



warburton
MOUNTAIN BIKE DESTINATION

Environment Effects Statement
Summary Brochure

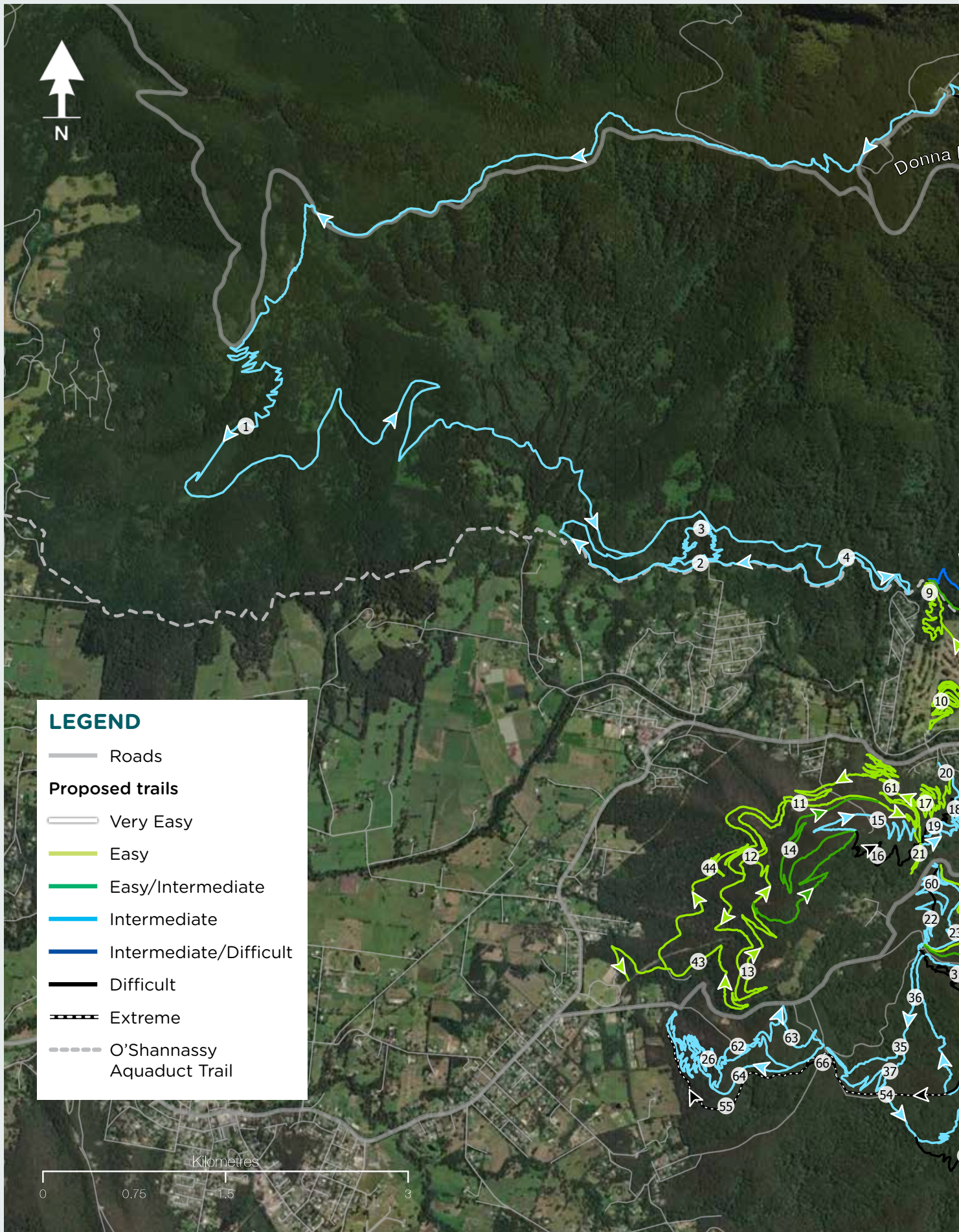


Figure 1: Project map



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1

Introduction

This brochure provides a summary of the content and key findings of the Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination project (the Project).

This brochure is intended to assist readers in navigating the EES and describes where additional information on topics of interest can be found. The EES includes:

- A short summary of the EES and findings (the Executive Summary)
- A main report, providing a comprehensive response to the scoping requirements; and
- Technical appendices providing details of the study investigations underpinning the main report.

This executive summary describes why an EES was required, how the EES is exhibited, where to find and read the EES and guidance around how to make a submission.



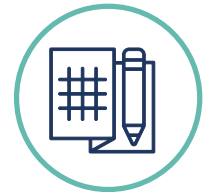
2010

The idea was raised by local community



2013

A feasibility study was completed



2016

Concept design and master planning



2018

Further community engagement



2020

EES referrals

Figure 2: Project timeline



Warburton Mountain Bike Destination

A world-class mountain biking destination in the heart of the Yarra Ranges

Yarra Ranges Council is planning a world-class mountain bike destination in Warburton. Located around 70 kilometres east of Melbourne, The Warburton Mountain Bike Destination would feature more than 170 kilometres of trails across Mount Donna Buang, Mount Little Joe and Mount Tugwell. The project is being delivered in partnership with Parks Victoria, The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, Melbourne Water, and the Upper Yarra Community Enterprise.

Nestled amongst the mountains, the Project would attract visitors from around the world to experience Warburton's natural beauty and relaxing atmosphere. It will also create more jobs and help grow the local economy.

With a steady growth in mountain bike participation, land managers are seeing a significant increase in informal trail construction and use in the region. This, often illegal practice can lead to poor environmental outcomes and increase safety risks for users. Formalising the activity and supporting growth in participation would allow Yarra Ranges Council and its project partners to construct and operate the trails in a way that best protects the natural environment and local features Warburton is known for.

The Project will provide more recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors of all ages and riding abilities and improve the health and wellbeing of the community by supporting strong connection with the environment.

In 2031 when all stages of the project are complete, the trail network is expected to bring in substantial economic benefits to Warburton. Injecting more than \$48 million a year into the local economy, creating 84 jobs during construction and 229 operational jobs.

Funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian governments, and contributions from Yarra Ranges Council and the Upper Yarra Community Enterprise, the project would create a world-class mountain biking hub set in the natural beauty of Warburton.

The idea for the trail network first came from local riders and was supported through the Parks Victoria "Healthy Parks, Healthy People" program.

Since then, Yarra Ranges Council has completed a feasibility study, developed a project Master Plan and engaged extensively with the community and key stakeholders to refine the project design.

More than 170 kilometres of trails are proposed across three main zones: Mount Donna Buang, Mount Little Joe and Mount Tugwell. The trails would connect with the popular Lilydale-Warburton Rail Trail and the O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail.

Four entrances or 'trail heads' would provide facilities for riders, including car parking, picnic areas, toilets and bike wash stations. The main trail head and visitor's hub would be located at Warburton Golf Course, at the base of Mount Donna Buang. Shuttle buses would transfer riders to the Mount Donna Buang summit and Mount Tugwell trail head.

Once complete, the project would be eligible for designation as a Gold-Level Ride Centre by the International Mountain Bike Association, which would make Warburton the only Gold-Level centre in Australia and one of only three outside the USA.

In 2020, the project was referred to the Victorian Minister for Planning under the Environment Effects Act 1978, and it was determined that assessment was required through the preparation of an environment effects statement (EES).

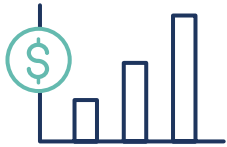
This EES presents an integrated assessment of the project, to allow stakeholders and decision-makers to consider the potential environmental effects of the construction and operation of the project. The EES outlines how the project design has been developed in response to technical assessments and community feedback to avoid and minimise impacts on key sensitivities and protect important local features.

Project objectives

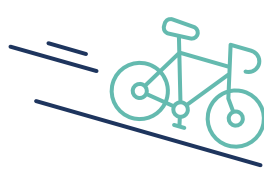
More than just a weekend activity

Yarra Ranges Council aims to strengthen Warburton and the Upper Yarra as an eco-tourism and outdoor recreation hub, improving economic resilience and local jobs growth, while supporting positive health and social outcomes for the community.

The Warburton Mountain Bike Destination has been developed and driven by key project objectives, including:



Facilitate tourism growth and associated positive economic and jobs growth in the Yarra Valley region



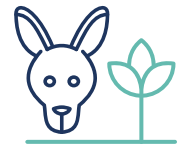
Create iconic mountain bike trails eligible for International Mountain Bike Association Gold Ride Centre status



Create spectacular riding experiences that have a competitive advantage over existing mountain bike destinations and leverage Warburton's beautiful township, rural valley and surrounding forested slopes



Enhance the health and well-being of the community



Maintain the significant biodiversity and heritage values within the project area and provide opportunities for the community to connect with and appreciate their importance.

The Project would contribute to Warburton's nature-based visitor economy.

Warburton and the Upper Yarra Valley has experienced significant economic hardship in recent years and is experiencing an economic downturn.

The region, which has traditionally been supported by significant extractive, forestry, tourism and manufacturing industries, is now a community in economic stagnation.

More recently, the local economy, which is reliant on weekend daily visitation and short-break tourism from Melbourne, has been significantly impacted by the COVID19 pandemic.

The town of Warburton is home to just over 2,000 people and supports a range of shops, cafes and other local businesses, and is already a popular destination for visitors to the Yarra Valley.

Located only 70 kilometres from Melbourne, with over four million people living within an hour's drive, it is well-positioned as a tourist destination. In addition, the proximity to an international airport increases the ease of travel for overseas visitors.

With outdoor recreation facilities in the region already at capacity, the project would help meet the current demand for outdoor recreation, outdoor education, support existing tourism and generate further economic and social benefits for the region.

The Project will capitalise on existing informal mountain bike trails and transform the region into an eco-tourism and outdoor recreation hub with improved, purpose built and professionally maintained trails.

When fully developed in 2031



\$48 million
Annual spend



84
Construction jobs



229
Operational jobs



221,454
Trail users per year

Figure 3: Economic benefits



The design of the Destination has been locally tailored and informed by international experience.

The Project's development has been informed by an extensive feasibility assessment, technical investigations, stakeholder and community feedback and economic modelling.

Inspired by ski resorts around the world, the proposed trail network would radiate from the centre of Warburton to provide a ride in, ride out experience. International examples show that mountain-bike destinations attract more visitors and offer greater benefits to local economies and communities when the trail network is located close to townships.

This network design provides easy access to Warburton's local services and amenities for riders and their families, increasing their length of stay and improving economic outcomes.

Benefits for local businesses

Travelling riders will often spend four to five days at a large mountain bike destination, extending Warburton's weekend visitor market into the weekdays and benefiting local accommodation, hospitality, retail and transport operators. While most riders would stay in accommodation close to the trail network, they would distribute their spending across the region, often taking breaks from riding for day trips to visit other regional attractions.

Once fully operational, the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination is forecast to inject around \$48.6 million a year into the local economy.

Modelling of the project's economic benefits has taken into account a reduction in international tourism due to COVID-19.

YARRA RANGES COUNCIL

Yarra Ranges Council has a vision to combine Warburton's scenic natural environment and village atmosphere with recreational opportunities, promoting a healthy community and attracting national and international tourism.

Yarra Ranges Council has a population of around 160,000 residents across 55 suburbs, townships and small communities. Home to 13,620 businesses, employing 41,700 people, Council's local planning approach recognises that each community is unique and embraces the diversity and strength of local communities to support their health, safety and wellbeing needs.

Yarra Ranges Council actively promotes interaction with the natural environment and provides residents with support, resources and education across a range of projects and programs.

Yarra Ranges Council is committed to protecting the municipality's iconic features and natural character, and strengthening its local economy through environmentally sustainable activities.

Health, wellbeing and social benefits

Carefully developed to preserve community amenity and significant environmental and cultural values, the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination would be a significant attraction for people looking to stay active, connect with nature and spend time with family and friends.

The trail network includes a mix of trail difficulty levels and has been designed to be an inclusive facility catering to all abilities and skill levels.

Yarra Ranges Council research indicates only around half of its population meets physical activity guidelines. Improving community access to recreation facilities would encourage increased levels of physical activity, health and wellbeing.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused global shifts which are being felt locally and provide even more impetus for the project's development:

- Rising unemployment and economic pressures
- A resurgence in domestic tourism
- Renewed focus on health and wellbeing
- A strong desire to reconnect with nature.

Building the trails

Mountain bike trails are built using small construction equipment and make use of naturally occurring slopes and ground contours to weave their way through the landscape, avoiding trees and sensitive values.

Before construction starts, a detailed pre-construction walk-through with the trail builder and technical experts is completed to inspect conditions, confirm exact alignments, identify environmental values to be protected, and agree on construction methods.

The average trail construction width would be between 1.2 and 3.3 metres, and have an average operational width (ride line) of 0.6 to 1.2 metres. Once the trails are built, the temporarily disturbed construction area along the trail would be able to regenerate, with native vegetation.

Due to the minor nature of trail construction, small, mobile construction crews would be used to build the trails. With the exception of works at trail heads, crews would not require long-term construction areas, and would follow the trail alignments. Construction impacts are expected to be generally short term in specific locations (sometimes only a number of days).

Subject to obtaining all the required regulatory approvals, the construction of Stage One of the project is expected to commence by mid-2022 and take around 18 months to complete. Stage Two is subject to funding and would take approximately 12 months to build.

Further detail regarding the construction of the Project can be found in **EES Chapter 3: Project Description**.





3

Why is an EES required?

The *Environment Effects Act 1978* provides for the assessment of projects capable of having a significant effect on the environment through preparation of an EES. The EES process informs subsequent statutory decisions under Victorian legislation.

On 20 December 2019, Yarra Ranges Council referred the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination to the Victorian Minister for Planning.

On 21 May 2020, the Minister for Planning issued a decision that the project is to be assessed through the preparation of an EES. The reasons for the decision include:

- The Project has the potential for significant environmental effects, in particular on native vegetation, flora and fauna species and communities listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act) and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), as well as environmentally sensitive waterways.
- An EES is warranted to provide an integrated, robust and transparent process to assess the proposal's effects and associated uncertainties

and to evaluate effectiveness of the proposed avoidance, mitigation, management and offsetting measures, prior to any statutory approval decisions.

Decisions on the following primary approvals required under Victorian legislation will be informed by the outcomes of the EES:

- Approval of amendments to the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme to facilitate the use and development of the project under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic) by the Minister for Planning
- Approval for works within a National Park under the *National Parks Act 1975* (Vic) by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
- Approval for works on a waterway under the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) by Melbourne Water

Additionally, approval of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic) by the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

The *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) provides the legal framework to protect and manage designated Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES). Under the EPBC Act, if the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment decides that a project is likely to have a significant impact on MNES, the project becomes a 'controlled action' that must be assessed and approved by the Minister before it can proceed.

Yarra Ranges Council referred the project to the Commonwealth Government under the EPBC Act on 19 May 2020. The Commonwealth Department for Agriculture, Water and Environment issued a decision on 16 June 2020 that the project is a controlled action under the EPBC Act. The relevant controlling provision under the EPBC Act is "listed threatened species and communities".

The EES process is accredited to assess impacts on MNES under the EPBC Act through the Bilateral Assessment Agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of Victoria. The Commonwealth Minister for the Environment will make the EPBC Act approval decision after considering the Minister for Planning's assessment under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

Details of required project approvals are presented in **Chapter 5: Legislative framework**.

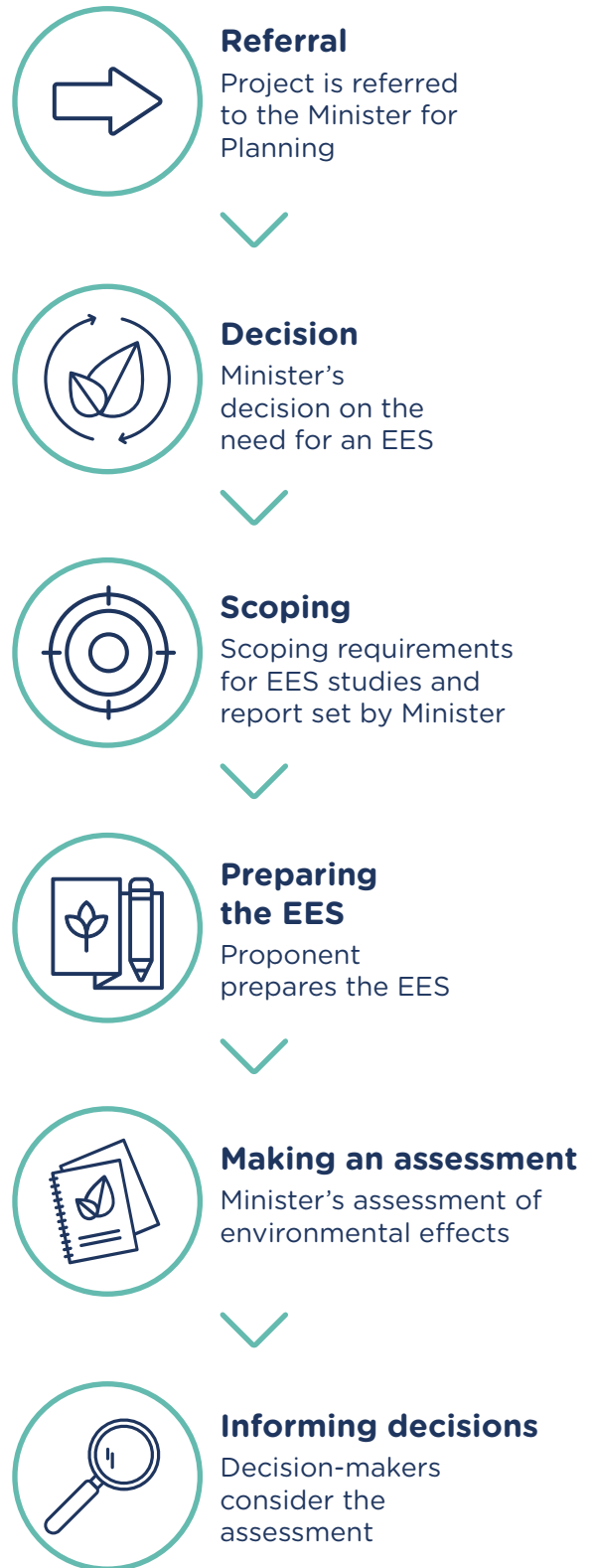


Figure 4: Planning timeline



4

Approach to impact assessment

The framework for assessment of impacts

To ensure a consistent and transparent approach to the evaluation of potential impacts on the environment, an assessment framework was developed for the EES.

The key components of the assessment framework are:

- Evaluation framework - the framework for evaluation of environmental effects is captured in the scoping requirements, which include the EES evaluation objectives that identify the desired environmental outcome and relevant policy and legislation
- Assessment approach - the process for undertaking the technical specialist assessments including an assessment of existing conditions, risk assessment to screen for key aspects of assessment, impact assessment, refinement of design and development of mitigation measures
- Project development - the iterative approach to the progression of the project design (including from the above assessment) as a result of the findings of the technical specialist assessments and community and stakeholder feedback.

The assessment approach included consideration of the potential for cumulative impacts which could arise where other major projects are constructed within the same geographic area in a similar period.

Information on how impacts are assessed and managed are included in **Chapter 6: EES assessment framework**.

Consultation

Community consultation has been used to shape the project since its inception and is a requirement during the EES process. A public consultation plan was prepared to guide Yarra Ranges Council engagement with community and key project stakeholders specific to the EES. A range of consultation activities were undertaken to understand community and stakeholder views, ideas and concerns. Engagement specific to the EES was undertaken in November - December 2020 and in March - April 2021 to:

- Inform the community and stakeholders about the project, the EES process and opportunities for participation
- Help communities and other interested stakeholders understand the project by providing useful and accessible information about project

objectives, benefits, principles guiding design and development, and work done to identify, understand and address impacts.

- Encourage participation and seek targeted input during the preparation of the EES to identify potential issues, gain local insight and seek feedback on measures that respond to stakeholder concerns.
- Demonstrate how community and stakeholder feedback has been considered in the development of the project and the EES.

Participants were asked to provide feedback on the project's potential impacts, ideas for improvements and areas of importance, using tools including an online interactive map, online surveys, a hard copy feedback form, and online and local community sessions. This feedback was used to inform the technical assessments undertaken for the EES.

Further information on project consultation including issues raised and how these were addressed is included in **Chapter 7: Communication and engagement**.

Technical studies

An overview of the results of the six specialist technical studies (which evaluate the potential environmental effects of the project) is provided in Section 6.0. These studies are:

- Biodiversity and Habitats
- Surface Water, Groundwater and Geotechnical Hazards
- Heritage
- Land Use and Planning (with supporting landscape and visual, air quality and noise studies)
- Socio-economic
- Transport

All technical reports are available with the **EES**. Please read these reports to understand your interests before making a submission.

Hierarchy for environmental management

Effective management of potential environmental impacts is central to the EES process. Environmental management is applied iteratively throughout the EES process through the use of the environmental management hierarchy.

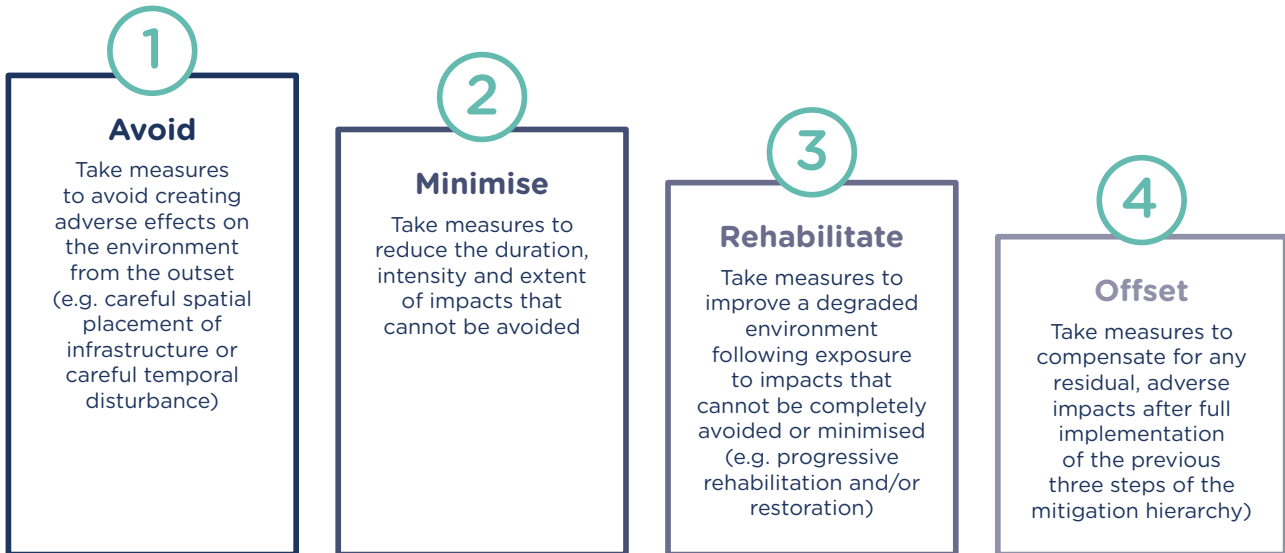


Figure 5: Hierarchy for environmental management

As the technical studies have progressed, impacts have been identified and mitigation of these impacts are considered in accordance with the hierarchy. Avoidance of the impact is the first control applied. In some instances where avoidance cannot be achieved, investigations then progress to considering how to minimise, rehabilitate and lastly, offset the impact.

Information on how impacts are assessed and managed are included in **Chapter 6: EES assessment framework**.



5

Project alternatives

During the project development process, consideration was given to feasible trail alternatives for trails where there is potential for significant environmental impact. Through a screening process that considered ecological, heritage and socio-economic factors, trails that warranted an investigation of alternatives were identified.

Trail 1 (Drop-a-K) was identified as a very high priority for investigation of alternatives due to significant ecological sensitivities near the trail, including Leadbeater's Possum, Mount Donna Buang Wingless Stonefly and Cool Temperate Rainforest. An alternative to Trail 1 (comprising Trails 45, 46 and 47) was identified with these individual trails each rated high priority. It was therefore decided that both Trail 1 and the alternative (Trails 45, 46 and 47) would be fully assessed and compared within the EES to evaluate both trail options and to determine whether potential biodiversity impacts could be effectively managed.

During the trail alternatives screening process, all trails were rated moderate or low impact on socio economic and heritage and further examination of alternatives was not considered required. Heritage and socio-economic issues are addressed in the full impact assessment presented in the EES, including identification of further avoidance and minimisation measures where necessary.



Further information on this work is provided in the **EES Chapter 4: Project development and alternatives**.

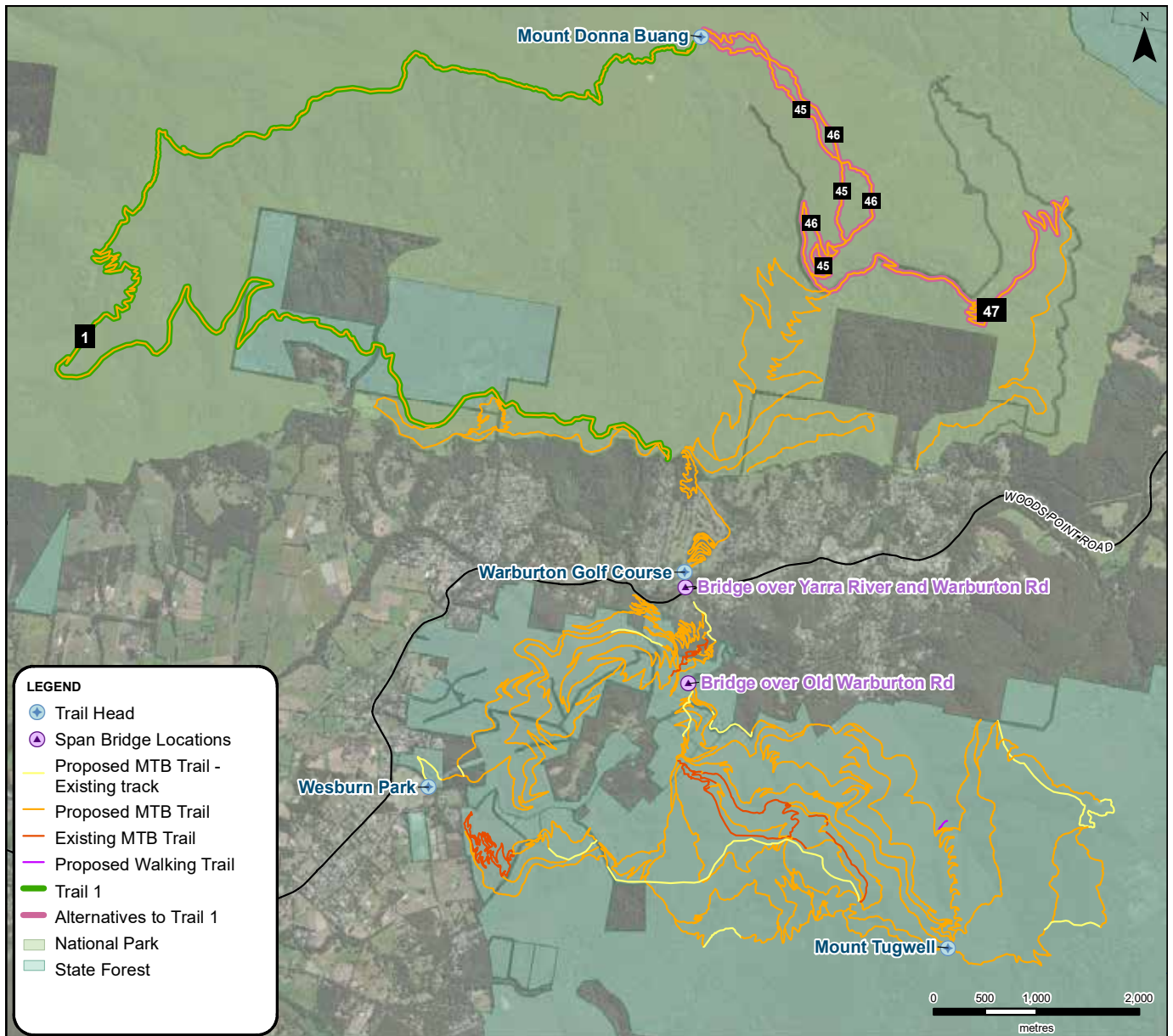


Figure 6: Project alternatives

Trail 1 and the alternative to Trail 1

Trail 1 (Drop-a-K) and the alternative to Trail 1 (Trails 45, 46 and 47) were fully assessed in the EES.

Trail 1 is approximately 22 kilometres in length and traverses the Yarra Ranges National Park from the summit of Mount Donna Buang through forested land towards the Warburton township, also intersecting Woiwurrung State Forest.

Trails 45, 46 and 47 are also within the Yarra Ranges National Park and commence at the summit of Mount Donna Buang but are located further east. These trails have a combined length of around 15 kilometres following a south easterly direction through forested land towards the Warburton township, before joining trails 5 and 6.

The key differences between Trail 1 and the alternative (Trails 45, 46 and 47), relate to economic

benefits and biodiversity and habitat impacts. The economic analysis indicates that the project has significantly reduced economic benefit with the removal of Trail 1 due to the attractiveness of this trail as a tourism product. The findings of the biodiversity and habitats assessment are also critical to a decision on whether Trail 1 should be adopted as part of the trail network (with implementation of suitable mitigation measures to address the key ecological issues), or whether the alternative should be adopted as it would avoid potential impacts associated with Trail 1 that cannot be adequately mitigated.

Further information on the comparison of alternatives is provided in the **EES Chapter 15: Comparative analysis of Trail 1 and Trails 45 to 47.**

6

Assessment of potential impacts

Biodiversity

The Warburton Mountain Bike Destination is set in a unique and sensitive environment which is highly valued for its biodiversity and beauty. Protecting the area's natural and cultural environment and minimising potential impacts is central to the project's development.

The mountains around Warburton are home to beautiful native forests and Yarra Ranges National Park. Featuring significant vegetation communities such as Cool Temperate Rainforest, the area provides important habitat for native fauna.

The trail network would be located within the Victorian Alps Bioregion and the Highlands Southern-fall Bioregion. Biodiversity investigations have recorded seven ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) and 288 indigenous plant species within the project area. It was determined that 44 FFG Act-listed flora species are likely to occur, including two species that are also EPBC Act-listed.

During field assessments, 61 terrestrial fauna species were recorded within the project area. It was determined that 26 FFG Act-listed fauna species are likely to occur including 11 species that are also EPBC Act-listed.

Avoiding and minimising biodiversity impacts has been central to the development of the mountain bike trail network. This began in the design phase, by ensuring trails avoid critical ecological values wherever possible and by the proposed adoption of micro-siting and sensitive works methods during construction.

The key threats to biodiversity from the project are the removal of high-quality native vegetation and soil disturbance during trail construction. The average trail construction width would be between 1.2 and 3.3 metres, with vegetation cleared to a height of 2.5 metres. Once the trails are established the temporarily disturbed construction areas along trail edges would be allowed to regenerate with native vegetation, reinstating habitat elements. Overall, the trails are likely to end up with an average operational width (the ride line) of 0.6 to 1.2 metres.



The native vegetation to be removed to build the trails has been determined as part of the EES process and the offset requirements to compensate for these losses has been calculated.

Trail alignments have been designed to avoid older trees with hollows, which are likely to provide habitat for native animals including Leadbeater's Possum, Greater Glider and forest owls.

As part of the EES process environmental risk controls were developed for Cool Temperate

Rainforest, Leadbeater's Possum and the Mount Donna Buang Wingless Stonefly with input from key experts. The risk controls proposed include exclusion zones around nest boxes, hand construction only around Myrtle Beech trees and specific requirements for waterway crossings.

There is potential for construction and operational impacts to Mount Donna Buang Wingless Stonefly and its habitat due the sensitivity of this species to soil and hydrological disturbance. Micro-siting trail works between Mount Donna Buang, Mount Victoria and Ben Cairn and installing elevated structures in headwater habitats would minimise the potential impacts to this species.

The proposed trails to the north of Warburton on Mount Donna Buang run through steep mountain terrain featuring mixed forest with tall eucalypts. This gives way to areas of Cool Temperate Rainforest north and south of Mount Donna Buang Road.

This type of rainforest only occurs in highland areas with higher rainfall and fertile soils. Rainforest and related vegetation are highly sensitive to disturbance from fire, disease and other threatening processes and Cool Temperate Rainforest is listed as threatened under the FFG Act, so protection of the forest on Mount Donna Buang was a starting point for the design of trails.

The presence of the Cool Temperate Rainforest, confirmed by ecological fieldwork, has led to significant design revisions to keep trails out of the rainforest areas as much as possible, reducing the length of trail within Cool Temperate Rainforest to approximately 2.5 kilometres. All trails that intersect the Cool Temperate Rainforest would be built by hand to minimise soil disturbance and removal of understorey vegetation.

Detailed information on existing conditions, predicted impacts and mitigation is available in **EES Chapter 8: Biodiversity and Technical Appendix 1: Biodiversity**. Please read these to understand your interests before making a submission.

Commonwealth Matters of National Environmental Significance

The EPBC Act provides protection for Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES). A detailed assessment has been undertaken to evaluate the potential for significant impact on MNES in accordance with EPBC Act guidelines. The MNES relevant to the project is threatened species and communities with a number of EPBC Act-listed flora and fauna species potentially occurring in the project area.

The assessments undertaken for the EES determined that significant impacts to MNES can be avoided through the development of the design, and mitigation measures implemented during the project construction and operations phases.

Flora

The project is considered unlikely to result in a significant impact on nationally significant flora species. Two EPBC Act-listed flora species were identified as having moderate or higher likelihood of occurrence: the Round-leaf Pomaderris *Pomaderris vacciniifolia* (critically endangered) and Tall Astelia *Astelia australiana* (vulnerable). No species have been detected within the assessment corridor during field surveys.

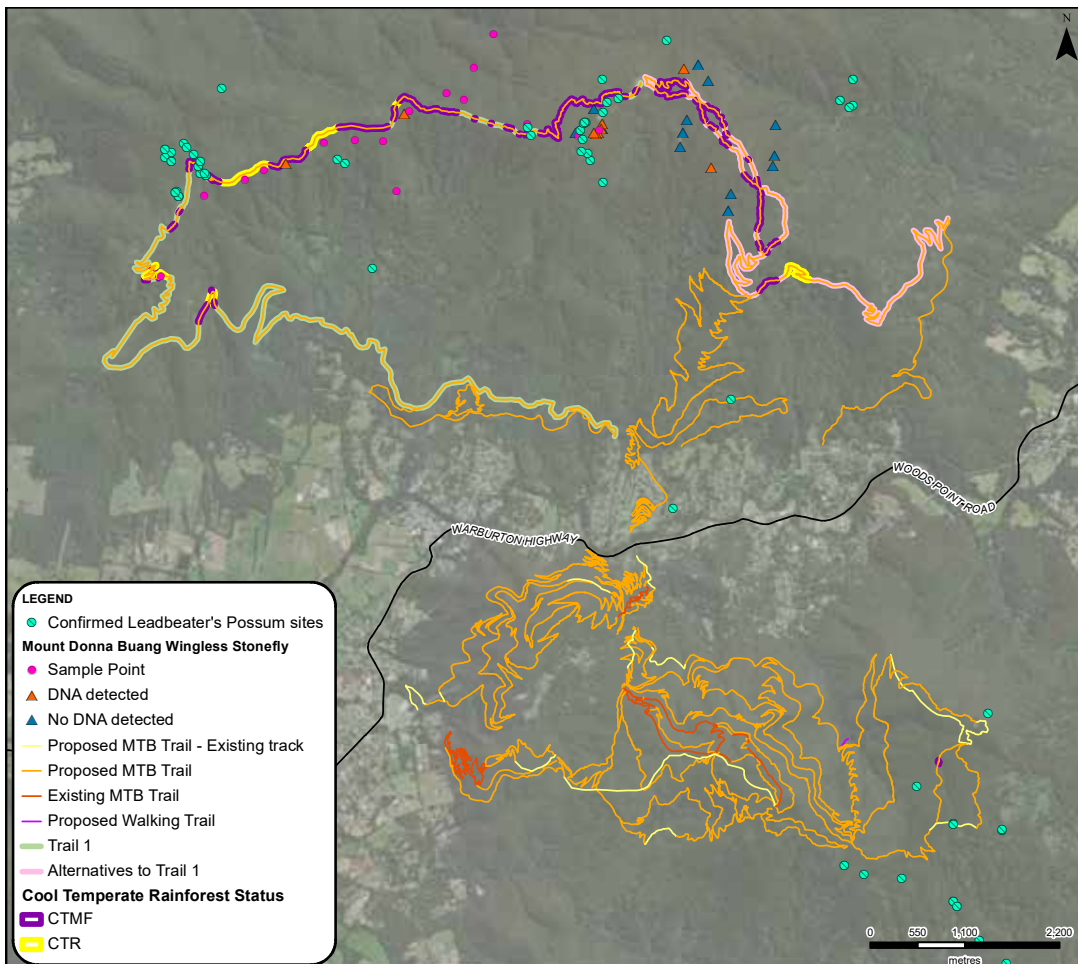


Figure 7: Habitat study areas

Fauna

The Project is also considered unlikely to result in a significant impact on nationally significant fauna species. Eleven EPBC Act-listed fauna species were identified as having moderate or higher likelihood of occurrence including the Leadbeater's Possum. The biodiversity assessment determined that the project is unlikely to result in a significant impact on nationally significant fauna. The project has committed to avoid the removal of large trees and critical Leadbeater's Possum habitat amongst other mitigation measures.

PROTECTING THE LEADBEATER'S POSSUM

Leadbeater's possum *Gymnobelideus leadbeaterii* is a critically endangered species under the EPBC Act and listed under the FFG Act.

There is known habitat for Leadbeater's Possum within the project area that has the potential to be impacted.

The conservation and protection of Leadbeater's Possum is critical for this project and a fundamental consideration in the preparation of environmental controls and evolution of the design.

Trail alignments have been designed to minimise impacts to trees. Large old trees and areas with high stem density of mid-storey vegetation which may provide critical habitat are not expected to be removed during construction.

Detailed information on existing biodiversity and habitats values, predicted impacts, avoidance, minimisation and mitigation is available in **EES Chapter 14: Matters of national environmental significance** and **Technical report A: Biodiversity**. Please read these to understand your interests before making a submission



Waterways and catchments

The Project site covers a large area with varying elevation (from 150 to 1250 metres) within Melbourne Water's Yarra River Upper (Rural) sub-catchment, the Little Yarra Water Supply Protection Area and the Don River Water Supply Protection Area.

A surface water, groundwater and geotechnical hazard assessment found that the trail network would require 42 crossings of waterways, including a bridge for bicycles to cross the Yarra River.

The study of the project's effects on waterways and catchments was conducted by specialists in hydrology and water quality, using research, field studies and consultation with stakeholders.

The EES has considered potential waterway and catchment impacts including any changes to water quality, water level, temperature or flow paths, and potential effects related to erosion, sedimentation and landform stability. The majority of impacts to waterways and catchments would be avoided by construction of bridges to avoid direct impacts on waterways. Further mitigation measures are also proposed for the management of impacts during construction and operation of the project including waterway management controls and post-construction monitoring of waterways. It is not anticipated that the project would result in significant impacts to the waterways and catchments around Warburton.

Detailed information on existing conditions, predicted impacts and mitigation is available in **EES Chapter 9: Surface water, groundwater and geotechnical hazards** and **Technical Appendix B: Surface water, groundwater and geotechnical hazards**. Please read these to understand your interests before making a submission.

Heritage

Warburton has a significant cultural history and the area has historically been used for gold mining and timber harvesting and processing. The proposed trail network would be located in forested areas which are the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people. Assessments have been undertaken to understand the historic and cultural heritage values of the area to inform the EES. This has included a historic heritage survey and a complex assessment undertaken to prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

Aboriginal cultural heritage

The Project area falls into the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) area of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWWCHAC), who are represented on the Project Reference Group advising the Yarra Ranges Council on the project and the Technical Reference Group advising on EES preparation.

Investigations found that there are five Aboriginal places of cultural heritage significance within one kilometre of the project area, but none would be impacted by the project.

While it is not anticipated that the project will encounter any Aboriginal cultural heritage, a Cultural Heritage Management Plan will be implemented that sets out processes and protocols in the event of any unexpected finds.

Historic heritage

There have been substantial settlements in the bushland for short periods, especially during the 1850-1890 gold rush and artefacts from historical land uses can still be found in the landscape today.

There are five heritage places in or near the project area, with the trails intersecting three of these places. Heritage specialists have been engaged to advise on design and construction methods to ensure these areas are protected.

To avoid and mitigate impacts to listed historic heritage sites, micro-siting of key project components and monitoring would be undertaken

during construction. Additionally, consent under Section 124 of the *Heritage Act 2017* is likely to be required for three of the five historic heritage places which are listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory. These consent applications would include mitigation measures, developed in consultation with Heritage Victoria that would be incorporated into the Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Detailed information on existing conditions, predicted impacts and mitigation is available in **EES Chapter 10: Cultural heritage** and **Technical Appendix C: Cultural Heritage**. Please read these to understand your interests before making a submission.

Social, economic, amenity and land use

The EES includes a description of the area's demographic and social character, existing and potential land uses and public infrastructure. It identifies implications for current land uses, recreational activities, residential amenity, business function and infrastructure capacity.

Assessments were undertaken in relation to social, economic, amenity and land use aspects including:

- Land use and planning assessments
- Landscape and visual impact assessment
- Air quality assessment
- Noise assessment
- Bushfire assessment
- Socio-economic assessment

The Project would attract a wide range of visitors looking to stay active, connect with nature and spend time with family and friends. When fully developed in 2031, the project is expected to attract around 221,000 visitors per year. This would generate about 77,000 overnight stays in the region, create 229 jobs and stimulate an annual spend of \$48.6million in the local economy.

The assessments found that noise and air quality impacts associated with construction would be temporary and localised. Amenity impacts during





operations have been minimised by modifications to the trail network, following consultation with residents in Old Warburton, Merlino Avenue and the small number of directly affected landowners. Impacts on existing recreational activities including horse riding and walking trails and infrastructure capacity are not expected to be significant.

The Project area is currently used for walking and mountain biking. Formalising the existing land use through a Planning Scheme Amendment will ensure strong management controls are put in place to maintain the environment during project construction and operation. These controls are specified in the Construction Environmental Management Plan and Operations Environmental Management Plan.

Detailed information on existing conditions, predicted impacts and mitigation is available in **EES Chapter 11: Land use and planning**, **EES Chapter 12: Socio-economic**, **Technical Appendix D: Land use and planning** and **Technical Appendix E: Socio-economic**. Please read these to understand your interests before making a submission.

Transport

Understanding how the project would work and interact with the existing road network and parking was a key consideration of the assessment, with a focus on ensuring local transport and amenity needs are protected.

Locals raised concerns about the ability of existing local roads and parking facilities to cope with increased visitors. The transport assessment has determined that:

- Use of shuttle buses is an effective means to manage use of the road network and parking demands associated with trail users
- There is sufficient capacity across the existing road network to accommodate the modest growth in traffic predicted
- Access for emergency services vehicles would not be adversely affected by the project
- The Project includes provision of an additional 165 car parks at the main trailhead at the Warburton Golf Course and a further 120 car parks at Wesburn Park. These additional facilities would sufficiently accommodate visitors and reduce pressure on existing town facilities.
- Improvements to signage, wayfinding and parking restriction compliance would increase use of existing parking spaces.

During construction, temporary road closures of a few hours at a time would be required for bridge construction works. These works would be timed and carefully managed to ensure transport disruption is minimised.

During the operation of the project, special mountain biking events would require specific traffic management plans to be prepared setting out how traffic and parking (such as overflow parking) would be managed during these times.

It is not expected that the increased traffic as a result of the project would significantly impact the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in the area.

Overall, the road network in the vicinity of the project was found to comfortably accommodate the anticipated increase in road use during the construction and operation of the project and no significant impacts are anticipated.

Detailed information on existing conditions, predicted impacts and mitigation is available in **EES Chapter 13: Transport** and **Technical Appendix F: Transport**. Please read these to understand your interests before making a submission.

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Managing environmental effects

The Project would be delivered in accordance with the environmental management measures established through the EES process. These measures are designed in accordance with the overall mitigation hierarchy which steps out the priorities for approach to mitigation. Environmental effects are avoided in the first instance, with mitigations then considering minimising, rehabilitating and finally offsetting.

These measures, together with other project requirements and commitments would be implemented through a series of documents, namely the project CEMP and OEMP and in accordance with the project's Environmental Management Framework presented in Chapter 16 of the EES.

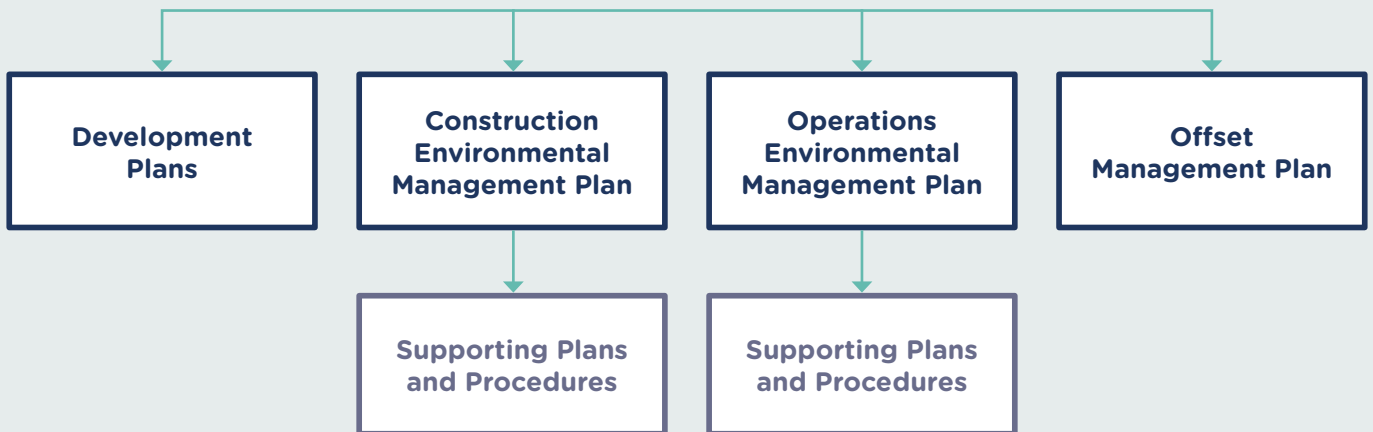


Figure 8: Environment Management Framework

A range of monitoring programs would be implemented informed by regulatory requirements and scale of environmental risk.

Contractors will be required to comply with relevant legislation, approval conditions, the CEMP and OEMP.

In the event of a complaint from the community regarding noise, dust, or other aspect of construction or operation issues, further investigation will be undertaken in line with Council's complaint management process.

Further information on the Environmental Management Framework is available in **EES Chapter 16**. The draft CEMP and OEMP are provided with the EES documents. Please read these to understand your interests before making a submission.



How to make a submission

Viewing the EES

The Warburton Mountain Bike Destination EES and PSA will be on public exhibition for 40 business days from Friday 26 November 2021 to Tuesday 25 January 2022. During this time, members of the public can view the EES documents and make written submissions about any matters described in the EES and Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) documents.

Copies of the EES, PSA and supporting material can be downloaded from the project website: www.rideyarraranges.com.au

Free copies of the EES Summary brochure and USBs containing all the EES documentation are available at the public exhibition locations or directly from Yarra Ranges Council. Subject to COVID-19 restrictions on community facilities, during the public exhibition period, hard copies of the EES are available for inspection during office hours at:

- Yarra Ranges Council Community Hub
2415 Warburton Hwy, Yarra Junction VIC 3797
- Arts Centre Warburton
3409 Warburton Hwy, Warburton VIC 3799
- Yarra Ranges Council Offices (Medicare Building)
Chapel St, Lilydale VIC 3140
- State Library of Victoria
328 Swanston St, Melbourne VIC 3000

Please check the COVID restrictions for metropolitan Melbourne for viewing availability.

Making a submission

Submissions on the EES and Planning Scheme Amendment must be made in writing and received by 11.59 pm on Tuesday 25 January 2022.

Each submission is a public document and will be treated as a submission on the EES and the PSA.

Online submissions are preferred and can be lodged via the Victorian Government's engagement website: www.engage.vic.gov.au/warburton-iac

Where a submitter is unable to lodge a submission online, they must contact Planning Panels Victoria (PPV) through the DELWP Customer Call Centre on 136 186 (select option 6) and request a hard copy submission cover sheet issued by PPV. Each hard copy written submission must have a cover sheet issued by PPV.

All submissions must state the name and address of the person making the submission. Petitions will be treated as a single submission and only the first names from a petition submission will be registered and contacted.

All submissions will be treated as public documents in accordance with the PPV Privacy Collection Notice and will be published on the Victorian Government's engagement website. Do not include personal information in the body of your submission (such as your email address or phone number). Your name will be made public.

Anyone seeking to be heard at a public hearing is required to submit a written submission and indicate on the submission form that they would like to be heard at the hearing.

The submissions process is independently managed by PPV and any inquiries regarding the management of submissions and the hearing process should be directed to them.

For more information about the submission process, contact PPV on 136 186 (select option 6) or email planning.panels@delwp.vic.gov.au

Navigating the EES documents

The EES is structured by topics, as shown in Figure 9 below and consists of an EES main report, attachments and EES technical reports.

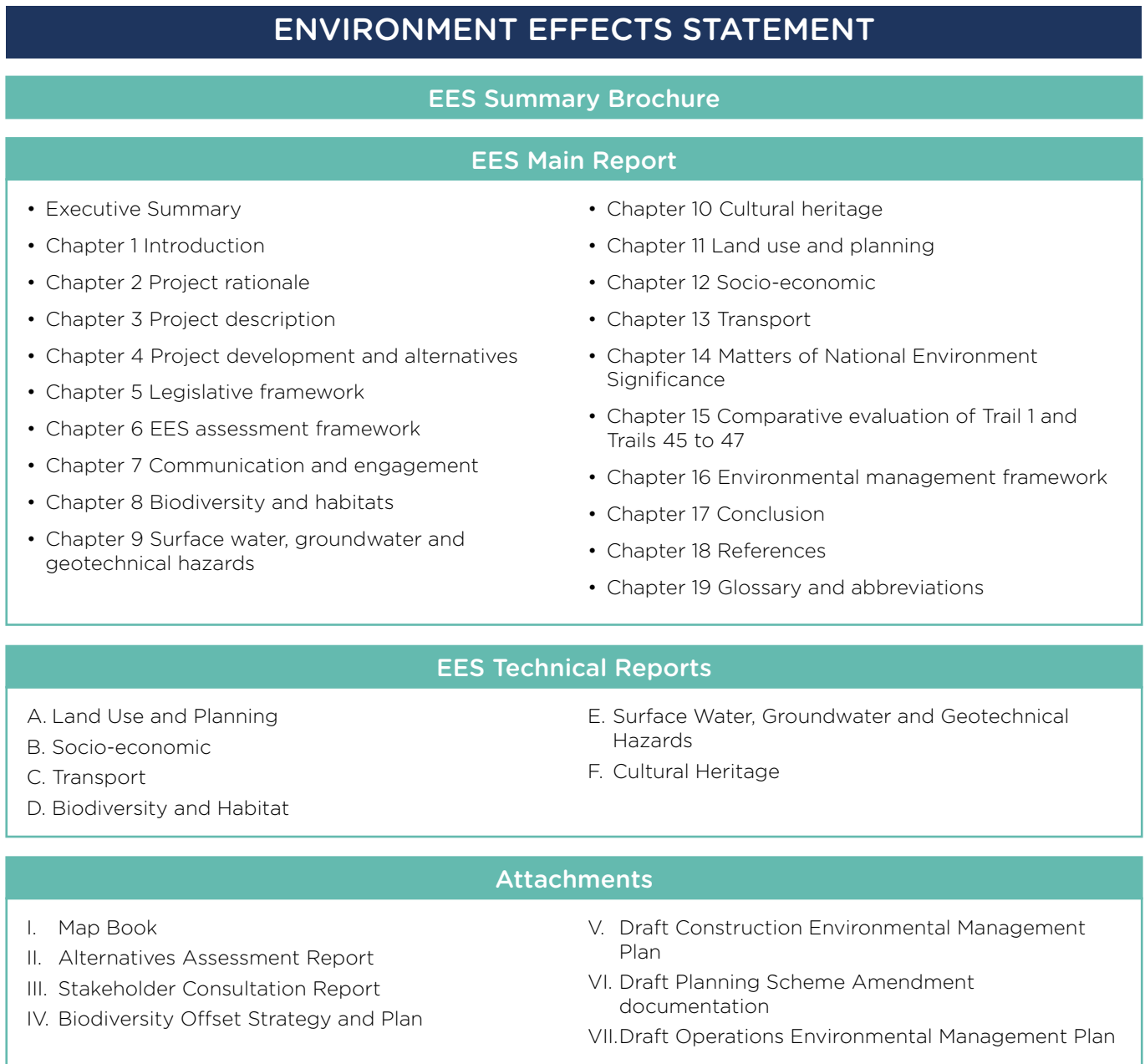


Figure 9: Navigating the EES



9

Next steps

Following the public exhibition of the EES and PSA an independent inquiry will be appointed by the Minister for planning to consider the EES and public submissions.

The inquiry will hold a directions hearing where the necessary arrangements and timetable for the public hearing will be established. Further information about the directions hearing arrangements (including whether it will be held in person or conducted online by video conference), will be published on the Engage Victoria website: www.engage.vic.gov.au.

The inquiry will follow the health advice from the Victoria government and the Chief Health Officer in making this decision.

The inquiry may conduct a formal public hearing at which Yarra Ranges Council and people who have made submissions will make presentations. The public hearing is open for anyone to watch and attend.

The independent inquiry will prepare a report based on their findings of the EES and an assessment of the project will be made by the Minister for Planning.

The Minister's assessment makes recommendations about whether the environmental effects of the project are acceptable, along with any modifications or further management measures the Minister considers appropriate. In preparing this assessment, the Minister considers all relevant information, including the EES documents, public submissions and the inquiry report.

The relevant decision-makers for the approvals required by the project would then consider the Minister's assessment.

Find out more and stay involved

Community input is an important part of the EES process and the project's continued development.

- 🌐 Sign up for project updates, find the latest information or ask a question on our website rideyarraranges.com.au
- ✉ mtb.planning@yarraranges.vic.gov.au
- ☎ 1300 368 333

NOVEMBER 2021

