guidance on the use and application of these types of signs and should be used to help guide the installation of any such signs. Figure 4 below shows the typical format of these Tourist Attraction Signs.

Figure 4. Tourist Attraction Signs (from Tourism Victoria 'Tourist Signing Guidelines').



An estimate of 10 such signs has been used for cost estimate purposes.

16. Proposed Management Model

The *Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Trails Strategy* suggests joint management of the trail via a committee of management. A traditional Committee of Management, auspiced under the Crown Land Reserves Act, has the responsibility for management of a Crown Land Reserve, which does not apply to the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail, as it crosses multiple land tenures with multiple land managers.

Some kind of cross-organizational committee would need to be established to allow the input of these various organizations. As the main proponents of this project, CGSC would be expected to take lead responsibility for the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail with input from HSC and CoB, plus input from DSE, PV and Vic Roads in relation to the various parcels of land they manage. This relationship would need to be defined and governed under some type of Memorandum of Understanding.

The main responsibilities of each Council would be the installation of signage, design and publication of a map/guide and promotion, ongoing maintenance inspections of the route and the chairing of the cross-organizational committee.

The main responsibilities of DSE, PV and Vic Roads would be to ensure that the sections of the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail that cross their land are included in regular routine road maintenance programs.

The majority of the proposed route falls within the CGSC area and the project has the strong support of the local Bicycle Advisory Group, therefore it is recommended that an appropriate representative from CGSC lead the implementation and ongoing management of the trail, including chairing the proposed cross organisational working group (e.g. HSC, CoB, DSE, PV and Vic Roads). CGSC should also lead the development of possible funding applications to assist implementation. HSC and CoB will be required to appoint an appropriate representative to participate in working group meetings and oversee its implementation, management and maintenance obligations (within respective LGA boundaries), including support funding for capital development, maintenance and promotion where required.

17. Maintenance

The maintenance needs of the proposed Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail can be placed into two categories:

1. Road maintenance, and
2. Signage maintenance.

Provided that existing maintenance programs are adequately addressing the maintenance needs of the roads proposed to be used by the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail, it is not envisaged that this project will require increased or higher standards of road maintenance than are currently being applied. Furthermore, the use of these roads by the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail will not contribute any additional wear and tear or damage – vehicles cause far greater damage to roads and tracks than cyclists.

While some of the more minor roads used by the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail are quite rough, upgrading them to a better standard may also attract more traffic, effectively negating the reason of including them in the first place – because they are quiet.

Maintenance of signage will be largely in response to vandalism or accidental damage by vehicles.

CGSC and HSC should be responsible for implementing regular periodic inspections of the entire route. The exact frequency of these inspections should be determined by the two Councils, however may monthly, quarterly or bi-annually. The objective of these inspections is to identify any maintenance issues. Any identified issues would be logged and photographed. Procedures would need to be put in place to ensure any identified issues are rectified by the appropriate party, e.g. road issues to be dealt with by the manager of that road and signage issues to be dealt with by whichever Council's boundaries it falls within.

CGSC may already have an ongoing maintenance program for the trails promoted in the Cycle Central Goldfields brochure, which could possibly form the basis for the system proposed herein.

Finally, a procedure would need to be developed to ensure that any complaints received from users about maintenance issues are dealt with promptly. Such complaints may simply trigger an inspection by the relevant Council and rectification of the issue through the normal maintenance processes.

18. Design Guidelines

Given the route option identified for the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail, no actual trail construction is needed. The route uses a combination of existing sealed and unsealed roads (predominantly quiet country or forest roads) and it is not intended that cycle lanes or road surface treatments be undertaken. As such, there are no specific applicable design guidelines. It is assumed that the existing roads were constructed, and are maintained, having regard to relevant Australian Standards appropriate for the road hierarchy/standard, including intersection treatments.

Cyclists on the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail will need to adhere to normal road rules, laws and behaviours as per any other road user.

Guidelines for trail signage has been discussed in Section 15.

19. Estimated Development and Maintenance Costs

As noted, the core trail infrastructure already exists through the use of existing road networks and visitor facilities in each township. Therefore establishment of the trail primarily relates to installing signage and promotional material.

Allowances for initial signage installations are as follows:

Signage Type	Quantity (Allowance)	Indicative Cost Per Item (including design & installation)	Total Indicative Cost
Directional	40	\$150 each	\$6,000
Warning	25	\$150 each	\$3,750
Interpretive	20	\$200 each	\$4,000
Tourism Attractor	10	\$500 each	\$5,000
Total			\$18,750 (ex GST)

A conservative estimate for promotional costs (refer to Section 20 below) recommended \$6,000 be made available to promote the route in its first year. On-going annual costs, assuming that some promotional activities can be undertaken by the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board and Ballarat Regional Tourism without incurring fees, will be around \$4,500.

Maintenance of the trail was discussed in Section 17, it assumed that the majority of maintenance activities can be absorbed into existing road management regimes by the respective asset management agency.

Costs for reactive maintenance such as signage repairs is difficult to quantify at this stage. A general allowance of \$2,000 may be appropriate in the first year, however this figure will need to be reviewed annually.

Provision for longer term asset (i.e. signage) renewal will also need to be considered and incorporated into each respective Council's asset management plans for similar asset classes.

In summary, indicative implementation costs are estimated at \$24,750 (ex GST)(i.e. Signage \$18,750 + Promotion \$6,000) with ongoing annual costs of \$6,500 (i.e. Promotion \$4,500 + Maintenance \$2,000). It is recommended that these costs be apportioned across the three municipalities in line with the approximate percentage of the trail in each municipality (e.g. CGSC 43%, HSC 27%, CoB 30%).

20. Trail Promotion and Marketing

Interpretive Information:

Providing information along the trail at sites of interest can enhance the visitor experience.

Identification of significant sites and the development of interpretive signage should be undertaken in association with local historical societies, such as the Maryborough-Midlands Historical Society. Sometimes a site doesn't have a built or natural structure to indicate that a significant event has taken place there.

Interpretive signage of heritage buildings, natural features, cultural features and sites where significant historical events took place should be located at Talbot, Clunes and Creswick.

Potential sites along the route outside the key towns which could be suitable for interpretive signage include:

- Aboriginal Wells
- Paddy's Ranges State Park
- Turn off to Quartz Mountain
- Aboriginal Maternity (Shelter) Tree
- Beckworth Court
- Turn off to Mount Beckworth Reserve

Events Strategy:

Develop an annual series of events to reinforce awareness of the route that could involve any or all of the following:

- A guided group cycle along all or part of the route as part of the biannual Heritage Weekend or Organs of the Goldfields, or other event
- A new food, wine, local produce and art event that links the towns. It could be experienced by bicycle or by car and on foot.

- Cycling events that originate in the various towns along the route that are part of existing events.

Promotions:

- Prepare a brand pyramid for the route that identifies the emotional connectors between the trail and its visitors (what will motivate people to cycle the route, what they are seeking in the experience, etc). The 'brand essence' identified through this process can be used to inform the selection of language, graphic design features and imagery that would be used to promote the trail to ensure that promotional activities are consistent in the story they tell and the impressions they create.

Graphic Design Elements:

- Develop graphic design elements - a logo, e-signature feature (for use in emails sent by Council staff, and other organisations interested in promoting the route), and 6-8 high quality images.

Brochure:

- Include the route in the next edition of Cycle Central Goldfields.
- Prior to the next reprint, prepare a DL flyer to stock in visitor information centres, bicycle shops, accommodation properties, etc.

Websites:

- Select one of the Shires' tourism websites to include all information about the route. Promote the route on the other sites with a click-through to the comprehensive site. Options include www.visitmaryborough.com.au, www.visitcreswick.com.au, www.visitclunes.com.au.
- Information about the route should relate to its various sections (Maryborough-Talbot, Talbot-Clunes, Clunes-Creswick, Creswick-Ballarat), including information about the attractions, facilities, accommodation, events, touring times, degrees of difficulty, etc. This will assist people to develop a customised itinerary to suit their needs.
- Also feature the route in the relevant regional sections of the 'visitvictoria' website, including Daylesford and the Macedon Ranges, and the Goldfields (Maryborough).
- Feature the route in the Ballarat and Bendigo tourism websites.

Publicity:

- Through Bendigo Regional Tourism and Ballarat Regional Tourism, invite travel journalists and journalists from cycle magazines such as Ride On, to experience the route and write about their journey. Alternatively, as part of regional tourism activities, contract a PR agency to prepare editorial and place articles as possible.

- Prepare a summary of the route experience (1-2 pages) to give to journalists in a media kit and to use in website copy.

Bicycle Books:

- Approach bicycle book authors to consider including the trail in their books and maps, such as *'Bike Tours Around Victoria'* by Julia Blunden.

Working with Tourism Operators:

- Conduct briefings of tourism businesses along the route to encourage them to cater to cycle tourists, e.g. provide a place to house bicycles overnight, and promote the route on their websites and marketing materials.

Marketing for the project should be undertaken by Central Goldfields and Hepburn Shires. Responsibilities and commitments should be articulated in a Memorandum of Understanding.

The cost of the initiatives above will depend on negotiations and current arrangements with regional tourism boards and Tourism Victoria.

It is recommended that \$6,000 is made available to promote the route in its first year. On-going annual costs, assuming that some promotional activities can be undertaken by the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board and Ballarat Regional Tourism without incurring fees, will be around \$4,500.

21. Potential Barriers

The table below highlights the key potential barriers to implementation of the trail concept and recommended mitigation strategies.

Potential Barrier	Likelihood of Occurring	Impact on the Project	Mitigation Strategy
Concept not supported by road asset management agencies (e.g. DSE, PV, Vic Roads).	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with relevant road managers to explore support for the project. Establish a MOU outlining roles and responsibilities of each agency. Establish a working group and annual schedule of meetings (e.g. quarterly or bi-annually) to monitor implementation and ongoing management.
Lack of cross border LGA support or collaboration.	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Council to sign off/adopt the outcomes from the Crossing Borders Tracks and Trails project, including identifying a staff representative to be responsible for implementing the project in each Shire (and participation on agency working group).
Lack of capital funding to implement recommendations.	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital costs have been kept to a minimum through utilisation of existing roads and visitor facilities. CGSC to take a lead role in pursuing external funding opportunities. HSC to collaborate and consider support funding where required. Capital costs to be apportioned to each Shire based on direct costs within each respective LGA.
Lack of funding to support ongoing marketing and promotion.	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing marketing and promotional costs for the base level of core activities (as outlined in Section 20) have been kept to a minimum. Marketing and promotional costs will be apportioned to each Shire based on the approximate percentage of the trail in each LGA (percentage allocations to be agreed, e.g. approximately 1/3 each CGSC, HSC and CoB).

22. Action Plan

The following section outlines the key next steps, strategic actions and priorities to implement the Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail.

Ref #	Action	Priority	Indicative Cost	Responsibility
1	Each Council to confirm its support, commitment and relative priority for the project, including capital funding (or support for external funding applications), implementation, ongoing maintenance and promotion.	High	Within existing resources	CGSC. HSC. CoB.
2	Clarify which agencies are responsible for the various sections of road along the route and confirm support for the concept (i.e. DSE, PV, Vic Roads, HSC and CoB).	High	Within existing resources	CGSC to lead.
3	Establish a cross organisational working group to oversee implementation and ongoing management. Including establishment of <i>Terms of Reference/MOU</i> to clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations of each agency/group.	High	Within existing resources	CGSC to lead.
4	Confirm the preferred name for the trail (refer to discussion in Section 14).	High	Within existing resources	CGSC to lead.
5	Explore external funding opportunities for signage, promotional material and project launch (e.g. Advancing Country Towns).	High	Within existing resources	CGSC to lead.
6	Establish branding material for the trail (i.e. logo, signage design, etc).	Medium	Allowance \$5,000	CGSC to lead. Costs to be apportioned between each Council (i.e. CGSC 43%, HSC 27% and CoB 30%).
7	Audit the trail to confirm signage requirements (i.e. locations for directional, warning and tourist attraction signs).	Medium	Within existing resources	CGSC to lead.
8	Work with local historians, relevant community groups and indigenous representatives to identify opportunities for interpretive information along the trail route. <i>(NB: Costs for interpretive information are to be determined pending results of the investigations above and confirmation of design/display requirements. External funding may be available to support identified initiatives).</i>	Medium	Initial investigations within existing resources. Costs of interpretive information to be determined.	CGSC to lead.
9	Manufacture and install signage.	Medium	Allowance \$20,250	CGSC to lead. Costs to be apportioned between each Council (i.e. CGSC 43%, HSC 27% and CoB 30%).
10	Establish promotional and marketing material (refer to	Medium	Allowance	CGSC to lead.

Ref #	Action	Priority	Indicative Cost	Responsibility
	Section 20).		\$4,000	Costs to be apportioned between each Council (i.e. CGSC 43%, HSC 27% and CoB 30%).
11	Coordinate project launch and community awareness campaign (including involvement of small townships and businesses along the route).	Medium	Allowance \$2,500	CGSC to lead. Costs to be apportioned between each Council (i.e. CGSC 43%, HSC 27% and CoB 30%).
12	Establish protocols/procedures to monitor levels of use of the trail and community feedback (i.e. impact on small towns).	Low	Within existing resources	CGSC to lead.
13	Ensure signage assets and trail maintenance is incorporated into relevant Council asset management plans and maintenance protocols.	Low	Within existing resources	CGSC, HSC & CoB. Other agencies as required.

23. Conclusion

The Ballarat - Maryborough Heritage Trail is likely to have lower market appeal than the other trail projects forming part of the Crossing Borders Tracks and Trail project due to the on-road nature of the concept. However, the concept still has the capacity to generate a level of tourism and economic return from a relatively modest level of initial investment. Furthermore, ongoing management and operational costs are low.

Therefore, having regard to the relatively low level of investment required, and anticipated tourism, economic, social, recreational and health benefits that could be derived from the project, it is recommended that the concept be implemented and relevant information incorporated into regional tourism promotional material, including as a core component of the Cycle Central Goldfields promotional initiatives.

The Action Plan outlines the recommended key next steps and priorities to assist overall implementation activities.



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