

# Walking Trails Classification and Improvement Project

Update no. 5 – May 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 regarding the major upgrade of the Ada Tree Scenic Reserve near Warburton.

## Towards a national standard

The parks agencies from each Australian state and territory have agreed to work together towards developing a national system for classifying walking trails. The lead land management agency from each state and territory will also act as an avenue through which their own stakeholders in each state can have their views heard and be involved in the consultation process.

A Technical Reference Group (TRG) has been formed to advise on this aspect of the project. Conditions across Australia vary both in the type of walking trails on offer, weather conditions and likely hazards to be encountered. From potentially cold climate conditions in Tasmania to the wet tropics, a new classification system will have consistency but also some flexibility to deal with the great variety of landscapes across Australia. The TRG will consist of representatives from each State and Territory, as well as Tourism Australia, who also support the project.

The TRG met for the first time in Melbourne on 14 April 2008. Agreement was reached on the next stage of the project which will involve testing of various existing classification systems as well as some 'mock ups' of potential new systems.

A consistent system across Australia will have benefits for both domestic and international tourists as well as residents. Tourists in particular will be able to compare trails across States and Territories and choosing a trail will be a 'one stop shopping' experience where walkers will be able to confidently choose trails within their level of ability and experience.



TRG members from left: Bronte Leak, SA Trails Unit; Jacqueline Hindmarsh, NT Parks and Wildlife Service; Chris Day, NT Parks and Wildlife Service; Susana Heraud, Tourism Australia; Rosalie Bent, Dept of Sustainability and Environment (Vic); Carolyn Littlefair, NSW Parks and Wildlife Service; Richard Wadsworth, Dept of Sustainability and Environment (Vic); David Walker, Qld Parks and Wildlife Service; Stuart Lennox, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service.

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## Tracks and Trails Conference Workshop

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) ran a pre-conference workshop for land management agency staff in conjunction with the Tracks and Trails Conference in Maroochydore in March 2008.

The workshop was run using a discussion format in small groups. Questions and issues were allocated to tables of up to 10 participants with a table host to facilitate discussion, record views and act as spokesperson.

Participants rotated tables three times during the workshop and chose tables where the issues in question were of interest to them. Issues discussed included the benefits of developing a national classification system for walking trails, information needs relating to particular areas of Australia, developing a system that is meaningful for both urban and rural trails and how best to involve a system of disabled access.

For a more detailed analysis, please contact the Project Officer below.

## Ada Tree Scenic Reserve receives upgrade

Upgrade works at the Ada Tree Scenic Reserve have commenced. A new car park, picnic area, trailhead and interpretation facility is being constructed that will enhance the arrival experience and the amenity for visitors. The Ada Tree is an old growth Mountain Ash thought to be about 300-400 years old. The Ada Tree is a 20 minute walk through the rainforest from the car park and picnic area, and is approximately 19 kilometres south of Warburton and 24 kilometres north of Powelltown. The works are being undertaken by Sure Constructions of Warragul.

The Island Creek Walk from the car park to the Ada Tree viewing platform will be upgraded as Phase 2 of the project. Please note that the site is currently closed to the public for safety reasons while the work takes place. It is anticipated that the site will re-open in July 2008 with greatly improved facilities that will allow visitors to fully experience the heritage and significant environment of the area.

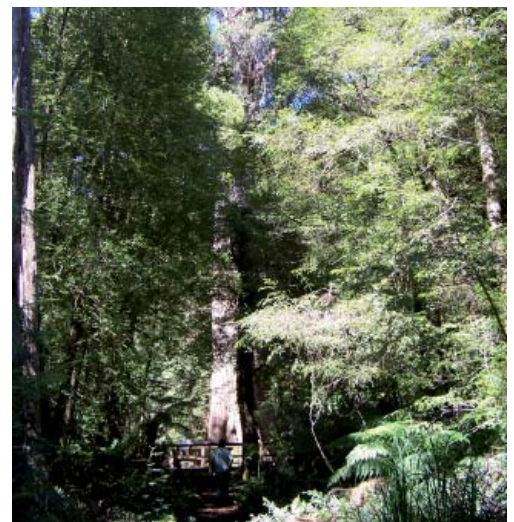


*The Ada Tree*

## For more information

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