



WMTB online information session – Monday 30 November 2020, Saturday 5 December 2020.

Questions asked and answers from the project team

Don't forget to share your feedback about the project on the online interactive map to help inform ongoing project development and preparation of the EES.

Visit rideyarranges.com.au or request a hard copy information and feedback pack by calling 1300 368 333.

Question	Answer
If everything goes well from here what is the projected opening date?	Construction would only begin after the Environment Effects Statement (EES) process is complete and after all relevant planning approvals are obtained. We expect this to be in the second half of 2021. Trails would progressively open from within three months of construction starting.
Will there be improvement to the Dee Rd access to the trailhead? It is currently a single lane from McNamaras Rd to the carpark and with increased traffic either a dedicated bike path or a widening of the pavement will be needed for the safety of bikes and drivers.	We are not anticipating a large number of riders would access the trails from Dee Rd. Council would monitor road usage and respond as needed to address safety concerns.
Will there be a shuttle bus from the town(s) to take mountain bikers up the mountains as the only means of accessing the trails.	<p>The trail network has been designed as a ride-in, ride-out experience from Warburton and Wesburn. Shuttle bus operations are also proposed to deliver riders and their bikes to the trail heads at Mt Donna Buang Summit, and Mount Tugwell Summit. This helps make the trails more accessible for a wider range of users – from beginners to experienced riders.</p> <p>Shuttle buses with trailers for bikes would operate daily and could accommodate hundreds of riders per day. Proposed shuttle bus routes use Warburton Highway, Donna Buang Road, Old Warburton Road, Edwardstown Road and Mt Bride Road - connecting all four trail heads.</p> <p>For more information view the Trail Heads and Shuttling factsheet.</p>
Will there be a cap on daily MTB users managed by a pre-booking only process?	No cap on daily shuttle bus users is proposed.
Will wildlife along Old Warburton Rd be protected from MBD traffic by mechanisms such as including the mountains on the north side of Warburton Hwy as part of the National Park?	<p>Extending National Park designated areas is outside of the scope of the project and the EES. The project will not be looking at extending the boundary of the existing National Park.</p> <p>For more information view the Biodiversity and Habitat discussion paper.</p>

<p>Will shuttles eventually be offered at this riding destination, similar to what is offered by Blue Dirt in the VIC High Country? This is a great way to re-invest the revenue back into trail maintenance and they're always extremely popular - just ask Blue Dirt.</p>	<p>Shuttle buses with trailers for bikes would operate daily and could accommodate hundreds of riders per day. Proposed shuttle bus routes use Warburton Highway, Donna Buang Road, Old Warburton Road, Edwardstown Road and Mt Bride Road - connecting all four trail heads.</p> <p>For more information view the Trail Heads and Shuttling factsheet.</p>
<p>Why can't the more provocative National Park be separated from the less controversial State Park components for the EES, thus commencing those trails?</p>	<p>The EES process requires all aspects of the project to be considered under the same process at the same time. No works can start until the EES process is completed and all necessary approvals obtained.</p>
<p>Can the Council proceed with infrastructure upgrades that will benefit the town anyway, and reduce opposition to the MTB destination once residents see realistic upgrades that will make visitor numbers less impactful?</p>	<p>No works on the project, including local infrastructure upgrades proposed as part of the project, can begin until the EES process is completed and all necessary approvals obtained.</p>
<p>Why can't this issue be finally resolved with a simple plebiscite that allows only locals to vote on the park's future (ratepayers and permanent residents). It's their home and they are most affected by this initiative so let the locals decide whether or not it goes ahead.</p>	<p>There are well established, formal planning processes which the State and Commonwealth government have determined is appropriate for assessing the project, in line with relevant legislation.</p> <p>The Minister for Planning determined that an EES is required for the Project and the Commonwealth Government determined that approval would be required under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), and accredited the EES process for the related assessment.</p> <p>There will be the opportunity for locals to view the EES and make a formal submission when it is publicly exhibited around mid-2021. Formal feedback including written submissions will be considered by an independent Inquiry Panel and public hearing. In the meantime, we encourage local people to provide feedback now which can be considered in preparation of the EES.</p> <p>For more information view the EES factsheet.</p>
<p>Will this be another ambitious attempt to bring life to a small country town, health and wellbeing to literally thousands upon thousands of people and generations to come, only to be shut down by uneducated Councillors interested in their own circle of life, rather than an open mind to what can potentially be a massive pickup for an otherwise sleepy region just waiting to be awoken.</p>	<p>Yarra Ranges Council is committed to the delivery of the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination Project.</p> <p>Stage 1 of the project is fully funded at \$11.3 million. Yarra Ranges Council has committed \$2.7 million and received \$300,000 from the Warburton and Yarra Junction Community Bank, with additional funding from the State and Federal Government.</p> <p>Once the trails are operating, the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination is forecast to inject \$31.2 million to the local economy.</p>
<p>What proportion of intermediate and advanced trails are planned? My preference is for natural, technical trails over groomed machine-made trails. Will there be a balance of natural and groomed trails?</p>	<p>The trail network has been designed to appeal to riders of all skill levels from beginner to advanced, across a range of differing terrains, outlooks and environments.</p> <p>For more information view the Trails Design and Operation factsheet.</p>

<p>How will works minimise impacts on Cool Temperate Rainforest and avoid damaging roots and branches of Myrtle Beach trees? Not doing so will see areas impacted by Myrtle Wilt.</p> <p>How will biosecurity issues be addressed to stop the spread of dangerous plant pathogens and pest weed species?</p>	<p>Myrtle Wilt occurs when a fungus enters a beech tree through an exposed wound, naturally caused when tree limbs are broken off, for example during a storm.</p> <p>Although a naturally occurring process, the presence of Myrtle Wilt can be increased by human disturbance, for example logging.</p> <p>Strategies to minimise the introduction or spread of Myrtle Wilt will be identified in the EES and are expected to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minimising the length of trail through Cool Temperate Rainforest ● Limiting construction activity to hand tools only in sensitive areas ● Conducting trail walks and mapping with ecologists before construction to clearly identify any signs of myrtle wilt ● Provide, and encourage use of, wash down facilities for mountain bikes to prevent the spread of disease
<p>The Mount Donna Buang Wingless Stonefly is found nowhere else apart from a 3-4 square kilometre home range. Tracks have been removed from its habitat in the past due to the impact on this critically endangered species. How will this track not cause the decline in the MDBWS?</p> <p>Are you able to move the track from the home range of this critically endangered species?</p>	<p>Strategies to avoid or minimise impacts on the Stonefly will be identified in the EES and are expected to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Avoiding areas of known and potential habitat for Mt Donna Buang Wingless Stonefly ● Aligning the trails as close as possible to the verge of Mt Donna Buang Road ● Ensuring elevated trails are constructed to minimise ground disturbance. <p>We are currently investigating potential alternative routes which would help reduce impacts on this important species.</p> <p>For more information view the Biodiversity and Habitat discussion paper.</p>
<p>What can nearby residents do to help support the EES process?</p>	<p>There will be the opportunity for locals to view the EES and make a formal submission when it is publicly exhibited around mid-2021. Formal feedback including written submissions will be considered by an independent Inquiry Panel and public hearing. In the meantime, we encourage local people to provide feedback now which can be considered in preparation of the EES.</p> <p>For more information view the EES factsheet.</p>
<p>Do you have any details on proposed visitation levels, car parking, shuttle facilities, and directional indications on trail design?</p>	<p>When complete in 2031 we expect around 128,000 visits to the region per year.</p> <p>For more information about visitation levels view the project benefits factsheet.</p> <p>You can find more information about car parking and shuttle facilities in the Trail Heads and Shuttling factsheet.</p>
<p>How do you expect to control the safety aspects of having mountain bikes so close to an equestrian park the only equestrian park that is free to use in the valley? Why should mountain bikes be given access</p>	<p>Yarra Ranges Council is continuing the development of the Wesburn Master Plan, which will consider all user groups.</p>

to land that was taken away from the pony club for environmental reasons?	Clear signage within the equestrian park and along the trails would help to reduce the likelihood of any safety risks between bike and horse riders.
When will the new final build date be completed?	Construction would only begin after the Environment Effects Statement (EES) process is complete and after all relevant planning approvals are obtained. We expect this to be in the second half of 2021. Trails would progressively open from within three months of construction starting.
Will there be MTB service stands in the trail?	Service stands and bike wash facilities would be available at Trail heads. For more information view the Trail Heads and Shuttling factsheet.
Is there a reason it cannot be built on the less sensitive north side of the mountain?	The project is being developed in partnership with Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning with input from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Melbourne Water and the Upper Yarra Community Enterprise. Since 2016, each of these organisations and other key stakeholders have provided direct input into the development of the project, identified sensitive areas through a step-by-step design process and advised on field studies and other technical investigations. This process identified a sensitive water catchment located on the north of Mount Donna Buang. The project team has been working closely with Melbourne Water to Ensure waterway protection and have incorporated standards and controls to mitigate possible impacts on water catchments. For more information about sensitive design development view the Waterways and Catchments discussion paper.
How many stages are there?	The project is proposed to be delivered in two stages. Stage 1 is funded to deliver approximately 110km of trails and supporting infrastructure.
What is the total length of tracks new/old/illegal?	The total length of the new trail network is 186km. Approximately 14.9km of this is existing trails which would be merged into the network.
How much has already been spent on preparing to date?	An EES is a well-established assessment process that provides a comprehensive framework for assessing the environmental effects of major projects in Victoria. We expect the EES process to cost approximately \$2 million in total. While it is an expensive process, it is important to ensure all the right checks and balances are in place to avoid or minimise adverse effects that could result from the project, before works go ahead. Once the trails are operating, the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination is forecast to inject \$31.2 million to the local economy.
What happens if negotiations with the likes of the golf club fall through?	Yarra Ranges Council is negotiating with the Golf Club to secure space to develop the trail head and a trail passing through the golf course. Council is working with the club to

	<p>minimise impacts to golfers and reach an agreement that will benefit both parties.</p>
<p>We have been talking about these trails for years now, when will we be seeing a start to construction?</p>	<p>Construction would only begin after the Environment Effects Statement (EES) process is complete and after all relevant planning approvals are obtained. We expect this to be in the second half of 2021. Trails would progressively open from within three months of construction starting.</p>
<p>How do you plan to enhance our unique sense of identity which is based in restorative nature tourism beside the river or in the mountains while allowing for all this green blur tourism? How do we avoid over tourism with this project?</p>	<p>Now is a great time for people to raise concerns and ideas for addressing those concerns, so that this can be considered in preparation of the EES.</p>
<p>What is the capacity of car parking available at trail head locations?</p>	<p>Under proposed plans, the existing car park at the Warburton Golf Course would be updated from 30 spaces to accommodate 180 cars as well as a pickup point and shelter for shuttle services.</p> <p>There are currently xx parking spaces at the Mount Donna Buang Summit. Improvements are proposed within the current footprint of the existing visitor site. No additional car parking spaces are proposed.</p> <p>Minor upgrades to the Wesburn Park trail head car park are planned as part of the project. A Wesburn Park Master Plan is being developed by Yarra Ranges Council and will consider the needs of all users.</p> <p>Drop off bays are proposed at the Mount Tugwell summit.</p> <p>For more information view the Trail Heads and Shuttling factsheet.</p>
<p>What is the fire plan?</p>	<p>The project will work closely with emergency services to develop an Emergency Management Plan that will investigate options to keep riders safe and respond to emergency incidents quickly.</p>
<p>Will there be any mitigation measures put in place for bike trail use on high fire dangers days? Will current fire refuges be upgraded to account for any additional tourists visiting the Warburton area?</p>	<p>The project will work closely with emergency services to develop an Emergency Management Plan that will investigate options to keep riders safe and respond to emergency incidents quickly.</p> <p>Trails will likely be closed on code red fire risk days as is currently done in other National Park and State Forest areas.</p>
<p>What will the council do to ensure residents can continue to use their town and its facilities when visitors increase further?</p>	<p>The EES will assess potential impacts of the project, including traffic, congestion and parking.</p> <p>Changes to the design may result from technical study findings or through the EES process. The project team is continuing to study potential impacts and consider ways to avoid or minimise them.</p> <p>A Wesburn Park Master Plan is also being developed by Yarra Ranges Council and will consider the needs of all users.</p>

	<p>Now is a great time for people to raise concerns and ideas for addressing those concerns, so that this can be considered in preparation of the EES.</p>
<p>When will there be formal meetings/ referendums (suggested many times) with council/ project managers and the local residents so they can attend? So far there have been meetings for stakeholders and hand-picked groups from council but nothing in the way of consultation with local residents according to the Act. The local residents will be affected everyday of their lives with this project.</p>	<p>Community engagement is an important part of developing the project.</p> <p>Since 2013 Council has engaged with the local community through a wide range of activities including online information and surveys, stakeholder and resident meetings, face to face information sessions, social media, email and phone calls.</p> <p>A range of changes have been made to the plans in response to this engagement. Consultation up to 2020 is detailed in a Community Engagement Report available on Ride Yarra Ranges.</p> <p>There will be the opportunity for locals to view the EES and make a formal submission when it is publicly exhibited around mid-2021. Formal feedback including written submissions will be considered by an independent Inquiry Panel and public hearing. In the meantime, we encourage local people to provide feedback now which can be considered in preparation of the EES.</p> <p>For more information view the EES factsheet.</p>
<p>What is the expected timing for EES exhibition/panel?</p>	<p>The EES will be publicly exhibited around mid-2021.</p>
<p>Why is the process so delayed? There is so much to gain and the consultation process is exhausting. There is obvious benefit for the local community, so why not take the expert opinions, and stop listening to locals that will say anything to stop the project. Independent advice, Independent decision. Question is, what is the timeline to commencement, and what hurdles are yet to be covered?</p>	<p>Construction would only begin after the Environment Effects Statement (EES) process is complete and after all relevant planning approvals are obtained. We expect this to be in the second half of 2021.</p>
<p>What provisions are being made for emergency medical evacuations?</p>	<p>The project will work closely with emergency services to develop an Emergency Management Plan that will investigate options to keep riders safe and respond to emergency incidents quickly.</p>
<p>How will short stay accommodation be handled and also for the availability of housing stock for locals and would be residents?</p>	<p>As part of the project's EES documentation a Social Impact Assessment will be undertaken.</p> <p>The Assessment would address impacts to the housing market, including availability of rental properties within the project area.</p>
<p>What provisions are being made for parking?</p>	<p>Under proposed plans, the existing car park at the Warburton Golf Course would be updated from 30 spaces to accommodate 180 cars as well as a pickup point and shelter for shuttle services.</p> <p>Improvements at the Mt Donna Buang Summit are proposed within the current footprint of the existing visitor site. No additional car parking spaces are proposed.</p> <p>Minor upgrades to the Wesburn Park trail head car park are planned as part of the project. A Wesburn Park Master Plan is being developed by Yarra Ranges Council and will consider the needs of all users.</p>

	<p>Drop off bays are proposed at the Mount Tugwell summit.</p> <p>For more information view the Trail Heads and Shuttling factsheet.</p>
Will there be an increased police presence for the problems of an increased population load?	We don't anticipate a significant increase in law and order issues but will continue to work with local police to monitor and respond to issues as they arise.
What provisions are being made to prevent the increased tourist load causing bushfires and what provisions are being made for evacuations in the event of a bush fire?	The project will work closely with emergency services to develop an Emergency Management Plan that will investigate options to keep riders safe and respond to emergency incidents quickly.
Details of the proposed management model post construction-Inc. where the \$ needed to manage and maintain the project will come from and what commitments Local Government-State agencies have made to meet ongoing running costs into the future. Thanks	<p>Council is currently assessing the best management model for the operation of the trail network.</p> <p>The operation of the trails would likely be a council led operation, working closely with state government agencies including DELWP, Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water.</p> <p>The trails are likely to cost approximately \$200,000 per year to operate.</p> <p>The trail network also provides great opportunity to provide revenue, through licensing, merchandise and in particular partnerships and sponsorships.</p>
Why should local long-term rental residents be forced to move from their home for the benefit of this project?	The EES will include a social impact assessment, which will consider possible community impacts such as changes to the character and population of the town and to housing availability. Feedback from the community will be considered in this assessment.
As Warburton has only one road in and out - How can 900 extra vehicles not count as extra congestion especially in one of Australia's highest fire danger zones. Would this not be class as dangerous in an emergency?	The project will work closely with emergency services to develop an Emergency Management Plan that will investigate options to keep riders safe and respond to emergency incidents quickly.
Do the panellists think it's ethical for the council to force the 44 residents of Old Warburton to live in the middle of an MTB park without their consent?	<p>During the planning phases of the project, consultation with Old Warburton residents has led to a number of design changes to reduce the proximity of the trails to residents.</p> <p>The EES will include a social impact assessment, which will consider all impacts such as changes to the character and population of the town and to housing availability. Feedback from the community will be considered in this assessment.</p>
When are the negotiations with the likes of the golf club expected to be finalised?	Yarra Ranges Council is negotiating with the Golf Club to secure space to develop the trail head and a trail passing through the golf course. Council is working with the club to minimise impacts to golfers and reach an agreement that will benefit both parties
Will rates be affected?	No, we don't anticipate this project would have any impacts on rates for residents within the Yarra Ranges Council area.
What would the sponsorship opportunities from the mountain biking community be? Examples?	<p>Sponsorship opportunities will be looked at following construction of the network.</p> <p>The EES will include a social impact assessment, which will consider possible community impacts such as changes to</p>

	the character and population of the town and to housing availability. Feedback from the community will be considered in this assessment.
Will e-bikes be allowed on the planned network?	Yes, as long as the bikes meet the appropriate standard, then they would be allowed on the network.
Has the Minister approved a final EES scope doc yet? thanks	The final Scoping Requirements, which set out the scope of the EES have been released by the Minister for Planning and can be found on the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) website: https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects/projects/warburton-mountain-bike-destination
As far as housing goes & comparing Warburton to the likes of Derby, surely there needs to be an acknowledgement about the differences between the 2 towns & the availability of vacant housing. Are there measures that can be brought in to protect or restrict the number of Airbnb's in the area?	The EES will include a social impact assessment, which will consider possible community impacts such as changes to the character and population of the town and to housing availability. Feedback from the community will be considered in this assessment.