

A person wearing a helmet and a backpack is riding a mountain bike on a dirt trail that winds through a dense forest. The trees are tall and thin, with sunlight filtering through the canopy, creating a dappled light effect on the ground. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

# WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MOUNTAIN BIKE STRATEGY

MOUNTAIN BIKING AND OFF-ROAD  
CYCLING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
2022-2032



## PREPARED AND PUBLISHED BY:

WestCycle Incorporated  
Purpose Drive Performance

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The authors of the WA Mountain Bike Strategy acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A vision for mountain biking in Western Australia.

‘More West Australians and visitors can access and participate in mountain bike opportunities that are sustainable and provide long term health, economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits to the community’

Mountain biking continues to grow in popularity globally making it one of the fastest growing sport, recreation and physical activities in the world. It has been a similar experience in Western Australia, with new people taking up the activity leading to record levels of participation across the State.<sup>1</sup>

This record growth has been accompanied by record investment into new mountain bike trail developments, providing West Australians with more opportunities to ride, along with the potential to attract increased visitation to the State. The benefits that mountain biking provide at both an individual and community level are becoming increasingly recognised and continue to build the case for additional investment and development.

While many sports and recreation activities were impacted or shut down during the height of the COVID-19 restrictions, mountain biking was in the top ten sports nationally to experience an increase in the number of participants with an estimated 99,000 additional participants in 2019-2020 from the previous year.<sup>2</sup>

This strategy has been informed through several processes including:

- Reviewing existing research, strategies and worldwide trends;
- Targeted interviews and consultation with key agencies and stakeholders;
- Industry and community forums ;
- A public survey attracting 550 responses; and
- Advice and input from a Project Governance Group with representatives from key agencies, stakeholders and mountain bike community representatives.

While there are many positive stories to be told, mountain biking is not without its challenges. With increased growth comes increased requirements and demands for facilities, maintenance, managing risks and new trails in under serviced areas.

Governance and planning for trails are priority issues. Ensuring there is clarity amongst key agencies and other stakeholders for the oversight and implementation of this strategy and its recommendations is essential. As the peak body for cycling in Western Australia,

WestCycle, is best placed to lead this process and should coordinate with other agencies and stakeholders to clarify roles, responsibilities and accountability in the implementation of this strategy.

With a growing network of mountain bike trails around the State comes an increased need for sustainable and ongoing trail maintenance. While funding will help the development and building of a trail, there is typically a shortfall in recurring income required to ensure the long term maintenance and sustainability of the trail. Additionally, while investment into major mountain bike trail networks has increased, funding for community and local trails has decreased creating what can be considered a two-speed trail economy across the State. Securing new funding to support local community trails, as well as trail maintenance and supporting the contribution of volunteers and land managers, is critical. Developing trail governance and business models during the planning phase of new trail developments is essential and will assist with trail sustainability over the longer term.



Although there are more people mountain biking than ever before, participation is skewed to particular demographic groups. More needs to be done to increase participation amongst juniors, females, Aboriginal people and socially and culturally diverse groups through offering introductory programs that develop skills and connect participants with appropriate support and facilities.

Access to trails is a critical factor limiting further increases in participation, with 87% of participants indicating they would ride more if they had close access to trails.<sup>3</sup> Working

with Local Government and other land owners to increase access to urban trails, bike parks and pump tracks are important factors that need to be progressed.

Mountain bike marketing, tourism and improving the economic impact of trails is a further key focus area highlighted in this strategy. While new trail developments provide the facility for visitors and tourists to ride, there is a need for improved partnerships with the business community and to build the capacity of trail managers and local businesses to capitalise on the opportunities

that mountain bike tourism presents.

This strategy has identified 59 separate recommendations which seek to address these key challenges and help Western Australia build on the strong foundations that have been established for mountain biking across the state in recent years. This document and its recommendations will be accompanied by an implementation plan which will provide detailed guidance on the specific actions, timeframes and responsibilities necessary to deliver on this strategy.

FOCUS AREAS	STRATEGY	
Focus Area 1: Governance and Planning	1.1	Adopt a governance structure to implement and monitor the achievement of these Strategic Focus Areas and recommendations.
	1.2	Develop a state-wide network of sustainable mountain bike facilities and experiences.
	1.3	Secure long term funding for sustainable mountain bike trail development including planning, construction and maintenance.
	1.4	Obtain and utilise data to better understand the benefits, usage and future planning requirements for mountain bike trails.
Focus Area 2: Sustainable Trail Development, Maintenance and Resourcing	2.1	Sustainably develop and manage high quality mountain bike trails.
	2.2	Develop governance and business models appropriate to the circumstances of each trail to improve sustainability.
	2.3	Improve the capacity of the trails industry and workforce.
	2.4	Encourage and support responsible and safe mountain biking.
Focus Area 3: Participation	3.1	Increase access to mountain biking opportunities and experiences - particularly amongst women, juniors and other under-represented groups.
	3.2	Improve programs and support for junior development, coaching, clubs and volunteers.
	3.3	Support the development of events that increase participation and provide pathways for competitive riders.
	3.4	Grow the profile and participation in off-road cycling, touring and gravel riding.
	3.5	Ensure increased usage of electric assist mountain bikes is managed sustainably.
Focus Area 4: Mountain Bike Marketing, Tourism and Economic Impact	4.1	Grow the profile and awareness of Western Australian mountain bike experiences.
	4.2	Build the capacity and business capability of trail managers and mountain bike destination businesses.
	4.3	Support the development of unique and culturally appropriate mountain bike trails, experiences and events.



# INTRODUCTION



The popularity of mountain biking continues to grow globally and is fast becoming one of the world's most popular sport, recreation and physical activities. This trend is similar in Western Australia with participation levels at all time records with the most recent AusPlay data recording 53,116 people participating in mountain biking in WA across 2021.<sup>4</sup> Western Australia is blessed with diverse terrain, offering locals and visitors alike the opportunity to engage in a variety of mountain bike experiences across a variety of landscapes.

Western Australia has benefited from record investment into major trail developments in recent years, with prominent new mountain bike trail networks in Collie, Dwellingup, Margaret River, Nannup, and Perth Hills, and with trails in Walpole, Mt Barker and Albany in the planning and development stages.

The benefits that mountain biking provides communities are increasingly recognised. The development of trails and increased participation provide a range of economic, physical and mental health, environmental and social benefits, all supporting the

case for further investment into mountain bike opportunities.

While continued growth offers a range of benefits, it also presents challenges for government, governing bodies, land managers, clubs, trail maintenance groups and volunteers, regional towns and businesses and other key stakeholders. This document considers these key challenges and presents a series of strategies and recommendations to guide decision-makers in addressing these gaps and continuing to progress mountain bike development in Western Australia.

£199

MTB Trails listed on Trails WA website, covering **1925.5 kilometres** of trail.

87%

of people would ride more regularly if they had closer access to trails.<sup>3</sup>

50%

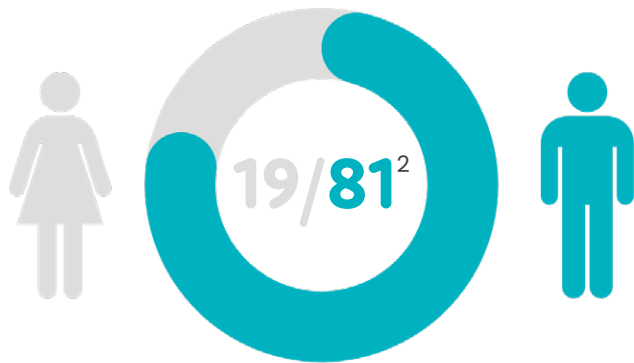
of people travel between 30 and 60 minutes to access their regular MTB trail.<sup>3</sup>

37%

of mountain bikers reported that they would be prepared to contribute \$5-\$10 per ride towards the cost of maintaining and managing trails.<sup>3</sup>



15% of WA mountain bikers use an e-MTB.<sup>3</sup>



## QUALITY OF THE TRAIL DISTANCE FROM HOME VARIETY OF TRAILS

top three reasons for selecting a trail to ride<sup>3</sup>



Murray Valley Trails (Dwellingup) were ridden a total of 111,353 times in 2021.<sup>4</sup>

The Wambenger Trails recorded **6,059 rides** in their first full month after opening (October 2021)



Kalamunda Trails were ridden

**139,633**

times in 2021.

The top three ridden trails in Kalamunda were:

**GOLDILOCKS**  
(30,367)

**FLACCID ASHBACK**  
(23,263)

**SCORPION**  
(19,851)





## PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The first edition of the Western Australian Mountain Bike Strategy was developed and implemented in 2015 and covered a five year period until 2020. This strategy has been a pivotal link to allow the State Government to understand the requirements and needs of the WA Mountain Bike stakeholder community, allowing for record investments into the infrastructure of the MTB landscape.

The purpose of this new WA Mountain Bike Strategy is to provide an updated strategic

direction for mountain biking in Western Australia. It identifies the current and emerging key challenges and opportunities facing mountain biking and provides a series of strategies and supporting recommendations aimed at maximising the potential for social, cultural, economic, environmental, health and wellbeing outcomes for the State.

It seeks to maximise the opportunity for all Western Australians and visitors to benefit from access to

an appropriate range of mountain biking experiences and will guide the sustainable development of mountain biking activities and associated trails infrastructure.

Through consultation with a range of key stakeholders, the recommendations in this strategy address key gaps in trail planning processes, sustainable governance and business models, increasing participation and increasing trail tourism and associated economic benefits.

## PROJECT METHODOLOGY

This project was informed by a range of data collection and analyses including:

- A review of existing research, strategies and worldwide trends
- Interviews with specific agencies, organisations and eminent persons
- An industry forum facilitated across multiple regions
- A community forum facilitated across multiple regions
- A public survey that attracted 550 responses, and
- Advice and input on the identification and development of key strategies and recommendations from the Project Oversight Group.







**VISION**  
 'More West Australians and visitors can access and participate in mountain bike opportunities that are sustainable and provide long term health, economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits to the community'

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint 2022-2027 (Draft for Comment) contains a set of guiding principles which were created to facilitate the development of trails in WA. These principles can be applied to the explanatory text below.

**Table 1 - Guiding Principles. Adapted from the Strategic Trails Blueprint 2022-2027 Draft for Comment.**

<b>ACCESS AND INCLUSION</b>	<b>CONSUMER FOCUS</b>	<b>CONSISTENCY</b>
Consideration is given to ease of access for all members of the community.	Trails are planned, developed and managed to align with current community and market needs, and respond to change.	Lead agencies and relevant stakeholders enact coordinated change consistent with the Blueprint.
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE</b>	<b>INNOVATION</b>
Trail planning, development and management considers short- and long-term community, health, social, economic and environmental factors.	Trails help protect, interpret, conserve and raise awareness of environmental, cultural and heritage values.	Trail improvements, development and management will reflect global advances and emerging relevant technologies such as media, measurement and research.
<b>COMMUNITY BENEFIT</b>	<b>VISITOR ECONOMY CONTRIBUTION</b>	<b>QUALITY TRAILS</b>
Trails offer economic, health, wellbeing, social and other community benefits for Western Australian residents	Opportunities are realised for trails to support coordinated growth in tourism resulting in increased visitors, spend, new business enterprises and job creation.	Good planning, maintenance and support networks, and an appropriate and sustainable funding model, result in a diverse network of fit-for purpose, sustainable, high quality trails.
<b>ABORIGINAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT</b>	<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>	
Collaboration with Aboriginal people in all levels of trail development and management strengthens the connection between cultural and heritage values, trail user experience and creates opportunity for Aboriginal enterprise, story-telling and cultural awareness.	The community and user groups have the opportunity to become ambassadors for the trail sector through consultation, feedback and active participation in the trail development process, trail use, trail care and events.	



## REVIEW OF THE 2015-2020 MOUNTAIN BIKE STRATEGY

The original WA Mountain Bike Strategy 2015-2020 has been vital in helping the State Government understand the requirements and needs of the WA Mountain Bike stakeholder community and providing strategic guidance for the sector.

The strategy identified 55 recommendations across the following five priority areas.

### FOCUS AREA 1: GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING

Establish a strong and coordinated approach to mountain bike planning and governance.

### FOCUS AREA 2: TRAILS, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Develop a state-wide network of sustainable trails, facilities and associated infrastructure.

### FOCUS AREA 3: PARTICIPATION

Support and increase mountain bike participation and community involvement.

### FOCUS AREA 4: TOURISM AND MARKETING

Raise the recreational, sport and tourism profile of Western Australian Mountain Biking.

### FOCUS AREA 5: RESOURCING

Develop diverse revenue streams to ensure economic sustainability.

The below table provides a summary of key outcomes that have been achieved and where it has been identified that further work is required to progress priority areas.

**Table 2 –2015-2020 WA Mountain Bike Strategy Progress Assessment**

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS	FURTHER WORK REQUIRED
Increased awareness and promotion of the MTB Strategy, planning hierarchy and development of regional MTB master plans.	Securing long term sustainable funding for trail developments and maintenance.
Governance Reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Merger of WAMBA with WestCycle</li> <li>○ Establishment of MTB Advisory Groups</li> </ul>	Adoption of governance and business models to improve long term trail sustainability.
Development and implementation of a Western Australia specific trail classification system.	Increased support and resources for trail maintenance and management.
Record investment in major MTB infrastructure projects including Collie / Dwellingup / Perth Hills.	Capacity building and support for clubs and groups.
Increased levels of participation, as captured through trail counter data.	Improved access to local trails and urban bike parks / pump tracks within or in close proximity to population centres.
Development of a WA MTB Code of Conduct.	Delivery of participation and skill-building initiatives, particularly to under-represented group including females, young people and beginners/less skilled riders a priority.
Established quantitative parameters for national, regional and locally significant facilities.	Further support for juniors and coaches is required.
Development and adoption of the WA MTB Management Guidelines.	Case studies evaluating the environmental, social, cultural and economic effects of sustainable mountain biking.
Adoption of the 8-stage trail development process.	
Development and adoption of the Australian Adaptive Mountain bike Guidelines.	Growing the profile and awareness of WA Mountain Bike experiences.









# MOUNTAIN BIKING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA





## WHAT IS MOUNTAIN BIKING?

Mountain biking can be broadly defined as cycling off-road on a variety of unsealed surfaces, typically through a natural setting.

Mountain biking is a diverse activity that can be enjoyed almost anywhere from a backyard to a gravel road, as well as purpose-built trails. Mountain biking is typically performed on specialised bikes designed to meet the demands of a variety of landscapes, compared to road or other bikes.

The popularity of mountain biking has grown significantly in recent years and is one of a relatively small number of sporting activities that experienced increased participation during the height of COVID-19. AusPlay data for the period ending December 2020 reported an increase nationally of an additional 99,000 participants having mountain biked in the previous 12 months.<sup>5</sup>

A community survey conducted by WestCycle in November and December 2021 received 550 responses from across Western Australia.<sup>6</sup>

The top reported reasons why people mountain bike were for physical and mental health and fitness, to be in the natural environment and to connect with nature, and to connect with nature, for the challenge, to socialise with family and friends, and to relax and unwind.

Figure 1 – Reasons why people mountain bike



## BENEFITS OF MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain biking is increasingly being recognised for the broad range of benefits it can provide at both an individual and community level. These benefits include physical and mental health and wellbeing improvements, economic and tourism benefits, social connectedness, cultural and environmental benefits.

Our Bike Path 2022–2026 provides a guiding framework for bike riding in Western Australia. Developed by WestCycle for all aspects of the bike riding community, the framework sets out a

vision for bike riding to be embraced by the Western Australian community as a way of life. The framework also identifies reasons why bike riding is important to WA: a) Benefits our physical and mental health, b) supports the economy, c) benefits the environment, d) creates liveable cities, e) connects our communities.<sup>7</sup>

DLGSC's More People More Active Outdoors (2019) identified five key pillars supporting the benefits of outdoor recreation. These include: a) personal development, challenge and enjoyment, b) improved health and wellbeing, c) outdoor

learning, d) connection to nature, e) economic development.<sup>8</sup>

Ausplay data demonstrates the shifting trend in people moving from playing structured competitive sport to more recreational and social based activities such as running, swimming and cycling including mountain biking. The CSIRO Megatrends report described this trend as 'A Perfect Fit', highlighting the rise of individualised sport and fitness activities with people increasingly playing sport to get fit rather than getting fit to play sport.<sup>9</sup>





## HEALTH AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The physical and mental health benefits of participating in sport and physical activity are widely documented and well known. From reduced risk of chronic disease to improved sleep, feeling more energetic, improved brain and cognitive function and an improved state of mind, the benefits of an active community are evident. However, in Western Australia, only 35.8% adults meet Australia's physical activity guidelines.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the growing popularity of mountain biking presents governments and other key stakeholders with an effective product by which to encourage more people to be physically active.

Mental health is an issue that impacts everyone. One in six Australians is currently experiencing depression, anxiety or both with suicide being the leading cause of death for young Australians.<sup>11</sup> Physical exercise, socialising and spending time in nature are known to be recommended complementary and preventative treatments for anyone suffering, or at risk of suffering, from mental health conditions. In response to the community survey, the number one reason why people mountain bike is for physical and mental health and fitness.

Involvement in activities such as mountain biking can be individual or as part of a group. Groups can either be formal or informal, providing social engagement and interaction delivering valuable benefits to the individual and the group collectively.



Cycle tourists typically stay longer, spend more and engage in a broader range of experiences than the average visitor.<sup>12</sup>



Mountain bike groups and clubs provide valuable connections, encouraging new people to be involved and developing a sense of community through opportunities to volunteer. Volunteers not only contribute significantly to their communities, but also benefit from the increased social connectivity and sense of giving back to their community that comes from volunteering.

### ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The economic benefits from mountain biking stem from reducing the cost and impact of poor health from physical inactivity, to generating increased spending and activity from tourism as well as generating jobs across a range of sectors including retail, hospitality, and trail construction and maintenance.

Nationally, sport provides an estimated \$83 billion in combined economic, health and educational benefits each year and accounts for approximately 3% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product. It is estimated that sport provides a return on investment of \$7 to every dollar spent.<sup>12</sup>

Cycle tourism has been identified globally as an attractive market for tourism operators as a key growth adventure tourism activity due to its low-impact,

high-spend, and high-dispersal nature. Cycle tourists typically stay longer, spend more and engage in a broader range of experiences than the average visitor.<sup>13</sup>

Research undertaken by AusCycling into the economic impact of mountain biking calculated an average expenditure for mountain bikers of \$27 per ride.<sup>14</sup> This includes expenses for transport to and from trails, meals and beverages, purchases from shops and bike rental hire. The average annual expenditure calculated per mountain bike rider was \$2,282 and \$4,921 for larger items. For mountain bike holidays, expenditure per trip was \$1,707 for intrastate trips and \$2,485 for interstate trips. Key areas of expenditure included airfares (interstate), ground transport, meals and beverages, accommodation, retail purchases bike rental and equipment and spare parts. It was also calculated that the total economic contribution was estimated to support the equivalent of 1,323 full time employees.

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Growing populations are putting pressure on the environment, including air quality, water quality and bio-diversity. Trails help to manage access to natural environments including plant and animal species by directing mountain bikers to a designated trail.

Mountain bike clubs and groups rely on volunteers who provide countless hours to help preserve and conserve the environment in the management and maintenance of trails. Further to this, with 80% of respondents to the community survey identifying being in nature as a primary motivator to mountain bike, there is considerable environmental goodwill amongst mountain bikers and an opportunity to leverage this into improved awareness and support for protecting our natural environments.

### FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS CAN BE SUMMARISED AS:

- Well planned and managed trails that are appropriate to the landscape can preserve and protect the environment, create a sense of place and add value to the area.
- Strategic planning for the development of mountain bike trails catering to user demand can prevent the development of unsanctioned trails in unsuitable environments.
- Passive surveillance provided by trail users can reduce antisocial behaviour and illegal dumping of waste in natural areas.





## WHO ARE MOUNTAIN BIKERS?

Understanding the different types of mountain bikers or user types helps to define who the trails are for and why the trails are being developed.

### LEISURE

Includes general cyclists of all ages and abilities and is potentially the largest market. Typically, they ride infrequently, often have limited skills and require very accessible trails. They are not members of clubs, and they are more likely to use highly accessible routes close to home, or make the journey to trail facilities with amenities and services such as bike hire, cafes and toilets.

### ENTHUSIAST

Enthusiasts are purely recreational mountain bikers with moderate skills and variable fitness, and ride weekly. They are typically aged 29–49 and form the existing market majority (WA MTB Strategy). They typically don't compete in events and prefer trails with good trail signs and seek technical but not too challenging trails. Enthusiast Mountain Bikers are the most likely to take short breaks to different areas.

### SPORT

Competitive mountain bikers, who ride regular routes multiple times a week and are members of mountain bike clubs. They are a small but influential market. They are willing to seek less accessible trails, have a high fitness level and are technically proficient but may have limited outdoor skills. They ride a very wide variety of trails.

### INDEPENDENT

Skilled outdoor enthusiasts who ride once a week and are technically proficient with good levels of fitness. Generally they are a small market. Often involved in other outdoor activities, they are capable of planning their own rides and ride a very wide variety of trail classifications. The adventurous aspect is more important than the technical challenge.

### GRAVITY

Skilled technical riders who seek very challenging trails, typically ride at least once a week and are often members of clubs. They represent a small market that requires purpose-built trails often with an uplift facility, which are repeatedly used in a concentrated manner. Gravity riders seek specific trails with the highest classifications.





## TYPES OF MOUNTAIN BIKING

Different types of mountain biking require different types of trails, which are usually defined by the terrain. Trail type defines the style of riding and its typical attributes. Different trail types suit different styles of riding and typically each trail type will have a specific mountain bike designed to suit. All trail types can vary in classification.



**Table 3 – Types of Mountain Biking and Off-Road Riding**

TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Cross Country	Primarily single-track orientated with a combination of climbing and descending, and natural trail features of varying technicality. Cross Country trails appeal to the majority market and can cater for timed competitive events. Typically bikes are lightweight with shorter travel dual suspension or have no rear suspension.
All Mountain / Enduro	Similar to Cross Country and primarily single-track orientated, with greater emphasis on technical descents, with non-technical climbs. All Mountain trails can cater for timed competitive events (Enduro). All mountain trails may use uplift to the trailhead where appropriate. Bikes are typically light to medium weight with medium-travel dual suspension.
Downhill	Purely descent-only trails with emphasis on steep gradients for speed and technical challenge with a focus on skill development. These trails can cater for timed competitive racing. Downhill trails typically appeal to the more experienced market. However, green (easy) downhill trails are emerging to cater for all experience levels. Downhill trails usually require uplift to the trailhead via chairlift or vehicle shuttling. Bikes are designed for descending, built for strength over weight and typically long-travel dual suspension.
Freeride	Typically descent-focused trails with emphasis solely on technical challenge and skill development. Trails feature both built and natural terrain technical features with a focus on drops and jumps. Appeals to the more experienced market and caters for competitions judging manoeuvres and skills only. Bikes are typically medium to long-travel dual suspension and are built for strength.
Park	Built feature environment with emphasis on manoeuvres, skill development and progression. Appeals to wide market including youth and can cater for competitions judging aerial manoeuvres. Can include jump tracks, pump tracks and skills parks. Typically dirt surfaced but can include hardened surfaces. Bikes are typically built for strength, with short travel suspension.
Touring	Typically long distance riding on reasonably uniform surface conditions and lower grades. Touring trails are dual direction linear trails or long distance circuits with a focus on reaching a destination. Touring trails can include rail trails, access/fire roads and single track. While there is a limited market for long distance mountain biking, touring trails can be ridden in sections making them accessible to all. Bikes may be carrying panniers or towing trailers, and are usually robust with limited suspension. However, for short sections or day trips most mountain bikes are suitable.
Gravel	While not a new concept, the popularity of gravel riding has increased significantly in recent years. It is typically conducted on gravel or unsealed roads or paths and can be considered as bridging the gap between traditional road riding and mountain biking combining the higher speed and efficiency of road cycling with the capability to ride on rough and loose terrain. While traditional mountain bikes can be used for gravel riding, specialised bikes have become popular in recent years and typically feature a drop bar bike with clearance for bigger tyres and a more relaxed comfortable geometry.
Cyclocross	Cyclocross is a growing discipline of cycling which provides off-road riding opportunities over a short course predominantly on natural surfaces such as grass, mud and sand. Races are conducted over multi-laps and can be conducted in a variety of settings where there is access to off-road terrain.



## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

### DEPARTMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, CONSERVATION AND ATTRACTIONS

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) manages national parks, marine parks, State forests and other reserves, conserves our world renowned native animals and plants, supports Aboriginal people in protecting their culture and heritage on parks and reserves, and supports access to, managed use and enjoyment of, the State's wildlife and natural areas.

Many different forms of recreational activities are undertaken within these areas, with DBCA being the largest provider of outdoor recreation opportunities in Western Australia. Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing recreational and sporting activities catered for on lands managed by the department.

DBCA is committed to working in partnership with the community to actively connect Western Australians with the parks and areas it manages by developing and managing recreational facilities, including mountain bike trails. The department manages a number of mountain bike facilities in partnership with community mountain bike groups and is a key stakeholder in a range of mountain bike policies, strategies and plans.

### DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, SPORT AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) develops and implements government policy and

initiatives in sport and recreation, while contributing to the healthy lifestyle of Western Australians by increasing physical activity through sport and recreation.

DLGSC has the lead State responsibility for sport and recreation and works closely with other agencies and organisations to deliver community outcomes. DLGSC is a key stakeholder and contributor to policy, strategy and planning for mountain biking in Western Australia.

### WESTCYCLE

WestCycle is the peak body for cycling in Western Australia. WestCycle embraces all cycling disciplines and operates at a strategic level to lead and coordinate the growth and development of bike riding in Western Australia.

WestCycle advocates and campaigns to government on a range of cycling related issues and acts as the interface between the cycling community and government.

WestCycle also plays a leading role in actively promoting mountain bike planning, including the development of the Western Australian Mountain Bike Strategy and regional mountain bike master planning.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES AND PRIVATE LAND OWNERS

Local Government Authorities (LGAs) work with local partners (including business, charities, police and other groups) to determine and deliver local priorities. LGAs provide a range of services to the local community, such as infrastructure, health, planning, recreation etc. Local

Government largely works within Federal and State legislation.

Some land vested in LGAs may be appropriate for trail development, with many LGAs in Western Australia already providing trail opportunities for their residents and visitors.

There are numerous examples worldwide where private land owners have developed commercial mountain bike trails and facilities on private property to provide for this growing activity, including the Linga Longa Bike Park near Greenbushes in the south-west of Western Australia.

### MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUBS AND GROUPS

There are numerous mountain bike clubs and informal groups from across the State that support the development of mountain biking in their communities. The clubs and groups are made up of volunteers, who are dedicated to the growth of mountain bike trails and the sport. Some clubs have been around for over 20 years and possess a wealth of knowledge, experience and strong roots in trail advocacy.

Clubs and groups are made up of recreational riders, racers, parents, trail builders and others who volunteer their time to support their communities. Clubs and groups have taken on the responsibility for many years to build and maintain trails through sustainable management practices and close relationships with land owners. Many clubs also hold races and events to encourage participation and development of the sport and athletes.



## MOUNTAIN BIKE COMMUNITY

It is acknowledged that many individual mountain bikers are not necessarily associated with a mountain bike club or group, yet they are potentially the largest user group and one of the most challenging to consult with. Based on national and international experience, it is anticipated the continual growth of MTB activities will see sustained growth in participation from this group.



## KEY CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

The table below highlights key challenges and opportunities facing mountain biking in Western Australia. They have been drawn from insights identified through the consultation and research phases of this project, and have helped inform the strategies and recommendations in this document.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ The current governance arrangements for mountain biking in Western Australia are unclear and requires key stakeholders to determine their respective roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Early engagement with the community including conservation groups can help improve the overall trail planning process.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ There are gaps across the state in the master planning framework to inform future trail development needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ There is a need to enhance the knowledge, skills and support for both the paid and volunteer workforce to maintain the growing network of trails across the state. There is also an opportunity to support the creation of jobs in trail building and maintenance.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ There is currently no long term sustainable funding resource to meet future trail development needs, including at a local community level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Educating mountain bike riders on the negative impacts of riding unsanctioned trails and promoting safe riding behaviours will reduce risks to the environment and riders and other trail users.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ There are gaps in data collection, monitoring and evaluation processes to inform current trail usage and future trail requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Women, juniors and people from diverse cultures are significantly under represented in mountain bike participation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Trail developments need to be underpinned by governance and business models that identify future revenue sources for reinvestment to improve future sustainability of trails.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ The distance to travel to trails is a major barrier to participation for many people, particularly in urban areas.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Limited availability of introductory programs and coaching, a lack of events attractive to beginners and trail design all act as barriers to new participants taking up mountain biking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ The use of electric assist mountain bikes (e-MTB's) is rapidly growing and will continue to do so in coming years.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Coaching and programs both within and outside the school environment should be enhanced to encourage increased junior participation with additional opportunities and support available to progress the development of aspiring junior mountain bikers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ There is an absence of a mountain bike tourism marketing strategy that links with state, regional and local level marketing efforts.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Accessibility for adaptive cyclist should be factored into all new trail developments including supporting infrastructure and amenities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Further education, training and support is required to help trail managers and mountain bike destination businesses capitalise on tourism opportunities presented by mountain bike visitors.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Riding off-road for transport or recreation is a fast growing segment of off-road cycling. Off-road transport routes, rail trails and long distance touring trails like the Munda Biddi provide opportunities to get more people riding off-road.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Events can enhance participation opportunities and contribute to the tourism and economic impact of mountain bike trails to Western Australia.</li> </ul>



# FOCUS AREA 1: GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING







## MOUNTAIN BIKE GOVERNANCE

**The future success of mountain biking in WA will largely be determined by the suitability and effectiveness of the overarching governance model that encompasses the WA Mountain Bike Strategy. Ensuring that appropriate systems and processes are in place to guide decision making, accountability, and monitoring of risk and performance are essential to ensure that the best possible outcomes are delivered.**

WestCycle is the peak body for cycling in Western Australia and is recognised by government agencies and key stakeholders as the interface between the cycling community and government in Western Australia. Recent cycling governance reform at a national level saw the creation of AusCycling which has assumed the role as the national body for all cycling disciplines and represented a shift from the traditional federated governance structure where state and territory associations are members of the national body. At this point in time, there is no formal governance relationship between AusCycling and WestCycle. With strong support from the Western Australian government, WestCycle is best placed to lead the development of mountain biking in Western Australia. It is, however, recognised that there are program areas where AusCycling is best placed to provide servicing and support to deliver improved outcomes for the mountain bike community. It is recommended that a collaborative partnership approach between WestCycle and AusCycling is established which clarifies respective roles

and responsibilities and how the mountain bike community can best be supported in WA. Relevant examples include the development of clubs, coaches, athlete development pathways, national events and high performance programs.

To support the implementation of the recommendations in this strategy, WestCycle should convene an implementation group with representation from government, key stakeholders and the community to provide oversight and monitoring of this strategy. This group will have oversight of the development and monitoring of an implementation plan which will provide detailed guidance on the specific actions, timeframes and responsibilities necessary to deliver on this strategy.

WestCycle should also work closely with the Trails Reference Group (TRG) which is a cross organisation reference group comprising agencies and individuals to influence and guide the strategic planning, development and communication of actions that support the development of trails in Western Australia. The TRG plays a key role in guiding the strategic development of trails in WA including regional master planning and ensuring the consistent application of planning processes. WestCycle should seek the input and feedback as required from the TRG to ensure appropriate alignment between the implementation of the WA Mountain bike strategy and the objectives of the TRG.





## PLANNING

Adopting appropriate planning processes that are applied consistently on a state-wide basis will be central to ensuring that future trails are built in the right places, in the right way and for the right reasons.

A range of trail strategy and planning documents is useful in helping to guide the future planning and development of trails. At a state level, the following strategies provide important guidance to the future planning and development of trails.

- Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint.
- WA Mountain Bike Management Guidelines.
- Trails Development Series – A Guide to the Trail Development Process.
- WestCycle – Our Bike Path 2022 – 2026.
- Western Australian High Performance Strategic Plan.
- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries – More People More Active Outdoors – A Framework for Outdoor Recreation in WA 2019.
- Department of Water and Environmental Regulations Operational Policy 13: Recreation within public drinking water source areas on crown land.
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Policy statement 18: Recreation, Tourism and Visitor Services
- Western Australian Cycle Tourism Strategy

The Strategic Trails Blueprint provides a state-wide trail planning hierarchy to guide investment decisions across all trail types.

The Trail Development Series has been developed to assist land managers in consistent, high quality trail development and management across WA. The series sets out planning and management standards for all trails to guide all stakeholders in a consistent development process. There is a clear trail development process which encompasses eight stages, from proposal through to construction and management.

Regional master planning helps to ensure that the existing trail supply is assessed and optimised in conjunction with the introduction of potential new experiences. Optimising the existing supply may include physical infrastructure and upgrades, as well as identifying the features and attributes within a region to help create unique and interesting experiences.

In recent years, regional level master planning has been achieved for the Perth & Peel region, South West, Great

Southern and the Pilbara. Regional master planning is an important part of the process to help identify suitable locations for future mountain bike trail development and is encouraged for regions which have not yet completed this process. Future master planning should be prioritised for regions where there are currently gaps in the existing planning framework.

Central to establishing a state-wide network is the use of a significance hierarchy, which helps to ensure that trail developments are of the right type, in the right place and for the right reasons. The trail significance hierarchy which was developed by D. Davis (2010) and adapted for Western Australia is detailed in the WA Mountain Bike Management Guidelines.<sup>14</sup> The significance hierarchy comprises three levels – National, Regional and Local and provides a quantitative justification for identifying the size of a trail network.

NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE
A mountain bike facility for a large population centre and/or tourism resource that caters for at least one week of unique riding opportunities.	A mountain bike facility for a small population centre or large community and/or a tourism resource that caters for short breaks or weekend trips.	A mountain bike facility for a small community and/or a tourism resource that caters for day trips.
<b>STATE-WIDE NETWORK</b>		

The criteria and parameters associated with each level provide further qualifying guidance to determine the appropriate scope and scale of a mountain bike trail development and are outlined in Appendix 1.

While the importance of following a comprehensive planning process as detailed in the eight stages in the Trail Development Series can not be understated, there is a need for planning and decision making processes to be optimised to help streamline timeframes for new trail developments.



## SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Recent years has seen record investment into significant trail developments including \$18.4 million for trail towns in Collie and Dwellingup and a further \$20 million across projects in the Perth Hills, South West and Great Southern regions. While this investment has been welcomed and has fast tracked progress of important trail developments, a sustainable recurring funding resource is not currently available. Securing long term sustainable funding for new trail developments is necessary in order to ensure that developments can continue, particularly for local trail developments that can meet the needs for local communities right around the State.

## DATA, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Access to, and the utilisation of, data is vital in helping make informed decisions as well as to better demonstrate the benefits of trails. Access to accurate participation data across the trail network benefits decision making at both a strategic level in determining macro trends such as state-wide participation, but also at a local level in understanding demands on particular infrastructure. This can help understand requirements such as maintenance and the need for additional amenities and supporting facilities.

The use of data can help to inform impact studies and to gain an understanding of the benefits that particular trails

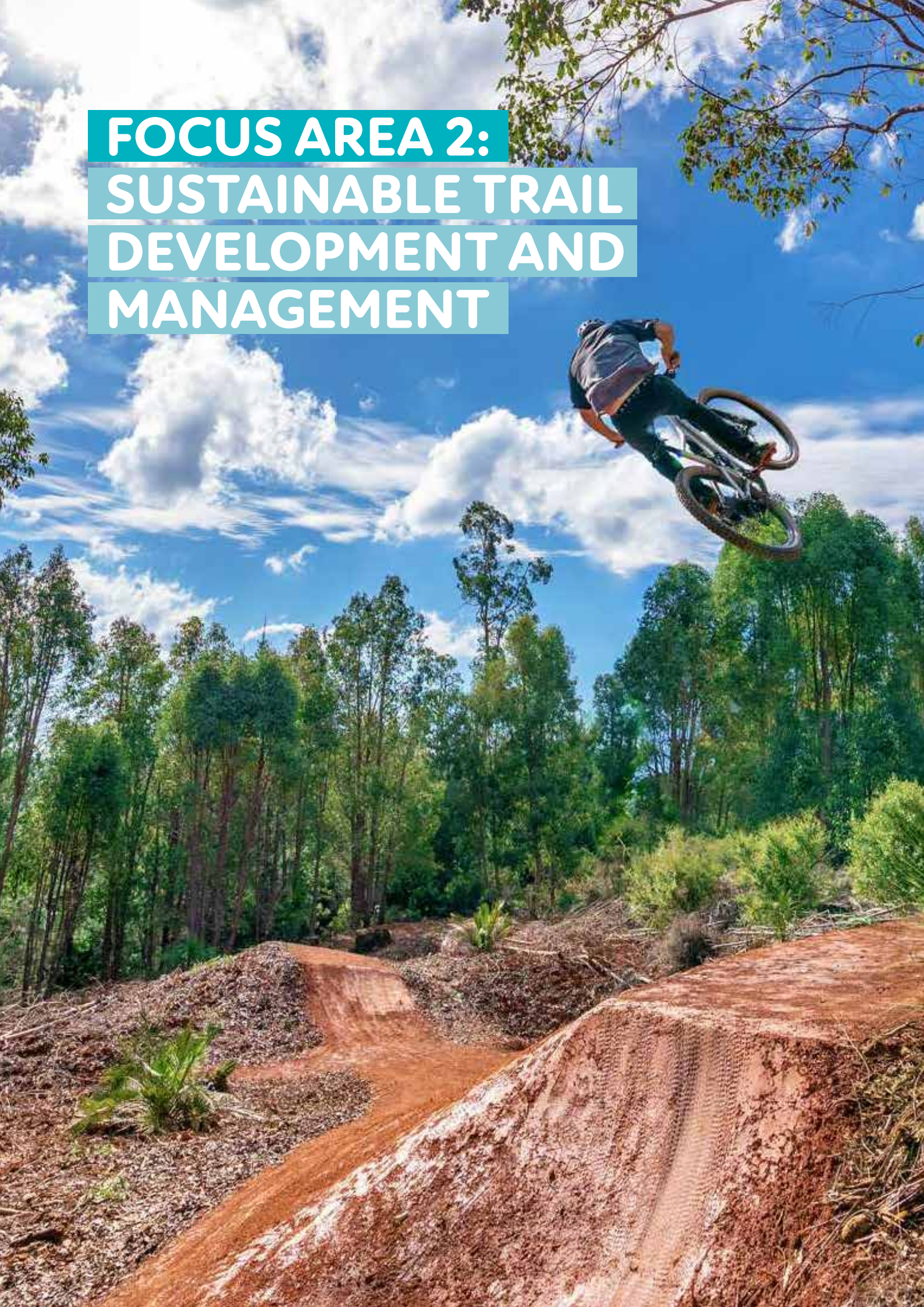
provide to the community. Impact studies which can demonstrate pre and post economic impact will help to further demonstrate the benefits of mountain bike trails and the return on investment they can provide to the community.

While trail counter data can provide basic understanding of participation for an individual trail, there is no state-wide receptacle for counter data to add to the understanding of participation more broadly. Additionally, there is a need for more detailed insights to better understand participant demographics, behaviour patterns and preferences.





# FOCUS AREA 2: SUSTAINABLE TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT







## SUSTAINABLE TRAIL MANAGEMENT

The maintenance and long term sustainability of trails is one of the most pressing challenges facing the trails sector. Research conducted by WestCycle found that access to well maintained trails was highlighted as the most important factor for mountain bikers when choosing where to ride with 84% of survey participants rating it as either *Extremely Important* or *Very Important*. Survey participants also identified that poorly maintained trails act as a contributing factor in choosing to ride unsanctioned trails.<sup>6</sup>

The WA Mountain Bike Management Guidelines were developed in response to a recommendation in the WA Mountain Bike Strategy 2015–2020 to establish and implement a trail development process to guide mountain bike trail planning from proposal to implementation. The guidelines are an important tool for land managers, trail professionals and mountain bike groups providing guidance to ensure a consistent approach to planning, designing, constructing, and managing sustainable mountain bike trails across the State.<sup>15</sup>

The Guidelines set out a vision to ‘Sustainably develop and manage high quality mountain bike trails for the right users, in the right areas for the right reasons backed by strong partnerships and community ownership.’

The guidelines have the following four objectives:

### OBJECTIVE 1

Provide an understanding of various styles of mountain biking and the differing user types and their needs.

### OBJECTIVE 2

Develop trails using principles of sustainable planning, design, and construction techniques.

### OBJECTIVE 3

Follow the Trail Development Process for all trails.

### OBJECTIVE 4

Provide a consistent approach to mountain bike trail development and management across Western Australia.

It is important that the WA Mountain Bike Management Guidelines are periodically reviewed to ensure they remain current and continue to provide a contemporary framework to support the sustainable development of trails into the future. Specific updates could include additional information on trail governance and business models and access to resources providing detailed guidance such as potential costs for specific elements of developing trails.

A critical aspect of sustainable trail management and maintenance is ensuring appropriate planning from the initial concept for a trail development. The Trail Development Process was developed to provide land owners, land managers, and trail users in Western Australia with a methodology to ensure any trails developed in the State are sustainable and an asset rather than a liability.





The Trails Development Series document, A Guide to the Trail Development Process, details the 8-stage trail development process which encompasses a constant evaluation, review, and improvement process as trails are being developed, maintained, extended or renewed.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 4 – 8 Stage Trail Development Process**

STAGE	OUTCOME
<b>1 TRAIL PROPOSAL</b>	A trail development proposal is either supported in principle by the land manager/owner, or not supported (due to environmental, social, cultural or other constraints). The purpose of a proposal could be to identify potential suitable areas for consideration.
<b>2 FRAMEWORK</b>	A project outline developed by the steering group (stakeholders), including: project objectives, project management model, stakeholders, roles, target market, requirements, execution, and ongoing management model.
<b>3 SITE ASSESSMENT</b>	Broad scale study of the area and identification of opportunities, constraints and characteristics such as soil types, vegetation etc.
<b>4 CONCEPT PLANNING</b>	Identification of opportunities and conceptual trail plan, including broad trail corridors and infrastructure requirements.
<b>5 CORRIDOR EVALUATION</b>	Detailed assessment of trail corridors for use in determining the final trail alignment.
<b>6 DETAILED DESIGN</b>	Detailed trail design and alignments physically flagged in the field. Includes detail on the trail classifications, technical trail features (TTFs), construction methods and specifications.
<b>7 CONSTRUCTION</b>	Trail constructed in line with the Detailed Design.
<b>8 MANAGEMENT</b>	Management plan implemented detailing maintenance and monitoring requirements.

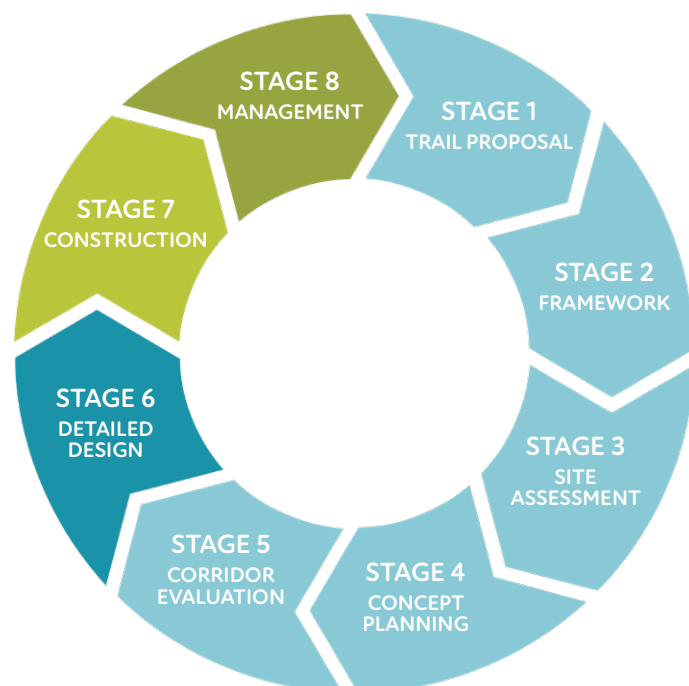
DESKTOP

FIELD

Sustainable trails means developing the right trails, in the right places, the right way and for the right reasons.

The trail development process provides protocols and procedures which ensure that any trails developed are an asset.

The trail development process has been staged and should be viewed a cycle, starting again when changes are required.







Community engagement and a partnership approach should be central to all aspects of the trail development process. The community and user groups can act as ambassadors for trail projects as well as providing valuable input and feedback in the design process. They will generally be active users of the trail, act as environmental stewards and can provide volunteers to support trail maintenance and future development. It is also vital that conservation groups are engaged at the beginning of the process, to ensure there is clarity around each party's objectives and possible concerns. Engagement

and dialogue will build relationships that will help to meet the needs and outcomes of all stakeholder groups. It is important the community is engaged at the beginning of the trail planning process.

The Strategic Trails Blueprint highlights the need for Aboriginal engagement and empowerment as a guiding principle to achieve the vision of the Blueprint. The engagement and empowerment of Aboriginal people in all levels of trail development and management strengthens the connection between cultural and heritage values and trail

user experience and creates opportunities for Aboriginal enterprise, story-telling and cultural awareness.

Recognising the connection to Country and wealth of knowledge Aboriginal people and communities can bring to a trail project and empowering Aboriginal people to be part of the trail development process through meaningful engagement and leadership, can strengthen partnerships and provide significant benefits for the trail development process and overall trails experience.



## TRAIL GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS MODELS

Over the past 5 -10 years, there has been a significant increase in demand for trails in Western Australia coinciding with increases in construction and maintenance costs which has outpaced increases in government management and maintenance resources. Grants and 'one-off' capital funding will generally fund new trails, trail networks and major improvements, but will not fund ongoing trail management and maintenance. Many stakeholders consulted identified dissatisfaction with current arrangements to support the maintenance of trails with a lack of resources and support for volunteer driven trail maintenance highlighted as a key issue. It is important that trail governance models are incorporated in the early stages of trail planning to ensure that a model which best meets the needs of the trail and the community can be established.

As trail projects move from development to operation, there is a range of roles and functions that need to be fulfilled by the trail 'operators' to ensure the trail network is fully activated and operating at its maximum potential. These roles and functions include trail and facility maintenance and management, marketing and activation and the ongoing development of the trail network. Ensuring there is an appropriate governance and business model is critical to support the sustainable management

and maintenance of trails. This should be carried out as part of the trail development process by the stakeholders or steering committee who have convened to progress planning for the trail.

With different ownership and management arrangements across different trails, different governance and business models will be required to meet the variety of trail models that exist and that suit local needs. A report on trail governance and business models for the Yarra Ranges Council by TRC Tourism<sup>17</sup> described that 'while different trail governance and business structures have broad advantages and disadvantages, the sustainable management of a trail and its success as a community, tourism and economic resource also depends on:

- The circumstances of each trail – such as land tenure, trail development history, management issues and the agencies, landholders and stakeholders involved
- The way governance and business structures and associated personnel operate in practice; and
- The operating environment – such as state and local government legislation, policies, planning frameworks and institutional arrangements; community and tourism industry engagement and support; sources of funding and expertise; marketing and promotion arrangements.

The TRC Tourism Report described the following governance models which can be grouped into three broad alternatives.

### ALTERNATIVES INCLUDE:

- Public Delivery and Public Operation;
- Public Delivery and Community Operation – alternative community operation arrangements could include:
  - Operation by volunteer groups;
  - Operation by community management group;
  - Operation by Incorporated Association / other not-for-profit entity – foundation or charity); and
  - Operation by a Company Ltd by guarantee.
- Public Delivery and Private Operation.







To help determine what governance model will be appropriate, TRC Tourism identified the following outcomes that should be considered when assessing potential governance models for the management of trails.

- 1** Governance and accountability are clear and simple to initiate and administer over the longer term.
- 2** Trails are planned and managed effectively and efficiently.
- 3** The strengths of expertise offered by each partner in the model are recognised and the recommended model allocates responsibilities and authority accordingly.
- 4** The visitor experience and presentation of the trail network are substantially improved or continually improving, and the new model facilitates commercial tourism positioning, product development and marketing to take the trail forward as a trail destination.
- 5** The trails are supported by a range of funding sources with a revenue raising mechanism to enhance cash flow to enable self-generated investment into facilities, assets, and services.
- 6** An effective control environment is in place to reduce key risks (to staff, volunteers and visitors) and each agencies operations are not adversely affected (i.e. there is no dilution of effectiveness).
- 7** The benefits of the new model are visible to the community, and it is inclusive of user and community groups.
- 8** The model must be appropriate under Western Australian and Australian regulation.



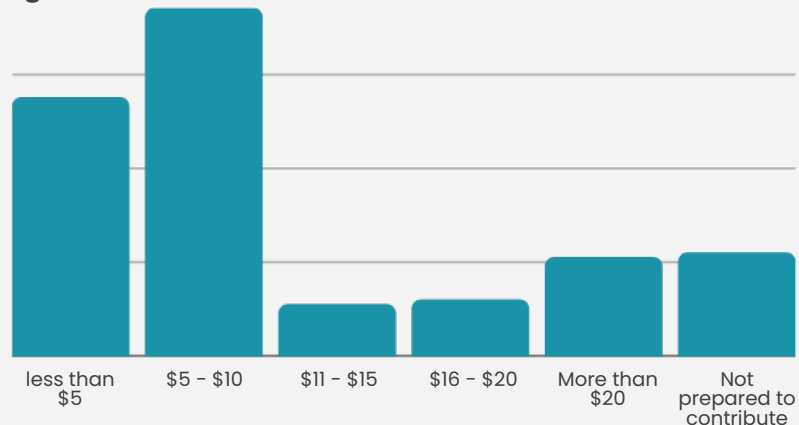
## FUNDING SOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE TRAIL MANAGEMENT

A key consideration to determine the best governance model for trail sustainability is the business or funding model to invest into the trail facilities, assets, and services. To date, there are limited examples in Western Australia where the use of trails is associated with a fee or other source of income that is used to reinvest into the future of the trail assets and services. Linga Longa is one example of a private facility that charges for trail access as well as camping.

As part of the community survey completed by WestCycle, participants were asked whether they would be prepared to contribute to the cost of managing and maintaining trails. 37% of respondents indicated

they would be prepared to contribute an amount of \$5 - \$10 per ride towards the cost of maintaining trails. Only 11% reported they would not be prepared to contribute any amount.

**Figure 4 - User contribution towards trail maintenance**



The table below highlights possible income sources that can be incorporated within a sustainable governance and business model for mountain bike trails.

**Table 5 - Potential mountain bike facility revenue sources**

FEE/INCOME TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Entry fees	Paid for entering a park or area.
Facility or attraction fees	Paid to enter or use a specific facility or attraction.
Parking Fees	Payment for timed parking.
Licence charges	Charges or shares of revenue paid by businesses operating within parks/protected areas.
Leases	Lease fees for operating a business or concession.
Merchandise	Sale of merchandise/souvenirs.
Licences and Permits	Instruments required by private companies or individuals to conduct commercial activities in parks/protected areas.
Taxes	Targeted taxes on relevant points in the market chain related to tourism – earmarked for conservation/recreation.
Sponsorship and donations	Individual or company sponsorship or donations for specific area or facility.
Members and supporters	Members pay an annual or one-off fee to join or support an organisation or facility.
Partnerships	Partner with others who will derive a benefit from park, facility, or program.
Volunteers	Individual or groups of volunteers assist with management and maintenance of a trail or trail network.
Events	A per participant or flat charge paid to support the facilities on which the event is based.





With more kilometres of trails being developed there are growing maintenance requirements to ensure trails continue to provide an enjoyable and safe riding experience.

## INDUSTRY TRAINING AND WORKFORCE CAPACITY

With more kilometres of trails being developed there are growing maintenance requirements to ensure trails continue to provide an enjoyable and safe riding experience. The 2021 community survey conducted by WestCycle highlighted the importance of well-maintained trails as the most important factor for people when considering where to ride with 84% of respondents indicating it as either *Extremely Important* or *Very Important*.

Building the capacity of the workforce (both paid and volunteer) will be critical to ensuring there is the required level of knowledge and skills available across the industry to maintain the growing kilometres of trails. Importantly, a state-wide approach is needed, along with improved industry collaboration and industry leadership in the delivery of

training. Understanding the different skill sets available and mapping this across the State will help to identify where there are gaps and further training, and where support is required. Initiatives such as the Trail Training Project (once completed) will provide an important training resource for the planning, construction and maintenance of trails state-wide, including components that have been developed with Traditional Owners. This project is being developed by a partnership between Outdoors Great Southern, DBCA and DLGSC. Increasing training and education of Local Government personnel in trail maintenance should also be prioritised.

Volunteers are and will continue to be a critical component of the trail maintenance workforce. It is important that volunteers and the role they play is clearly

identified and incorporated in the trail governance model previously discussed, and that they are resourced appropriately and supported with the necessary training. Recognising the value of the contributions of volunteers to the management and maintenance of mountain bike trails should be further promoted and acknowledged.

The ongoing maintenance and improvement of trail assets and supporting infrastructure can support job creation and local manufacturing opportunities. Targeting strategic investments into trail developments and leveraging this investment by supporting job creation opportunities within local communities should be identified within the planning phases for trail developments and renewal projects.



## SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE MOUNTAIN BIKING

Riding unsanctioned trails presents challenges for landowners, trail managers and for trail users themselves. 65% of respondents in the community survey reported at some point having ridden on unsanctioned trails. *Being close to home, variety, more challenging, more natural* were the most reported reasons why people ride unsanctioned trails. Addressing informal riding on unsanctioned trails is a challenge that all stakeholders must work together to address.

### RIDING UNSANCTIONED TRAILS IS UNSUSTAINABLE AND CAN LEAD TO THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS.

- Impact on environmental values through erosion, disturbance to flora and fauna and the potential spread of biological threats like dieback (*Phytophthora cinnamomic*).
- Conflict with other recreational activities and trail users.
- Conflict with other land uses, such as public drinking water source areas, harvesting operations or mining.
- Impact sites of heritage and cultural significance.
- Places landowners and land managers under pressure and increases exposure to risk and potential liability.
- Creates costs for land managers to remove and rehabilitate, diverting limited resources from sanctioned trail maintenance.
- Undermines the reputation of the mountain biking industry and the positive benefits it delivers.

Educating the mountain bike community on the potential impacts of riding unsanctioned trails and the need to adopt accepted standards of behaviour should be addressed by stakeholders. Reviewing the WA Mountain Bike Code of Conduct and widely promoting these should be actioned.

Further, with 80% of respondents to the community survey identifying being in nature as a primary motivator to mountain bike, there is

considerable environmental goodwill amongst mountain bikers and the opportunity to leverage this into improved awareness and support for protecting our natural environments.

Continuing to improve safety for mountain bikers and mitigate risks to landowners and managers remains an important priority for the industry. Way finding signage, trail maps and trail ratings should be accurate, accessible and consistent. Furthermore, tools and resources to provide feedback on trail maintenance issues such as through Trails WA should be promoted. There is also a need to ensure that existing processes surrounding emergency situations such as bushfires, as well as emergency service access and egress to attend to injured riders, should be regularly reviewed to mitigate against potential risks.

Between 2015 and 2020, there was a 100% increase in ambulance attended mountain bike incidents.<sup>18</sup> While there is likely to be a degree of correlation between the increase in incidents and the increase in overall rates of mountain bike participation observed during this period, more research is needed to understand the nature and cause of these injuries and to better inform safer trail development and other measures that can improve rider safety. Injury or the fear of injury is also understood to be two of the more common reasons why people discontinue mountain biking. Measures that improve rider safety are important to reduce the risk of, and fear of injury and encourage more people to participate in mountain biking.







**FOCUS AREA 3:  
PARTICIPATION**





**Participation in mountain biking continues to grow right across Australia with the most recent AusPlay data estimating 492,900 adults and children participating in mountain biking nationally across 2021. This represents an increase of nearly 22% from the previous 12 month period.<sup>19</sup> Record levels of participation were recorded in WA with more than 53,000 people participating across 2021.**

This growth in participation highlights the popularity of mountain biking as a sport, recreation and tourism activity. The opportunity to connect with nature and continue to exercise and participate in a socially distanced activity contributed to the continued popularity of mountain biking – even throughout the COVID-19 pandemic when many other sports and activities were

unable to continue. Mountain biking was in the top ten sports that experienced an increase in participants across 2019–2020 with an estimated 99,000 additional participants nationally from the previous year.<sup>20</sup>

Membership data from Mountain Bike Australia (now part of AusCycling) reinforces this growth with a reported 52.5% increase in membership in the six years to June 2020.<sup>21</sup>

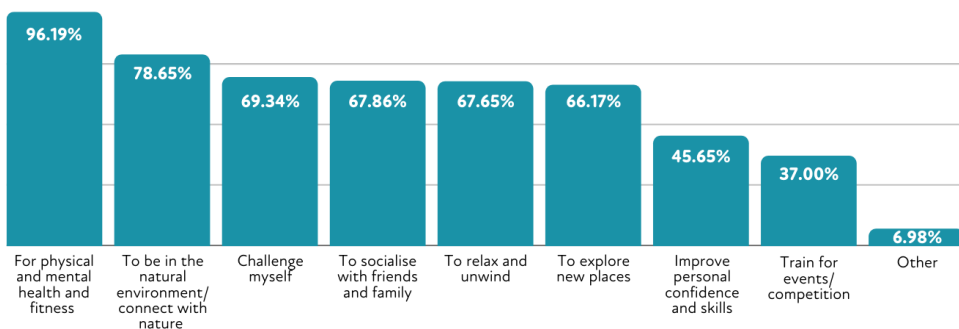
Trail counter data from trails in various regions across WA also support this increased level of interest and participation in mountain biking.<sup>22</sup> The Wambenger Trails near Collie recorded 6059 rides in their first full month after opening, and the Murray Valley Trails (Dwellingup) were ridden a total of 111,353 times in 2021, their first full year of operation after opening.

The Kalamunda Trails, the closest trail network to metropolitan Perth, were ridden a total of 139,633 times in 2021.

The continued growth of mountain biking presents both challenges and opportunities for the governing bodies, land managers, clubs, trail care groups, commercial operators, and other key stakeholders.

The WestCycle mountain bike community survey highlighted the following as the main reasons why people choose to mountain bike.<sup>23</sup>

- Physical and mental health and fitness (96%)
- To be in the natural environment (78%)
- To challenge myself (70%)
- To socialise with family and friends (69%)
- To relax and unwind (69%)



**FIGURE 5 – REASONS WHY PEOPLE MOUNTAIN BIKE**

**62%**

of respondents to the survey indicated riding at least once per week with 31% of these participants riding two to three times per week.

Responding to how far people usually ride when they mountain bike, 33% ride 11km–20km while 40% ride 21km–30km. For most people this would represent a ride of between 60 minutes to two hours duration.



One of the biggest barriers which impacts on people not being able to ride more often is the

**DISTANCE REQUIRED TO TRAVEL TO ACCESS TRAILS**

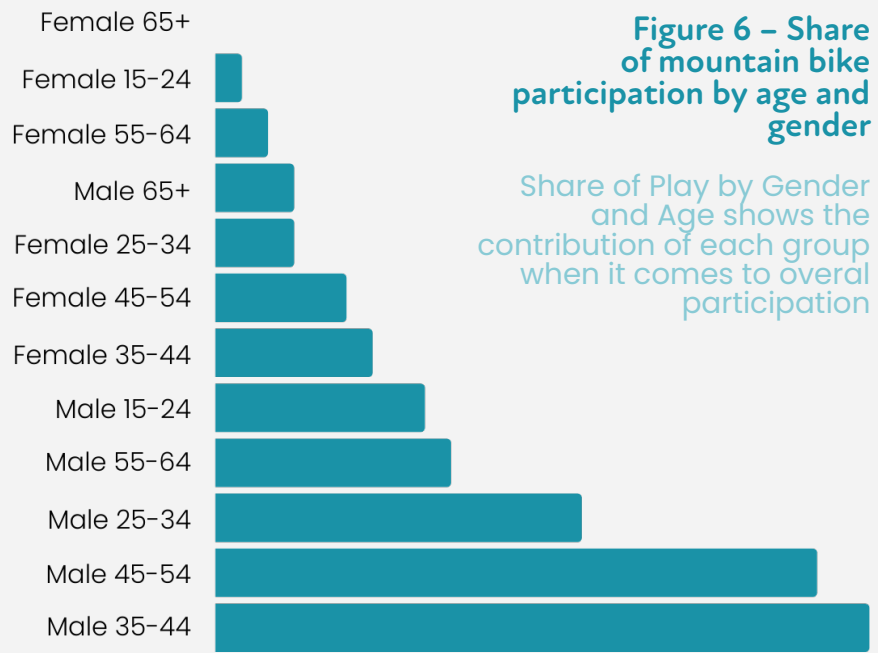
**50%**

of respondents to the community survey travel 30–45 or 46–60 minutes to access their regular mountain bike trails with 11% reporting they travel more than 60 minutes to access their most regular mountain bike trail. 87% of respondents said they would ride more regularly if they had closer access to mountain bike trails.



## PARTICIPATION PROFILE

While the popularity and participation in mountain biking has continued to grow, rates of participation are highly skewed to certain segments of the community. AusPlay data shows that participation is highly skewed to middle aged males between the ages of 35-54 (Figure 6) This is consistent with the community survey conducted with 78% of respondents identifying as male and 64% of all respondents between the age of 35-54. AusPlay reports that only 6% of participants are 15 years and under and only 17% of participants are female.<sup>24</sup>



## INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN UNDER REPRESENTED GROUPS

While the opportunity exists for mountain biking to become more accessible to more of the community, it is likely that there are several interrelated factors that need to be addressed to reduce barriers and diversify the participation base. These include the fear of injury, a lack of skill development opportunities, limited availability of coaching, difficulties in accessing conveniently located trails, and trail design. Increasing participation in under represented groups will require approaches that can address each of these barriers to participation.

At present, there is a lack of access to coaching as well as skill development opportunities and programs. Providing coaching and introductory programs catering for specific target groups such as females will help improve skill development, reduce the fear of injury, and will increase confidence and encourage

participants to try riding off-road. The introduction of new facilities in urban areas such as bike parks, skills parks and pump tracks provide a suitable environment for introductory programs for people new to the sport. Coaching and development opportunities at urban locations will not only improve beginner skills, but will also help to form social connections and groups who can support each other in riding trails. Programs should be targeted to particular segments to encourage social aspects and the development of a supportive environment.

Opportunities to increase junior participation should be encouraged through coaching and programs both within and outside the school environment. There is an opportunity to educate junior participants on technical riding skills, as well as foster an appreciation for the natural environment, potentially creating lifelong ambassadors.

While developing the facilities and enhancing the built environment through urban trails, bike parks, skill parks and pump tracks will encourage increased participation, tapping into existing services and campaigns will create further opportunities to encourage participation. Leveraging campaigns such as Bike Month by offering specific pump track events, or incorporating family fun day events at bike parks or trails, will serve to expose broader segments of the community to mountain biking.

Effective trail design can also influence the experience of beginner and inexperienced riders. An example is the incorporation of design features such as overtaking lanes on single track trails. Allowing more experienced riders the opportunity to pass beginner riders improves the overall experience for both beginner and the experienced rider.





Making trails accessible for adaptive cyclists should also be factored into trail design. Recent trail developments at Dwellingup and Collie have catered for adaptive cycles, helping to improve accessibility for people with a disability. In addition to the actual trail design, it is important that supporting infrastructure, such as parking and amenities also factor in accessibility requirements.

## ACCESS TO TRAILS

Having access to trails close to home was the second most important factor for people when choosing where to ride with 75% of respondents selecting this as either Extremely Important or Very Important.

For many people living in urban centres and particularly the Perth metropolitan areas, access to trails typically

requires travelling relatively long distances by car. In the recently conducted community survey, 50% of people travelled 30–45 minutes or 45–60 minutes to access trails. With 87% of respondents indicating they would ride more regularly if trails were more accessible, encouraging the development of urban trails should be supported in suitable locations. In becoming a valuable community asset, they deliver a range of benefits as well as mitigate against the potential for people to build or create their own unsanctioned trails in their local communities.

A number of LGA's have invested in (or are investigating opportunities) for urban trails, bike parks and pump tracks. These should be encouraged and provide a valuable opportunity for the community to access a mountain bike experience

without having to travel long distances where traditional trails are not accessible. It is important that any new developments, whether they be in urban or regional areas, incorporate opportunities to encourage and attract beginners and less experienced riders including children and families.

As participation in mountain biking increases, the demand on existing trails will continue to grow and place pressure on access to new developments. Access to facilities suitable for mountain biking are impacted by policies adopted by land owners and managers. As demand for access to new trail opportunities grows, there is a need for stakeholders and facility owners and managers to work together to improve accessibility and increase participation opportunities that are inclusive and sustainable.



## JUNIOR PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT AND HIGH PERFORMANCE

Junior development and pathways for talented athletes have been under resourced in recent years. While riders like Sam Hill have been able to achieve success on the international stage, there has been a lack of a structured development pathway for junior athletes. While the gaps were identified in the previous Mountain Bike Strategy in 2015, the national governance changes with the introduction of AusCycling and COVID-19 have only exacerbated challenges over the past two years.

### A SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY IS BUILT AROUND ACCESS TO THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

- Ⓞ Athlete
- Ⓞ Coaching
- Ⓞ Daily Training Environment
- Ⓞ Competition and Events
- Ⓞ Athlete Wellbeing

While WestCycle is the peak body for cycling in Western Australia, AusCycling as the recognised National Sporting Organisation has carriage for developing the development framework for athletes, coaches and commissaires or officials across all cycling disciplines including mountain biking. There is a need for WestCycle and AusCycling to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities for both parties to ensure that athletes, coaches and clubs are supported and serviced effectively in WA.

It is important that development camps and opportunities are provided locally in addition to any national eastern states based camps. Costs involved for parents of junior athletes are often cost-prohibitive for many families and it is important that opportunities to gain the relevant experience are afforded in WA or are financially supported where travel to eastern states program is required.

Enhanced coach development opportunities should also be prioritised. AusCycling has carriage for the national coaching framework and should ensure that adequate opportunities are offered for both new and existing coaches to develop their skills.

With Brisbane set to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2032, we can expect to see an increase in funding into high performance sport, and it is likely that State Institute programs will increase the programs and servicing they have available. There is a need for both WestCycle and AusCycling to understand what is required to strengthen high performance pathways and to work with the Western Australian Institute of Sport (WAIS) and other stakeholders to invest in programs that can support West Australian athletes.

## EVENTS

Events provide benefits to a variety of riders and stakeholders for a variety of reasons. Events often promote the sport to potential new participants and provide a sense of community and belonging to participants. Events serve as development

opportunities as part of the athlete pathway and can provide competitive opportunities for elite and high performing mountain bikers. They can also provide economic and tourism outcomes, generating revenue for communities associated or nearby to events and supporting both commercial and not-for-profit entities involved in delivering events.

At present, events typically cater for people with a reasonable level of skill and fitness. Event opportunities that cater for beginners and present a more accessible introductory experience should be encouraged.

Events provide a useful way to highlight and promote a region, attracting domestic (local and interstate) or international participants depending on the nature and profile of the event. Events such as the Cape-to-Cape and Dwellingup 100 have developed national and international profile and provide valuable economic and tourism benefits for the regions in which they are held. WA has unique landscapes and can provide a range of different event experiences which should be further explored to open up additional major event opportunities. In addition, elite level events that provide high performance athletes with international competition and experiences should be investigated.

Large events have the potential to impact on the environment, and it is important that innovative ways that minimise the impact on the environment are incorporated into event planning.





## OFF-ROAD RIDING FOR TRANSPORT AND RECREATION

Riding off-road for transport or recreation is one of the fastest growing segments of off-road cycling / mountain biking. Transport trails provide enjoyable experiences and are often cheaper to develop per km than single track trails and other off-road trail types. The growth of gravel riding has exploded in recent years with all indicators leading to further future growth. Requiring relatively low skill levels when compared to mountain bike riding involving single track and gravity assisted trails, gravel riding opens opportunities for participants of all skill and fitness levels to experience riding off-road. Gravel trails can typically be ridden on a Gravel or Cross (CX) style bike which is closer in design to a road bike but has wider tyres and different tube angles to provide a more comfortable ride. An added benefit of this type of riding is that they are more rider friendly for covering longer distances than traditional mountain bikes. This provides opportunities for off-road trails to be accessed by riding to them as opposed to driving as is largely the case to access mountain bike trails.

The Department of Transport now supports the development of unsealed surfaces and trails that have a specific transport component and are included in their grant programs. One of the benefits of these trail types is that they are typically cheaper to develop than traditional cycle paths.

Rail trails provide a further opportunity to deliver interesting, unique and challenging experiences in Western Australia. The growth

of rail trails, particularly in Queensland and New South Wales have seen the development of trails alongside rail networks. This is a potential growth opportunity for Western Australia, and while challenges such as trails crossing different land tenures and ownership require consideration, they have the potential to open new tourism markets and opportunities for our regional towns.

Off road touring presents additional opportunities to increase participation and well as economic and tourism benefits. The Munda Biddi trails are already recognised as one of the world's top cycling trails and is a drawcard for local, interstate and international visitors. Continuing to improve trails, facilities and amenities for trails such as the Wadandi Track, Kep Track and Munda Biddi as well as potential new long distance off road cycling experiences should be supported.

Cyclocross is a growing discipline of cycling which provides off-road riding opportunities over a short course predominantly on natural surfaces such as grass, mud and sand. Races are conducted over multi-laps and can be conducted in a variety of settings where there is access to off-road terrain. One of the advantages of Cyclocross is that it can be conducted in urban environments, providing improved access for larger population centres without the need to travel long distances to access traditional mountain bike trails. Cyclocross has the potential to increase participation in off-road cycling in a relatively safe and accessible environment.





# Dwellingup Adventure

## Murray Valley Mountain Bike Trails

This network of purpose-built single-track trails offers down a morning experience through Lake Pinnac Reserve, with a variety of trail types and styles. The Murray Valley trails has something for everyone.

The Murray Valley Adventure Bike Trails are part of the Dwellingup Adventure Trails network, which includes walk, cycle and canoe experiences. The trail for this network and existing network is the Lake Pinnac, also known as the Forest and Wooded Open Woodlands. For legal use, please refer to the Forest and Wooded Open Woodlands. The unique Wood Australia network easy to spot in the forests around Dwellingup and Lake Pinnac.

There are opportunities throughout the trail network to stop to discover more about the local wildlife, landscapes, history and cultural heritage that make the Dwellingup Adventure Trails an experience you will want to return many times over.



### Easy Trails (Green)

Recommended for beginner riders with basic mountain bike skills. Typically open, rolling trails at low weight with gentle gradients. Surface may be uneven, loose or muddy at times. There may also occur small rocks, obstacles and technical trail features.



### Adaptive Trails

These trails have been used under the Adventure Mountain Biking Guidelines.





# Trails



## Medium Trails (Blue)

Recommended for intermediate riders with some technical skills. Typically narrow trails with loose, soft, rocky or sandy surfaces and hills with steep descents. Riders will encounter moderate and technical trail features.



## Difficult Trails (Black)

Recommended for experienced riders with good technical skills. Variable surfaces and steep gradients. Riders will encounter large obstacles and technical trail features.



## ELECTRIC ASSIST BIKES

The use of electric assist mountain bikes (eMTB) is rapidly growing each year in Australia. 14% of the community survey participants indicated that they regularly use an eMTB on trails. Data from Europe indicates approximately 50% of new mountain bike sales are electric assist, highlighting the likely continued growth in the eMTB market in Australia.<sup>25</sup>

While eMTBs have and will continue to play a positive role in improving accessibility to trails for people of varying abilities and backgrounds, consideration needs to be given to trail design and maintenance requirements, potential environmental impacts, safety and regulatory issues as well as the opportunities that increased participation provides. A greater understanding of the potential impacts on eMTB use is required to ensure that the increased prevalence of eMTB is managed sustainably and does not have unexpected or adverse impacts on the development of mountain bike riding.

The use of Electric Trail Bikes (eTrail Bikes) bikes is also increasing and presents an additional challenge. The potential blurring of the lines between eTrail bikes and eMTB's needs to be considered due to the different impacts that the use of eTrail bikes presents to mountain bike trails.



**FOCUS AREA 4:  
MOUNTAIN BIKE  
MARKETING, TOURISM  
AND ECONOMIC  
IMPACT**





**Internationally, cycling and particularly mountain biking is increasing in popularity as an activity for tourism, recreation, sport and commuting. In the four years prior to COVID-19 in 2020, the total number of people travelling for cycling had increased each year with the total number of visitors in Western Australia cycling as part of a trip reaching 680,000.**

This includes 469,000 visitors who spent at least one night away from home. Western Australia presents as an appealing mountain bike destination, offering a diversity of landscapes providing a variety of mountain bike experiences. From red dirt, natural forests, and coastlines overlooking turquoise oceans, there is a variety of landscapes that form part of the attractiveness of Western Australia as a mountain biking destination.

Cycle tourism has been identified globally as an attractive market for tourism

operators, as a key growth adventure tourism activity due to its low-impact, high-spend, and high-dispersal nature. Cycle tourists typically stay longer, spend more and engage in a broader range of experiences than the average visitor<sup>26</sup>

Research undertaken by AusCycling into the economic impact of mountain biking calculated the average expenditure for Mountain Bike holidays per trip was \$1,707 for intrastate trips and \$2,485 for interstate trips.<sup>27</sup> Key areas of expenditure included airfares (interstate), ground transport, meals and beverages, accommodation, retail purchases, bike rental and equipment and spare parts. This represents a significant opportunity for tourism related business and communities to benefit from mountain bike related travel.

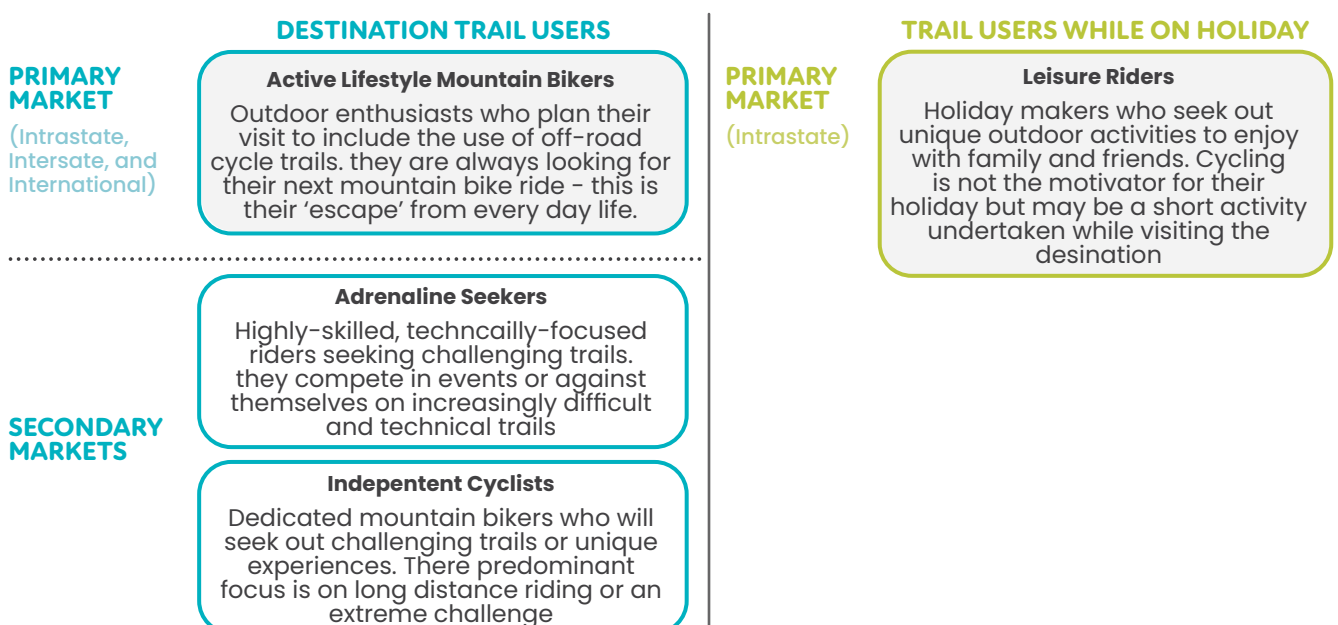
Mountain biking destinations can deliver significant economic benefits for communities where trails are located and have been the

driver for the revitalisation and development of a number of regional towns internationally and recently here in Australia and WA. International destinations including New Zealand, Canada and Scotland have developed strong profiles as 'must visit' mountain biking locations. Blue Derby in Tasmania is the most well known Australian example of a town which has revitalised itself off the back of investing in mountain bike trails and now attracts visitors from interstate and internationally generating significant economic benefit for the local community and surrounds.

The recently prepared WA Trails Market Research Report identified primary visitor segments that should be the focus of marketing efforts to attract mountain bike riders to Western Australia. Potential visitors were categorised as Destination Trail Users or Trail Users While on Holiday. An overview of the market segments is presented below (Figure 7)

**FIGURE 7- MOUNTAIN BIKE TARGET MARKETS**  
**TARGET MARKETS - MOUNTAIN BIKING**

These are the primary visitor segments and markets for Western Australia's Mountain biking trail offering.



Adapted from the WA Trails Market Research Report, Trail Futures, 2021.



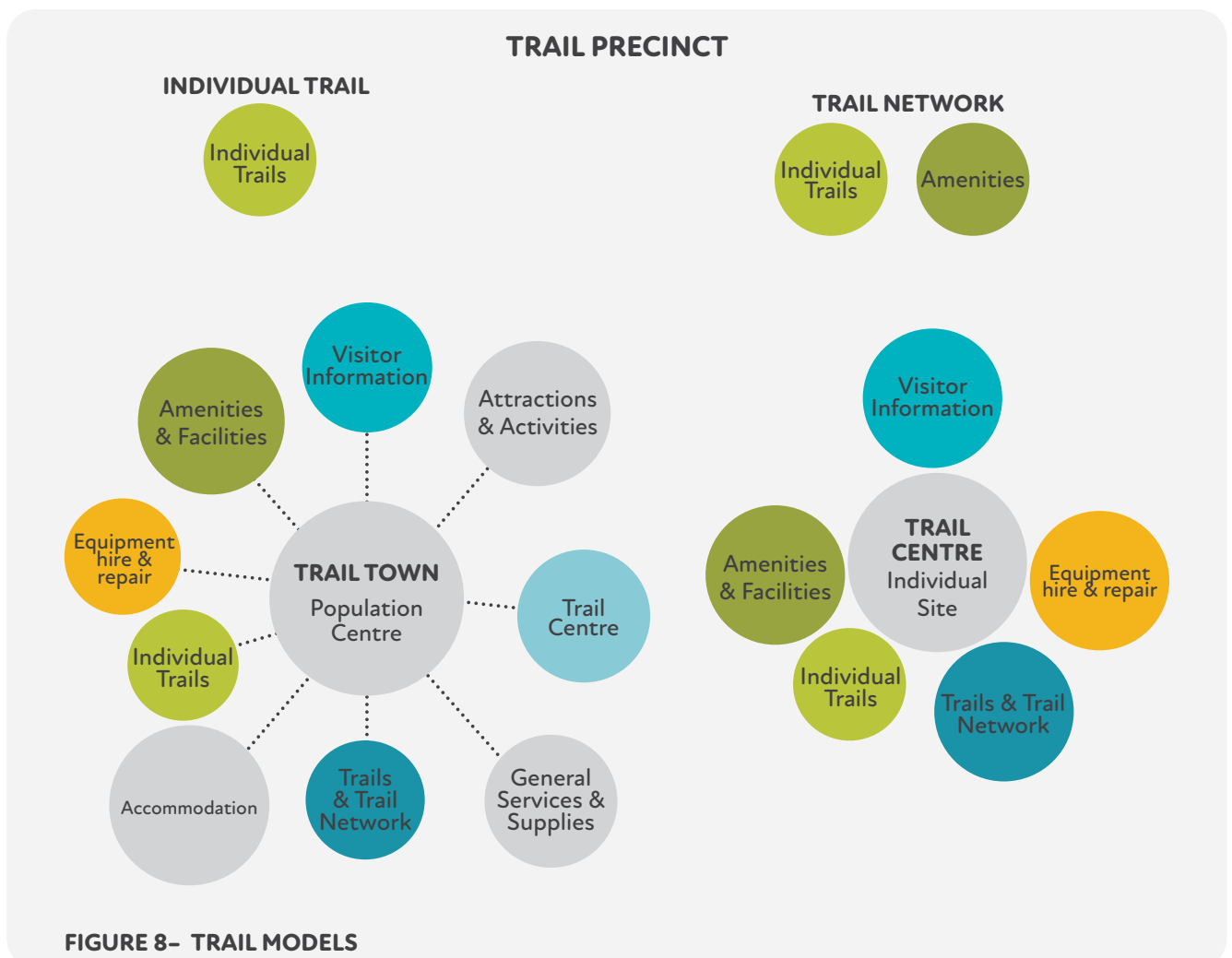
Understanding the key market segments that exist and what drives their interest in travelling to a particular destination is essential to build marketing strategies and campaigns that will be appealing and attract mountain bikers to a particular trail or network. Ensuring that there is a trails-focused tourism marketing strategy that is linked into state, regional and local level marketing efforts should be prioritised, with funding to support marketing activities and leverage private sector tourism business marketing efforts.

Increasing recognition of the potential tourism and economic benefits that trails can bring communities has generated interest in regions

across the state wanting to invest and develop mountain bike trails. While the potential for economic and other benefits exists, not all trail towns will necessarily desire to, or have the resources, facilities and capabilities to accommodate a national or regionally significant trail network. It is important for each community to understand its relative strengths and weaknesses and to work through the 8-stage trail development process to determine the scale of trail network most suitable for their community. A local trail or network of trails can provide equally important benefits to a community as a larger national or regionally significant trail network. The opportunity for local

trails to provide community activation, participation, physical and mental health benefits, wellness and club development are all benefits that can provide value to local communities.

A trail model defines the extent of development for a particular trail facility. The range of trail models is described in detail in the WA Strategic Trails Blueprint (refer Figure 8 below). With careful planning, the most appropriate and cost-effective trail model can be selected and designed to accommodate present and future needs of a location. In addition to individual trails of varying distances and classifications, there are trail networks, trail centres and trail towns.







In order to fully realise the potential that trails can provide regional communities, there is a need to help build capacity within the community and support connections and partnerships between the private sector, the community and state and local governments to improve the overall mountain bike product and experience. This highlights the importance of establishing the correct governance and business model and ensuring that the right stakeholders are engaged and involved in the decision-making process. A successful trail town model will help support the overall sustainability of a trail network by supporting investment back into the management and maintenance of the trail network.

While a regional town might have a world class trail network, it is important that the town and surrounding community are engaged from the beginning of the planning process and that private sector and local businesses have the capacity to support the overall mountain bike product and visitor experience. Examples would include developing mountain bike friendly businesses such as bike hire, visitor centre experiences, cafes and accommodation providers who understand the needs and desired services of mountain bike visitors. The Trail Friendly Business Program

is an initiative of Trails WA to make businesses that offer trail specific products and services easily identifiable. The program is intended to provide a mutually beneficial relationship for businesses and trail users across Western Australia. By combining WA's trails with high quality trail friendly businesses, trail users will have a superior trails experience and businesses will be able to reach their target customers more easily.

Education and support for trail managers is also needed, to help them understand the tourism system and the role they can play in developing the overall mountain bike product, and improve its attractiveness as market-ready tourism product.

There is also a need to improve regional collaboration to build an overall better tourism product and experience. Rather than competing with neighbouring regions and trails, taking a partnership approach to identify the strengths and unique experiences offered by different locations will help to build a more complete and attractive package of experiences. As an example, encouraging promotion that links Margaret River trails with Collie and Dwellingup would help create a week-long package of trail experiences and increasing the attractiveness to interstate

and international visitors to travel to Western Australia for a week long mountain bike experience. This draws on the relative strength of Margaret River as a well known tourism destination and links in Dwellingup and Collie opening new mountain bike tourism opportunities for these centres.

Events which cater for mass participation as well as those with elite international profiles provide attractive tourism opportunities. The Cape to Cape Mountain Bike event around Margaret River attracts national and international competitors (pre-COVID-19) and forms part of a global series of events that lead to qualification for the Absa Cape Epic in South Africa.

Other major events such as the Dwellingup 100 and the Southern Peaks which includes the Albany Urban Downhill attract large number of competitors from across the state and deliver significant benefits for the communities they support. In 2014 and 2016, Cairns, Queensland hosted rounds of the UCI Mountain Bike World Cup and the World Championships in 2017. An analysis of the economic benefits of the 2014 World Cup event estimated a \$3.5 million benefit to the State's economy. Encouraging investment into events should be encouraged to deliver a broad range of benefits to the communities where they are hosted.



# STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## FOCUS AREA 1: GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING

Implement effective governance and planning processes to ensure a coordinated and sustainable approach to mountain biking in Western Australia.

STRATEGIES		RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.1.	Adopt a governance structure to implement and monitor the achievement of these Strategic Focus Areas and recommendations.	1.1.1	Develop an implementation plan for the WA Mountain Bike Strategy.
		1.1.2	WestCycle to establish a steering committee involving key stakeholders to oversee the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the WA Mountain Bike Strategy.
		1.1.3	WestCycle to coordinate with the Trails Reference Group to ensure ongoing alignment between the WA Strategic Trails Blueprint and the implementation of the WA Mountain Bike Strategy.
		1.1.4	WestCycle and AusCycling to clarify respective expectations, roles and responsibilities to service and support identified program areas.
1.2.	Develop a state-wide network of sustainable mountain bike facilities and experiences.	1.2.1	Use master planning to identify and prioritise locations for mountain biking trails as part of a state-wide network. Regions where there is a gap in master planning should be prioritised.
		1.2.2	Ensure that Mountain Bike trail developments are strategically coordinated by applying the significance hierarchy so that trails are developed in the right place, in the right way and for the right reasons.
		1.2.3	Apply the WA Mountain Bike Management Guidelines incorporating the 8-stage trail development process to all mountain bike trail developments to ensure high quality and sustainable trail experiences.
		1.2.4	Provide advice and support to assist Local Government Authorities in initiating and progressing the development of Mountain Bike trails where appropriate.
1.3.	Secure long term funding for sustainable mountain bike trails development including planning, construction and maintenance.	1.3.1	Secure long term sustainable funding to support mountain bike trail planning, construction and maintenance including major upgrades.
		1.3.2	Work with key partners and stakeholders to advocate and highlight the return on investment that mountain bike trails deliver to the community.
1.4.	Obtain and utilise data to better understand the benefits, usage and future planning requirements for mountain bike trails.	1.4.1	Expand and improve Mountain Bike trail usage data collection to better inform strategic decision-making and business case development.
		1.4.2	Develop case studies and business cases which highlight the physical and mental health, economic, environmental and community benefits of mountain biking.



## FOCUS AREA 2: SUSTAINABLE TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Develop and manage sustainable mountain biking trails and experiences in Western Australia.

STRATEGIES		RECOMMENDATIONS	
2.1.	Sustainably develop and manage high quality mountain bike trails.	2.1.1	Promote the adoption and use of the 8-stage trail development process to build high quality and sustainable mountain bike trails.
		2.1.2	Advocate for increased support for the maintenance and improvement of all mountain bike trail assets.
		2.1.3	Foster and encourage community engagement and involvement, including with conservation groups at the commencement of planning for all mountain bike trail developments.
		2.1.4	Undertake a review and update the Western Australian Mountain Bike Management Guidelines.
2.2	Develop governance and business models appropriate to the circumstances of each Mountain Bike trail to improve sustainability.	2.2.1	Ensure that governance models which address the management and maintenance of mountain bike trails are established as part of the planning process for all trail developments.
		2.2.2	Determine the costs associated with the ongoing management and maintenance of a Mountain Bike trail to ensure these are accounted for in the trail business model.
		2.2.3	Identify possible revenue streams from trails and supporting infrastructure to reinvest and improve the sustainability of trails.
		2.2.4	Develop case studies and best practice examples to share with the industry to improve the sustainability of Mountain Bike trails.
2.3	Improve the capacity of the Mountain Bike trails industry and workforce.	2.3.1	Support initiatives that develop the Mountain Bike trail building industry including professional trail builders, volunteers and local government through education, sharing of knowledge and networking opportunities.
		2.3.2	Promote the potential for job creation and local manufacturing including Aboriginal employment that Mountain Bike trail development and ongoing maintenance can provide local communities.
		2.3.3	Provide support and build the capacity of clubs, groups and volunteers involved in Mountain Bike trail development and maintenance.
		2.3.4	Recognise and promote the value of volunteers within clubs and groups.
2.4	Encourage and support responsible and safe mountain biking.	2.4.1	Review, update and widely promote the WA Mountain Bike Code of Conduct.
		2.4.2	Develop awareness and understanding of the impacts of mountain biking on unsanctioned trails.
		2.4.3	Ensure way finding signage and trail maps are accurate, accessible and consistent.
		2.4.4	Promote available means (Trails WA) for mountain bikers to provide feedback on trail maintenance issues.
		2.4.5	Review existing processes related to emergencies such as bush fires and injured rider access and egress.





### FOCUS AREA 3: PARTICIPATION

Grow participation by improving opportunities for all the community to access mountain bike experiences.

STRATEGIES		RECOMMENDATIONS	
3.1	Increase access to mountain biking opportunities and experiences for all participants including women, juniors and other under-represented groups.	3.1.1	Actively support Local Government to overcome barriers to develop urban trails, pump tracks, bike and skills parks which improve accessibility to mountain bike experiences.
		3.1.2	Encourage and promote introductory and gateway programs that increase participation and mountain biking skill development of all participants including underrepresented groups across all ages, gender, cultures and other demographic backgrounds.
		3.1.3	Develop Mountain Biketrails and facilities including amenities that are accessible for participants using adaptive and handcycles.
		3.1.4	Identify opportunities such as Bike Week and Ride to School days to engage the community and activate opportunities around bike and skill parks, pump tracks and trails.
		3.1.5	Encourage new mountain bike trail developments to accommodate a variety of user riding preferences with a particular emphasis on trails that cater for beginners and families.
3.2	Improve programs and support for rider development, coaching, clubs and volunteers.	3.2.1	Collaborate with AusCycling to develop an optimal servicing model for athletes, coaches, clubs and volunteers.
		3.2.2	Provide increased development support and servicing for talented junior and senior athletes.
		3.2.3	Deliver increased coach education and development opportunities.
		3.2.4	Provide increased support and capacity building of mountain bike clubs and volunteers.
3.3	Support the development of events that increase participation and provide pathways for competitive riders.	3.3.1	Work with event organisers to provide additional opportunities that encourage participation from beginner or inexperienced mountain bikers.
		3.3.2	Work with event organisers to continue to improve the adoption of sustainable and innovative event management practices.
		3.3.3	Identify opportunities to attract national and international mountain bike events.
3.4	Grow the profile and participation in off-road cycling, touring and gravel riding.	3.4.1	Review and continue to improve long distance off-road cycling trails, facilities and amenities for both new and existing trails such as the Wadandi Track, Kep Track and Munda Biddi Trail.
		3.4.2	Support Local Government and other stakeholders identify and develop transport and recreation trails such as gravel trails and trails that can connect to mountain bike trails.





STRATEGIES		RECOMMENDATIONS	
3.4	Grow the profile and participation in off-road cycling, touring and gravel riding.	3.4.3	Undertake planning for potential new long distance trails such as rail trails.
		3.4.4	Support opportunities that increase participation in Cyclocross including the identification of suitable facilities.
3.5	Ensure increased usage of eMTB's is managed sustainably.	3.5.1	Consider the opportunities, challenges and impacts of increased use of eMTB's.
		3.5.2	Identify any unique needs and offerings that will encourage electric assist rider participation in a sustainable manner over, time.

#### FOCUS AREA 4: MOUNTAIN BIKE MARKETING, TOURISM AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

Maximise the benefits that mountain biking can deliver to our communities.

STRATEGIES		RECOMMENDATIONS	
4.1.	Grow the profile and awareness of Western Australian mountain bike experiences.	4.1.1	Increase the visibility of the Trails WA website as a primary source of information for mountain bike trail and tourism information.
		4.1.2	Encourage marketing of Mountain Bike trails that is connected between state, regional and local level efforts.
		4.1.3	Encourage regional towns and trail networks to collaborate and provide complementary experiences to improve the overall mountain bike tourism opportunity.
4.2	Build the capacity and business capability of Mountain Bike trail managers and mountain bike destination businesses.	4.2.1	Implement initiatives to educate and build capacity of Mountain Bike trail managers and organisations involved in Mountain Bike trail branding and marketing activities.
		4.2.2	Encourage and support connections and partnerships across the private sector, community, state and local government which improve the overall tourism experience for tourists and visitors.
		4.2.3	Work with tourism bodies to support the development of trail-tourism products to improve trail tourism products and services available to tourists and visitors.
		4.2.4	Support and advocate for the Trail Friendly Business Program.
4.3	Support the development of unique and culturally appropriate mountain bike trails, experiences and events.	4.3.1	Continue to develop iconic and unique mountain bike experiences that capitalise on the diversity and unique features of the West Australian landscape.
		4.3.2	Support the appropriate development of Aboriginal cultural experiences within the WA mountain bike experience.
		4.3.3	Continue to support iconic events that contribute to the tourism and economic return to Western Australia.



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 – SIGNIFICANCE HIERARCHY

### NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

A mountain bike facility designed for a large population centre and/or a tourism resource that caters for at least once week of unique riding opportunities.

CRITERIA	METRIC	MINIMUM INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED
Length of trails	> 80km	Trail Town or Trail Centre with high quality user facilities including: Car park Toilets Trailhead signs Trail markers Accommodation Bike hire Cafe
Number of loops	4+	
Proportion of single track	> 50%	
Minimum area of site	> 1500 ha	
Location	< 180km from airport/major transport links	
Road access	< 20km from major highways	
Exclusion Zones	> 90km from another national centre	
Other	Must be within 1km of a national or state road	
Trail classification range	Mixture of trail classifications. Easy and Moderate required as a minimum	

### REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

A mountain bike facility for a small population centre or large community and/or tourism resource that caters for short breaks or weekend trips.

CRITERIA	METRIC	MINIMUM INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED
Length of trails	20km – 80km	Car park Toilets Trailhead signs Trail markers Accommodation
Number of loops	2+	
Proportion of single track	> 50%	
Minimum area of site	> 500ha	
Location	< 40km from 15,000 population	
Road access	< 10km from highways and primary roads	
Exclusion Zones	> 45km from another national or regional scale centre	
Other	Must be within 1km of a national or state road	
Trail classification range	Mixture of trail classifications. Easy and Moderate required as a minimum	

### LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

A mountain bike facility for a small community and/or tourism resource that caters for day trips

CRITERIA	METRIC	MINIMUM INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED
Length of trails	Up to 20km	Car park Toilets Trailhead signs Trail markers
Number of loops	2 +	
Proportion of single track	> 80%	
Minimum area of site	> 250ha	
Location	Selected areas	
Road access	Must have clear public road access	
Trail classification range	Easy through to difficult and extreme	

Adapted from the West Australian Mountain Bike Management Guidelines, DBCA, 2019.







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