

Walking Trails Classification and Improvement Project

Update no.4 January 2008

The Walking Trails Classification and Improvement Project is funded under 'Go for your life', which is a Victorian Government initiative that aims to promote the health and wellbeing of all Victorians through healthy eating and increased participation in physical activity.

There are two parts to the project:

- Developing a new Standard Classification system for walking trails
- Undertaking upgrades to selected State forest walking trails in Victoria

The Walking Trails Classification and Improvement Project is funded for 4 years and is coordinated through the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).

This edition of the newsletter gives an update on the development of a national classification system for walking trails and some news on openings of walking trails in Gippsland and Merbein (near Mildura).

Towards a national standard

A Discussion Paper was circulated to interstate land management agencies (predominantly Parks agencies) in November 2007. The paper summarised the work done to date in Victoria and asked for comments on developing a national standard. Seven submissions were received from five States and Territories as well as Tourism Australia.

Benefits of developing a national standard include:

- Consistency across Australia leading to better decision making for residents and visitors when choosing trails within their level of ability
- International and domestic visitors will be able to compare trails
- Less rescues and safety incidents

Land management agencies in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria, together with Tourism Australia, have expressed a willingness to work towards a national standard. The DSE Project Officer will continue to work with the remaining states to ascertain and encourage their level of involvement. A Technical Reference Group (TRG) will be established for this purpose and will provide advice to the Walking Trails Classification and Improvement Project regarding the development of a national classification standard for walking trails.

Tracks and Trails Conference Pre-Conference Workshop

March 10 2008

Rosalie Bent and Richard Wadsworth from DSE Victoria will be running a workshop on developing a national standard for walking trails on Monday 10 March 2008 just prior to the Tracks and Trails Conference.

For more information, please visit

<http://www.tracksandtrails.org.au/12.html>.



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Merbein Common Township Link Track

On 18 November 2007 the Merbein Common Township Link Track was opened by Mr John Arnold, Mayor of Mildura Rural City Council. The track links the town of Merbein (near Mildura) with a network of tracks, picnic areas and recreation sites along the Murray River. Interpretation panels along the track tell the history of the site which originally included a racecourse.

Residents and visitors can now walk seamlessly from the Post Office in the centre of town to the riverbank and beyond. DSE contributed \$10,000 to this joint project with the Mallee Catchment Management Authority, Friends of Merbein Common and Yelta Landcare group. DSE's upgrade works were coordinated by Julian Raudino at DSE Mildura.



Australian Alps Walking Track – State forest upgrades

Two upgrades of sections of the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) are near completion. The first upgrade involved re-routing part of the track near Stronach's Camp north of Noojee due to wind throw and forestry issues.

The second upgrade involves installing better facilities including tent platforms at the Mountain Monarchs campsite north of Erica. This section of track is popular as it provides a link between the alpine resort of Mount Baw Baw and the township of Walhalla. A tour operator is now guiding a two day, 40 kilometre walk along this part of the AAWT with an overnight stop at Mountain Monarchs.



DSE Walking Trails Classification and Improvement Project has provided a total of \$25,000 of funding for these two upgrades which have been coordinated by Rob Patrick and Peter West of DSE Noojee and DSE Erica respectively.

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