

Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan

Main Report





About this document

The Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan is made up of four documents:

- » Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan: **Summary**
- » Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan: **Main Report**
- » Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan: **Attachments**
- » Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan: **Marketing Strategy**

This document is the Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan: **Main Report**

The Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan was prepared by Inspiring Place on behalf of Sport and Recreation Tasmania.

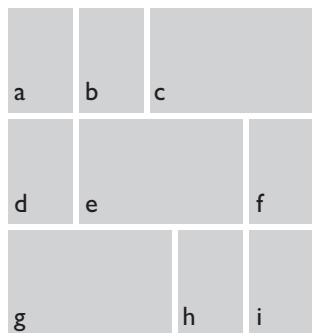
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- a LMBC 12 Hour Race, Four Springs, Northern Tasmania. Photo: Tourism Tasmania and Brad Harris
- b Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park, Glenorchy. Photo: Simon French, Dirt Art
- c Wildside MTB Race, Ocean Beach, West Coast of Tasmania. Photo: Nic Deka
- d North-South Track, Wellington Park, Hobart. Photo: Hobart City Council and Jupe-Bergshoeff
- e Blue Tier, North East of Tasmania. Photo: Keith Ryan
- f Blue Tier, North East of Tasmania. Photo: Keith Ryan
- g Bridestowe Lavender Farm, North East of Tasmania. Photo: Tourism Tasmania and Enrico Caraciollo
- h Close-up. Photo: Keith Ryan
- i Maria Island, East Coast of Tasmania. Photo: Tourism Tasmania and Brad Harris

Section

- One** Rowena Fry, Houffalize World Cup, Belgium. Photo: Russ Baker
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Foreword

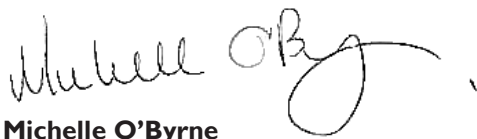
Mountain biking is a fast growing sport that has become very popular in Tasmania and around the world. The growth and popularity of the sport has presented us with exciting opportunities to encourage healthy, active lifestyles as well as build on Tasmania's profile as an outstanding nature-based tourism and adventure destination.

The Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan (The Plan) provides a framework that will allow the state to move forward with confidence on the coordinated development, management and marketing of mountain bike opportunities in Tasmania.

The Plan will guide the development of new opportunities and management of existing opportunities for mountain biking in the state and ensure that Tasmania continues to be a great place to live. Strategic development and marketing of our iconic wild rides, mountain bike adventure centres and other high quality trails will complement the Tasmanian Brand and ensure that Tasmania remains an attractive destination for visitors.

Development of *The Plan* involved extensive consultation with the community, land managers and other stakeholders with an interest in mountain biking. The positive response from the community and land managers indicates the strong interest in providing a diversity of mountain bike opportunities in Tasmania and ensuring the activity is sustainably managed.

The Plan has been considered and supported by the steering committee, and as Sport and Recreation Minister I congratulate all partners involved and look forward to the positive initiatives it will generate.



Michelle O'Byrne

Minister for Sport and Recreation

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Summary

Background

The impetus to develop a strategic mountain bike plan for Tasmania has been driven largely by the significant increase in the popularity of the activity locally, nationally, and more broadly on an international scale.

The increase in local participation has resulted in a situation where the demand for mountain bike (MTB) trails significantly exceeds the available opportunities. This increase in popularity has also placed considerable demand on land managers to both provide and manage mountain bike infrastructure, presenting new land management challenges. Land managers are being required to confront policy restrictions as they relate to mountain biking in protected areas, illegal trail development and unauthorised use of existing trails, public liability issues, new and innovative design and construction techniques, and safety issues relating to shared trail use.

The unique natural landscape of Tasmania and the established reputation as a leading nature-based tourism destination presents opportunities for Tasmania to establish itself as a unique, niche mountain bike tourism destination, with potential economic benefits for local economies, advancement of the sport and even improved environmental management of key riding areas.

The State Government committed \$4 million over three years to tracks, trails and city bikeways in the 2008/09 state budget. Sport and Recreation Tasmania allocated \$35 000 of this funding directly to the development of this mountain bike plan. The purpose of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* is to provide a framework for the coordinated development, management and marketing of mountain bike opportunities in Tasmania.

Overview of the state's existing MTB trails and facilities

An inventory of the most popular mountain bike trails and riding facilities in the state has been prepared, detailing the existing opportunities in the south, north, and northwest regions.

Existing mountain bike opportunities in Tasmania are characterised by:

a greater supply of opportunities in the south – in particular the greater Hobart area, followed by the northern region (particularly within the greater Launceston area), with a significantly smaller supply of mountain bike infrastructure in the northwest – which reflects the population distribution across the state

an overall greater supply of cross country/all mountain trail opportunities – this in part reflects the suitability of existing trails, including fire trails and vehicle management tracks, for cross country riding

limited authorised cross country singletrack opportunities close to population centres, and connected to more expansive trail networks

limited purpose built downhill specific trails (e.g. downhill competition trails, not designated for uphill travel) with sealed access to the trailhead for shuttling

limited authorised trails that have been specifically designed and purpose built for mountain bikes (e.g. limited supply of purpose built cross country singletrack or downhill specific trails), with the majority of riding occurring on unauthorised walking tracks, fire trails and access roads, shared-use trails and illegally constructed trails (e.g. the exception here may be dirt jump parks, of which there are number across the state, developed and maintained by councils)

a high proportion of the trails/riding locations that fall roughly into the 'intermediate' (blue) category under the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) trail classification system, whilst a number of locations offer opportunities for all skill levels

a variety of local, state and national events occur, or have occurred at the locations included in the inventory

a significant portion of popular trails having either informal access (e.g. have not been authorised for bike access by the land manager), or have been illegally constructed within public reserves or private land

riders are accessing trails on a range of land tenures, with public land under the management of local councils and Forestry Tasmania having the highest amount of authorised infrastructure/opportunities at present (many trails also cross tenure boundaries)

a significant number of trails/riding areas are either completely or partially on private land, making a significant contribution to the existing supply of purpose built cross country singletrack in the state (although most areas are available for use only during events mainly due to concerns regarding public liability)

limited skill building infrastructure to aid with rider skills progression (although there are a number of bike parks, skills infrastructure is not generally in place, or is very limited)

a number of suburban dirt jump facilities have been developed in recent times, however there is still demand for high quality facilities, particularly close to population centres (given most usage is by young riders with limited transport options)

a general lack of information about trails and riding areas (e.g. trail maps, brochures), either online or in hard copy

limited investment in mountain bike specific support infrastructure, such as wash down stations and trailhead signs and facilities

a general lack of consistency in the standards of construction and maintenance of trails, and the application of classification and signage.

Key consultation findings

Extensive consultation has been undertaken with land managers, government agencies, local councils and mountain bike riders across the state. This included six regional forums and a website survey of 568 mountain bike riders.

There was a great deal of consistency in the land manager and bike rider forums as to what Tasmania offers as strong appeal for mountain bike riding experiences. The main points of difference for Tasmania as a mountain bike destination were considered to be the:

highly diverse, compact and 'wild' natural environment, providing opportunities for riders to experience a range of landscapes and terrains within a short period of time (e.g. the summit to the sea in a day)

accessibility to mountain bike (MTB) trails and facilities that are close to urban areas

mountain bike riding is free and uncrowded

cool temperate and seasonal climate provides great riding experiences

established, high profile reputation as a nature-based and adventure tourism destination, with the potential to bundle mountain biking activities with other tourism products, including food, wine and culture.

Vision

The following vision statement has been prepared to assist future planning, development and management of mountain bike riding within Tasmania.

Tasmania will provide a world-class, diverse range of outstanding mountain bike riding experiences showcasing Tasmania's natural environment to entice local, national and international riders, where the network of trails and facilities are managed on a sustainable basis with the support of land managers and riders.

Future directions

The *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* focuses on a number of key future directions to realise this vision, those being:

1. Clear governance and leadership
2. Hierarchy of MTB trails in the state
3. Enabling policy and legislation
4. Innovative trail design and construction
5. Classification of trails and signage system
6. Adequate resource commitment
7. Working partnerships between land managers and users
8. Leading products and events
9. Marketing and promotion
10. Education programs
11. Risk management practices
12. Ongoing research program

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made for each of the future directions.

No.	Recommended action
A Governance	
A1	The existing State Trails and Bikeways Advisory Committee plays a high level role in the implementation of the <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i> through fostering coordination and collaboration between government agencies and setting funding priorities to achieve a whole of government approach.
A2	The current Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan Project Steering Committee (perhaps as the State MTB Working Group) should continue as the primary body to drive the implementation of the plan, providing ongoing advice and input into the implementation of the plan. In addition to the representatives from the existing agencies, it is recommended that a local government representative be appointed by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT).
A3	Regional MTB Project, and/or Local Working Groups are established to coordinate the implementation of the Iconic Wild Rides, MTB Adventure Centres and Regional MTB Trail Hubs and Bike Parks (the working groups should include relevant land and trail managers, representatives from regional/local MTB clubs, local riders, other interest groups and businesses).
A4	The responsibility for the planning, development, management and maintenance of local MTB trails and facilities should rest with the relevant land managers in partnership with the local councils, MTB Clubs and riders and other interest groups.
B Hierarchy of trails	
B1	A hierarchy of MTB trails and locations be adopted in Tasmania based around the levels of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential IMBA Epic Ride • Iconic Wild Rides • MTB Adventure Centres • Regional MTB Trail Hubs and Bike Parks • Local MTB Trails
B2	The core criteria for each level of the MTB hierarchy be adopted on a statewide level, as a guide for assessing the potential and standard of MTB trails and locations in the future.
C Enabling policy and legislation	
C1	A state mountain bike policy framework be developed to encourage consistency and cooperation across the different agencies and land tenures.
C2	The Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Tasmania develop and implement mountain bike policies providing guidance on mountain bike access, infrastructure development and management on reserve land under the management of the agency. The policy should encompass or be consistent with the core policy attributes of the state framework.
C3	The Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) should investigate the potential of amending existing legislation and management plans where considered appropriate and in keeping with the proposed mountain bike policy for reserves.
C4	Local councils and other land managers (e.g. Hydro Tasmania) should also consider adopting the core policy attributes of the state mountain bike policy framework, and incorporating them into local tracks and trails plans.

No.	Recommended action
D Classification of MTB trails and signage system	
D1	Adopt the IMBA Australia Trail Difficulty Rating System as the mountain bike classification system for Tasmania, including the intention to achieve some consistency across the state in the application of the system.
D2	Incorporate a bike symbol inlaid on top of the colour for each difficulty category (particularly in the case of multiple use trails) into the standard for Tasmania.
D3	Consider adopting the approach to shared use trail difficulty rating as outlined in the <i>Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area Draft Track Strategy 2009</i> , as outlined in Attachment 5, as a state standard.
D4	Encourage integration of generic principles/guidelines for MTB signage within signage policies and guidelines used by individual land managers.
E Innovative trail design, construction and maintenance	
E1	Adopt the IMBA Australia Trail Difficulty Rating System and apply the trail criteria (tread width, tread surface, trail grade, natural obstacles and technical trail features) as basic guidelines for new trail developments.
E2	Adopt the trail design and construction guidelines presented in <i>Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack</i> as broad guiding principles for mountain bike trail construction in Tasmania.
E3	Work with existing track and trail construction specialists (e.g. PWS and private contractors), mountain bike clubs and riders to develop skills in multiple use and mountain bike specific trail construction and design techniques (e.g. IMBA trail building schools) in the Tasmanian context.
E4	Investigate the possibility of developing a Trail Care Crew or equivalent for Tasmania ¹ , in partnership with the key land management agencies, IMBA Australia, and the mountain bike clubs.
E5	As a first priority, consider the opportunities for shared use when designing or assessing new trail development proposals, or trail upgrades, as this will maximise resource use and effort.
E6	Provide some trails within the state that are specifically designed for mountain biking, and are designated 'mountain bike preferred' or mountain bike only (single use), in acknowledgement of the inherent risks associated with some types of riding (e.g. fast downhill trails are not considered appropriate for shared use given high speeds), and the desire for narrow, flowing trails (e.g. singletrack) that may not accommodate other users well.
E7	Consider the merits of directional trails, where this will better facilitate shared use, or improve the riding experience.
E8	Ensure that the environmental impacts of proposed trail developments are adequately assessed and a plan to minimise environmental and (where applicable) social impact/s is specified prior to the commencement of work on trail developments. This includes meeting the requirements of existing planning and development processes, including RAA's, planning scheme and other requirements under state and/or national environmental legislation.
E9	It is recommended that regular maintenance requirements are identified, costed and can be provided for prior to the commencement of new trail developments.
E10	Adequate trail condition monitoring is to be built into all tracks maintained for MTB riding, with limits of acceptable change specified for the various categories of track and management action to be taken if limits are exceeded.
E11	Investigate the possibilities for the reuse of decommissioned railways in the state, as off-road touring, mountain bike linkages and commuting routes.

¹ The Trail Care Crew may be a project that could be developed and operated jointly with Victoria or other areas in Australia, to increase the scope, opportunities and potential for ongoing funding.

No.	Recommended action
E12	Encourage and support innovation in trail design and construction, including trialling new materials and techniques, to ensure that Tasmania is at the 'sharp edge' of mountain bike trail development.
F	Resource commitment
F1	The State Government take a leading role in pursuing funding opportunities for the development of MTB infrastructure and services to help position Tasmania as a leading MTB riding destination within Australia in the next five years.
F2	The State Government enter into partnership funding arrangements with the Australian Government, local councils and not-for-profit organisations to support and foster the implementation of the priorities identified in the <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i> as is occurring with the recently established state Trails and Bikeways Program.
F3	As identified in the <i>Trails Tasmania Strategy</i> , consider options for innovative re-direction of funds to support the benefits of recreational trails (for example, a percentage of gambling ² or cigarette tax: a percentage of the road-works budget dedicated to cycling needs, applying a recreational trails levy/contribution on all new development or applying a community-based trails levy/contribution and via existing programs such as Wildcare's natural partnerships).
F4	Build strong relationships with the community to encourage and support volunteer participation and support in the implementation of the <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i> .
F5	Investigate a range of incentives and support mechanisms for land managers to provide access for mountain bike riding, including funding from use of the trails (e.g. permit fees applied to tour operators, merchandising etc).
G	Partnerships between land managers and users
G1	Support the growth and development of regional/local mountain bike clubs and representative bodies.
G2	Support the longer-term potential to develop a state mountain bike peak body, made up of representatives from the regional/local mountain bike clubs and representative bodies.
G3	Develop and/or distribute examples of trail partnership Memorandum of Understanding or other agreement templates that can be used by land managers, landowners, clubs and other community organisations, to ensure that partnerships are formalised and the responsibilities of the parties clearly stated.

² The State Government has established a Community Support Levy based on the gambling tax (a percentage of the gross profits from video gaming machines in hotels and clubs). This levy allows a proportion of its funds to be used for grants, administered by Sport and Recreation Tasmania to be allocated on a dollar-for-dollar basis for the benefit of sport and recreation clubs. The levy is currently being reviewed and may be merged with other state funding programs in the future.

No.	Recommended action
H	Leading MTB products and events
H1	Leading existing MTB events receive funding and promotional support, with the Wildside MTB Race, Australian MTB Series and Blue Dragon Challenge being recognised as the current leading events for Tasmania.
H2	Existing MTB products to receive support in relation to product development, training for staff and promotion.
H3	As other Iconic Wild Rides are progressively developed, the feasibility for introducing new events should be explored, but should aim to not directly compete with existing events (in relation to the experience offered or timing of the event).
H4	Work with tourism operators to explore the potential for new MTB tourism products, including guided adventure rides, family short ride experiences, and long-distance supported rides.
H5	Investigate the potential to develop a major new multi-stage event (e.g. seven days) based around the diverse Tasmanian landscape settings via the Iconic Wild Ride locations.
H6	The government take a lead role in the implementation of the <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i> in order to provide a significant catalyst for the private sector to expand and invest in new MTB tours and products.
H7	Investigate the potential of hosting a national mountain bike conference in Tasmania within the next five years.
I	Marketing and promotion
I1	Adopt a marketing strategy for MTB riding experiences in the future based on the directions of the <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i> .
I2	Develop a central website for MTB information in Tasmania with links to access and trail maps, MTB tours and products, bike shops, MTB clubs and other service information.
I3	Facilitate the production of mountain bike specific trail maps, brochures or other information sources available for riding areas in Tasmania.

No.	Recommended action
J	Education
J1	Adopt and communicate the mountain bike rider code of conduct for Tasmania as outlined in Section 5.10, and with reference to international 'Leave No Trace' principles.
J2	Recognise the importance of local bike shops in the dissemination of information, as important points of communication for local and regional mountain bike communities, and as ambassadors for mountain bike riding in Tasmania. Ensure future marketing and promotional programs incorporate the role of bike shops.
J3	Investigate the possibility of developing a Trail Care Crew or equivalent for Tasmania (See Action E4 above).
J4	Support mountain bike clubs and schools to further develop rider skill programs, and to work to involve well known local, national and international level professional riders – the 'Sprockids' program should be investigated as a potential vehicle.
J5	Work with the Launceston Mountain Bike Club, the Dirt Devils/Hobart Wheelers and other clubs and the key land managers to investigate the potential of developing trial volunteer mountain bike patrol programs for Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Wellington Park/Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park respectively.
K	Risk management
K1	All land/trail managers develop and implement Risk Management Programs for their trail systems, consistent with the <i>Australian Standard AS/NZS 4360 Risk Management</i> .
K2	Continue to develop and distribute information regarding the <i>Civil Liability Act 2002</i> , to provide clarity for landowners, managers, clubs and riders.
L	Research
L1	Continue to collect rider profile and participation data, using similar questions to that of the rider survey in this <i>Plan</i> , to provide consistency in data collection and allow for comparative analysis.
L2	Develop a methodology for collecting mountain bike tourism data, including the possibility of inserting a specific question into the Tasmanian Visitor Survey, and working in partnership with event organisers to develop an event participant data set.
L3	Investigate the opportunities for working in partnership with the University of Tasmania, or other institutions, to undertake research into a range of mountain bike issues and topics.
L4	Investigate the possibility of incorporating specific questions on MTB participation in the regular ABS household surveys with possible funding support from IMBA Australia, Mountain Bike Australia and various state sport and recreation departments.

Section I

Introduction



Rowena Fry, Houffalize World Cup, Belgium.
Photo: Russ Baker

Section I

Introduction

I.1 Background

The impetus to develop a strategic mountain bike plan for Tasmania has been driven largely by the significant increase in the popularity of the sport locally, nationally, and more broadly on an international scale.

The increase in local participation has resulted in a situation where the demand for mountain bike (MTB) trails significantly exceeds the available opportunities. This increase in popularity has placed considerable demand on land managers to both provide and manage mountain bike infrastructure, presenting new land management challenges. Land managers are being required to confront policy restrictions as they relate to mountain biking in protected areas, illegal trail development and unauthorised use of existing trails, public liability issues, new and innovative design and construction techniques, and safety issues relating to shared trail use.

The unique natural landscape of Tasmania and the established reputation as a leading nature-based tourism destination, presents opportunities for Tasmania to establish itself as a unique, niche mountain bike tourism destination, with potential economic benefits for local economies, advancement of the sport and even improved environmental management of key riding areas.

A number of background reports were listed in the project brief as having informed the need for a *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan*.

The research paper '*Mountain Biking in Tasmania: a summary of current trends and future opportunities*'³ was published by Sport and Recreation Tasmania (SRT) in July 2005. The report:

- identified a range of different riding styles and facility requirements

- identified the MTB venues known in Tasmania at the time

- identified a range of issues around the sustainable management of mountain biking

³ Ryan, K (2005) *Mountain Biking in Tasmania: a summary of current trends and future opportunities*, Sport and Recreation Tasmania.

recognised the potential of Tasmania for mountain biking and associated management issues.

The *Trails Tasmania Strategy*⁴ was released by the State Government in December 2007. The strategy:

recognised the strong and growing demand for mountain biking trails

identified a lack of provision to meet current demand, particularly for mountain biking trails and facilities close to where people live

recommended the development of a state mountain bike plan

presented several strategies directly related to mountain biking and the development of high quality trails and mountain bike parks

recognised the potential to market a suite of 'great rides' for the state

suggested Tasmania was well placed to be the first state in Australia to have a mountain bike trail recognised by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) as an 'EPIC' ride.

Tourism Tasmania commissioned a report *Mountain Bike Tourism Market Profile for Tasmania*⁵ that was made available in December 2008. The report:

assessed the potential visitor mountain bike market for Tasmania

reinforced several recommendations of *Trails Tasmania Strategy* including the:

need to develop a state mountain bike plan

the concept of developing and marketing a series of 'great rides'

supporting the planning and development of a diversity of high quality trails and mountain bike parks around Tasmania, and the potential marketing power an IMBA 'EPIC' to Tasmania

⁴ Inspiring Place (2008) *Trails Tasmania Strategy*, Trails Tasmania Steering Committee.

⁵ Inspiring Place (2008) *Mountain Bike Tourism Market profile for Tasmania*, Tourism Tasmania.

recommended the development of a mountain bike tourism strategy (focusing on marketing and promotion) in conjunction with the state mountain bike plan.

The State Government committed \$4 million to tracks, trails and city bikeways in the 2008/09 state budget to be administered over three years. Sport and Recreation Tasmania allocated \$35 000 of this funding directly to the development of this mountain bike plan.

The Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts, through Sport and Recreation Tasmania, engaged Inspiring Place in 2009 to prepare the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan*.

Sport and Recreation Tasmania is the lead agency and sponsor of the project. A steering committee was established to oversee the project and involved a number of partners, including the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS), Forestry Tasmania, Wellington Park Management Trust, and Tourism Tasmania, in acknowledgment of the need for a multi-level, partnership approach to mountain biking development and promotion.

1.2 Purpose of the Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan

The purpose of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* is to provide a framework for the coordinated development, management and marketing of mountain bike opportunities in Tasmania.

The main outputs for the plan were identified as being:

an inventory of known mountain bike trails or venues in the state and proposed developments of such trails and facilities⁶

a supply and demand assessment that considered the different styles of riding and identified gaps in provision

a final plan that included recommended actions, priority for implementation and a marketing strategy.

1.3 Process

Development of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* has been undertaken in six main stages, as outlined below in Table 1.1.

⁶ The full inventory has not been included in this report, although it has been summarised in Section 2.2. The inventory will be available as a management tool for land managers.

Stage	Main tasks
Stage 1 Project start-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial briefing • Prepare work program and consultation plan.
Stage 2 Inventory and gap analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of relevant reports, user profile and trend data, policies etc • Prepare inventory of existing trails and riding areas • Prepare brief situation report • Organise regional land manager and stakeholder forums • Prepare web survey of mountain bike riders.
Stage 3 Stakeholder consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run land manager and bike rider forums in the north, northwest and south • Follow up contact with key stakeholders..
Stage 4 Strategic assessment of the opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a vision for Tasmanian mountain bike riding • Develop a framework for planning, developing and marketing of Tasmanian mountain bike riding • Identify opportunities and priorities for developing Tasmanian mountain bike riding.
Stage 5 Draft Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare draft <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i> • Prepare draft Marketing Strategy • Public exhibition of the draft <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i>.
Stage 6 Final <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review submissions received regarding the Draft Plan • Revise and finalise the plan.

Table I.1. Project methodology

I.4 Acknowledgements

Inspiring Place would like to acknowledge the support of the project steering committee members throughout the preparation of the plan. The advice and assistance of Sport and Recreation Tasmania was invaluable and in particular the assistance provided by Keith Ryan and Luke Chiu. We would also like to acknowledge the significant input and ideas received from the land managers and mountain bike riders towards the plan.

Section 2

Mountain biking in Tasmania: trends, infrastructure and tourism products



Mark Webber Challenge, Coles Bay, East Coast of Tasmania.
Photo: Tourism Tasmania and Jerry Galea

Section 2

Mountain biking In Tasmania: trends, infrastructure and tourism products

Section 2 provides an overview of the current situation in Tasmania and elsewhere as it relates to mountain bike riding, including:

a summary of participation and demographic trends, and the primary rider motivators (Section 2.1)

an overview of existing mountain bike infrastructure in Tasmania (Section 2.2).

Sections of the following discussion have been extracted and adapted from the *Mountain Bike Tourism Market Profile for Tasmania*, prepared by Inspiring Place for Tourism Tasmania in 2008.

2.1 Trends

2.1.1 Participation and demographics

There is limited participation data available which isolates mountain biking as a specific activity from that of cycling generally in Australia or Tasmania. The online mountain bike rider survey prepared as part of this project provides the first focused statewide mountain biking specific data source. In combination with the recently completed survey for Trevallyn and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Areas, the data provides an important 'snap shot' of rider profiles and preferences in Tasmania.

The international and national participation information presented in Table 2.1 has been derived from a number of sources. Table 2.2 provides an overview of international and national mountain bike rider profile data.

National and international participation	Summary
<p>National and state trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General cycling was rated as the fourth most popular physical activity in Australia in 2008, with an estimated 1.9 million participants - an increase of 34 per cent over the period 2001-2008⁷. • 1.2 million bikes were sold in Australia in 2008, outselling motor vehicles for the ninth consecutive year⁸. • Approximately 70 per cent of the bikes sold in Australia throughout 2005 were mountain bikes⁹. • A survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2000 indicated that 4.2 per cent of Tasmanians participated in off-road cycling or mountain biking (15 300 – 8 500 in the greater Hobart/south, 3 300 for the north, 3 500 for the Mersey-Lyell area¹⁰. Mountain bike riding participation trends suggest that these figures will have significantly increased over the last nine years. <p>International trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 11.8 million people in the United Kingdom (UK) own a mountain bike, with an estimated 1.3 million regularly biking off road¹¹. • Regular participation in the United States (US) ranged between four to six per cent of the population (approximately 14 million riders)¹² between 1994 and 2003. • Approximately 3.5 million German residents are mountain bikers (out of 7.2 million recreational cyclists)¹³. • Mountain biking was the tenth most popular physical activity for New Zealand adult males in 2001 (10 per cent - 128 200 people)¹⁴. • Mountain biking was also rated the tenth most popular physical activity for New Zealand adults aged between 25-34 years in 2001¹⁵. 	<p>Mountain biking is a popular physical activity on an international scale, with participation rates continuing to increase.</p> <p>It is likely that the participation rate for both general cycling and mountain biking in Tasmania has increased significantly since 2000. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is an increase in the number of commuter cyclists, the increase in nationwide bike sales an increasing demand for mountain bike accessible and/or specific trails, and the continued construction of illegal MTB trails across the state.</p> <p>Local bike shops indicated that the most popular type of bikes sold are mountain bikes in the \$500 range, followed by mountain bikes in the \$1 000 range, supporting research presented in the <i>Australian Bicycle Industry Report 2006</i>.</p>

Table 2.1. Participation trends

⁷ Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport (2008) *Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey 2008 Annual Report*.

⁸ <<http://www.cyclingpromotion.com.au>> Accessed 5 June 2009.

⁹ Australian Bicycle Industry (2006) *The Australian Bicycle Industry Report 2006*, page 11.

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1384.6 – Statistics – Tasmania (2008) <<http://www.abs.gov.au/asstats/abs/0>> Accessed 21 July 2009.

¹¹ Genesis Strategic Management Consultants (2008) *Draft: The Sustainable Development of Mountain Biking in Scotland – A National Strategic Framework*, UK, page 2.

¹² Koepke, J (2005) *Exploring the Market Potential for Yukon Mountain Bike Tourism*, Cycling Association of Yukon, Canada, page 4.

¹³ As above footnote.

¹⁴ <<http://www.sparc.org.nz/research-policy/research/sparc-facts-97-01/top-sports-and-physical-activities>> Accessed 25 September 2008. Figures are based on participation within the 12 months prior to the survey, and people over the age of 18.

¹⁵ <<http://www.sparc.org.nz/research-policy/research/sparc-facts-97-01/top-sports-and-physical-activities>> Accessed 25 September 2008.

International and national rider profile	Summary
<p>The following mountain bike rider demographics are a generalised summary drawn from a number of Australian and international sources¹⁶:</p> <p>The majority of experienced mountain bike riders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are male (up to 80 or 90 per cent), however, it is expected that there will be a discernable gender shift in years to come, as between 2002 and 2003 there was a 33.9 per cent increase in the participation of women in the US¹⁷ • have tertiary level education, and come from professional or technical backgrounds • have higher than average incomes (e.g. \$50 000 and above) • range in age from mid 20s to mid 40s, with a high percentage in the mid 30s age group • tend to travel in small groups of two to three people • tend to travel to destinations within half a day to a day away from home for the majority of mountain bike trips, but will travel further for unique experiences or competitions • ride once to two or three times per week • generally access information about a destination through word of mouth or the internet • cite features such as fitness/exercise, technical challenge, spectacular scenery, local culture, and accessibility as important attributes for MTB destinations. 	<p>The demographic profile indicates that the majority of serious mountain bikers (excluding the generally younger group of extreme downhill and dirt jump riders) have above average annual incomes, and are willing to travel for quality experiences.</p> <p>Mountain bikers are experience driven and educated, and therefore likely to respond to innovative media, sustainable track construction and management techniques, and expect an adequate level of servicing associated with promoted mountain bike locations.</p>

Table 2.2. Typical mountain bike rider profile

¹⁶ APR Consultants (2005) *Mountain Biking in Rotorua, NZ*; Bowker, J.M and English, D (2002) *Mountain Biking at Tsali: An Assessment of Users, Preferences, Conflicts and Management Alternatives*; Green, D (2003) *Travel Patterns of Destination Mountain Bikers*, IMBA; Koepke, J (2005) *Exploring the Market Potential for Yukon Mountain Bike Tourism*; Ryan, K (2005) *Mountain Biking in Tasmania: A summary of current trends and future opportunities*, Sport and Recreation Tasmania; Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association (2006) *Sea to Sky Mountain Bike Economic Impact Study Overall Results*, Canada.

¹⁷ Koepke, J (2005) *Exploring the Market Potential for Yukon Mountain Bike Tourism*, Cycling Association of Yukon, Canada, page 5.

Tasmanian rider profile

The mountain bike rider survey prepared as part of the current project included a number of questions intended to allow a basic profile of the Tasmanian mountain bike community to be ascertained. A copy of the online survey questions used is provided in Attachment 1.

The survey was completed by 568 riders, including 12 interstate riders and one international rider (Canada).

The survey results indicate that the 86 per cent of respondents were male, with 34 per cent in the 25-34 year age group, followed by 29 per cent in the 35-44 year age group (see Figure 2.1 and 2.2).

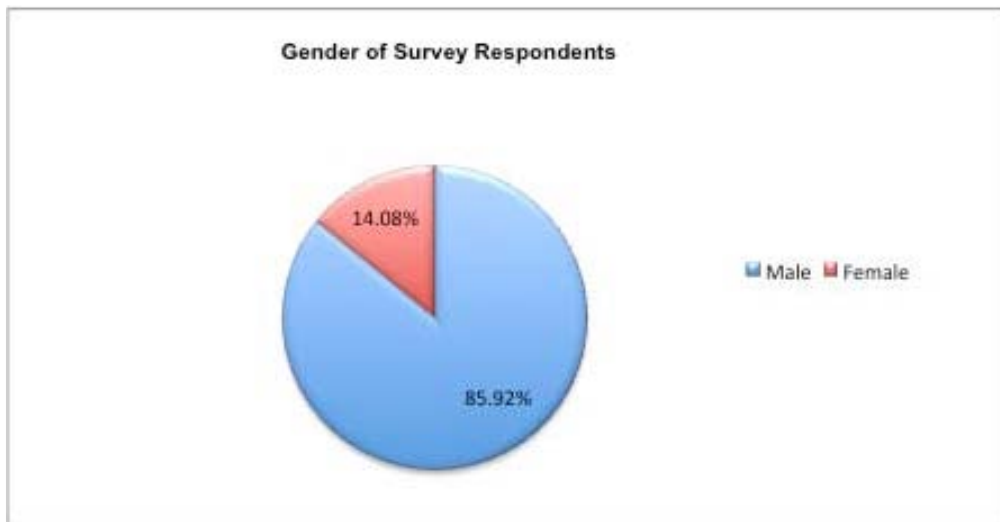


Figure 2.1. Gender of survey respondents.

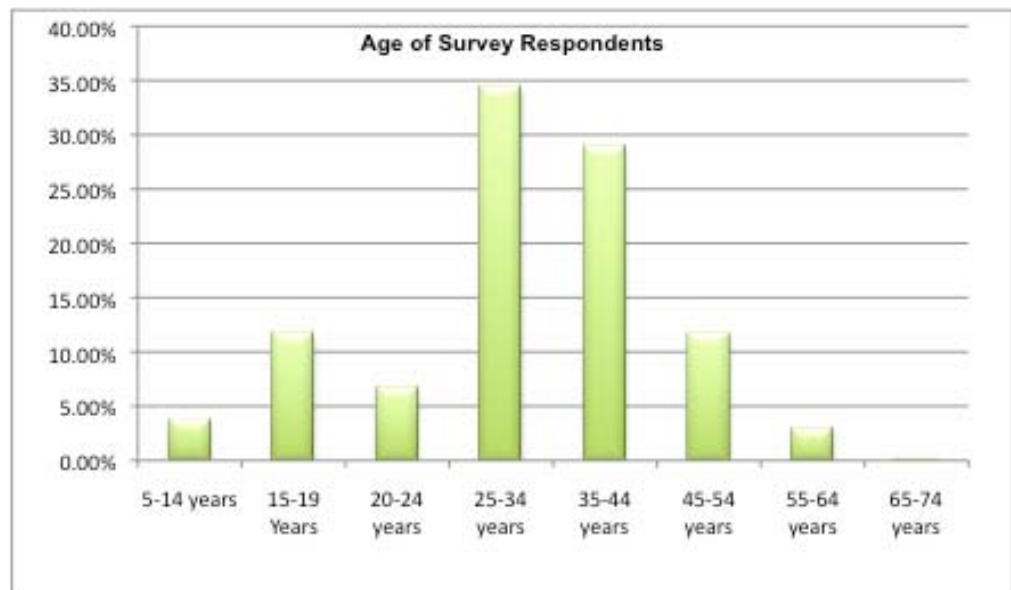


Figure 2.2. Age of survey respondents

The majority of respondents (approximately 38 per cent) indicated that they had been mountain bike riding for more than 10 years, and approximately 29 per cent indicated that they had been riding for three to five years, followed by 18 per cent for six to 10 years, and approximately 10 per cent for one to two years (Figure 2.3).

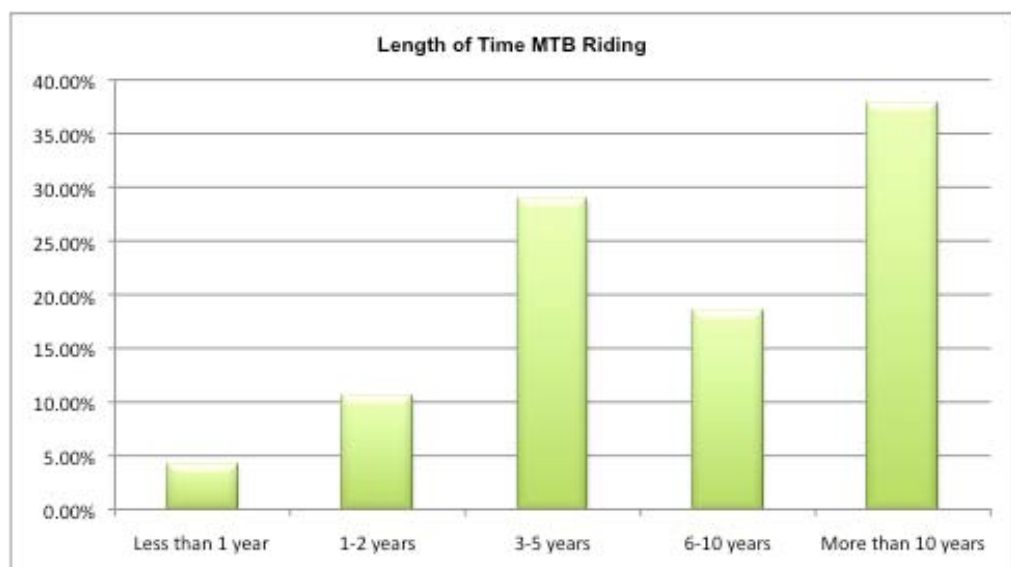


Figure 2.3. Length of time mountain bike riding.

More than half of the respondents (53.3 per cent) indicated that they ride a mountain bike two to three times a week, approximately 19 per cent ride every day, and approximately 16 per cent ride only once a week (Figure 2.4).

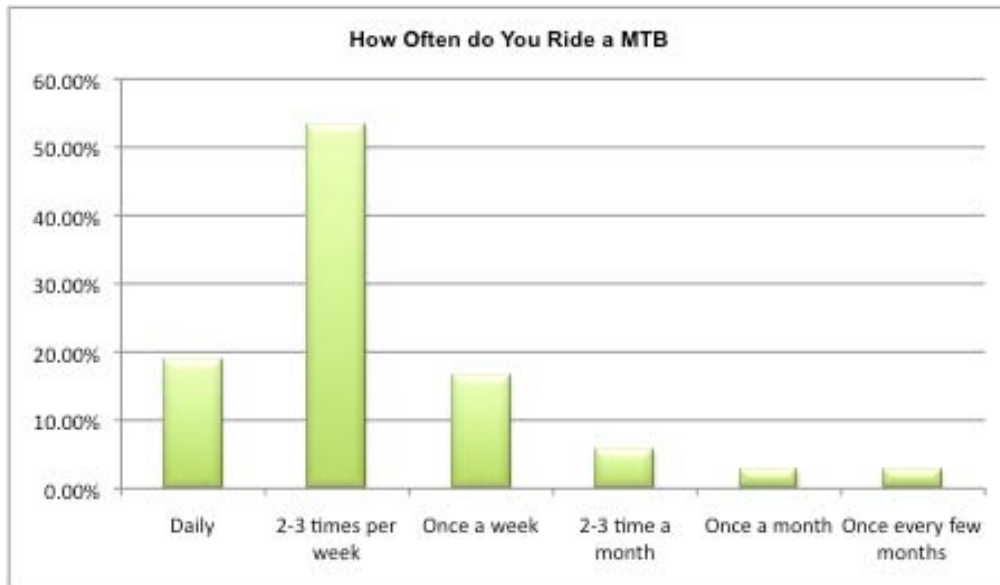


Figure 2.4. Respondent frequency of participation.

The vast majority of respondents (more than 80 per cent) indicated that they preferred, or participated most often in cross country/all mountain riding. Downhill riders comprised approximately 28 per cent of respondents, followed by off-road touring riders (approximately 24 per cent). Dirt jumping and free ride/north shore was also well represented (approximately 14 per cent of respondents for both riding categories), see Figure 2.5.

Attachment 2 provides a brief summary of the various MTB riding disciplines.



Figure 2.5. Mountain bike riding style.

Question 4 of the mountain bike rider survey asked “What attributes make a great mountain bike riding experience”. More than half of the respondents (58.5 per cent) chose ‘Setting/Environment’, followed by ‘Trail Flow’ (54.9 per cent), ‘Easy Access/Location’ (49.7 per cent), and ‘Technical Challenge’ (46.8 per cent), see Figure 2.6.

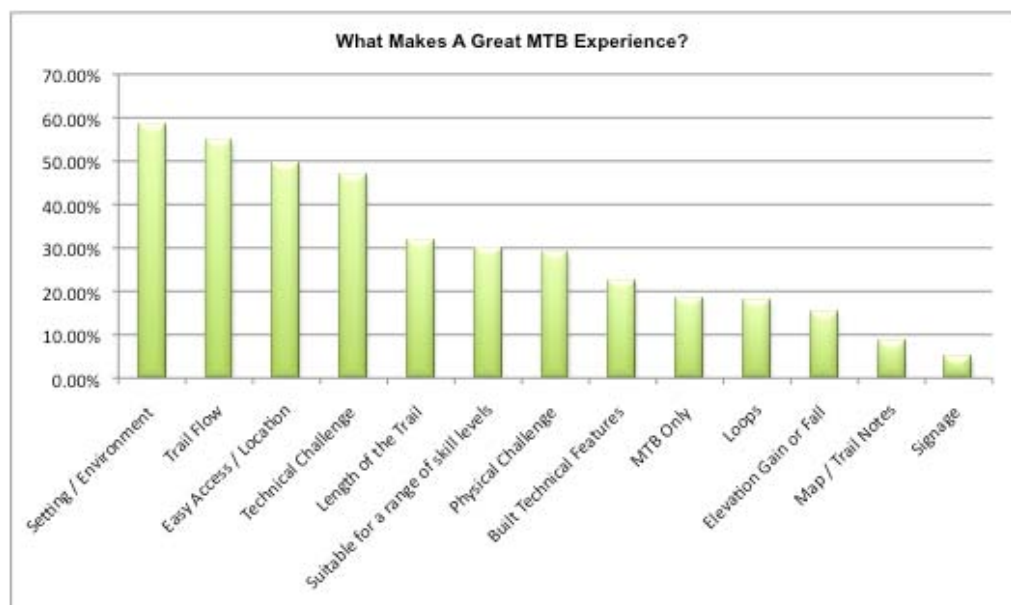


Figure 2.6. Elements of a great mountain bike experience.

A recent survey conducted as part of the development of the *Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area Draft Track Strategy* provides further insight into the Tasmanian mountain bike community.

Analysis of the survey data indicated that a typical mountain biker who rides at Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area (NRA):

- is a male aged between 25-34 years and lives in Trevallyn or Launceston
- rides in the Trevallyn NRA once a week
- is likely to belong to the Launceston Mountain Bike Club or know other riders in the club
- rides for a combination of fitness and exercise, fun and for an adventure or challenge.

The mountain bike rider profile for the nearby Kate Reed NRA was generally consistent with this. Analysis of the survey data indicated that a typical mountain biker who rides at Kate Reed NRA:

- is a male aged between 25-44 years and lives in one of Launceston's suburbs
- rides at Kate Reed NRA once a week and has been riding there between three to five years
- is likely to belong to the Launceston Mountain Bike Club or know other riders in the club
- rides for a combination of fitness and exercise, fun and for an adventure or challenge or thrill and excitement.

User surveys were undertaken on behalf of Hobart City Council following the completion of the North South Track in Wellington Park in 2008. Whilst the survey was specific to the North South Track, a number of the findings are broadly consistent with the participation and demographic trends presented elsewhere in the section.

The survey methodology incorporated three 'sampling frames': face-to-face interviews, online questionnaires, and an open online forum via Pedalbite. The majority of face-to-face interviews were with cyclists, riding in groups of two or more (4:1 ratio cyclists/walkers), the online questionnaire was completed exclusively by cyclists, as was participation in the Pedalbite online forum – being an online forum for cyclists. The broad findings of particular relevance to the current project include:

the majority of track users were males (all questionnaire respondents and 86 per cent of interview participants), aged in their early to mid 30s

a higher number of younger riders were captured via the online questionnaire and forum (e.g. twice as many riders under the age of 35 in comparison to the face-to-face interviews)

more than half of all respondents reported that they were cross country riders

one-fifth of all respondents reported that they were downhill riders (the second most popular riding style)

twice as many questionnaire respondents compared to interview participants described 'all mountain' as their riding style

in general, the majority of respondents had a high level of self-defined riding experience (less than 10 per cent reported that they were novice or beginner riders)

the majority of respondents expressed positive feedback about the North South Track, including the high standard of design and construction, use of local materials, and the natural setting and scenery.

Table 2.3 provides a brief summary of complimentary information relating to the profile of Tasmanian mountain bike riders. The information in the table is based primarily on anecdotal evidence gathered during consultations with riders and land managers:

Tasmania Rider Profile	Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small, but growing percentage of riders are members of local clubs (e.g. the Launceston MTB Club (LMBC) and the Dirt Devils/Hobart Wheelers), and participate in club activities (e.g. Tasmanian Cross Country Series, Enduro races etc). • A significant number travel to other places primarily to participate in mountain biking (e.g. New Zealand, Canada (Whistler), mainland Australia). • Tasmanian riders contacted as part of this study indicated that they would be happy to pay for quality trail maps, and potentially a small fee for entry into an area that caters well for mountain bikers (e.g. with purpose built infrastructure, toilets, showers, secure parking and bike wash). • As in many places, the exclusively downhill and free riders are of a younger age group (e.g. 15-mid 20s), although these disciplines are increasing popularity with older riders. • Many Tasmanian mountain bikers travel considerable distances from their homes to take part in independent adventure riding around the state, on both day and overnight trips, and also travel to participate in club events and competitions, but seek out local trails close to where they live for day-to-day riding. • Given the typical age and income profile of riders many are well connected among the business community which has opened up opportunities for corporate sponsorship and access to private land owned by corporations. 	<p>The anecdotal information indicates that intrastate riders are becoming increasingly organised, will travel for exceptional riding experiences and events, and are seeking higher quality information sources for riding locations.</p>

Table 2.3 Complimentary rider profile information about Tasmanian riders.

Summary

The characteristics of the Tasmanian mountain bike community are broadly consistent with the profile of international and interstate mountain bike riders. The profile information presented above is also consistent with the profiles of Tasmanian event riders (see Section 2.2.5), including:

the majority of riders are male (although the numbers of female riders is showing an increase, particularly in the cross country and downhill disciplines, and in event participation)

a high proportion of riders are in the 30-40 year age group

most ride mountain bikes on a regular basis (e.g. more than once a week)

generally have a tertiary level of education, and higher than average annual income

cite features such as scenery/environment, trail flow, technical trail features, and accessibility as the most important elements of a quality mountain bike experience

show a willingness to travel for exceptional riding experiences and events.

The rider profiles provide important information about the expectations of Tasmanian riders, as well as those of the primary mountain bike tourism market for the state – being the interstate independent mountain biker (see Section 2.3 and Attachment 3). This information has been a key consideration in determining the ‘gaps’ in mountain bike infrastructure/experience provision in the state.

Although the data presented above is limited in its scope, and has not been tested over a number of years, it sets a baseline for further research. We are now in a better position to determine the needs and priorities of mountain bike riders within the Tasmanian context.

2.1.2 Primary rider motivators

The following summarises what are considered to be the primary motivators for mountain bike riders, and has been adapted from the *Mountain Bike Tourism Market Profile for Tasmania*.

The primary motivators were derived as a result of a review of a range of studies, and discussions with experienced riders. They are:

Convenience/accessibility (e.g. the majority of independent mountain bike riders appear to seek out half day to full day ride destinations, or riding areas within close proximity to their home or place of work for the purposes of exercise/skills development).

Trail quality (e.g. riders are seeking a diversity of terrain, well-constructed trail features, sections of purpose built singletrack, and often trails that provide opportunities for all riding disciplines).

Amount of riding – the quantity of riding (e.g. the amount of different trails and length of individual trails) available in an area is particularly important for local riders, who are often seeking opportunities for one to two hour circuits with variation

Iconic experience – riding in a unique, natural landscape setting, with high scenic value, perhaps to a natural feature or other destination.

Further analysis of the online surveys is provided in Section 3.2.3 of the report.

2.2 Existing infrastructure and products

An inventory of the most popular mountain bike trails and riding facilities in the state has been prepared, detailing the existing opportunities in the south, north, and northwest regions. The inventory includes both authorised and unauthorised trails and riding areas.

It is important to note that the inclusion of trails/riding areas in the summaries below does not imply riders are authorised to ride these trails/areas now or that they will be in the future. The intention of the inventory was to identify where mountain bike riders are currently riding to assess how well the current supply of trails and riding areas meets current and predicted future demands and gaps in provision. Similarly, if gaps are identified it is not automatically implied that all unauthorised trails/areas will become authorised to fill the gaps. Riders unsure

about the status of particular rides should seek advice from the relevant land owner/manager about authorised trails/riding areas.

It should be noted that the inventory does not include lesser known and/or utilised local trails and linkages, but rather focuses on popular trails and riding areas specifically designed and/or particularly suitable for mountain bikes. Some of the more frequently used fire trails may not be included.

A description of each trail is detailed in the inventory, using the following information categories:

- Trail/facility name
- Trail statistics
- Land tenure
- Mountain bike access
- Amenities
- Downhill opportunities
- Cross country opportunities
- Dirt jumping and other riding opportunities
- Development potential
- Grading/difficultly
- Hierarchy
- Events.

2.2.1 The southern region

The following trails/riding areas are considered to be the most popular in the southern region¹⁸:

- Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park (DH, XC, 4X, DJ)
- Wellington Park (XC, DH)
- South Hobart (XC, DH)
- Westringa Track (XC)
- Mount Nelson Area (XC, DH)
- Queens Domain Trails (XC)
- The Lea (DH, XC)
- Clarence Mountain Bike Park (DH, XC, DJ, 4X to be completed)
- Kellevie (XC)
- Tahune Marathon Cross Country Course (XC)
- Snug Tiers Recreation Area (XC)
- Tangara Trail (XC)
- Browns River Dirt Jump Area (DJ)
- Pemberton Park Dirt Jump Area (DJ)
- Waverly Flora Park Trails (XC)
- Cove Creek Dirt Jump Park (DJ)
- Maria Island National Park (XC – off road touring).

¹⁸ The listing of these trails does not imply authorised access is available to all these riding areas or trails, or that all forms of riding listed are authorised on that trail/ area.

Additional popular trails identified from the consultation were¹⁹:

- Conningham Nature Recreation Area (XC)
- Alum Cliff Track (XC)
- Ellendale Area (XC, used for MTB orienteering)
- Other South Hobart trails (e.g. Rivulet, Bus Stop Track and Tolmans Hill area) (XC, DH)
- Other Wellington Park trails (e.g. Drops Track, East West Track) (DH, XC).

Note:

DH: Downhill **XC:** Cross Country **4X:** Four Cross/Dual Slalom **DJ:** Dirt Jump (see Attachment 2 for brief summaries of the various riding disciplines).

Summary

The mountain bike opportunities within the southern region are characterised by:

the majority of trails and riding areas are located within close proximity to urban areas, particularly within the greater Hobart area (e.g. Wellington Park, South Hobart area) – it should be noted that many of these are informal, unauthorised or illegal

riding opportunities outside of the major population centres generally occurring on existing trails (e.g. fire trails and access roads in public reserves), with limited investment in infrastructure and limited availability of information

a significant number of unauthorised and illegally constructed trails, particularly in the urban fringe areas

limited supply of purpose built cross country singletrack

limited opportunities for gravity or downhill riding, with sealed road access to the trailhead (e.g. the use of Radfords Track in Wellington Park for this purpose is indicative of the lack of opportunity)

significant bike park infrastructure (e.g. Glenorchy and Clarence Bike Parks), with national level event infrastructure

limited opportunities for skills training (e.g. for cross country oriented riders)

an overall higher degree of development than has occurred to date in the other regions (e.g. the Glenorchy and Clarence Mountain Bike Parks and purpose built North-South Track).

¹⁹ The listing of these trails does not imply authorised access is available to all these riding areas or trails, or that all forms of riding listed are authorised on that trail/ area.

2.2.2 The northern region

The following trails and riding areas are identified in the inventory for the northern region²⁰:

- Wyena/Lilydale (DH,DJ)
- Hollybank Forest Reserve and surrounding State Forest (XC,DH)
- Blue Tier Trails (XC,DH)
- Four Springs Area (XC)
- Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area (XC,DH)
- Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area (XC)
- Ben Lomond Area (XC)
- Ravenswood Tracks (XC).

Additional popular trails identified throughout the consultation were²¹:

- Youngtown Regional Park trails (XC)
- Heritage Forest Dirt Jump Park (DJ)
- Craggy Peaks Resort and surrounding trails (XC)
- Greens Beach – Badger Head – Bakers Beach (XC)
- Humbug Point Nature Recreation Area (XC)
- St Helens Point Conservation Area (XC)
- Scamander State Forest (XC)
- Friendly Beaches/Coles Bay Area (XC)
- Windsor Park Dirt Jump Park (XC)
- Legana Dirt jump Park (DJ).

²⁰ The listing of these trails does not imply authorised access is available to all these riding areas or trails, or that all forms of riding listed are authorised on that trail/ area.

²¹ As above footnote.

Summary

The mountain bike opportunities within the northern/northeast region are characterised by:

a higher number of mountain bike authorised trails within the boundaries of Launceston City, with the majority occurring in Trevallyn and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Areas

recent formalisation of access for mountain bike riders to Trevallyn and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Areas via the track strategy process (including shared use and 'mountain bike preferred' trails), including plans to further develop/upgrade mountain bike opportunities, and implement classification and signage systems relevant to riders

limited opportunities for gravity or downhill specific riding, with road access to the trailhead

limited supply of authorised purpose built cross country singletrack

lack of integrated bike park developments, as has occurred in the southern region

illegal trail/jump construction occurring within urban and urban fringe areas (Kate Reed and Trevallyn were noted as locations with significant illegal trail construction issues)

a significant amount of trail infrastructure on private land, with access negotiated by the LMBC, and trails constructed by volunteers (private venues are generally only available for use during club events)

a number of locations within close proximity to the city, that have started to develop mountain bike infrastructure or have plans for further development (e.g. Hollybank area)

what appears to be a higher degree of riders accessing unauthorised (walking) trails within national parks

significant mountain bike trail developments being undertaken including the recent work by Forestry Tasmania at the Blue Tier

Launceston City Council leading the way in the state in relation to the development of authorised dirt jump parks, including the preparation and implementation of planning, construction and maintenance guidelines.

2.2.3 The northwest region

The following trails and riding areas are identified in the inventory for the northwest region²²:

- Stubbs Road Trails (XC)
- Dismal Swamp/Tarkine Adventure Centre (XC)
- Montezuma Falls (XC)
- Trial Harbour to Granville Harbour (XC)
- Sterling Valley Track (XC)
- Dial Range State Forest and Forest Reserve (XC)
- Paloona (DH)
- Oldina Forest Reserve (XC)
- Wolfram Mines Track (XC).

Additional popular trails identified throughout the consultation were²³:

- Mt Ramsey Track (XC)
- Fern Glade Reserve (XC)
- Upper Natone Reserve (XC)
- Railton Dirt Jump Park (DJ).

Summary

The mountain bike opportunities within the northwest region are characterised by:

fewer opportunities for all riding styles than in the southern and northern regions

the majority of riding occurring on existing fire trails and access roads within public reserves, with some local enthusiasts involved in trail development

existing opportunities/accessible areas are most suited for cross country/all mountain riding

limited opportunities for gravity or downhill specific riding, with road access to the trailhead, close to the major population centres (with Paloona the only area identified as having downhill specific runs constructed by local riders)

²² The listing of these trails does not imply authorised access is available to all these riding areas or trails.

²³ As above footnote.

very limited supply of purpose built cross country singletrack, with the exception of the Stubbs Road facility, close to where the majority of the population lives (the Dismal Swamp trails fit this category of trail, but are located away from the major towns/cities)

lack of integrated bike park facilities including skill development infrastructure.

Riders from the northwest region who provided feedback on the draft *Plan* during the public exhibition period, expressed a preference for further development of the Dial Range area, as a priority over other riding locations in the region. Northwest riders also indicated that they are in the process of forming an MTB club, to provide increased organisation of, and opportunities for riders in the region.

2.2.4 Statewide observations about needs and gaps

Existing mountain bike opportunities in Tasmania are characterised by:

a greater supply of opportunities in the south – in particular the greater Hobart area, followed by the northern region (particularly within the greater Launceston area), with a significantly smaller supply of mountain bike infrastructure in the northwest, generally consistent with population density

an overall greater supply of cross country/all mountain trail opportunities – this in part reflects the suitability of existing trails, including fire trails and vehicle management tracks, for cross country riding

limited authorised cross country singletrack opportunities close to population centres, and connected to more expansive trail networks

limited purpose built downhill specific trails (e.g. downhill competition trails, not designated for uphill travel) with sealed access to the trailhead for shuttling

limited authorised trails that have been specifically designed and purpose built for mountain bikes (e.g. limited supply of purpose built cross country singletrack or downhill specific trails), with the majority of riding occurring on unauthorised walking tracks, fire trails and access roads, shared-use trails and illegally constructed trails (e.g. the exception here may be dirt jump parks, of which there are number across the state, developed and maintained by councils)

a high proportion of the trails/riding locations that fall roughly into the 'intermediate' (blue) category under the IMBA classification system, whilst a number of locations offer opportunities for all skill levels

a variety of local, state and national events occur, or have occurred at the locations included in the inventory

a significant portion of popular trails having either informal access (e.g. have not been authorised for bike access by the land manager), or have been illegally constructed within public reserves or private land

riders are accessing trails on a range of land tenures, with public land under the management of local councils and Forestry Tasmania having the highest amount of authorised infrastructure/opportunities at present (many trails also cross tenure boundaries)

a significant number of trails/riding areas are either completely or partially on private land, making a significant contribution to the existing supply of purpose built cross country singletrack in the state (although most areas are available for use only during events mainly due to concerns regarding public liability)

limited skill building infrastructure to aid with rider skills progression (although there are a number of bike parks skills infrastructure is not generally in place, or is very limited)

a number of suburban dirt jump facilities have been developed in recent times, however there is still demand for high quality facilities, particularly close to population centres (given most usage is by young riders with limited transport options)

a general lack of information about trails and riding areas (e.g. trail maps, brochures), either online or in hard copy

limited investment in mountain bike specific support infrastructure, such as wash down stations and trailheads

a general lack of consistency in the standards of construction and maintenance of trails, and the application of classification and signage

the Tasmanian Trail was also identified as a mountain bike opportunity - few riders complete the trail from end to end, but a higher number may ride sections of the Trail (several riders mentioned specific sections in each region as offering the best riding, or potential for the best riding, experiences along the route).

2.2.5 Mountain bike developments being investigated

The following presents a brief summary of the major mountain bike development projects currently in the conceptual stage, or in a various stages of implementation throughout the state. A number of these projects were outlined in the *Mountain Bike Tourism Market Profile for Tasmania* and others were mentioned during the consultation process.

Mountain bike developments: implementation stage

The following mountain bike development projects are implementation ready, in that feasibility investigations and other planning requirements have been undertaken, including costings and planning approval.

Hollybank

A *Mountain Bike Trail Network Plan* for the Hollybank State Forest area was prepared in 2005 as a partnership between Sport and Recreation Tasmania and Forestry Tasmania. In 2006, Joey Klein, IMBA Trail Specialist ground truthed this plan on behalf of Forestry Tasmania. Trails have been mapped and located on the ground via GPS, and costings and required studies completed. The plans are ready to be implemented, pending finding an available funding source.

Extension of the North-South Track, Mt Wellington

The *Wellington Park Bike Strategy* included a recommendation for a mountain bike link from Pinnacle Road to a range of trails on the eastern face of Mount Wellington, and eventually to the Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park. Significant progress has been achieved through on-ground works by both Hobart and Glenorchy City Councils – with Stage I from Shoobridge Bend to Junction Cabin complete. The trail is renowned as an example of high quality and sustainable mountain bike trail construction.

Stage two (the link from the Springs to Shoobridge Bend) is currently underway, and should be completed by the end of 2009. Stage 3 – Junction Cabin to the Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park is pending an available funding source.

Trevallyn and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area (NRA)

The *Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area Draft Track Strategy 2009* prepared by Parks and Wildlife Tasmania identified a number of planned improvements to the existing trail network, including improved signage, new and upgraded sections of trail, and closure of unsustainable and/or unsafe trails. Significant investment will be required to implement the plan.

West Tamar Dirt Jump Park

The West Tamar Council intend to develop a new dirt jump facility, to replace the Windsor Dirt Jump Park (dismantled in November 2009) and Legana Dirt Jump Park (removed October 2009). The new facility is to be located at Lions Park, Pitt Avenue, Riverside. This location is close to the Trevallyn NRA, and there may be potential to link the two riding locations with a short downhill section of track.

Waratah area

The *Tarkine Projects*²⁴ report, prepared on behalf of the Waratah Wynyard Council in 2009 describes mountain biking opportunities in the Waratah area. The projects identified are consistent with the development of the Tarkine as a nature-based tourism destination, as outlined in the *Cradle Coast Authority Tarkine Tourism Development Strategy (2008)*.

The key mountain bike project is the Huskisson River Mountain Bike Track. The track utilises existing sections of track (e.g. 4WD track) to access the Huskisson River, and is accessed via the Waratah Road, eight kilometres south of Waratah. A 40 kilometre loop will be developed, incorporating approximately 10 kilometres of new track and the development of a trailhead. The development will also provide access to the summit of Mount Ramsey. The report includes a cost estimate for on-ground works and collateral, including the preparation of a Waratah Mountain Bike Hub Study.

Mountain bike developments: conceptual

These proposed mountain bike development projects are only at a conceptual stage. Detailed feasibility investigations and planning requirements have not been completed. In most cases, interest has been expressed from land managers, however formal support for others has not been granted to date.

²⁴ Jenny Evans Design and Consulting (2009) *Tarkine Projects – Waratah Tasmania: a gateway for nature lovers*, Waratah Wynyard Council.

Big Bend, Mt Wellington

The potential to develop a purpose built MTB trail between Big Bend in Wellington Park and the Glenorchy MTB Park, is listed as an action in the *Glenorchy Recreation Plan 2008-2013: Volume 1: Strategies and Actions*. The concept has the potential to be the longest all mountain singletrack descent in Australia, with approximately 1000 metres loss of elevation and public road access to the trailhead with a large car park. With completion of the North South Track to the Glenorchy MTB Park, a return loop would be possible via the North South Track to the Springs and Pinnacle Road. The concept has the potential to be considered as an Iconic or 'EPIC' ride, particularly when considered in conjunction with the North South Track and the Glenorchy MTB Park. A detailed feasibility study will be required to assess the viability of this concept.

Maydena Adventure Hub

Forestry Tasmania is looking to develop an outdoors activity hub at Maydena, 80 kilometres west of Hobart. Mountain biking is one of the proposed activities, in addition to guided walking, 4WD tours, horse riding, fishing and climbing. Forestry Tasmania engaged Dirt Art in 2008 to prepare a preliminary assessment of the mountain bike opportunities for the area. The report identified the potential for the development of a 'gravity-oriented' facility, incorporating a network of shuttle-accessed downhill trails, as well as a range of cross country trails and jump areas, suitable for high level events.

Kingborough Council Mountain Bike Park

Kingborough Council recently engaged Dirt Art to prepare a concept plan for a potential urban mountain bike park and BMX facility, for a parcel of land within the broader area of the new Kingston High School and Kingborough Sports Centre site. The concept plan outlines the potential for a skills development area, dirt jump facility and a small network of cross country singletrack. The development of a quality skills area at this location would complement the facilities available at the Glenorchy and Clarence Mountain Bike Parks, and provide a point of difference.

Tarraleah Lodge

Tarraleah Lodge offer mountain biking as a guided experience (The Breakfast Bike Ride) as part of their activity package. There is recognised potential for further development of mountain bike product in this area.

Great Western Tiers/Meander Valley

The Meander Valley Council has received funding for development of the Great Western Tiers Tourist Cycling Trails under the *State Tourism Promotional Plan* (2006). The plan includes development of trail and supporting infrastructure, interpretation, supporting collateral, signage, and a community education program

to develop cycle friendly community. The infrastructure includes a range of themed trails for touring bike riders. Stage three of the *Great Western Tiers Cycling Strategy* seeks to identify opportunities for MTB trails to be developed in Meander Valley in partnership with land owners and MTB user groups. At the Launceston forum, some MTB riders indicated they are considering the potential to develop downhill trails in the Huntsman Valley and have been working with Forestry Tasmania on this proposal.

Launceston Country Club Casino

There is the potential for a partnership between the Launceston Mountain Bike Club (LMBC) and the Country Club Casino to develop a network of mountain bike trails on land owned by the Country Club Casino, behind the resort. The trails would be used for endurance events, and will only be available for use by LMBC members outside of event times.

Ben Lomond / Craggy Peaks Resort

Craggy Peaks resort, located at Rossarden in the Ben Lomond foothills, were intending to develop approximately 20 kilometres of mountain bike specific trails on adjacent state forest. The resort development is not proceeding and as a result the trail development in the area has stopped. The foothills of Ben Lomond is largely an unexplored area in relation to mountain bike riding, with significant potential, particularly on the northern side (where existing tours and events are held). The Craggy Peaks Resort has also hosted a mountain bike endurance race, that incorporated over 80 kilometres of trails in and around the resort area.

2.2.6 State events

Table 2.7 provides a brief summary of the main mountain bike specific events currently held in Tasmania, including competitor profiles for the different events. In addition to these selected events, there are other multi-sport adventure races run in Tasmania, which include a mountain bike stage such as the Freycinet Lodge Challenge, Huon Valley Winter Challenge, Ben Lomond Descent, and the Mark Webber Challenge.

Event	Summary	Competitor profile
Wildside MTB Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biannual cross country MTB competition ('mountain to beach' riding) – scheduled to take place on the 30 January – 2February 2010 • Approximately 200 kilometres of varied terrain between the Cradle Valley and Strahan • The field is capped at 450 competitors • Range of men's and women's categories (must be 18 to compete) • Entry is \$487 (includes lunches and a competitor kit) • Competitor bus services are available to assist competitors to get to the start of the race (e.g. either from Strahan or from Launceston), including personal gear transportation throughout the race (\$198 - \$268) • Total prize money of \$8 500 (awarded to stage winners and overall winners, as well as spot prizes) 	<p>In 2008:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87 per cent were men • 41 per cent of competitors were in the 30-39 age group, 23 per cent 40-49 and 12 per cent in the 23-29 age group • The majority of competitors had a high annual income (majority over \$50 000), 23 per cent \$50-\$70 000, 19 per cent \$70-\$90 000, 15 per cent \$90-\$120 000 • 40.6 per cent of competitors were Tasmanian residents, 26.6 per cent were from Victoria, 13.3 per cent from NSW, 6.6 per cent from Queensland, 5 per cent from Western Australia, 2.5 per cent from the ACT, 2.5 per cent from South Australia, 1 per cent from the Northern Territory, and 1.6 per cent of international origin • Generally seeking comfortable accommodation • Motivated to travel to Tasmania to compete due to diversity of riding and the Tasmanian environment.
Australian Mountain Bike Series (Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park – Dirt Devils/Hobart Wheelers)	<p>Hosted full round of events of the Australian MTB Series (XC, DH and 4X) in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2005/06 • 2006/07 • 2008/09 <p>Scheduled to host another full round in 2009/10</p>	<p>There is currently limited quantitative data available but on average there are approximately 400 entrants at each round with typically around 175 participating in XC events, 175 in DH and 50 in 4X.</p>

Table 2.7. Summary of state mountain bike events

Event	Summary	Competitor profile
Other events hosted by the Dirt Devils	<p>The Dirt Devils/Hobart Wheelers host a range of mountain bike events in addition to the Australian MTB Series, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter Downhill Series • Winter Cross Country Series • State Cross Country and Downhill Series • Kellevie 12/24 Hour Race. 	<p>While no quantitative data is available for race entries, the Dirt Devils/Hobart Wheelers stated that downhill focussed events were currently seeing greater participant numbers than other disciplines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average entries at downhill events are around 60-70 participants and growing • Average cross country entries are currently around the 40-50 participant mark • Cross country riders currently constitute the majority of memberships, followed closely by downhill riders.
Launceston MTB Club events	<p>The Launceston MTB Club is in its fifth year and hosts in excess of 30 events annually including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Hour Enduro • Six Hour Enduro • 12 Hour Enduro • Tasmanian Cross Country Race Series • Summer Twilights • Social rides • King and Queen of the Mountain (Ben Lomond). <p>The majority of participants are generally Tasmanian, with some competitors from NSW and Victoria.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2008/09, the LMBC events attracted 2 600 participants between the ages of seven and 64 • The majority of participants were Tasmanian, with some representation from other Australian states (origin data is not currently collected) • The Club currently has approximately 200 financial members, and 400 people on its mailing list.

Table 2.7. Summary of state mountain bike events (continued)

Event	Summary	Competitor profile
Tahune MTB Marathon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual race (last ran on the 7 February 2009), starting at the bridge over the Huon River near the Tahune Forest Airwalk • 100 kilometre course including a mixture of cross country singletrack and fire trails • Includes sections of the Tasmanian Trail • Shorter race for novice riders takes place on the same day – the Macquarie Accounting Challenge Course – 50 kilometre and lower technical challenge • 2010 race scheduled for the 13 February, and will include three race categories: The Experience (30 kilometre), the Challenge (60 kilometre) and the Marathon (100 kilometre). 	<p>In 2009:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were a total of 269 competitors • All competitors were from Tasmania, excluding one international rider • 13.5 per cent were women • The average age was 36.

Table 2.7. Summary of state mountain bike events (continued)

Event	Summary	Competitor Profile
Blue Dragon Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Challenge is a two-day mountain bike specific race run for the first time in January 2009, and attracted 182 competitors • Was only advertised on a local/intrastate basis • Day one is a 50 kilometre loop starting and finishing in the northeast town of Derby (including rainforest, vistas to north and east coasts, and along river edges) • Day two is a 50 kilometre loop starting and finishing in nearby Welborough (journeying past the old Anchor Mine, and into the Blue Tier sub-alpine area, descending via the Blue Tier Descent Trail) • Scheduled to run again in January 2010, focusing again on local riders • It is intended that the challenge will be promoted further afield (e.g. interstate) in coming years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All competitors, with the exception of two people, were Tasmanians (this reflects the fact that the event was only advertised intrastate) • The majority of riders were in the 30-39 and 40-49 age categories (which is considered a typical age profile for Tasmanian mountain bike events) • The majority of competitors were male – approximately 15 per cent were female • Competitors commented on the ‘adventure’ of the race, and the stunning location.

Table 2.7. Summary of state mountain bike events (continued)

Summary

Tasmania currently hosts a range of mountain bike specific events, many of which are organised by local clubs and targeted at local and/or intrastate riders.

A smaller number of events capture significant interstate participation, such as the stage of the annual Australian Mountain Bike Series held at the Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park, and other multi-sport events, also attract riders to the state.

The biannual Wildside MTB race attracts a significant number of interstate and a small number of international competitors, and is currently one of the main offerings of Tasmanian mountain bike tourism. The Tahune MTB Marathon also attracts interstate visitors, and this trend is expected to increase, as the event becomes more established.

There is further scope to enhance and expand existing, and develop new events, including multi-sport adventure races with a mountain bike component. The *Mountain Bike Tourism Market Profile for Tasmania* identifies the importance of events as key mountain bike tourism products. Specifically, the market profile recommends supporting “local clubs and organisers to increase the promotion and capacity of the premium and national level competitions”.

2.2.7 Existing tours and products

The following table provides an overview of the mountain bike tours currently operating in Tasmania:

Commercial tours	Product overview
<p>Mountain Bike! Tasmania Tours The Ben Lomond Descent 'Keep Some in Reserve' – Trevallyn Reserve 'Pedal About' – North Esk River</p> <p>www.mountainbiket Tasmania.com.au</p>	<p>Ben Lomond Descent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts at the Ben Lomond Village and descends 1050 metres via Jacobs Ladder and 4WD tracks Departs: Wednesday and Saturday Duration: six to seven hours from Launceston Cost: \$150 (includes transfer to and from Ben Lomond, lunch and snacks, bike, helmet and day pack). <p>Keep Some in Reserve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explores a variety of trails within Trevallyn Reserve, including technical cross country singletrack, easy fire trails, and a walk through Cataract Gorge Departs: Tuesdays and Fridays Duration: three to four hours Cost: \$90 (includes snacks, bike, helmet and day pack). <p>Pedal About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leisurely circuit following the banks of the North Esk and Tamar Rivers Departs: Mondays and Thursdays Duration: two to three hours Cost: \$75 (includes snacks, bike, helmet and day pack).
<p>Island Cycle Tours Mount Wellington Descent Active Tours – Bike, Hike, Kayak</p> <p>www.islandcycletours.com</p>	<p>Mount Wellington Descent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows the Mount Wellington Road, and connects (if guests are willing) to off-road trails, followed by snacks at Cascade Gardens and finishing at Salamanca Place Departs: 9:30 am and 1:30 pm September to June Cost: \$75 (adult), \$70 (child/concession).
<p>Tarraleah Lodge The Breakfast Bike Ride</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided downhill ride from the lodge to the river below Platypus spotting on route Cooked breakfast prepared by the guide Ride back up the hill to the Lodge in the 'Adventure Tarraleah Oka' (4WD bus).

Table 2.8. Existing mountain bike tours

Summary

There is a limited supply of mountain bike specific tourism products in Tasmania. The lack of tourism products is, in part, indicative of the limited amount of high quality MTB specific infrastructure in the state, which can be utilised and promoted by tourism operators. As is the case for event tourism, there is significant scope to further grow the existing mountain bike tour products, and develop new products.

There is also currently little recognition of mountain bike tourism among tourism operators and service providers (e.g. a lack of bike friendly accommodation options, shuttle services etc.), which probably reflects the small status of the market to date. Many destinations around the world have grasped mountain bike tourism, with whole communities geared towards servicing visitors with bikes.

Tourism Tasmania plans to conduct a series of product development workshops around the state to facilitate the development of products and services catering to the cycling market in general and the mountain bike market in particular.

The flow on benefits from the Wildside (to the small towns on the West Coast) and other mountain bike events, such as the Blue Dragon (based at Derby, Branxholm and Welborough in the northeast) are beginning to become obvious, with small towns embracing the influx of visitors for such events.

Section 3

Consultation findings



Maria Island, East Coast of Tasmania.
Photo: Tourism Tasmania and Brad Harris

Section 3

Consultation findings

3.1 Consultation process

Sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 provide summaries of the key issues, ideas and messages expressed by consultation participants.

Consultation took place in June 2009, and included:

community forums in Ulverstone (30 participants), Launceston (45 participants), and Hobart (95 participants)

land manager and key agency forums in Burnie (nine participants), Launceston (10 participants), and Hobart (22 participants)

preparation and distribution of an online mountain bike rider survey (posted on the Sport and Recreation Tasmania website, with links from other popular sites, such as Pedalbite <www.pedalbite.com>, Launceston Mountain Bike Club <www.lmbc.com.au>, Dirt Devils <www.dirtdevilsmtb.com> and Mountain Bike Australia <www.mtba.asn.au>) which received 568 survey returns

meetings and phone contact with individual stakeholders as required (e.g. a number of individual riders have made phone and email contact throughout the project, and phone contact has been made with state mountain bike event organisers, some private land managers and retail outlets).

Detailed notes from each of the forums is included in Attachment 4.

The last stage of the consultation process comprised a four week period of public review of the *Draft Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan*. A total of 28 submissions were received including 11 from Tasmanian individuals, four from interstate individuals, seven from Tasmanian State Government agencies and local councils, five from community/non-government organisations and one from a national/international organisation (IMBA Australia). A summary of the submissions received along with the response from the steering committee and recommended changes to the final plan are noted in Attachment 7.

3.2 Key findings

3.2.1 Community forums

The key issues, ideas and messages expressed by participants of the community forums included:

the need for land managers to formally acknowledge mountain biking as a legitimate activity

the need to formalise access to existing trails and riding areas, to enable investment in trail and mountain bike infrastructure development to occur in a legitimate way, and provide for a critical mass of riding opportunities for promotion

the limited number of mountain bike specific trails in Tasmania (e.g. compared to the significant amount of walking infrastructure)

perception of a poor understanding of mountain biking (e.g. the different types of riding styles, facility requirements, and needs of riders) among some land managers

the need to understand and communicate to the public the real physical or environmental impacts associated with mountain biking – to break down negative perceptions (e.g. impacts are generally similar to those of walkers, and much less than horses and other modes of transport²⁵)

the significance of Tasmania's diverse natural landscapes, 'real' mountains and diversity of terrain as key motivators for participation, and as a key strength of Tasmanian mountain biking

the proximity of the riding areas to population centres (e.g. compact size) was also considered to be a key strength

a general willingness to work with land managers to design, construct, and maintain mountain bike infrastructure

the general lack of information about existing trails/riding locations, and the need for a centralised, web-based information source in addition to trail maps/notes and advertising

²⁵ See *Chapter 5: Mountain Biking and the Environment*, in IMBA (2007) **Managing Mountain Biking: IMBA's Guide to Providing Great Riding**, USA; Chiu, L and Kriwoken, L (2003) *Managing Recreational Mountain Biking in Wellington Park, Tasmania, Australia* in **Annals of Leisure Research**, Volume 6 No.4; City of Mitcham (2006) *City of Mitcham Mountain Bike Strategy: Towards Sustainably Management*, South Australia (see Appendix H, including Cessford, 1995).

an acknowledgement of the issues associated with illegal trails/jumps/technical features and unauthorised use of existing tracks, but see this as an indicator of the gap in supply in relation to demand

the need to clarify public liability/risk issues as they relate to mountain bike access to both public and private land

issues associated with inconsistent approaches to trail classification and signage systems, and the need for a consistent approach to enable riders to choose trails that match their skill level (one that is recognisable to visitors as well as residents)

opportunities that could be created by linking existing sections of trails together (both within urban areas, and longer 'adventure' trails)

the need to provide improved opportunities for younger riders (e.g. access to bike parks/trails within riding distance, public transport, skill development facilities etc)

the need to better educate riders about appropriate use of riding areas (e.g. Rider Code of Conduct).

3.2.2 Land manager and key stakeholder forums

The key issues, ideas and messages expressed by participants of the land manager forums included:

a consistent vision for mountain biking in Tasmania (e.g. to be known as a unique riding destination, with innovative and sustainable trail opportunities, commercial developments and capitalising on the Tasmanian brand)

Tasmania's main 'points of difference' are considered to be diversity and accessibility of natural landscapes and the proximity of natural areas to urban areas, 'real' mountains, the Tasmanian brand (e.g. known as a nature-based/adventure tourism destination), and climate

illegal trail construction is one of the biggest problems facing land managers

a willingness expressed by land managers to be involved in the development and management of mountain bike opportunities

constraints included lack of funding (for construction and ongoing management), legislative and organisational constraints, and public liability concerns

the importance of events (local, state, national and international levels), as 'hooks' to attract local and visitor participation and raise the profile of Tasmania as a mountain bike destination

the need to ensure that what is promoted to visitors is consistent with the actual experiences available on the ground, including the level of support facilities (e.g. bike friendly accommodation)

the need for a consistent approach to classification and signage of mountain bike/shared trails on a statewide basis

the need for trail development to be sustainable, and respect the natural and cultural values, which is the primary objective of some reserve land categories

the need to consider the safety and quality of experiences of other trail users

a recognition that not all trails are suitable for shared use, and that there needs to be some provision of mountain bike specific or 'mountain bike preferred' trails

the need for better information about mountain bike opportunities in Tasmania (e.g. a centralised website, as well as maps and brochures, as well as promotional material for the target markets)

the need to clarify public liability/risk issues as they relate to mountain bike access to both public and private land

the potential of mountain bike access to exacerbate the spread of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* and weeds in some areas

the desire to investigate the establishment of a 'peak body' or centralised mountain bike organisation to facilitate communication between riders and land managers

the need for improved statewide data on rider participation rates and profiles, to enable informed decision making, and justify budget allocations.

3.2.3 Mountain bike rider survey

A brief analysis of the findings from the mountain bike rider survey (568 returns) is presented in Section 2.1.1. This section discusses only the survey questions, which relate to specific riding locations currently favoured by riders and ideas for further development, rather than rider profile data.

Figure 3.1 indicates that more than half of the survey respondents chose Wellington Park/South Hobart (57.2 per cent) as the most favoured riding location in the state. The second most favoured riding location was Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park (40.7 per cent), followed by the Blue Tier (22.5 per cent), and Clarence Mountain Bike Park (20.3 per cent).

Of the respondents who answered Question 11 of the survey ‘What town or suburb do you live in?’, 61 per cent were from the southern region, 32 per cent were from the northern region, and seven per cent from the northwest. The regional distribution of respondents is reflected in the emphasis and popularity of trails in the southern region, outlined above and illustrated in the Figure 3.1, and in response to Question 6 (a) and (b).

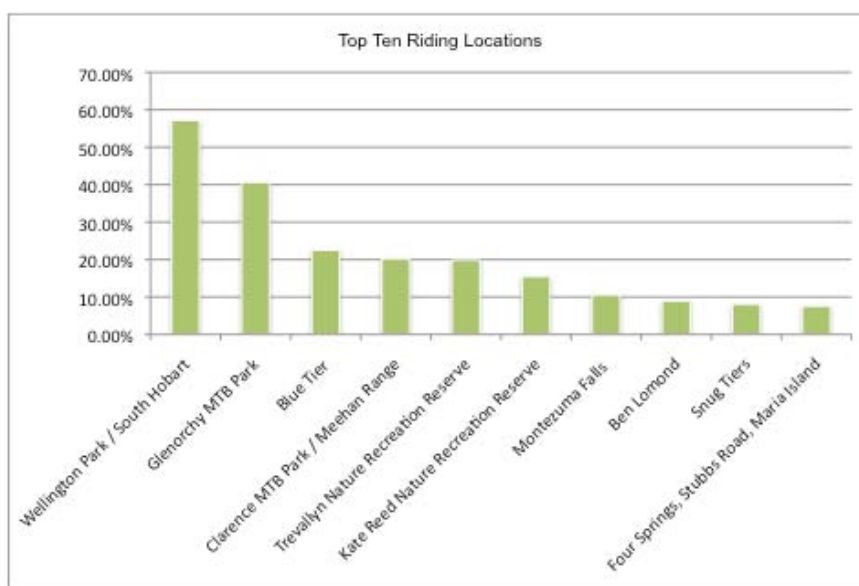


Figure 3.1. Top ten riding locations in Tasmania

The results outlined above were compared to the responses to Question 6 (a) and (b) “List two trails you think offer the best opportunities for further development and promotion of mountain biking in Tasmania”. Wellington Park

had the highest response rate – again, reflecting the large number of respondents from the southern region.

Other riding areas and trails were listed by less than one per cent of respondents, and have not been included in the following summary:

24 per cent of respondents listed Mt Wellington, or trails within Wellington Park

nine per cent listed Trevallyn NRA

seven per cent listed trails in the South Hobart area

six per cent listed Kate Reed NRA

five per cent listed the Glenorchy MTB Park

five per cent listed the Clarence MTB Park/Meehan Range

three per cent listed the Blue Tier

three per cent listed Ben Lomond

two per cent listed Hollybank

one per cent listed the Snug Tiers area.

Review of the survey responses indicated that in general, respondents listed trails or riding areas within close proximity to where they lived. For example, respondents from the northern region were strongly represented by riders from the Launceston area. Therefore, Trevallyn and Kate Reed NRA's were the most popular riding areas and the areas considered to have the best potential for further development within the region. The northwest region had the lowest response rate. The Dial-Range, Stubbs Road area and Palooa were considered to be the best riding locations in the region, with the best potential for further development.

Question 7 – “What development would you like to see happen at your two selected trails” and Question 8 – “Other comments” are difficult to summarise, given their open nature, and the large number of responses received. A number of quotes considered to be representative of the type of comments received from respondents are included below for each question.

Some of the quotes received in response to Question 7 (developments you would like to see) are included below. These examples do not necessarily equate to a majority view or consensus in relation to specific locations identified but rather provide a snapshot of the range and types of comments received.

“Any improvement of trails and linking of tracks (flowing and contouring) for mountain biking on Mt Wellington would be great...”

“A MTB only trail that offers a true wild 'mountain' experience”

“More tracks, jumps, trails, dirt jumps, northshores and more berms and drops and more flow”

“Legalised downhill specific trails running all the way down from the springs to the cascade, also many legalised trails along the way to accommodate for different skill levels and to mix up runs, e.g. fast smooth tracks, northshore, super technical rocky”

“Ben Lomond should be developed as a major summer tourism attraction with mountain biking at its heart”

“The Big Bend link would be epic. A major tourist attraction from a demographic that has \$\$\$\$. Start at Salamanca on a Saturday morning. Ride up the mountain using roads, fire trails and singletrack till you get to the top. Traverse and descend down to Tolosa Street.”

“Long singletrack, a full day with lots of scenery. May start and finish in different towns. Even better, start at one bike park and finish at another”

“I worked as a summer student with Forestry Tasmania last summer and spent many a day driving through Maydena, amazed at the terrain and how perfect a location it is for a mountain bike facility”

“Lilydale - there are endless areas for trail construction - both xc and dh - it is close enough to Launceston to be convenient - easy to get to and once there you have access to great trails - with good road access. A good shuttle road is the key to a good [downhill trail]”

“Further development of the existing tracks used for the Tahune Marathon plus facilities such as a cafe, children's play area, toilets and showers, a bike washing area, signage etc”.

Some of the quotes received in response to Question 8 (other comments) were:

“Just looking at the rides mentioned above there is no doubt that Tasmania offers an unbelievable diversity in MTB experiences. While we have to compete with the other states I doubt that few could compete with having so many rides in such relative close [proximity to population centres]”

"I have travelled through the UK and NZ and they seem to be light years ahead of us in their infrastructure for MTBing with very profitable designated multi use/ mountain bike areas..."

"Mountain Biking is growing and growing - now is the perfect time to invest in this awesome sport - it will further enhance what is a great Tasmanian culture, as well as bringing in HEAPS of tourists from all over the world"

"Maybe a state-wide signage system that also ranks the trails similar to the black-diamond system for skiing. Maybe water hoses at the ends of trails for bike washing (help contain some plant diseases). First Aid kits, mobile phone boosters on tracks..."

"A web site listing all tracks and maps"

"Mountain biking needs to be promoted as an active, fun, environmentally friendly sport. There are many misconceptions that mountain bikers do as much damage to the environment as trail bikes, this needs to be put straight to the public"

"We have such a beautiful state yet we have our mountain bike specific riding in/around completely unappealing land. We need tracks that get to show off the natural environment..."

"Mountain Biking is the new bush walking. On a mountain bike you can cover greater distances and still enjoy the scenery. Make trails accessible, and give options for trail riding, and downhill"

"In my opinion, it is doing awesome things for our youth. Personally, my mates are going to less parties so they can go riding and things like that. It's keeping us fit and having awesome fun..."

"There are still very limited legal, formal, publicly accessible with a car, mountain bike only, predominately downhill trails in Tasmania..."

"Singletrack technical routes with signage to eliminate need for maps, MTB only, close to where we live (Hobart) so don't have to spend too much of the day driving (ie. under 90min)".

Section 4

Vision for Tasmanian mountain bike riding



Wildside MTB Race, Trial Harbour, West Coast of Tasmania.
Photo: Tourism Tasmania and Rick Eaves

Section 4

A vision for Tasmanian mountain bike riding

4.1 SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis provides a useful overview of the current situation with mountain bike riding in Tasmania. The SWOT analysis in Table 4.1 has been prepared by the consultants based on the general findings from research, past work and consultation with both land managers and riders.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasmania's natural and cultural values provide a unique outdoor setting for riding • Continued popularity of MTB riding within the local community • Events such as Wildside MTB race and hosting other events such as the Australian MTB Series have attracted media and rider interest about Tasmania's outstanding landscape and the possibilities for riding • Accessibility of riding locations close to main urban areas • Diversity of MTB trails available within diverse landscapes • Support of state, regional and local government for the improvement of MTB trails and facilities – easy to achieve inter-agency support • Support of tourism industry to market and promote MTB products and opportunities in the future • Organised MTB clubs and groups operating and engaging with land managers in the north and south • Free access to MTB trails • Access to true wilderness and 'real' mountains (raw and remote) • State Government \$4 million funding for trails and bikeways • Not crowded and ability to link trails together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources and capacity of land managers to develop, manage and maintain trails and facilities • Some policy and legislative limitations to MTB use on state lands • Continued creation of illegal trails and facilities on public land • Many popular trails do not have authorised MTB access • Lack of single purpose or dedicated MTB trails • Lack of any agreed classification and signage system for MTB trails • Gaps in provision across different styles of riding and location • Loss of riding areas with urban growth (both existing and potential) • Limited coordination and advocacy of MTB interests at a state level, given small number of organised groups • Whilst volunteers are significant contributors to the development of riding opportunities, there are limitations to the time and responsibility that can be expected of them (e.g. club members can easily become 'burnt out' over time) • Limited MTB tourism product development and thus marketing and promotion

Table 4.1 SWOT analysis

Strengths (continued)	Weaknesses (continued)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable climate for riding experiences • Good quality retail service to support MTB riding • Cool temperate rainforest riding opportunities • Established reputation as a leader in nature-based and adventure tourism • Enthusiasm of local mountain biking clubs and individuals • Cycling culture and history in Tasmania • Mt Wellington (in excess of 1 000 metres vertical fall, within close proximity to our capital city, with intact bushland and a sealed access road to the summit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance from core international mountain bike tourism markets (e.g. USA, Canada, UK and Europe and New Zealand) • Distance from interstate mountain bike hubs/destinations (e.g. Mount Buller, Thredbo, Stromlo, Cairns) • Lack of significant infrastructure base, such as alpine resorts, to provide a catalyst for mountain bike riding (e.g. in particular lift-assisted downhill riding)
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a hierarchy of trails to cater for the varying interest of visitors and local riders • Tasmania, whilst slow off the mark, can learn from what has worked for MTB in other places and position Tasmania differently • Create distinctive MTB riding experiences that are built around the unique and diverse landscape • Create improved access and riding opportunities close to the urban areas • Improve the marketing and promotion of MTB through information, websites, trailheads, signs etc. • Implementation of an agreed trail classification and signage system for the state • Identify priorities for planned development of MTB trails within the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate resource commitment to allow for sustainable development of MTB trails and facilities • Lack of support for MTB trail development/authorisation by land managers • Lack of coordination, support and commitment by MTB riders to be organised and have a strong voice • Illegal trail development diverts available resources and land manager support away from improving more important trails • Limited MTB riders to support volunteer efforts to work with land managers, and the potential to rely too heavily on volunteers ('burn out' can occur) • Risk management issues close trails and facilities or limit access to riding areas or limit construction of new trails (e.g. private landowners concerned about liability) • Tasmania does not build MTB experiences around its unique landscapes and lacks competitive strength to attract riders

Table 4.1 SWOT analysis (continued)

Opportunities (continued)	Threats (continued)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and improve policy and legislation to support MTB riding across public and private lands • Promote innovative trail design and construction • Potential to package mountain biking with existing adventure and nature-based tourism products, as well as food and wine products • National MTB program located in Tasmania and sponsored by Tasmanian Government • Promote a strong sustainability position for mountain biking, based on best practice trail design, construction and monitoring • Clarification of risk management issues (e.g. the application of the <i>Civil Liability Act 2002</i>) may result in previously closed trails and riding locations being opened and promoted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited support for events • No continuation of the State Government funding commitment in future years • Policy and legislation become barriers to innovative MTB product development • Stronger competition from more established mountain bike destinations (e.g. New Zealand and mainland Australia) • Travel and bike transport costs acting as a deterrent for interstate and international visitors • Potential that developed trails will not meet the expectations of mountain bike riders (e.g. not be specifically designed with mountain bike riders in mind) • Considerable development of MTB trails and facilities has occurred in other Australian and overseas destinations • Potential for conflict with other trail users • Risk management issues and concerns from landowners

Table 4.1 SWOT analysis (continued)

There was a great deal of consistency in the land manager and bike rider forums as to what Tasmania offers as strong appeal for mountain bike riding experiences. The main points of difference for Tasmania (e.g. the unique characteristics that set Tasmania apart from other places) as a mountain bike destination are considered to be the:

highly diverse, compact and ‘wild’ natural environment, providing opportunities for riders to experience a range of landscapes and terrains within a short period of time (e.g. the summit to the sea in a day)

accessibility to MTB trails and facilities that are close to urban areas, contributing to the ‘liveability’ of Tasmania

mountain bike riding is free and uncrowded

cool temperate and seasonal climate provides great riding experiences

established, high profile reputation as a nature-based and adventure tourism destination, with the potential to bundle mountain biking activities with other tourism products, including food, wine and culture.

These strengths were recognised as providing a good fit with the Tasmanian tourism brand:

“Tasmania is an easily accessed land apart – a place of wild and beautiful landscapes; friendly, welcoming people with a relaxed island lifestyle; a pleasant, temperate climate; wonderful wine and food; and a haunting history evoked by spectacular convict-era ruins.”

4.2 Issues

The critical issues have been grouped into five main categories:

governance (responsibility, lack of overarching management framework and partnerships) and policy issues (Section 4.2.1)

planning, management and resourcing issues (Section 4.2.2)

gaps in supply to meet demand for riding trails (Section 4.2.3)

public liability and risk management Issues (Section 4.2.4)

marketing and promotional issues (Section 4.2.5).

4.2.1 Governance and policy issues

The critical governance and policy issues include:

a lack of formal land manager mountain bike policy (e.g. setting out the position of individual agencies in relation to mountain bike access, management and infrastructure development) resulting in an ad hoc approach to the development of mountain biking opportunities across the state

legislative constraints, with significant implications for some land managers (e.g. the implications of mountain bikes being legally defined as a ‘vehicle’ under the *Tasmanian National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*), and the intent of the different land tenures under the management of the Parks and Wildlife Service)

lack of agreed guidelines or standards for mountain bike infrastructure design, construction, maintenance and classification

other land manager objectives include the importance of meeting core business responsibilities and priorities (e.g. securing conservation outcomes, forest operations, protecting water catchments etc.) as a higher priority than mountain bike opportunity provision, with limited resource allocation

many of the trails/riding areas currently used do not have formal access arrangements in place for mountain bike riding, and are therefore not generally managed on an appropriate basis

lack of a 'peak body' or representative statewide mountain bike organisation to provide guidance and point of contact for land managers

a general lack of coordination between land management agencies in relation to mountain bike development (e.g. the potential to duplicate opportunities, and the difficulties associated with cross tenure trail development proposals).

4.2.2 Planning, management and resourcing issues

The critical issues relating to planning, management and resourcing include:

a need for sufficient long term government funding for the development and ongoing maintenance of mountain bike trails and associated infrastructure

illegal trail and trail feature construction – this is a particularly significant issue in fringe urban areas, with associated risk, public liability and environmental impact concerns

the informal nature of mountain bike access to many areas throughout the state means that a significant number of trails are not formally managed, which in some cases has translated into a lack of responsibility and sense of respect by riders

a perceived lack of understanding about mountain bike riding among some land managers (e.g. what riders need and want, requirements of the different riding styles)

the difficulties of managing multi-use trails (e.g. safely and in a way that ensures each user group has an enjoyable experience)

unsustainable trails (e.g. poorly designed, constructed and maintained, located in sensitive environments, presence of threatened species)

the potential to exacerbate the spread of plant diseases and weeds, in particular *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, the Root Rot Fungus

the need for rider education and implementation of a 'code of conduct' (e.g. encouraging riders to lead by example, engendering a sense of respect and ownership for trails and riding areas, communicating the implications of building illegal trails, and encouraging riders to be involved in formal trail building programs)

the relatively 'young' status of mountain bike riding as an activity/sport, the significant improvements in bike technology and subsequent evolution of the sport – these factors can translate to planning and management difficulties as there will be lag time as the land managers 'catch up' to the evolving sport

the limited amount of data/research currently available for mountain bike riding in Tasmania, with potential implications for the justification of resource allocation.

4.2.3 Gaps in supply to meet demand

The critical issues relating to the gaps in supply of mountain bike opportunities include:

the prevalence of illegal trail and trail feature (e.g. dirt jumps) construction in urban fringe areas, which likely reflects a gap in the supply of riding opportunities in some areas

limited supply of authorised cross country singletrack, or purpose built mountain bike specific trail infrastructure throughout the state outside of the main bike parks and recognised riding areas

limited supply of specifically constructed downhill trails, with sealed road access to the trailhead, allowing for multiple runs in a day (some downhill trails, excluding downhill competition trails, have the capacity to cater for both cross country and downhill disciplines – particularly if there is a well graded climb to the trailhead)

a lack of mountain bike rider skill development infrastructure (e.g. skills parks)

a lack of connectivity between trails in some areas, limiting riding opportunities and ‘isolating’ trails within the surrounding landscape, and requiring riders to drive or ride on road to access trails

limited provision of basic amenities and facilities associated with popular riding locations (e.g. toilets, rubbish bins signage, public transport access and maps) in some areas, which also reflect the unauthorised nature of many mountain bike riding locations

a general lack of mountain bike specific support infrastructure associated with trails (e.g. bike wash down stations, signage and classification, bike barns), or support services (e.g. shuttles and bike friendly accommodation) and bike parks

limited authorised opportunities for dirt jumping and skill development in population centres across the state (a strong demand for this sort of facility was demonstrated at the northwest regional rider forum where there was a strong representation of young riders).

4.2.4 Public liability and risk management issues

Critical public liability and risk management issues include:

the lack of clarity and certainty surrounding the real and perceived risk of public liability claims against land owners and managers (e.g. lack of understanding of the *Civil Liability Act 2002*²⁶)

the significant risk management issues that can occur as a result of illegal trail construction (e.g. poorly designed and built structures on public land)

the lack of management intervention in some riding areas, where mountain bike access is tolerated but not formally authorised, where maintenance and risk assessment checks are not carried out on a regular basis

limited signage, including trail difficulty classification in some areas, is a risk management issue that can be easily improved

the need to define and communicate the real risks associated with mountain bike riding, including the trail design and construction techniques available to minimise risk potential

safety concerns associated with multiple use trails (e.g. the chance of collisions between riders and other trail users) as a result of the relative speed differential.

²⁶ Legislation similar to the *Civil Liability Act 2002* has been recently tested in NSW, in *Jaber v Rockdale City Council 2008*, regarding injuries sustained in a diving incident. The court found that the plaintiff did not have a case, because the risk of diving from a wharf was considered an 'obvious risk' and a 'dangerous recreational activity'. Such rationale may be relevant to cases involving mountain bike incidents, however the legislation remains untested in Tasmania.

4.2.5 Marketing and promotional issues

The critical marketing and promotional issues include:

the limited supply of high quality, formalised trails and riding areas is a limiting factor in the promotion of Tasmania as a mountain bike destination

lack of a centralised information source (e.g. website) for mountain biking across the state

limited promotional and informational material, including detailed maps, trail notes, guide books or web-based information for mountain bike opportunities

limited marketing of mountain bike opportunities to the intrastate or interstate/international markets, reflecting limited authorised riding opportunities

limited promotion encouraging participation in mountain bike riding to Tasmanians (increased participation could play a role in the promotion of healthy lifestyles)

the need to ensure that the marketing of mountain bike opportunities in the state is consistent with the actual experience available on the ground, to ensure that the reputation of Tasmania as a great riding destination continues to grow.

4.3 Vision for Tasmanian mountain bike riding

The vision for mountain bike riding in Tasmania was discussed at the regional land manager forums and bike rider forums. The common aspects raised were that Tasmania should:

have more accessible MTB parks, trails and facilities that offer a diverse range of riding opportunities close to urban areas, and in the diverse natural landscapes of Tasmania

have MTB trails and facilities managed and maintained on a sustainable basis without causing adverse impacts on the state's natural and cultural values

provide better access to information and greater promotion of the MTB experiences to the visitor market

improve the network of MTB trails and facilities throughout the state including greater shared access on some trails and specific designated MTB trails where needed (especially downhill trails)

have greater involvement of local councils in the development of MTB trails and facilities

provide better linkages between trails and across different land tenures including improved links and services between different destinations and within urban areas

have strong support for MTB events as a hook to attract local, national and international riders

seek improved consistency of trail construction standards, MTB trail classification and signage

have greater education of MTB riders and the wider community about the activity

encourage the development of appropriate and sustainable commercial mountain bike proposals for products and opportunities

have less unauthorised trail construction taking place.

The potential benefits of developing a quality recreational trail network in Tasmania were identified in the *Trails Tasmania Strategy* – they included benefits to community health, social and community lifestyle, environment, transport, tourism and economic return to the community.

The following vision statement has been prepared to assist future planning, development and management of mountain bike riding within Tasmania.

Tasmania will provide a world-class, diverse range of outstanding mountain bike riding experiences showcasing Tasmania's natural environment to entice local, national and international riders, where the network of trails and facilities are managed on a sustainable basis with the support of land managers and riders.

'Sustainable' for the purposes of this plan, means that the trails and facilities should be environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. This means that MTB trails and facilities should be planned, designed, constructed and maintained to high standard, following appropriate environmental and cultural assessment processes to minimise impacts to the natural and cultural values of an area. The provision of MTB trails and facilities should be guided by demonstrated need and have the potential to provide long term, ongoing benefits to the community. Resources and funding for MTB trails and facilities must be sufficient to ensure ongoing management, repairs and maintenance of trails into the future. The Tasmanian MTB trails should be exemplars of environmental 'best practice'.

4.4 Future directions

The *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* will need to focus on a number of key future directions to realise this vision. An outline of the future directions is provided in Table 4.2 along with the reason or rationale for why it is important. Each of these future directions is assessed in detail in Section 5 of the report with recommendations being identified.

Future directions	Rationale
1. Clear governance and leadership	The <i>Trails Tasmania Strategy</i> identified that the roles and responsibilities for recreational trails were fragmented across different agencies and that there were limited mechanisms to achieve a whole of government approach. As part of the implementation of the above strategy, the State Government has created a fulltime Trail and Bikeways Program Manager position within Sport and Recreation Tasmania and budgeted \$4 million for trail development over the next three years (2008-2010). The implementation of the <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i> will require consideration as to how the key initiatives can be achieved as a whole of government program in partnership with the Australian Government, local councils and the community.
2. Hierarchy of MTB trails in the state	The inventory has shown a multitude of trails (both legal and unauthorised) within the state. A hierarchy of trails can identify which trails are best developed for different user markets including local, regional, national and international. Priorities within each of the different tiers of the hierarchy can then be determined and implementation plans put in place. It will also help distinguish the MTB riding experiences in Tasmania from other destinations.
3. Enabling policy and legislation	There are some legislative and policy constraints that limit land managers from responding efficiently to recognised needs for MTB trails and facilities. These need to be reviewed and where need be, revised to facilitate appropriate MTB trail and facility development across the state.
4. Innovative trail design and construction	Tasmania is widely recognised for its innovative walking trail design and construction techniques. Equally this should apply to selected MTB trails and facilities, so as to help distinguish Tasmania as a high quality riding destination and to allow safe and convenient use by local riders. Sustainable trail planning, design and construction is a key feature of an innovative and high quality trail network. The implementation of best practice design, construction and maintenance techniques will ensure that any environmental impacts are minimised, and aid in showcasing that mountain bike riding can be accommodated in a sustainable way.
5. Classification of trails and signage system	A statewide approach is essential to providing a coordinated approach across different trail styles and tenures to avoid confusion of the MTB trails system and allow consistency with other accepted or adopted systems e.g. IMBA.
6. Adequate resource commitment	The planning, development, management and maintenance of MTB trails and facilities – both existing and future – will require adequate management resources to meet the growth in riding and expectations of both land managers and riders. Tasmania will not be able to capture market interest or maintain tracks to the standards expected by riders or be environmentally sustainable unless there is an ongoing resource commitment in the future.
7. Working partnerships between land managers and users	More benefits can be achieved for MTB riding in Tasmania with the development of a strong working relationship between land managers and users.

Table 4.2 Rationale for future directions

Future directions	Rationale
8. Leading products and events	Events and MTB product development are crucial to the marketing and promotion of Tasmania as a MTB destination for interstate and overseas riders.
9. Marketing and promotion	There are limited resources for marketing and promotion of MTB and these should be directed towards the best prospects for attracting and meeting the needs of both visitors and locals.
10. Education programs	Education programs will help improve access to MTB trails, reduce the potential for conflicts with other users and improve environmental sustainability.
11. Risk management practices	The management of risk issues is important to both the land manager and user, and across different tenure types.
12. Ongoing research program	Research can be a vital tool for knowing the MTB market and assessing the effectiveness of management actions.

Table 4.2 Rationale for future directions (continued)

Section 5

Making it happen



North-South Track, Wellington Park, Hobart.
Photo: Hobart City Council and Jupe-Bergshoeff

Section 5

Making it happen

5.1 Governance and leadership

5.1.1 Context

Following the *Trails Tasmania Strategy*, the State Government committed \$4 million over three years to tracks, trails and city bikeways in the 2008/09 State Budget and created the position of Trail and Bikeways Program Manager within Sport and Recreation Tasmania.

Sport and Recreation Tasmania within the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts is considered to be the appropriate lead agency for facilitating the implementation of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* for the following reasons:

it is widely recognised as taking the lead with the planning for recreational trails and was the initiating support agency for establishing the *Trails Tasmania Strategy* and the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan*

it is an agency orientated towards coordination and facilitation rather than the ongoing responsibilities involved with trail construction, management and maintenance

it is the lead agency for the Premiers Physical Activity Council, which has strong policy connection with recreational trails and achieving liveable communities and supportive environments for physical activity in the state

it is developing a number of other strategic policy initiatives that have synergy with recreational trails including the, Essential Places and Spaces, Open Space Planning Guidelines, Recreation Planning Guidelines, Trails Toolkit and Outdoor Adventure Activity Standards

it has the capacity to operate at the state, regional and local levels and has established working relationships with other government agencies, regional bodies, local councils, peak bodies, user groups and the wider community

it has strong connections with other sporting and recreation agencies involved with recreation trails in Australia.

The *Tasmania Mountain Bike Plan* will require a commitment at the government policy level, the establishment of a statewide working group, and specific project working groups to ensure effective implementation.

There is currently a State Trails and Bikeways Advisory Committee with responsibility for facilitating a whole of government approach to the development and improvement of trails, cycling and bike riding within Tasmania. The committee has representatives from Sport and Recreation Tasmania, Department of Infrastructure Energy and Roads, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Department of Health and Human Services, Forestry Tasmania, Tourism Tasmania and the Local Government Association of Tasmania.

Rather than establish a new advisory body for implementation of the *State Mountain Bike Plan* it would be logical to utilise the working relationship of the existing State Trails and Bikeways Advisory Committee to assist with higher level tasks, including:

- implementing a whole of government policy direction across the state

- ensuring improved coordination and collaboration between government agencies

- reviewing the priorities for funding and allocation of budget to projects listed within the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan*.

The current project steering committee should continue to provide ongoing advice and input into the implementation of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* as the next tier of responsibility. This group could become the State MTB Working Group (similar to other existing state working groups such as the Recreational Vehicle Working Group) as it has more detailed understanding of mountain bike riding within the state, and could invite the involvement of other agencies, local councils and organisations (e.g. MTB rider groups) to assist with advice as required. It is envisioned that this group would be the primary body with responsibility for the implementation of the plan.

The implementation of the major initiatives of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* such as the Iconic Wild Rides, MTB Adventure Centres and Regional MTB Trail Hubs and Bike Parks will need to be organised at the regional and sometimes local council level with the support and direction of the State MTB Working Group. This could be undertaken by MTB Project Regional and/or Local Working Groups and involve the relevant land managers, Sport and Recreation Tasmania, local council(s), MTB clubs or local riders and local community. It is important that the marketing and promotion of the MTB trails within the

hierarchy be managed to ensure the status of the Iconic Wild Rides, MTB Adventure Centres and Regional MTB Trails Hubs are not diminished.

In the case of the MTB Adventure Centres, it is expected that the local council and community will need to play a major role in embracing the development potential for the centre. The process might also include the involvement of the wider community including local MTB riders, service clubs, local tourism association, local businesses, schools and other interested persons.

The responsibility for the local MTB trails and facilities sits well with the relevant land managers in partnership with the local councils, MTB clubs and riders and other interest groups.

5.1.2 Recommended actions

A1. The existing State Trails and Bikeways Advisory Committee plays a high level role in the implementation of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* through fostering coordination and collaboration between government agencies and setting funding priorities to achieve a whole of government approach.

A2. The current Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan Project Steering Committee (perhaps as the State MTB Working Group) should continue as the primary body to drive the implementation of the plan, ongoing advice and input into the implementation of the plan. In addition to the representatives from the existing agencies, it is recommended that a local government representative be appointed by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT).

A3. Regional MTB Project and/or Local Working Groups are established to coordinate the implementation of the Iconic Wild Rides, MTB Adventure Centres and Regional MTB Trail Hubs and Bike Parks.

A4. The responsibility for the planning, development, management and maintenance of local MTB trails and facilities rests with the relevant land managers in partnership with the local councils, MTB clubs and riders and other interest groups.

5.2 Hierarchy of MTB trails

5.2.1 Context

Currently there is no established hierarchy of MTB trails within the state, albeit some trails are generally recognised as being more significant or more popular than other trails. The inventory of MTB trails (refer to Section 2.2) provides an overview of the existing supply of trails and gaps in meeting MTB rider needs. Many of the trails across the state provide a network of riding opportunities for local riders within reasonable access from their urban area. Some of the trails have the potential to be developed, managed and marketed to attract international and interstate riders.

The value of establishing a hierarchy of MTB trails in the state is:

the relative significance of different MTB riding experiences can be identified and by doing so, this will allow Tasmania to better position itself more competitively in the market for the growing number of mountain bike visitors to the state

rides can be better positioned, developed and maintained to the differing needs and expectations of international, interstate, intrastate and local riders

priority can be assessed for those MTB trails that offer the best ride experiences for the different types of riding, allowing prioritisation of funding allocation

the ability to more clearly market and promote the different MTB ride experiences to the intended market segment

the ability to better identify and implement the most appropriate planning, development, management and maintenance requirements for the different levels of trails.

Figure 5.1 shows the recommended hierarchy for developing MTB trails within the state. It is important to note that the hierarchy does not imply that any one category is more important than another. Nor does it imply that any particular category will receive priority in terms of development or allocation of any available funding. The hierarchy is useful for understanding each category's relevance and appeal to various MTB markets/users and provides an indication of the level and type of marketing, development, signage and support infrastructure expected at trails or riding areas in each category.

Map 5.1 shows the locations within the state of the suggested Iconic Wild Rides, MTB Adventure Centres and regional trail hubs and bike parks. Map 5.1 illustrates the opportunity to disperse the hierarchy of potential MTB trails across Tasmania, and in particular to provide riders with access to a range of opportunities across the different riding styles:

each of the main entry points for visitors to the state – airports at Launceston, Hobart, Devonport and Burnie/Wynyard and by ferry into Devonport

the major visitor destinations for visitors touring the state – for example Hobart, Freycinet, Launceston, Cradle Mountain and Strahan (e.g. providing opportunities to capture the softer end of the market)

the major tourism destinations promoted by Tourism Tasmania (the Five Zones) – Hobart and surrounds; east coast; Launceston, Tamar and the north; the northwest coast and the western wilderness

the capital city, Hobart.

The list of suggested MTB trails for each level of the hierarchy has been determined based on research, consultation, knowledge of Tasmanian landscapes and the visitor markets, and experience on trails within each area identified.

Table 5.1 explains the rationale for the different levels of the hierarchy, the core market appeal, criteria for each level, and an example of trails and riding areas that have the potential to meet the criteria for each level of the hierarchy. A numerical scoring system may be applied to the criteria for management purposes (e.g. as a means of prioritisation of trail projects), if required in the future. Such a scoring system is a useful management tool when assessing new projects and development proposals, assessing grant applications and determining priorities for infrastructure works and marketing campaigns. Development and implementation of the scoring system would be the responsibility of the State MTB Working Group. Similarly the State MTB Working Group could review the criteria and how they are applied when any funding for infrastructure developments or marketing plans is secured.

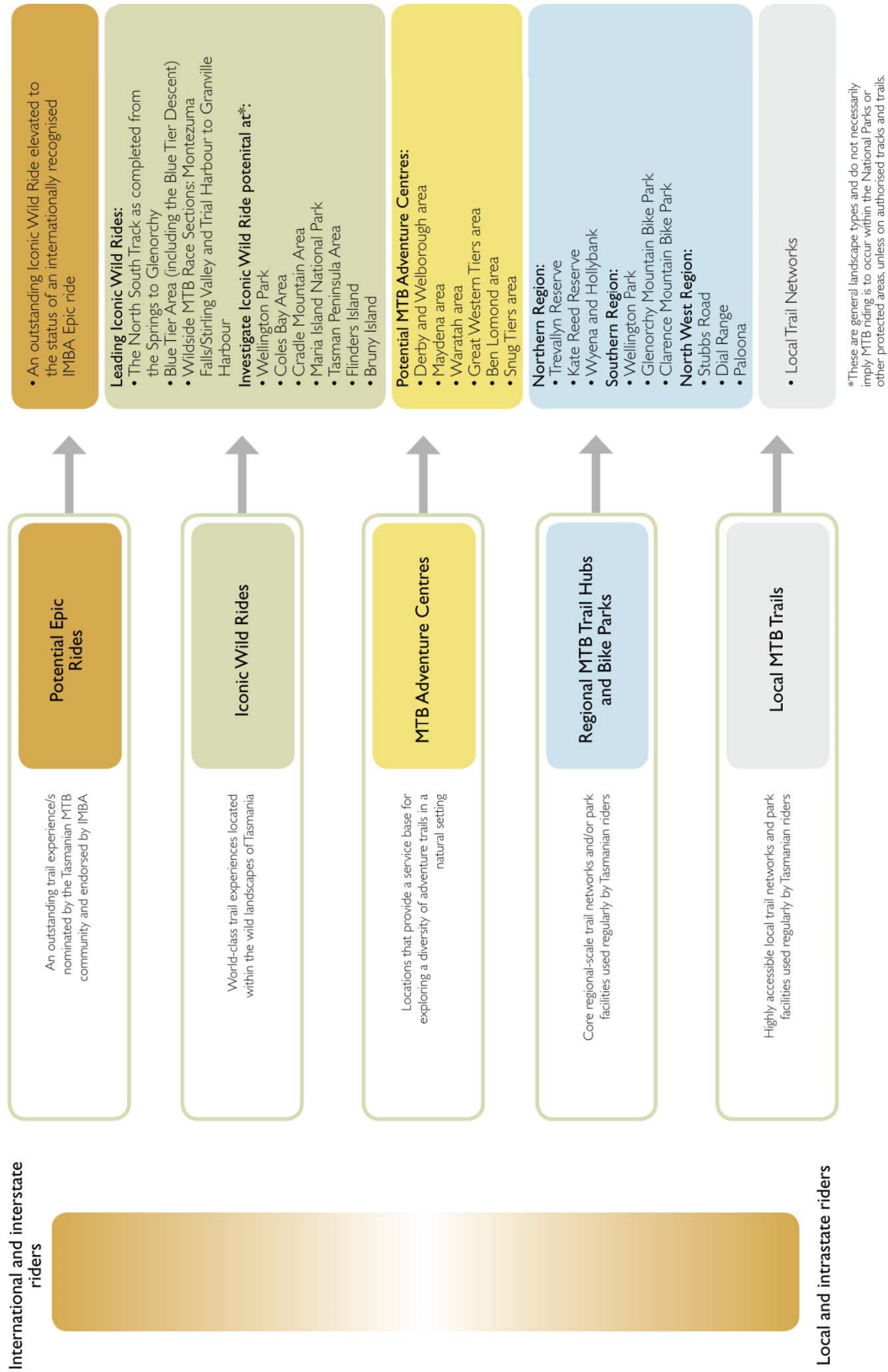
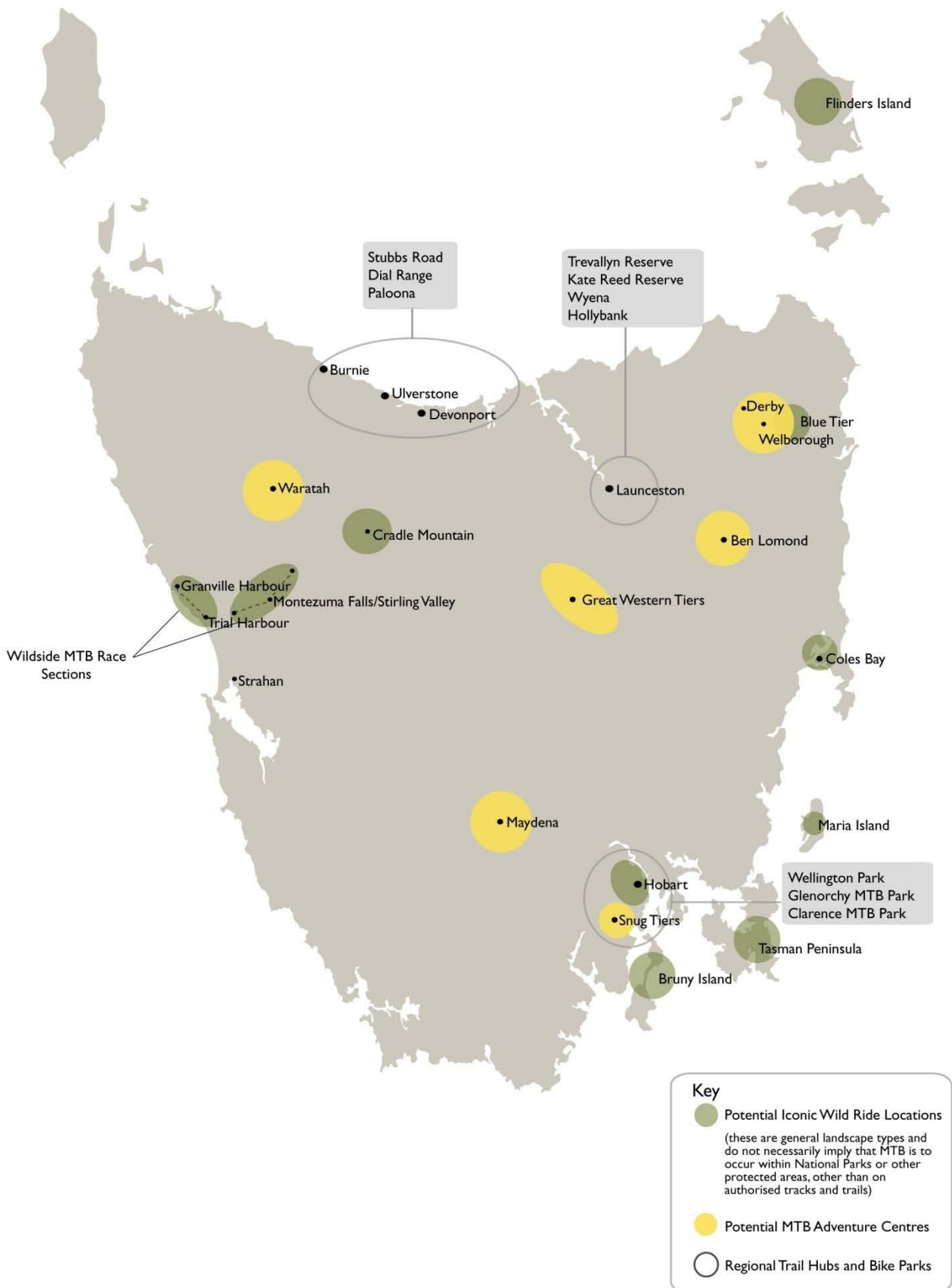


Figure 5.1. Tasmanian MTB trails hierarchy



Map 5.1. Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan strategy framework

Hierarchy	Description	Rationale	Core market appeal	Core criteria	Example trails
Potential Epic Ride	An outstanding trail experience/s nominated by the Tasmanian community and endorsed by IMBA as an EPIC ride.	IMBA has endorsed a number of Epic Rides (primarily in North America) that are world class and internationally marketed, but none have yet been nominated or approved in Australia. Tasmania, like most other states, should aim to identify, develop and manage an outstanding MTB trail that has the capacity to be recognised by local riders and IMBA as an Epic Ride. It is unlikely that multiple Epic Rides would be endorsed by IMBA within the state. To market and promote the distinctiveness of Tasmania as a destination, it would be appropriate to consider one of the potential Iconic Wild Rides as a prospective nomination for an Epic Ride.	International and interstate riders (the independent mountain biker) to be attracted to Tasmania for this ride. The Epic would also attract local riders, with levels of use influenced by location.	An Iconic Wild Ride that is considered to provide a high quality experience - a journey through a spectacular landscape, unique trail features, providing challenges for riders of varying abilities. The development of an Epic begins with the nomination of an existing trail, which is then assessed by IMBA against a number of criteria ²⁷ , including consideration of the unique features of the trail such as: quality and variability of experience the 'iconic' nature of the ride (representative ride of the region) trail length and amount of climbing diversity of riding (e.g. singletrack combined with service roads) trail popularity the geographic distribution of Epics relationship with the landowner and level of support from mountain bike riders.	To be determined. Likely to be one of the Iconic Wild Rides; recognising that the main points of difference for Tasmania are around the wild, natural environment these rides will encompass

Table 5.1. Proposed MTB trails hierarchy

²⁷ The nomination should include details of nominator, name of trail, location, length of ride, amount of climbing, short description of route, per cent track type, responsible land manager, local IMBA affiliated club and shop, directions to an description of trailhead, distance from nearest cities, awards and honours received for trail, use levels and special features that make the ride epic.

Hierarchy	Description	Rationale	Core market appeal	Core criteria	Example trails
Iconic Wild Rides	World-class trail experiences located within the wild landscapes of Tasmania	This would involve choosing the very best MTB ride opportunities within Tasmania's unique landscapes that have the capacity to be developed and managed as world class trails. None of the nominated iconic wild ride locations are fully developed and it is suggested that there are two tiers of prospective trails. The first are considered to be the leading wild rides with outstanding prospects for trail development, upgrading of facilities and marketing (and least amount of work required). The second tier are those trail areas that need investigation and may require legislative or policy change to progress (given many of the best trail locations may be within or close to national parks).	International and interstate riders to be attracted to Tasmania for these rides. Local riders would also use the Iconic Wild Rides with levels of use influenced by location.	An Iconic Wild Ride must meet all of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> located within a landscape that is distinctive to Tasmania and recognised by both Tasmanians and visitors as being unique to or representative of the state the trail is designed, developed, managed and maintained as a world class MTB trail with suitable trail length, surfaces and high standard of facilities demonstrated capacity to attract international and interstate riders the trail offers a strong sense of naturalness and remoteness the trail offers inspiring and challenging experiences for intermediate to skilled MTB riders, but may also incorporate easier sections or alternatives 	<p>Leading Iconic Wild Rides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North-South Track (as completed from Springs to Glenorchy) Blue Tier Area (including the Blue Tier Descent) Wildside MTB Race Section/s: (e.g. Trial Harbour to Granville Harbour, Montezuma Falls/Stirling Valley). <p>Iconic Wild Rides locations to be Investigated²⁸:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellington Park Coles Bay area Cradle Mountain area Maria Island National Park Tasman Peninsula Area Flinders Island Bruny Island.

Table 5.1. Proposed MTB trails hierarchy (continued)

²⁸ These are general landscape types/areas likely to be sought by MTB riders (as well as other participants in other outdoor adventure activities such as bushwalking, rock climbing, kayaking, etc.) and likely to meet the core criteria and core market appeal. They do not necessarily imply MTB riding is allowed or should be allowed within National Parks or other protected areas in these general areas. Where MTB riding is allowed in such areas it is only supported where it occurs on tracks or trails approved for such use and listing a national park or protected area does not provide an implied or express authority to ride on all trails in those areas.

Hierarchy	Description	Rationale	Core market appeal	Core criteria	Example trails
Iconic Wild Rides (continued)	See above	See above	See above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorporates sections of MTB specific trail including singletrack, technical trail features and good flow the trail is managed on a sustainable basis with adequate management resources available to the land manager. 	See above

Table 5.1. Proposed MTB trails hierarchy (continued)

Hierarchy	Rationale	Core market appeal	Core criteria	Example centres
MTB Adventure Centres	<p>There are a number of remote locations within the state with the potential to provide a service base for riders to access a diversity of high quality adventure MTB trails (that are not necessarily of iconic wild ride status). Most of the suggested locations are comprised of towns that could embrace MTB riding as a prime focus for local tourism. The distinctiveness of the small towns and their local setting would provide a strong appeal for those riders seeking uncrowded, intimate and adventurous experiences away from the main urban areas. The potential for the development of the adventure centres would largely depend on the willingness of the local community to embrace MTB riding as a prime investment for their place – it would require upgrading of trails and support facilities, information and for customer service standards to be tailored to the MTB market. Riding opportunities should be explored outside the immediate Adventure Centre area (e.g. within an hours drive from the centre, and may include nearby towns and settlements, to provide a variety of experiences).</p>	<p>More likely interstate riders and possibly smaller numbers of international riders. May be one of the major attractions for riders to visit Tasmania, as well as add to the reasons to stay longer.</p> <p>It is likely that the development of MTB Adventure Centres would attract intrastate riders as well as local residents.</p>	<p>MTB Adventure Centres must meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> located so as to provide access to a network of adventure MTB trails within a natural setting the MTB trails are designed, developed, managed and maintained as high quality trails with suitable trail length, surfaces and high standard of facilities to cater for different skill and fitness levels must have well developed locally-based support facilities and services including a range of accommodation options, food and beverage, basic equipment supplies and information for MTB riders it must have the demonstrated support of the local council, land managers and local community to function effectively, and be promoted as a MTB Adventure Centre incorporate trails with sections designed specifically for mountains bikes, including singletrack and technical trail features the trail or specific MTB infrastructure is managed on a sustainable basis with adequate management resources available to the land manager. 	<p>Potential MTB Adventure Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Derby and Welborough area Maydena area Waratah area Great Western Tiers area Ben Lomond area Snug Tiers area.

Table 5.1 Proposed MTB trails hierarchy (continued)

Hierarchy	Rationale	Core market appeal	Core criteria	Example trails/areas
Regional MTB Trail Hubs and Bike Parks	These are the key riding locations to meet the needs of local riders – well developed trail hubs and MTB parks within the major urban centres/regions that provide access to a network of local trails for day to day use.	Primarily local riders including intrastate travel during holidays and weekends, and during events. Some of these facilities will have the capacity to attract interstate and international riders through high level event infrastructure, and may also play a supporting role in addition to the Adventure Centres, and Iconic Wild Rides.	<p>A Regional MTB Hub or Bike Park must meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be recognised as a popular MTB riding area by the local riders, including MTB clubs • provide access to a diversity of trails and facilities of varying quality, length and suitability for different skill levels • have the capacity to hold MTB events • have basic support facilities to cater for the level of MTB riding use (e.g. parking, toilets, shelters, and signage) • have the support of the local council and relevant land manager • incorporates sections of MTB specific trail/infrastructure including singletrack and technical trail features • the trail or specific MTB infrastructure is managed on a sustainable basis with adequate management resources available to the land managers. 	<p>Northern Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trevallyn Reserve • Kate Reed Reserve • Wyena²⁹ and Hollybank. <p>Southern Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellington Park • Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park • Clarence Mountain Bike Park. <p>Northwest Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stubbs Road³⁰ • Dial Range • Paloota.³¹

Table 5.1 Proposed MTB trails hierarchy (continued)

²⁹ This location is on private land and access is subject to the approval of the landowner.

³⁰ As above footnote.

³¹ This location is on Hydro Tasmania and State Forest land and access is currently informal.

Hierarchy	Rationale	Core market appeal	Core criteria	Example trails/areas
Local MTB Trails	Access to the network of local MTB trails close to urban living areas and work places.	Local riders	A Local MTB Trail is an authorised trail that is used by local riders with the knowledge and support of the relevant land manager. The trail should have a basic level of signage and active management to ensure risk management.	The majority of trails currently being used by MTB riders are local trails.

Table 5.1 Proposed MTB trails hierarchy (continued)

5.2.2 Recommended actions

B1. A hierarchy of MTB trails and riding locations be adopted in Tasmania based around the following categories:

- Potential IMBA Epic Ride
- Iconic Wild Rides
- MTB Adventure Centres
- Regional MTB Trail Hubs and Bike Parks
- Local MTB Trails.

B2. The core criteria for each level of the MTB hierarchy be adopted on a statewide level, as a guide for assessing the potential and standard of MTB trails and locations in the future.

5.3 Enabling policy and legislation

5.3.1 Context

There is very limited policy or strategic level documentation relating to mountain bike access and infrastructure development in Tasmania. The current project is about providing a strategic statewide direction for mountain bike development, identifying the best opportunities, management precedents, standards, and partnerships.

Key land managers (e.g. Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Tasmania) have not yet endorsed specific policies detailing a consistent position and/or procedure as it relates to this recreational activity. The Parks and Wildlife Service have previously embarked on the process of developing a draft Mountain Bike Policy, however, the draft policy is in the early stages of development, and is yet to be endorsed. Implementation of the *Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area Draft Track Strategy 2009* is intended to provide the Parks and Wildlife Service with a test case, from which to assess their position on mountain bike infrastructure development and management.

As a result of a lack of policy guidance, mountain bike access and development proposals (particularly as they relate to protected areas) are assessed on a case-by-case basis, within the bounds of existing legislation and management plans. Mountain bikes are defined as a 'vehicle' under Parks and Wildlife legislation (*Tasmanian National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*), and are therefore only permitted legal access to roads and tracks designated for vehicular use. There is scope under the management planning process to specify mountain bike access to other tracks and trails within a reserve area. This can be achieved through the authorisation of the activity by the Director of the Parks and Wildlife Service, and identifying with signage which trails are authorised to ride on. Whilst this process is possible, it is generally preferential to have a plan of management that specifies the activity as authorised. Altering an existing management plan involves a statutory process and can be time consuming.

The Wellington Park Management Trust developed and implemented the *Wellington Park Bike Strategy 2000*. The strategy provides an example of a management document that incorporates mountain biking as a legitimate activity, and deals with a range of associated issues. Since 2000, the majority of the recommendations outlined in the strategy have been implemented and the strategy updated in 2005. The bike strategy identifies specific issues associated with bike access within Wellington Park, including shared use conflicts and on-trail safety, trail grading and signage for mountain bikes/shared trails, and outlines which trails should be available for mountain bike use, and which should not. Of the issues yet to be resolved, the continued pressure for authorised downhill

opportunities in the park, particularly downhill trails beginning at the Springs, is a priority. The safety and user conflict issues associated with the shared use of Radfords Track further emphasise the need for investigation of alternative trail opportunities.

The Dial Range is another area that also has mountain bike specific management guidelines, a rider code of conduct, and a multi-use trail system, as outlined in the *Dial Range Recreation Management Plan and Supplement 2000*.

However the general lack of mountain bike policy is problematic, given the significant growth in participation, unique requirements and management issues, and the resulting ad hoc approach that it produces. Policy development in this area would also provide for a consistent approach to assessing the appropriateness of different types of mountain bike trails in relation to the natural and cultural values of the different categories of protected areas within the state.

There are a number of strategies and documents that have both described the growth in mountain biking in Tasmania, and made recommendations regarding future development and management, these are: *Mountain Biking in Tasmania: a summary of current trends and future opportunities 2005*, the *Trails Tasmania Strategy 2007* and the *Mountain Bike Tourism Market Profile for Tasmania 2008*. These documents have provided the context and impetus for the development of the current project.

Other relevant documents, although site specific, include the *Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area Draft Track Strategy 2009*. The document provides practical recommendations relating to the management of mountain biking within multi-use public reserve areas. The *Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area Draft Track Strategy 2009* is a comprehensive document, with the background report version incorporating in depth analysis of survey information (some of which has been summarised in Section 2.1 above), consideration of trail classification and signage systems suitable for mountain bike users, risk analysis and a literature review. This document has provided a key reference point for the current project.

Many local government open space, recreation and trail planning strategies also refer to mountain bike infrastructure development and management, and acknowledge the growth in participation and demand, and the associated issues as they relate to council managed land.

Dirt Art has also recently prepared a number of unpublished scoping reports for proposed mountain bike development opportunities, including *Maydena Hub Centre – The Mountain Bike Opportunity 2008*, *Big Bend to Glenorchy Mountain Bike*

Park Trail – The Opportunity 2009, and Kingborough Council Mountain Bike Park Concept Brief.

A concept plan has also been developed for the Hollybank area as a partnership between Sport and Recreation Tasmania and Forestry Tasmania. The concept plan has since been translated into a detailed trail network plan by Joey Klein, IMBA Trail Specialist, in association with Forestry Tasmania.

5.3.2 Recommended actions

CI. A state mountain bike policy framework be developed to encourage consistency and cooperation across the different agencies and land tenures. The policy framework should incorporate the following core policy attributes (among others):

recognises mountain bike riding as a legitimate recreational activity, involving different styles of riding requiring different infrastructure and management requirements which can be sustainably managed on public land

recognises the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* as the main strategic document, guiding development over the next 10 years

states the intention of land managers to work in partnership to achieve the implementation of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan*, and to work towards developing Tasmania as a recognised mountain bike riding destination

recognises sustainable trail design, construction and management as key principles of the Tasmanian mountain bike trail network

recognises the provision of singletrack opportunities, as well as mountain bike preferred trails, as important components of the mountain bike experience

specifies the requirements for safety and risk management

specifies the adoption of the IMBA Australia Trail Classification System as the state mountain bike trail classification system (as outlined in this document).

It is envisioned that these core policy attributes will be adopted by all relevant land managers, providing the basis for internal mountain bike policy development.

C2. The Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Tasmania develop and implement a mountain bike policy providing guidance on mountain bike access, infrastructure development and management on reserve land under the management of the agency. The policy should encompass or be consistent with the core policy attributes outlined above. It may also include the following elements:

which types of mountain bike trails (e.g. construction style/trail footprint, level of difficulty and intended riding style) are most suited to each reserve category (if any)

construction standards/guidelines, and preferred materials for trail building

management protocols for dealing with user conflicts and other issues

processes for volunteer involvement and management

trail/facility maintenance and risk management protocols.

C3. The Parks and Wildlife Service should investigate the potential of amending existing legislation and management plans where considered appropriate and in keeping with the proposed mountain bike policy for reserves.

C4. Local councils and other land managers (e.g. Hydro Tasmania) should also consider adopting the core policy attributes of the state mountain bike policy framework, and incorporating them into local tracks and trails plans.

5.4 Classification of trails and signage system

5.4.1 Context

There is currently no consistent approach to the classification and type of signage associated with mountain bike and/or multi-use trails in Tasmania. This has resulted in an inconsistent approach to the grading of trail difficulty, and to the presentation style and amount of information available for riders on-trail (e.g. some riding locations have no trail signage, particularly unauthorised areas).

Mountain bike trail classification systems

Ad hoc approaches to trail difficulty rating and use of on-trail signage impact upon the riders experience of a trail or riding area, making it difficult to choose routes to suit personal ability, and to navigate in an unfamiliar area.

Importantly, lack of a consistent trail difficulty rating system can result in serious risk management issues, particularly where difficult trails (e.g. steep and rocky descents) or unexpectedly difficult hazards (e.g. large drops, jumps and elevated log rides on easy or intermediate trails) are not associated with warnings. Riders will not be able to adequately judge whether a particular trail or trail feature is within the range of their skill level, leading to a potentially higher risk of injury, and therefore risk of litigation against the land manager.

The existing mountain bike trail classification systems originated from ski trail grading systems used in alpine resorts in North America and Europe. The most common systems share many similarities, and are generally variations on the IMBA USA Trail Difficulty Rating System. Attachment 5 summarises the most commonly used mountain bike trail classification systems, including a basic overview of the system and a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages:

IMBA Trail Rating Difficulty System

Whistler Trail Standards: Environmental and Technical Trail Features

Forestry Commission Scotland Mountain Bike Cross Country Trails and Bike Park Signage

Wellington Park Bike Strategy Grading System.

Whilst a consistent approach to trail classification has not been implemented to date in Tasmania, there are some good, though differing, examples throughout the state. The system implemented in Wellington Park has set a precedent, particularly for the greater Hobart area - implemented at the Glenorchy MTB

Park and the Clarence MTB Park. This system is most closely aligned with the Forestry Commission UK system.

The IMBA Trail Rating Difficulty System (particularly the USA version) is widely recognised by mountain bike riders internationally, as well as in Australia and locally in Tasmania, and includes measurable trail characteristics for each grade). Adoption of the IMBA system was a recommendation of the *Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area Draft Track Strategy 2009*. This system has already been implemented successfully at Dismal Swamp/Tarkine Adventure Centre.

Elements of both the IMBA USA/Australia and Forestry Commission UK systems have their advantages (e.g. there is a more evenly spaced progression between the categories in the Forestry Commission UK system, but the USA system offers a higher degree of resolution relating to measurable trail parameters). See Attachment 5 for summary of the different systems. A recent review of the IMBA Trail Rating Difficulty System by IMBA Australia has provided an opportunity to refine this system, better aligning elements of the USA and UK systems for the Australian context.

The main changes to the IMBA Trail Rating Difficulty System will include refining the difficulty level category headings from:

White Circle – ‘Easiest’ change to ‘Very Easy’

Green Circle – ‘Easy’

Blue Square – ‘More Difficult’ change to ‘Intermediate’

Black Diamond – ‘Very Difficult’ change to ‘Difficult’

Double Black Diamond – ‘Extremely Difficult’ change to ‘Extreme’.

Amending Section 5.4 of the document *IMBA Australia Trail Rating Difficulty Rating System 2009* (Draft), to ensure that the need for consistency in application is emphasised. Section 5.4 stated that “trails will rate differently from region to region...but the ratings should be consistent locally”. This section is to be amended to read “it is acknowledged that there is some subjectivity in evaluating the difficulty of trails, however, the aspiration is to achieve consistency in difficulty rating across Australia”. This should also be the goal for Tasmania.

The IMBA Australia version of the system also differentiates between the trail user and the land manager. The trail user interpretation of the standard is descriptive (more like the Forestry Commission UK system), whilst the land

managers version incorporates detailed prescriptive information, including approximate trail width measurements, gradients and heights of technical trail features (from the IMBA USA system). See Attachment 5 for a draft of the IMBA Australia Mountain Bike Trail Classification System. The IMBA Australia system has almost become the default national standard, and therefore, adoption of this system in Tasmania will ensure consistency at a national and international level.

Inlaying a bike symbol (e.g. Wellington Park has a similar system, where the bike symbol is coloured rather than the background) will also provide trail users with further clarity as to which activity the signage system relates to on multiple use trails, and can be easily applied in Tasmania, if not adopted Australia-wide. Multiple use or shared use trails should also indicate the relevant grading of the trail under the adopted standards for other users (e.g. the Australian Standards for Walking Tracks, and the Horse South Australia system for equestrians).

The Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area Draft Track Strategy Implementation Plan 2009 proposes the adoption of the IMBA Trail Difficulty Rating System colours, in combination with standard track user pictograms to communicate trail difficulty on shared trails to communicate the type of user permitted and the level of difficulty of shared use trails. Attachment 5 provides a table which summarises the similarities between the different trail user classification systems for the most common trail activities in shared use systems (i.e. the Australian Standard for Walking Tracks, Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service system for walking tracks, IMBA system for mountain biking and Horse South Australia system for horse riding).

Signage

Signage incorporating detailed information about the level of difficulty, or specific trail attributes and/or hazards as they relate to mountain biking, are generally limited, although there are exceptions as outlined above.

Wellington Park is one of the locations in the state that has set an example in relation to trailhead and on-trail signage, through the implementation of the *Wellington Park Bike Strategy 2000/2005* and the *Wellington Park Sign Manual*. The classification system used is outlined in brief above, and is communicated through consistent use of symbols and colours (e.g. a green, blue, red or black bike or walker graphic) in conjunction with a description of the level of difficulty (e.g. 'easy', 'moderate', 'difficult' or 'extreme'). The IMBA 'double black diamond' symbol has been used to alert riders of advanced trail elements on the North-South Track. On-ground information has been translated consistently to the Wellington Park Mountain Bike Map, which also includes a Bike Riders Code of Conduct.

Trailhead signage is used at the beginning of trails to provide information to visitors, and may include the following information for higher level trails (e.g. the Epic, Iconic Wild Rides and some trails within the MTB Adventure Centres):

the trail name

trail network map with trail difficulty ratings and distances

descriptive information (e.g. what sort of obstacles, maximum height of obstacles and drops, surfaces riders should expect, maximum slope and average slope of sustained steep sections)

rider code of conduct

hazard warnings

use and restrictions (e.g. depicted as universal pictograms)

emergency and/or land manager contact details

who to contact to report issues, or to be involved in trail maintenance programs etc.

interpretation.

Regional MTB Trail Hubs, Bike Parks and local level trails are not likely to require this level of information, but should include some form of trail entry signage incorporating:

the trail name

distance (actual distance rather than time for riders)

level of difficulty (IMBA Australia Classification)

use and restrictions (e.g. depicted as universal pictograms)

emergency and/or land manager contact details(not likely to be required for local level trail networks)

basic trail network map (not likely to be required for local level trail networks)

any significant hazards.

Signage for mountain bike specific trails and infrastructure (or single use trails) is relatively easy to implement once a classification system is in place. Multiple or shared use trails are more difficult to sign, given the differences in modes of travel and relative risks/hazards associated with different users and combinations of

users. The categories of the user-specific classification systems are not always compatible. For example an 'easy' walking track may be equivalent to a 'difficult' mountain bike trail.

A common set of mountain bike and multiple use/shared trail signage guidelines for Tasmania would be beneficial. Whilst individual land managers have their own signage systems, templates and policies, attempts should be made to incorporate any MTB guidelines into these more generic policies/documents. The guidelines should not be too prescriptive in terms of detailed design and material use, to avoid conflict with existing signage strategies of land management agencies, but should outline the basic principles. This will also aid in risk management. As noted above, the *Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area Track Strategy* provides recommendations relating to shared use signage, which may provide a starting point for further consideration on a state level.

In addition to information and directional signage, some trails may include interpretation. For higher level trails (e.g. 'Iconic Wild Ride'), thematic interpretation plans may be prepared.

It should also be noted that many trail users object to excessive signage. Too many signs along a trail can adversely impact upon the experience (e.g. 'clutter' a natural setting), and remove a sense of exploration. Trail signage should be kept to the minimum required to ensure that trail users can determine a trails' suitability in relation to their skill level, navigate their way along the trail, and the information required for risk management is presented.

5.4.2 Recommended Actions

D1. Adopt the IMBA Australia Trail Difficulty Rating System as the mountain bike classification system for Tasmania, including the intention to achieve some consistency across the state in the application of the system.

D2. Incorporate a bike symbol inlaid on top of the colour for each difficulty category (particularly in the case of multiple use trails) into the standard for Tasmania.

D3. Consider adopting the approach to shared use trail difficulty rating as outlined in the *Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area Draft Track Strategy 2009*, and outlined in Attachment 5, as a state standard.

D4. Encourage integration of generic principles/guidelines for MTB signage within signage policies and guidelines used by individual land managers.

5.5 Innovative trail design, construction and maintenance

5.5.1 Context

Tasmania is well-known for its bushwalking track construction skills. The rugged and diverse natural landscapes of the state have required a well-considered response and robust approach to track construction. Whilst the skill base for walking tracks is considerable, there are a number of individuals with specific skills in the design and construction of mountain bike specific trails (including bike park infrastructure and technical trail features) in the state. However, with further training and a greater understanding of mountain bike riding (e.g. the concept of flow, the expectations and needs of the different disciplines, and risk and environmental management specific to this user group), Tasmania's existing track building skills base could be adapted to the creation of high quality, and innovative mountain bike trails and facilities.

Poorly constructed unauthorised trails have been identified as a critical issue associated with mountain biking in Tasmania. A number of popular trails throughout the state have been built by local enthusiasts with the best intentions but not necessarily with public risk or conservation values in mind. Whilst local enthusiasts are an important trail building and maintenance asset, they often lack the land management knowledge, equipment and support (resources and supervision) required to construct sustainable mountain bike trails.

Whilst there are many examples of unsustainable cross country trails and poorly constructed unauthorised jump facilities throughout the state, the environmental impacts of poor construction are particularly evident in steep environments where downhill trails have been constructed down the fall line of a hill, rather than the natural contours, resulting in water channelling which is a major contributing factor in trail erosion.

Other potential issues associated with trail construction and design may include:

- introduction or spread of plant diseases, such as *Phytophthora cinnamomi*

- sedimentation and/or contamination of water bodies (e.g. increased turbidity and nutrient input as a result of soil displacement)

- altered hydrology (e.g. as a result of poorly constructed crossing points)

altered composition of native vegetation communities via increased light penetration and/or introduction of exotic species

soil compaction.

An understanding of local environmental conditions is therefore an important element of sustainable MTB trail construction. There are a number of existing planning and development processes in place in Tasmania relevant to trail planning, design and construction on both public and private land. Processes include Reserve Activity Assessments (RAA), required for change of activity or minor developments on reserved land under the management of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (RAA's can include the need for Aboriginal and cultural heritage surveys, flora and fauna surveys and assessments, and general environmental impact assessments), planning and development processes required under local planning schemes, and requirements under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*. Sustainability should be a high priority throughout all phases of trail development and ongoing maintenance.

There are a number of other Acts making up the Tasmanian Planning System, including the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* and the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975* (under review) that will also be of relevance. Some trail projects may trigger national environmental legislation such as the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Change of use, and new trail developments will need to meet the requirements of the planning and development processes, which will provide a means of assessing likely impacts, and determining the feasibility of proposed MTB trail projects.

The reservation status/land tenure of public reserves will also afford some protection of the natural and cultural values (e.g. via the *Crown Lands Act 1976*, *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*, *Nature Conservation Act 2002*).

The implementation of specific trail features and elements can also aid in minimising user conflict on shared trails (e.g. through speed calming techniques, aligning trails so as to have good sight lines, and providing alternative lines), and safety issues on both shared and single use trails. Such techniques have been used to some degree on the North-South Track in Wellington Park. Consideration of the characteristics and needs of the primary user group, in combination with the environmental characteristics should drive trail design, and in some case may result in single purpose (e.g. mountain bike preferred) trails, or directional trails. For example, downhill specific trails (downhill competition trails), which are designed for high speeds, often with significant jumps and berms, are not generally suitable for uphill travel, and should be designated single direction use. Shared use trails will not always be the best option.

Whilst there is no agreed standards for mountain bike trail construction, the guidelines provided by IMBA, are widely used and accepted (See Attachment 5). The guidelines incorporate practical design and construction techniques for providing challenging riding experiences, whilst ensuring that risk, environmental and user conflict issues are minimised.

Sport and Recreation Tasmania and Forestry Tasmania organised a once off IMBA trail building school at Hollybank in 2005. The event was facilitated by IMBA trail specialist Joey Klein, and included riders, land managers and trail builders from around the state. The trail building school provided an introduction to mountain bike trail design and construction techniques, and resulted in the initial construction work and alignment of the Eagle Tier downhill trail.

Other features of mountain bike trail development include the level of facilities required. For example, Epic, Iconic Wild Rides, and Adventure Centres should have quality arrival facilities, including:

- major trailhead signage

- designated parking

- toilets, picnic tables, and rubbish bins

- bike rack/stands

- bike wash down facilities (particularly in areas where *Phytophthora* is an issues).

Some areas with long distance MTB trails may also incorporate rider accommodation facilities in the form of 'bike barns', which are basic on-trail hut-style accommodation, with bike storage, wash down and maintenance facilities.

There are also opportunities associated with the re-use of existing decommissioned railways. Rail trails provide opportunities for a range of trail users, including horse riders, walkers as well as off road touring cyclists and mountain bike riders – particularly novice cross country riders and families. Use of decommissioned railways also makes good use of existing infrastructure. Rail trails can also act as non-motorised and safe linkages between towns and settlements, and may connect sections of other off-road trails. This is true for other off-road cycling linkages, such as the proposed improvements to the Fern Tree – city linkage.

5.5.2 Recommended Actions

E1. Adopt the IMBA Australia Trail Difficulty Rating System and apply the trail criteria (tread width, tread surface, trail grade, natural obstacles and technical trail features) as basic guidelines for new trail developments.

E2. Adopt the trail design and construction guidelines presented in *Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack* as broad guiding principles for mountain bike trail construction in Tasmania, in particular:

Part Three: The Principles of Sustainable Trails

Part Four The Trail Design Process

Part Six: Trail Construction

Part Seven: Trail Maintenance

Part Eight: Building Challenging Trails.

E3. Work with existing track and trail construction specialists (e.g. PWS, Forestry Tasmania, local councils and private contractors) mountain bike clubs and riders to develop skills in multiple use and mountain bike specific trail construction and design techniques (e.g. IMBA trail building schools) in the Tasmanian context.

E4. Investigate the possibility of establishing a Trail Care Crew or equivalent for Tasmania³², in partnership with the key land management agencies, IMBA Australia, and the mountain bike clubs.

E5. As a first priority, consider the opportunities for shared use when designing or assessing new trail development proposals, or trail upgrades, as this will maximise resource use and effort.

E6. Provide some trails within the state that are specifically designed for mountain biking, and are designated 'mountain bike preferred' or mountain bike only (single use), in acknowledgement of the inherent risks associated with some types of riding (e.g. fast downhill trails are not considered appropriate for shared use given high speeds), and the desire for narrow, flowing trails (e.g. singletrack) that may not accommodate other users well.

E7. Consider the merits of directional trails, where this will better facilitate shared use, or improve the riding experience.

³² The Trail Care Crew may be a project that could be developed and operated jointly with Victoria or other areas in Australia, to increase the scope, opportunities and potential for ongoing funding.

E8. Ensure that the environmental impacts of proposed trail developments are adequately assessed and a plan to minimise environmental and (where applicable) social impact/s is specified prior to the commencement of work on trail developments. This includes meeting the requirements of existing planning and development processes, including RAA's, planning scheme and other requirements under state and/or national environmental legislation.

E9. It is recommended that regular maintenance requirements are identified, costed and can be provided for prior to the commencement of new trail developments.

E10. Adequate trail condition monitoring is to be built into all tracks maintained for MTB riding, with limits of acceptable change specified for the various categories of track and action to be taken if limits are exceeded.

E11. Investigate the possibilities for the reuse of decommissioned railways in the state, as off-road touring, mountain bike linkages and commuting routes.

E12. Encourage and support innovation in trail design and construction, including trialling new materials and techniques, to ensure that Tasmania is at the 'sharp edge' of mountain bike trail development.

5.6 Resource commitment

5.6.1 Context

The *Trails Tasmania Strategy* identified that there was widespread community interest and demand for more and higher quality trails across Tasmania. The consultation program undertaken for the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* has reinforced the growing demand and need for upgrading existing MTB trails and developing new trails within the state.

Currently, land managers, local councils and community groups have limited resources to manage and maintain existing trails and are cautious about taking on increased responsibility for additional land and constructing new trails for MTB use without sufficient resources to manage and maintain such trails.

Whilst some progress will continue to be made from existing budget allocations, it is unlikely that Tasmania will match the expectations of its residents for more and better MTB trails or be in a position to develop MTB trails that will generate interest from international and interstate visitors with existing budgets. Some other states and overseas destinations have made a major commitment to MTB trail development for the benefit of their community and tourism industry.

The State Government's commitment of \$4 million to trails and bikeways over three years (2008-2010) in the 2008/09 state budget is a positive initiative, however this support will need to be expanded or at least continued beyond 2011 to realise the mountain bike potential outlined in this *Plan*. The funding and support from some local councils to upgrade and extend existing MTB trails and facilities within their municipalities is also a positive step. Forestry Tasmania has played a leading role in the development and planning of MTB facilities and trails at places such as the Tarkine Adventure Centre, Blue Tier, Hollybank and Maydena. More recently, the Parks and Wildlife Service has also taken a lead role in the provision of mountain bike opportunities in the Trevallyn and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Areas.

Whilst Tasmania may not be as advanced in the development of MTB riding experiences in comparison with most other states and many other international MTB destinations, the state has some of the most outstanding 'place' values that potentially give Tasmania a powerful edge in developing future MTB opportunities.

Tasmania is now benefiting from the significant investment by the State Government into the upgrading of selected walking tracks within the state, which have fostered high yield nature-based tourism walk products and positioned Tasmania as a recognised 'mecca' for bushwalking in the world.

Table 5.3 provides an overview of the priority actions required for MTB infrastructure development for each level of the trail hierarchy which will require a resource commitment.

The vision for, and desired improvements to, the current MTB trail system will not be achieved unless significant funding and resources are allocated towards MTB facilities and trails. To achieve the vision and potential benefits, it will require a strong commitment and partnership approach between governments at all levels, the community and trail users.

Such a funding initiative would send out a positive message to the Tasmanian community about how investment in MTB infrastructure will benefit both the local community and attract higher numbers of international and interstate visitors to the state in the future. These potential benefits are listed in Table 5.4.

	Priority actions for MTB infrastructure development
Iconic Wild Rides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare development plans for upgrading/constructing the four leading Iconic Wild Rides to 'market-ready' status within five years • Implement the Iconic Wild Ride development plans • Select the best leading Iconic Wild Ride for enhancement and nomination as a potential Epic Ride • Commence investigations for progressing the planning, development and management of the other nominated Iconic Wild Rides within the next 10 years • Market and promote the Iconic Wild Rides to the international, interstate and intrastate markets.
MTB Adventure Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create community building models to allow local communities to recognise and develop the infrastructure and services to become effective MTB Adventure Centres (this may be modelled on the Australian Cycling Fund tourism development model) • Prepare development plans for three selected adventure centres within five years • Upgrade the MTB trails and facilities for the selected MTB Adventure Centres • Market and promote the MTB Adventure Centres to the interstate and intrastate market, and to a lesser extent, to the international market • Commence investigations into developing potential for other MTB Adventure Centres within 10 years.
Regional MTB Trail Hubs and Bike Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade the selected regional MTB hubs and bike parks to better meet the needs of local riders and the states capacity for holding events.
Local MTB trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade local MTB trail networks across the state based on identified needs and priorities from riders and land managers.
MTB events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for specific upgrading of trails and facilities targeted for major MTB events including the Wildside MTB Race, Australian Mountain Bike Series, Blue Dragon Challenge and Tahune MTB Marathon • Support event organisers in the marketing of their product • Allow forward planning for a potential major multi-day event based around the Iconic Wild Rides in five years.

Table 5.3. Priority actions for MTB infrastructure developments

Values	Potential benefits
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved opportunities for fitness, health and wellbeing, accessible to the Tasmanian community, with potential to contribute to reducing the occurrence in the rate of common health issues including obesity and heart disease Less burden on the health system in the longer term Increased opportunities for improving mental health, through outdoor physical activity and social riding
Social and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved safety for riders (including through increased use leading to passive surveillance) Greater sense of community pride Create opportunity for some local communities to develop MTB infrastructure, facilities and services that support their economic future Adds to the quality of living in Tasmania
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of a sustainable trail network - better management and maintenance of trails Greater awareness of Tasmania's natural values Helps reduce the dependency on non-renewable energy sources (e.g. in the case of trails that act as commuter routes) Improved opportunities for partnerships between government, community and riders to manage environmental values
Tourism and economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positioning Tasmania as a leading nature-based tourism and adventure destination Tasmania would be offering MTB riding experiences that are competitive strengths over other destinations Increased visitor numbers and yield – other MTB destinations in Europe and North America have witnessed major economic benefits associated with MTB products New tourism opportunities in guided tour services, accommodation, service delivery, retail sales, spend within local communities etc. High profile of MTB events becoming hero products for attracting visitors

Table 5.4 Potential benefits of MTB investment

To achieve the vision and potential benefits, it will require a strong commitment and partnership approach between governments at all levels, the community and trail users.

5.6.2 Recommended actions

F1. The State Government take a leading role in pursuing funding opportunities for the development of MTB infrastructure and services to help position Tasmania as a leading MTB riding destination within Australia in the next five to ten years.

F2. The State Government enter into partnership funding arrangements with the Australian Government, local councils, community groups, not-for-profit organisations and businesses, and encourage others to enter into such arrangements, to foster the implementation of the priorities identified in the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan*, as is occurring with the recently established State Trails and Bikeways Program.

F3. As identified in the *Trails Tasmania Strategy*, consider options for innovative re-direction of funds to support the benefits of recreational trails (for example, a percentage of gambling³³ or cigarette tax), a percentage of the road-works budget dedicated to cycling needs, applying a recreational trails levy/contribution on all new development or applying a community-based trails levy/contribution, and via existing programs such as Wildcare's natural partnerships).

F4. Build strong relationships with the community to encourage and support volunteer participation in the implementation of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan*.

F5. Investigate a range of incentives the potential opportunities for land managers to provide access for mountain biking, including funding from use of the trails (e.g. permit fees applied to tour operators, merchandising etc).

³³ The State Government has established a Community Support Levy based on the gambling tax (a percentage of the gross profits from video gaming machines in hotels and clubs). This levy allows a proportion of its funds to be used for grants, administered by Sport and Recreation Tasmania to be allocated on a dollar-for-dollar basis for the benefit of sport and recreation clubs. The levy is currently being reviewed and may be merged with other state funding programs in the future.

5.7 Partnership between land managers and users

5.7.1 Context

The limited availability of funding to develop and maintain MTB trails and riding facilities, has been identified as a major constraint by land managers, mountain bike clubs and riders. This issue extends beyond mountain bike opportunity provision into general trail infrastructure, and is an issue particularly relevant to land under the management of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) and Forestry Tasmania. In the case of the PWS, the existing supply of trails on land under their management far outweighs the amount of funding available. Developing and maintaining recreational infrastructure is not the core business of some land managers (e.g. Forestry Tasmania), also having implications for the amount of funding that is available for these types of recreational activities. The situation is likely to be similar for other land managers throughout the state including Hydro Tasmania and local councils.

Land managers indicated the value of working with MTB clubs and volunteers as they are instrumental in organising and channelling the efforts of local enthusiasts. They also act as a point of contact, provide opportunities for skill development and events, a source of information as well as a 'voice' for the mountain bike community. MTB clubs and volunteers also provide peer education and informal monitoring of unauthorised/illegal activities.

There are already some very active mountain bike clubs in Tasmania. Most notably, the Launceston Mountain Bike Club (LMBC) in the north, and the Dirt Devils/Hobart Wheelers in the south (the Dirt Devils are the mountain bike arm of the club). Whilst there are other cycling clubs in the state (e.g. Cycling Tasmania and affiliated clubs, and BUGs), LMBC and the Dirt Devils/Hobart Wheelers are the primary regional organisations for mountain bike riding. Both clubs are affiliated with Mountain Bike Australia (MTBA).

In addition to these clubs, a group of Hobart based riders have recently formed the Hobart Trail Alliance, largely in response to recent trail closures and access issues in the greater Hobart area.

There is currently no formal mountain bike club in the northwest, however a club previously existed as an arm of the City of Burnie Cycling Club. The lack of organisation of the mountain bike riding community in this region was recognised by both the riders and land managers as an impediment to communication and the development of MTB opportunities. Following the consultation, local riders have mobilised to determine interest in developing a club. It was suggested that there might be a possibility for local riders to affiliate themselves with the LMBC,

given the smaller representation, significant costs and effort to secure insurances, and the highly organised nature of the LMBC.

There is currently no peak body for mountain biking in Tasmania, however there are two Tasmanian representatives on MTBA. Having a peak body may provide an interface between riders and land managers, and a source of information and advice on a range of topics including development proposal assessment, risk and liability, volunteer management, etc.

Management partnerships are one way in which the responsibility for trail development and ongoing maintenance can be dispersed among a number of stakeholders. Management partnerships may be between land managers (e.g. in the case of cross tenure trails), or between land managers and riders and other community organisations (e.g. Bushcare or other local environmental groups).

The PWS already has a comprehensive partnership agreement process that other agencies and groups may be interested in, and may form the basis of the template. The process is proving to be an effective tool for establishing works programs, funding applications, managing expectations, and providing some autonomy for a range of activities occurring on reserved land.

Partnerships also aid in building stronger links between land managers and riders, and between riders and other trail users/community groups. Community involvement creates a sense of ownership and care, and may result in trail users taking a more active role in the management of riding infrastructure.

One of the benefits of government agencies partnering with community/not-for-profit organisations is that it can allow for funding of projects not available to government organisations.

5.7.2 Recommended actions

- G1.** Support the growth and development of regional/local mountain bike clubs and representative bodies.
- G2.** Support the longer-term potential to develop a state mountain bike peak body, made up of representatives from the regional/local mountain bike clubs and representative bodies.
- G3.** Develop and/or distribute examples of trail partnership Memorandum of Understanding or other agreement templates that can be used by land managers, land owners, clubs and other community organisations, to ensure that partnerships are formalised and the responsibilities of the parties clearly stated.

5.8 Leading events and products

5.8.1 Context

Section 2.2.5 of this report outlines the main mountain bike specific events currently operating in Tasmania, including the:

Wildside MTB race held between Cradle Mountain and Strahan on a bi-annual basis

Rounds of the Australian MTB Series have been hosted by the Dirt Devils/Hobart Wheelers at the Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park (this event is not guaranteed to occur at Glenorchy, or in Tasmania on an annual basis, but rather depends on the quality of the facility, capacity of the club and strength of competition from other locations throughout Australia)

Launceston MTB Club Events

Dirt Devils MTB Club Events

Tahune MTB Marathon held near Tahune Forest Airwalk

the Blue Dragon Challenge based out of Derby and Welborough, and incorporating the Blue Tier, launched in January 2009.

These events, and in particular the first two, have helped to create a greater awareness amongst national and international MTB riders of the potential riding experiences available in Tasmania. One of the important values of such events is that they generate interest, and encourage riders to explore other riding locations, at other times of the year.

Three of the leading events are already taking place in nominated Iconic Wild Ride locations of Tasmania – the West Coast (Wildside), Wellington Park (Australian MTB Series) and the Blue Tier (Blue Dragon Challenge). It would be sensible to upgrade the existing trails and facilities in these locations to actively support and build upon the profile of the existing events for the international and national MTB markets.

As other Iconic Wild Rides are progressively developed, the feasibility for introducing new events should be explored, but should aim to not directly compete with the existing events. The plans for the North South Track extension to the Springs (nearing completion) and future extension to Glenorchy MTB, in conjunction with the potential development of an iconic downhill/all mountain trail in Wellington Park suggests there is significant potential for developing a new multi-discipline event in Wellington Park in future years.

The accessibility of the park to both riders and spectators within the capital city is a major benefit for supporting such an event.

The prospect of developing a major multi-stage MTB event, involving riders progressing between several of the iconic wild rides could also be explored in the future. It is envisioned that competitors would be transported via support vehicles, between Iconic Ride locations, allowing statewide programming, and access to the diverse Tasmanian landscapes. For instance this could be a seven day staged event incorporating Wellington Park, the east coast (e.g. Coles Bay area), the Blue Tier area, Hollybank and the Wildside MTB route on the west coast (two days) - a 'coast to coast' journey. There are a number of significant impediments to the development of a stage race of this length. The establishment of such an event would require significant investment, including government resource commitment (e.g. through Events Tasmania and/or Tourism Tasmania). It is also recognised that an event of this length, with multi-destinations would also present logistical challenges, particularly in relation to the transportation of riders between stages.

There are also existing six to seven day MTB events operating in Victoria and NSW that would represent competition, however the strength of appeal of the Tasmanian landscape is likely to be such that the event would be competitive in the market.

Section 2.2.6 outlines the limited MTB tour and products currently available within Tasmania. It will largely be up to the private sector to recognise the potential returns from investment in MTB tours and products. However the Government can play a significant role in facilitating an environment that is conducive to further growth of these tours and products.

Non-riding events, such as a national mountain bike conference could also be hosted in Tasmania, and provide an opportunity for Tasmanian trail designers, managers, event organisers, tourism operators and riders to broaden and share their knowledge. It would also provide an opportunity to showcase Tasmanian mountain bike riding, particularly if it coincided with a higher level race or event.

Commitment to the implementation of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* would provide a significant catalyst, particularly in the provision of quality base infrastructure, for the private sector to expand and invest in new MTB tours and products. Seed funding for such projects is available through Tourism Tasmania and Events Tasmania.

The potential tourism product opportunities are considered to be:

further development and promotion of existing MTB tours and products

development of new MTB guided tours (day and multiple day) and supported long-distance riding opportunities associated with the proposed Iconic Wild Ride and MTB Adventure Centres

expansion and diversification of MTB hire services (e.g. range of bike qualities and bike styles)

development of public and private shuttle services to deliver and pick-up riders at the Iconic Wild Ride locations and MTB Adventure Centre locations (transport options should also be considered in association with some regional and local bike parks and trail hubs)

specialised or branded MTB accommodation that caters for the specific needs³⁴ of riders, especially at the proposed MTB Adventure Centres and towns servicing the Iconic Wild Ride locations

increased business for bike shops given the higher profile of MTB riding in Tasmania, and equipment and servicing needs of residents and visitors

production and sale of MTB maps and booklets and trail notes

design, production and sale of Tasmanian MTB clothing and accessories

increased food and beverage sales at towns that service MTB riders

potential increased spend in other tourism sectors, including other adventure sports and tours.

The proposed Regional MTB Trail Hubs and Bike Parks would also provide economic benefit within the regions through expected growth in participation of riders³⁵. This would specifically support bike retailers, local transport services, food and beverage outlets and sale of maps and information. There may also be use of accommodation for intrastate riders visiting the regions.

³⁴ This might include adaption of existing accommodation or new accommodation that provides choice of sleeping arrangements, wash-down facilities, safe bike storage, bike workshop, laundry service, specialised food and supplies, local information, transport services etc.

³⁵ The economic benefits of MTB tourism have been well demonstrated in other communities around the world, see the IMBA website for economic and travel research reports <<http://www.imba.com/resources/science/index.html>>.

5.8.2 Recommended actions

H1. Leading existing MTB events receive funding and promotional support, with the Wildside MTB Race, Australian MTB Series and Blue Dragon Challenge being recognised as the current leading events for Tasmania.

H2. Existing MTB products/providers receive support in relation to product development, training for staff and promotion.

H3. As other Iconic Wild Rides are progressively developed, the feasibility for introducing new events should be explored, but should aim to not directly compete with existing events (in relation to the experience offered or timing of the event).

H4. Work with tourism operators to explore the potential for new MTB tourism products, including guided adventure rides, family short ride experiences, and long-distance supported rides.

H5. Investigate the potential to develop a major new multi-stage event (e.g. seven days) based around the diverse Tasmanian landscape settings via the Iconic Wild Ride locations.

H6. The government take a lead role in the implementation of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* in order to provide a significant catalyst (e.g. in the provision of quality base infrastructure) for the private sector to expand and invest in new MTB tours and products.

H7. Investigate the potential of hosting a national mountain bike conference in Tasmania within the next five years.

5.9 Marketing and promotion

5.9.1 Context

The *Mountain Bike Tourism Market Profile for Tasmania* identified the independent mountain biker (intrastate and interstate), as the primary mountain bike market for Tasmania (see Attachment 3 for an overview of the identified mountain bike markets). The majority of interstate visitors are expected to be residents of Victoria and NSW, with lower numbers originating in the other Australian states.

The international market is considered to be relatively small, due to distance (e.g. from the major population centres of Australia and elsewhere in the world) and strong competition from other well-established mountain bike destinations. However, Tasmania's reputation as a place to experience 'wild' and unique landscapes, combined with a commitment to developing high quality and

innovative mountain bike infrastructure, provides an opportunity to grow the international mountain bike rider market.

The event market is also considered to be a significant market for the state, as evidenced by the success of existing events, such as the Wildside MTB Race, the Australian MTB Series, and the more recent addition of the Blue Dragon Race, which attract interstate competitors, and a small number of international competitors (and their families).

A review of current studies indicates that there is some cross-over between the mainstream cycling market³⁶ (touring/road cycling), and the mountain biking market, including a higher than average income, an age range of 24-49, and higher male participation rate than that of women.

There is, therefore, the potential for some conversion of mainstream cyclists to mountain biking, as either 'true' mountain bike tourists, or to take part in a mountain bike experience as part of their trip. This is also true for the nature-based tourism market in general, who may be enticed to take part in a 'softer' mountain bike experience as part of a broader itinerary.

There is also some indication that there is significant conversion of bushwalkers to mountain biking. For example, a number of bush walking clubs in Tasmania are now offering mountain biking trips as part of their programs. The potential conversion of the bushwalking and mainstream cycling market, in conjunction with encouraging younger BMX or dirt jump riders to continue on to other disciplines of the sport, provides for the opportunity to significantly grow both the interstate and intrastate mountain bike market in Tasmania.

Review of rider profiles indicate that mountain bike riders are generally technology-savvy, and predominately use the internet to access information about riding areas. Mountain bike clubs, land management agencies/councils and some tourism websites in Tasmania refer to mountain biking opportunities in varying levels of detail. For example, there is a function on the Pedalbite website that allows basic maps of specific areas to be generated using Google Maps. Other information on riding areas is also available on this site, however, Pedalbite is primarily used by local riders, with information generated by users with little quality control, and has limited capacity in relation to tourism.

There is currently no centralised website for mountain bike information in Tasmania. The need for a central, web based information source was suggested in both land manager and community forums, including the capacity to download trail maps, GPS coordinates and notes. Examples from other locations often

³⁶ See Inspiring Place (2008) *Mountain Bike Tourism Market Profile for Tasmania*, Tourism Tasmania.

include advertising for bike related businesses, accommodation and dining options, contact details for local clubs, and advertising for events. The *Trails Tasmania Strategy* recommended the development of centralised trails website to provide a single source of information relating to all types of recreational trails in Tasmania.

There are currently few examples of mountain bike specific trail maps, brochures or other information sources available for riding areas in Tasmania. The unauthorised nature of many of the riding areas is an important contributing factor, as such trails cannot be officially promoted for use.

The *Wellington Park Mountain Bike Map* is the best example of a mountain bike specific information source that has been developed in Tasmania to date, and is commercially available. The map is available in both hard copy from local bike shops/outdoor retailers, and electronically for download on the Wellington Park website. The map details which trails are open to riders, their level of difficulty, and includes a rider code of conduct.

Basic (informal) maps and trail notes are also available for other areas (e.g. the Blue Tier), but have generally been produced as 'mud maps' for local rider information. A basic trail map is available for the Dial Range area, but is not easily accessible to visitors.

It is recommended that, where possible, trail maps illustrate topography (e.g. through contours) and aerial photography to enable trail users to identify steep ascents and descents, and other features of the landscape. This will provide trail users with a higher degree of detail, and therefore, information on which they can base decisions, than can be discerned from a line based, or more conceptual map.

There are many good examples of published MTB information sources from other areas in Australia and internationally (see Figure 5.2), including booklets, brochures, and maps.

- 1 Schladming, Dachstein, Austria
- 2 Stockyards Mountain Bike Area, You Yangs Regional Park, Victoria
- 3 7stanes, Glentress, Scotland
- 4 Schladming, Dachstein, Austria
- 5 Orlando's Ride, Lake Garda, Italy

Getting Dirty
Introduction to your new mountain biking area

About Your Area
Stockyards Mountain Bike Area is a new mountain biking area located in the heart of the You Yangs Regional Park, Victoria.

Getting There
The Stockyards Mountain Bike Area is located in the heart of the You Yangs Regional Park, Victoria.

Respect
When you visit your mountain biking area, please respect the environment and the local community.

Get More
For more information, please visit our website or contact us directly.

ANAKORDA

maistat
Maistat - Mountain Bike Area

SCHLADMING/DACHSTEIN | MTB

18 MTB Lehrpfad

19 Einsteiger-Runde

1

ORLANDO'S RIDE

LAO DI GARDA

ORLANDO'S RIDE

100000

5

RUNDENBEWERTUNG

100000

4 **antiblick**

7stanes Glentress

7

Figure 5.2. Examples of mountain bike maps and brochures

5.9.2 Recommended actions

- 11.** Adopt the marketing strategy for MTB riding experiences in the future based on the directions of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan*.
- 12.** Develop a central website for MTB information in Tasmania with links to access and trail maps, MTB tours and products, bike shops, MTB clubs and other service information.
- 13.** Facilitate the production of mountain bike specific trail maps, brochures or other information sources available for riding areas in Tasmania.

5.10 Education

5.10.1 Context

This section is intended to provide guidance for improving the knowledge base of land managers, riders and the community, as it relates to the activity of mountain biking. Some of the educational tools discussed will also aid in compliance, and engender responsible trail use among riders.

Land manager and rider education programs have been implemented successfully in other places throughout the world. The elements of these programs provide a good basis for the sorts of programs that could be implemented in Tasmania.

Rider codes of conduct

Codes of conduct are a common education tool used in Australia and elsewhere in the world to encourage responsible trail use by a range of recreational user groups.

The following example is recommended as a basis for a state code of rider conduct, and is based on the code of conduct implemented at Wellington Park and the Dial Range, and includes a number of additions following a review of the IMBA Rules of the Trail, the code of conduct for the You Yangs, and other examples:

Principle 1: Respect other trail users

- alert other trails users of your presence
- slow to their speed when passing
- slow down for corners and blind spots
- give way to walkers and horse riders on multiple use trails.

Principle 2: Stay on the designated bike riding tracks and trails

- do not trespass on private land
- ride only on trails approved for bikes
- do not create new trails, short cuts or obstacles.

Principle 3: Minimise your impacts on the environment

- avoid muddy trails – seek an alternative after rain
- avoid skidding
- take out your litter ‘leave no trace’
- respect the local flora and fauna
- keep your bike clean to prevent the spread of weeds and plant diseases.

Principle 4: Be a safe rider

- plan ahead – know your equipment and the area that you are riding in
- wear a helmet and other appropriate protective equipment
- know your ability and keep your bike under control
- be prepared for sudden changes in weather conditions
- carry tools and spares
- let someone know where you are going
- carry a mobile phone.

Principle 5. Get involved

- report trail hazards, incidents and maintenance issues
- take part in trail maintenance days
- set a good example for other riders.

It is likely that only the five principle headings of the above code would be incorporated into trail signage. The expanded points could be used in promotional signage and trail/riding area brochures and maps.

The MTB Rider Code of Conduct is consistent with the international ‘Leave No Trace’ principles (see < www.lnt.org/programs/principles.php >), adopted by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

The role of clubs and bike shops

The important role that local clubs and bike shops play in mountain bike advocacy, information dissemination and education was a theme that emerged strongly throughout the consultation process.

Mountain bike clubs (and cycling clubs in general) are instrumental in organising and channelling the efforts of local enthusiasts. They also act as a point of

contact, provide opportunities for skill development and events, a source of information as well as a 'voice' for the mountain bike community.

Excluding local clubs, bike shops are often the main point of contact and source of information for local riders. Staff members are also often seen as role models by other riders, and therefore, play an important role in setting an example of responsible riding.

Local bike shops also play an important role in directing visitors to riding locations. This is particularly evident in Tasmania at present, where there is limited information and promotional material available for many areas. Consultations confirmed that there is a strong demand for maps and information on local riding areas from bike shops.

Trail building skills programs

Poorly constructed and illegal trails have been identified as critical issues associated with mountain biking in Tasmania, as is the case generally found elsewhere. A significant number of popular trails throughout the state have been built by local enthusiasts with the best intentions. However, local riders often lack the knowledge, equipment and support required to construct sustainable trails.

Land managers are also grappling with mountain bike infrastructure development. Tasmania has a reputation for high quality bushwalking tracks – particularly track construction skills in rugged landscapes. Whilst Tasmania has the skills available locally to construct high quality, sustainable mountain bike trails, some land managers have little experience in the provision of infrastructure specifically for this user group. Having a good working knowledge of the needs and expectations of the different riding disciplines is invaluable when it comes to mountain bike trail, and multiple use trail development.

IMBA has developed a number of programs and guides which aim to educate riders and land managers about sustainable trail construction and the features that make great riding experiences. The IMBA Trail Care Crew³⁷, is a North American travelling program, where IMBA trail specialists provide trail sessions and work with IMBA-affiliated clubs and land managers to develop mountain bike opportunities. The Trail Care Crew specialists also lead a series of IMBA Trail Building Schools over two days.

³⁷ See < www.imba.com/tcc/index.html>.

The development of Trail Care Crews, or equivalent in Tasmania would provide a means of developing mountain bike infrastructure design and construction skills among key land management agencies, and develop volunteer trail construction and maintenance skills. The crews can also provide a means of raising awareness and educating land management, recreation planning staff along, riders and volunteers about the importance of sustainability and the benefits of shared use trail systems. The viability of a Tasmanian Trail Care Crew may be enhanced through a partnership arrangement with Victoria, and possibly other areas of Australia.

Skill development and school programs

Rider skill development programs have not yet become regular established programs in Tasmania, although there are some low level programs offered by the LMBC and Dirt Devils/Hobart Wheelers. Rider skill development programs provide another means of educating riders of all ages to be responsible trail users, as well as improving bike handling skills. Programs specifically for younger riders and women also provide a means of encouraging participation. A number of schools around the state already offer mountain biking as part of their outdoor program. For example, the Rose Bay High School were recently nominated for an Active Tasmania Award for their school MTB program. There is scope to grow these programs, including opportunities to work in partnership with well-known local or interstate/international riders. The international 'Sprockids' program, which began in Canada, may provide the vehicle to achieve this. This program incorporates a wide ranging educational program with mountain bikes as a central focus point for a variety of learning opportunities. The program provides for international team leaders to be trained via correspondence. Further information about this program can be found at <www.sprockids.com>.

Skill development programs may extend to encompass other facets of the sport, including trail building and maintenance, particularly for school groups, as young riders are often enthusiastic trail builders. Encouraging young riders to get involved in authorised trail building programs, under the leadership of a skilled trail builder, may be one way in which to minimise the development of unauthorised and poorly constructed trails and trail features. Other avenues to consider include existing skill development and work experience such as Green Corp, who could assist with trail construction and maintenance projects.

Providing riders with practical and informal educational opportunities, and opportunities to interact with and learn from their peers, will compliment other educational methods such as rider codes of conduct.

Mountain bike patrol programs

Mountain bike patrol programs have been implemented successfully in North America. Many patrols are volunteer groups who work closely with land managers, and are generally associated with a local mountain bike club. Others involve paid land management agency staff. Local patrol groups are supported by IMBA's National Patrol Program, which provides access to insurance covering a range of services and resources including member insurance, training resources and guidelines (first aid, bike repair, information about the types of environmental and social issues likely to be encountered), and a Patroller Certificate Program for members.

The role of mountain bike patrols includes providing directional and interpretive information to trail users, an informal educational role (e.g. educating users about trail etiquette and rules of the trail), providing first aid and bike repair services, trail surveillance and incident reporting. Patrol members, therefore require a range of skills and access to training programs, including first aid (e.g. remote or wilderness first aid), bike repair proficiency, good communication skills, knowledge of the local environment, and sometimes conflict resolution skills. Patrols also provide a positive public face for mountain biking, and aid in raising the profile and understanding of the sport among other, sometimes conflicting, trail users. Established patrols are often called upon to patrol large mountain bike events, which can provide a source of funding for ongoing training and equipment.

Patrols members, unless employed by the land management agency, do not, and should not be required to take on an enforcement role.

Popular riding areas in Tasmania, particularly those where there is a real or perceived conflict with other recreational user groups, could benefit from the introduction of mountain bike patrols. An 'on the ground' presence may aid in bridging the gaps between user groups and provide an informal means of educating local riders. MTB patrol programs should be driven by land managers in the first instance.

5.10.2 Recommended actions

J1. Adopt and communicate the mountain bike rider code of conduct for Tasmania, as outlined above, consistent with the international 'Leave No Trace' principles.

J2. Recognise the importance of local bike shops in the dissemination of information, as important points of communication for local and regional mountain bike communities, and as ambassadors for mountain bike riding in Tasmania. Ensure future marketing and promotional programs incorporate the role of bike shops.

J3. Investigate the possibility of developing a Trail Care Crew or equivalent for Tasmania (see Action E4 above).

J4. Support mountain bike clubs and schools to further develop rider skill programs, and to work to involve well known local, national and international level professional riders – the 'Sprockids' program should be investigated as a potential vehicle.

J5. Work with the LMBC, the Dirt Devils/Hobart Wheelers and other clubs and the key land managers to investigate the potential of developing trial volunteer mountain bike patrol programs for Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Wellington Park/Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park respectively.

5.11 Risk management

5.11.1 Context

Mountain bike riding is an activity with inherent risks, of which most riders accept, and to some extent, are attracted to as a feature of the sport. Issues can occur, however, when unexpected trail hazards, poor trail construction or inadequate maintenance are the cause of injuries.

Risk management, and the potential for public liability cases are often cited as being key concerns, and often deterrents, associated with opening trails or areas to mountain bike riders (this is particularly prevalent with private land owners). Risk associated concerns were raised throughout the consultation, in particular the lack of clarity surrounding the application and level of protection offered by the *Civil Liability Act 2002* to land managers. The legislation places the emphasis of responsibility on the participants who are undertaking dangerous recreational activities with obvious risks. Where similar legislation has been tested in Australia, such cases have focused on the definitions of 'obvious risk' and 'dangerous recreational activity'.

The *Civil Liability Act 2002*³⁸ defines 'obvious risk' as:

- (1)..."obvious risk" to a person who suffers harm is a risk that, in the circumstances, would have been obvious to a reasonable person in the position of that person.
- (2) Obvious risks include risks that are patent or a matter of common knowledge.
- (3) A risk of something occurring can be an obvious risk even though it has a low probability of occurring.
- (4) A risk can be an obvious risk even if the risk (or a condition or circumstance that gives rise to the risk) is not prominent, conspicuous or physically observable.
- (5) A risk is not an obvious risk merely because a warning about the risk has been given.

A 'dangerous recreational activity' is defined under this legislation as a "recreational activity³⁹ that involves a significant degree of risk of physical harm to a person".

³⁸< www.thelaw.tas.gov.au> Accessed 3 September 2009.

To date, this legislation has not been tested in Tasmanian courts. A recent case in NSW - *Jaber v Rockdale City Council* provides an example of an interpretation of similar legislation to that of the *Civil Liability Act 2002* in Tasmania. The NSW Courts determined that the claimant, who seriously injured his spine as a result of diving of a wharf and hitting his head on the sand, did not have a liability case against the local council. It was determined that the risk of injury from the activity was 'obvious' and diving off a wharf was considered a 'dangerous recreational activity'. This outcome suggests that in similar circumstances (e.g. where it can be proved that the risk is obvious and the activity is a dangerous recreational activity), injuries sustained as a result of mountain biking may be treated in a similar manner. Sport and Recreation Tasmania has recently released an information sheet on the *Civil Liability Act 2002*, relevant to state land management agencies, local councils and private landowners, as well as MTB participants. This information sheet can be found at the Sport and Recreation Tasmania website:

<www.development.tas.gov.au/sportrec/publications_and_links/information_sheets>.

Managing the real and perceived risks associated with mountain bike riding and infrastructure development is an important component of ensuring that Tasmania's mountain bike trail and facility network is sustainable in the longer-term. Developing and implementing risk management programs is therefore, an important component of trail management, and will provide a systematised way of managing the risks on trails, and minimise the financial losses resulting from any lawsuits.

Most land managers will already have risk assessment and management programs and protocols in place, however, they may require tailoring towards the activity of mountain biking, to minimise hazards and reduce the occurrence and severity of incidents. Attachment 6 provides an example of the basic elements to be included in a mountain bike risk management plan.

Risk management plans must meet the requirements of the *Australian Standard AS/NZS 4360 Risk Management*, which specifies a five-step approach to risk management:

1. Identify all hazards.
2. Assess and prioritise the risks these hazards create, deal with highest priority risk first.
3. Decide on measures to control the risks (e.g. eliminate the risk, substitute a venue, use personal protective equipment).

³⁹'Recreational activity' is defined in the *Civil Liability Act 2002* as (a) any sport (whether or not the sport is an organised activity) and (b) any pursuit or activity engaged in for enjoyment, relaxation or leisure.

4. Implement appropriate control measures.
5. Monitor the control measures and review the process.

5.11.2 Recommended actions

K1. All land/trail managers develop and implement Risk Management Programs for their trail systems, consistent with the *Australian Standard AS/NZS 4360 Risk Management*.

K2. Continue to develop and distribute information regarding the *Civil Liability Act 2002*, to provide clarity for landowners, managers, clubs and riders.

5.12 Research

5.12.1 Context

There is currently limited participation and rider profile or demographic data for mountain bike riding in Tasmania or Australia, particularly comparative data collected over a period of years⁴⁰. The rider survey associated with the current project (see Attachment I), and previous work undertaken by Sport and Recreation Tasmania and the Parks and Wildlife Service has provided good baseline information for the state.

There is proximate information regarding the breakdown of the popularity of the different riding styles, age breakdown, gender ratio and basic information regarding rider needs and expectations. This rider profile information indicates that the characteristics of the Tasmanian mountain bike riding community is broadly consistent with interstate and international mountain bike communities. Ongoing collection and analysis of rider profile data will aid in determining gaps in provision, and trends in the sport over longer time periods.

Tasmania currently lacks robust data relating to the participation rates of mountain biking in Tasmania, or Australia. This is an important information gap, as it impacts upon the ability to demonstrate a justification of government investment in mountain bike infrastructure.

Similarly, there is little data describing mountain bike tourism in Tasmania. For example the Tasmanian Visitor Survey, which is the main source of tourism data for Tasmania, simply asks if someone cycled during their trip to Tasmania, and does not distinguish MTB from other forms of cycling. Whilst the mountain bike tourism market is relatively small, the need to better understand the motivations,

⁴⁰ The majority of the existing data relates primarily to cycling in general, and does not distinguish between the forms, or differentiate mountain bike riding.

movement patterns and expectations of this market will be more important as Tasmania's reputation as a mountain bike destination grows.

There is also scope for the mountain bike community and land managers to work in partnership with the University of Tasmania, or other institutions, to undertake detailed studies into topics such as environmental impacts as they relate specifically to Tasmanian ecosystems, risk assessment and trail user conflict research, innovative trail construction and facilities construction, mountain bike tourism research, and further participation and rider profile research.

5.12.2 Recommended actions

- L1.** Continue to collect rider profile and participation data, using similar questions to that of the rider survey in this *Plan*, to provide consistency in data collection and allow for comparative analysis.
- L2.** Develop a methodology for collecting mountain bike tourism data, including the possibility of inserting a specific question into the Tasmanian Visitor Survey, and working in partnership with event organisers to develop an event participant data set.
- L3.** Investigate the opportunities for working in partnership with the University of Tasmania, or other institutions, to undertake research into a range of mountain bike issues and topics.
- L4.** Investigate the possibility of incorporating specific questions on MTB participation in the regular ABS household surveys with possible funding support from IMBA Australia, Mountain Bike Australia and various state sport and recreation departments.

Section 6

Action plan



Tarkine Adventure Centre, Dismal Swamp, North West of Tasmania.
Photo: Keith Ryan

Section 6

Action plan

Section 5 responds to the 12 Future Directions, and lists recommended actions that form the basis of the action plan in this section. The action plan provides an indication of priority and responsibilities (lead role and support role) for the various actions outlined in Section 5. The action plan covers:

1. Governance (Section 5.1)
2. Hierarchy of MTB trails (Section 5.2)
3. Enabling policy and legislation (Section 5.3)
4. Classification of trails and signage systems (Section 5.4)
5. Innovative trail construction (Section 5.5)
6. Resource commitment (Section 5.6)
7. Partnerships between land managers and users (Section 5.7)
8. Leading products and events (Section 5.8)
9. Marketing and promotion (Section 5.9)
10. Education (Section 5.10)
11. Risk management (Section 5.11)
12. Research (Section 5.12).

The priority for implementation is based on:

High - should be implemented within the next two years

Moderate - should be implemented within the next five years

Low - should be implemented within the next 10 years

Ongoing - action may be required on an ongoing basis.

The 10 Year Action Plan is considered to be a working tool and it is recognised that the implementation process may vary over time in response to new opportunities to secure funding, the policy framework, the level of support for the recommended actions, level of commitment by key stakeholders, changing participation trends and the willingness to invest resources into developing the opportunities for MTB riding across Tasmania.

No.	Recommended action	Priority	Responsibility
A	Governance		
A1	The existing State Trails and Bikeways Advisory Committee plays a high level role in the implementation of the <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i> through fostering coordination and collaboration between government agencies and setting funding priorities to achieve a whole of government approach.	High	Lead: State Government
A2	The current Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan Project Steering Committee (perhaps as the State MTB Working Group) should continue as the primary body to drive the implementation of the plan, providing ongoing advice and input into the implementation of the plan. In addition to the representatives from the existing agencies, it is recommended that a local government representative be appointed by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT).	High	Lead: Tasmanian MTB Plan Project Steering Committee (State MTB Working Group) Support: State Government
A3	Regional MTB Project, and/or Local Working Groups are established to coordinate the implementation of the Iconic Wild Rides, MTB Adventure Centres and Regional MTB Trail Hubs and Bike Parks (the working groups should include relevant land and trail managers, representatives from regional/local MTB clubs, local riders, other interest groups and businesses).	High-Moderate	Lead: Regional and Local Project Working Groups Support: State MTB Working Group
A4	The responsibility for the planning, development, management and maintenance of local MTB trails and facilities should rest with the relevant land managers in partnership with the local councils, MTB Clubs and riders and other interest groups.	High-Moderate-Low	Lead: Individual land managers Support: local councils, Sport and Recreation Tasmania (SRT), local MTB clubs, riders and other interest groups
B	Hierarchy of trails	Priority	Responsibility
B1	A hierarchy of MTB trails and locations be adopted in Tasmania based around the levels of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential IMBA Epic Ride • Iconic Wild Rides • MTB Adventure Centres • Regional MTB Trail Hubs and Bike Parks • Local MTB Trails. 	High	Lead: State MTB Working Group, Regional and Local Project Working Groups Support: State Trails and Bikeways Advisory Committee (STBAC)
B2	The core criteria for each level of the MTB hierarchy be adopted on a statewide level, as a guide for assessing the potential and standard of MTB trails and locations in the future.	High	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: STBAC

No.	Recommended action	Priority	Responsibility
C	Enabling policy and legislation		
C1	A state mountain bike policy framework be developed to encourage consistency and cooperation across the different agencies and land tenures.	High	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: STBAC
C2	The Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) and Forestry Tasmania develop and implement mountain bike policies providing guidance on mountain bike access, infrastructure development and management on reserve land under the management of the agency. The policy should encompass or be consistent with the core policy attributes of the state framework.	High	Lead: Tasmanian PWS and Forestry Tasmania Support: State MTB Working Group
C3	The Parks and Wildlife Service should investigate the potential of amending existing legislation and management plans where considered appropriate and in keeping with the proposed mountain bike policy for reserves.	High	Lead: Tasmanian PWS Support: State MTB Working Group
C4	Local councils and other land managers (e.g. Hydro Tasmania) should also consider adopting the core policy attributes of the state mountain bike policy framework, and incorporating them into local tracks and trails plans.	Moderate	Lead: Local councils
D	Classification of MTB trails and signage system	Priority	Responsibility
D1	Adopt the IMBA Australia Trail Difficulty Rating System as the mountain bike classification system for Tasmania, including the intention to achieve some consistency across the state in the application of the system.	High-Moderate	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: Individual land and trail managers
D2	Incorporate a bike symbol inlaid on top of the colour for each difficulty category (particularly in the case of multiple use trails) into the standard for Tasmania.	Moderate	Lead: State MTB Working Group
D3	Consider adopting the approach to shared use trail difficulty rating as outlined in the <i>Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area Draft Track Strategy 2009</i> , and outlined in Attachment 5, as a state standard.	High-Moderate	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: Individual land and trail managers
D4	Encourage integration of generic principles/guidelines for MTB signage within signage policies and guidelines used by individual land managers.	High-Moderate	Lead: Individual land and trail managers
E	Innovative trail design, construction and maintenance	Priority	Responsibility
E1	Adopt the IMBA Australia Trail Difficulty Rating System and apply the trail criteria (tread width, tread surface, trail grade, natural obstacles and technical trail features) as basic guidelines for new trail developments.	High	Lead: State MTB Working Group
E2	Adopt the trail design and construction guidelines presented in <i>Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack</i> as broad guiding principles for mountain bike trail construction in Tasmania.	High	Lead: State MTB Working Group
E3	Work with existing track and trail construction specialists (e.g. PWS, local government, and private contractors), mountain bike clubs and riders to develop skills in multiple use and mountain bike specific trail construction and design techniques (e.g. IMBA trail building schools) in the Tasmanian context.	High-Moderate	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: Individual land and trail managers and SRT

No.	Recommended action	Priority	Responsibility
E	Innovative trail design and construction		
E4	Investigate the possibility of developing a Trail Care Crew or equivalent for Tasmania, in partnership with the key land management agencies, IMBA Australia, and the mountain bike clubs.	Moderate-Low	Lead: State MTB Working Group
E5	As a first priority, consider the opportunities for shared use when designing or assessing new trail development proposals, or trail upgrades, as this will maximise resource use and effort.	High	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: Individual land and trail managers
E6	Provide some trails within the state that are specifically designed for mountain biking, and are designated 'mountain bike preferred' or mountain bike only (single use), in acknowledgement of the inherent risks associated with some types of riding (e.g. fast downhill trails are not considered appropriate for shared use given high speeds), and the desire for narrow, flowing trails (e.g. singletrack) that may not accommodate other users well.	High	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: Individual land and trail managers
E7	Consider the merits of directional trails, where this will better facilitate shared use, or improve the riding experience.	Low	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: Individual land and trail managers
E8	Ensure that the environmental impacts of proposed trail developments are adequately assessed and a plan to minimise environmental and (where applicable) social impact/s is specified prior to the commencement of work on trail developments. This includes meeting the requirements of existing planning and development processes, including RAA's, planning scheme and other requirements under state and/or national environmental legislation.	High	Lead: Individual land and trail managers Support: State MTB Working Group
E9	It is recommended that regular maintenance requirements are identified, costed and can be provided for prior to the commencement of new trail developments.	Ongoing	Lead: Individual land and trail managers
E10	Adequate trail condition monitoring is to be built into all tracks maintained for MTB riding, with limits of acceptable change specified for the various categories of track and action to be taken if limits are exceeded.	Ongoing	Lead: All land managers
E11	Investigate the possibilities for the reuse of decommissioned railways in the state, as off-road touring, mountain bike linkages and commuting routes.	Ongoing	Lead: State MTB Working Group
E12	Encourage and support innovation in trail design and construction, including trialling new materials and techniques, to ensure that Tasmania is at the 'sharp edge' of mountain bike trail development.	Ongoing	Lead: All land managers Support: State MTB Working Group

F	Resource Commitment	Priority	Responsibility
F1	The State Government take a leading role in pursuing funding opportunities for the development of MTB infrastructure and services to help position Tasmania as a leading MTB riding destination within Australia in the next five years.	High	Lead: State Government Support: State MTB Working Group
F2	The State Government enter into partnership funding arrangements with the Australian Government, local councils and not-for-profit organisations to support and foster the implementation of the priorities identified in the <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i> as is occurring with the recently established State Trails and Bikeways Program.	High-Moderate	Lead: State Government Support: SRT
F3	As identified in the <i>Trails Tasmania Strategy</i> , consider options for innovative re-direction of funds to support the benefits of recreational trails (for example, a percentage of gambling or cigarette tax ⁴¹ , a percentage of the road-works budget dedicated to cycling needs, applying a recreational trails levy/contribution on all new development or applying a community-based trails levy/contribution and via existing programs such as Wildcare's natural partnerships).	Moderate-Low	Lead: State Government Support: STBAC
F4	Build strong relationships with the community to encourage and support volunteer participation in the implementation of the <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i> .	Moderate	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: Individual land and trail managers
F5	Investigate a range of incentives and support mechanisms for land managers to provided access for mountain bike riding, including funding from use of the trails (e.g. permit fees applied to tour operators, merchandising etc).	Moderate-Low	Lead: STBAC Support: State MTB Working Group and Individual land and trail managers
G	Partnerships between land managers and users	Priority	Responsibility
G1	Support the growth and development of regional/local mountain bike clubs and representative bodies.	Moderate	Lead: SRT Support: Existing MTB clubs, regional and local Project Working Groups
G2	Support the longer-term potential to develop a state mountain bike peak body, made up of representatives from the regional/local mountain bike clubs and representative bodies.	Moderate-Low	Lead: MTB clubs Support: State MTB Working Group
G3	Develop and/or distribute examples of trail partnership Memorandum of Understanding or other agreement templates that can be used by land managers, landowners, clubs and other community organisations, to ensure that partnerships are formalised and the responsibilities of the parties clearly stated.	Moderate	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: Tasmanian PWS

⁴¹ The State Government has established a Community Support Levy based on the gambling tax (a percentage of the gross profits from video gaming machines in hotels and clubs). This levy allows a proportion of its funds to be used for grants, administered by Sport and Recreation Tasmania to be allocated on a dollar-for-dollar basis for the benefit of sport and recreation clubs. The levy is currently being reviewed and may be merged with other state funding programs in the future.

No.	Recommended action	Priority	Responsibility
H	Leading MTB products and events		
H1	Leading existing MTB events receive funding and promotional support, with the Wildside MTB Race, Australian MTB Series and Blue Dragon Challenge being recognised as the current leading events for Tasmania.	High-Moderate	Lead: Events Tasmania Support: Tourism Tasmania
H2	Existing MTB products to receive support in relation to product development, training for staff and promotion.	High-Moderate	Lead: Tourism Tasmania
H3	As other Iconic Wild Rides are progressively developed, the feasibility for introducing new events should be explored, but should aim to not directly compete with existing events (in relation to the experience offered or timing of the event).	Moderate-Low	Lead: Event organiser Support: Tourism Tasmania and Events Tasmania
H4	Work with tourism operators to explore the potential for new MTB tourism products, including guided adventure rides, family short ride experiences, and long-distance supported rides.	Moderate	Lead: Tourism Tasmania Support: Tourism operators
H5	Investigate the potential to develop a major new multi-stage event (e.g. seven days) based around the diverse Tasmanian landscape settings via the Iconic Wild Ride locations.	Low	Lead: Event organiser Support: Tourism Tasmania and Events Tasmania
H6	The government take a lead role in the implementation of the <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i> in order to provide a significant catalyst for the private sector to expand and invest in new MTB tours and products.	High	Lead: State Government Support: State MTB Working Group and tourism operators and event organisers
H7	Investigate the potential of hosting a national mountain bike conference in Tasmania within the next five years.	Moderate	Lead: State MTB Working Group
I	Marketing and promotion	Priority	Responsibility
I1	Adopt a marketing strategy for MTB riding experiences in the future based on the directions of the <i>Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan</i> .	High	Lead: Tourism Tasmania Support: State MTB Working Group
I2	Develop a central website for MTB information in Tasmania with links to access and trail maps, MTB tours and products, bike shops, MTB clubs and other service information.	High	Lead: SRT Support: State Government/State MTB Working Group Land and trail managers and riders
I3	Facilitate the production of mountain bike specific trail maps, brochures or other information sources available for riding areas in Tasmania.	High-Moderate	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: Individual land and trail managers and Tourism Tasmania

No.	Recommended action	Priority	Responsibility
J	Education		
J1	Adopt and communicate the mountain bike rider code of conduct for Tasmania as outlined in Section 5.10, with reference to international 'Leave No Trace' principles.	High	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: MTB clubs and land and trail managers
J2	Recognise the importance of local bike shops in the dissemination of information, as important points of communication for local and regional mountain bike communities, and as ambassadors for mountain bike riding in Tasmania. Ensure future marketing and promotional programs incorporate the role of bike shops.	Moderate	Lead: State MTB Working Group
J3	Investigate the possibility of developing a Trail Care Crew or equivalent for Tasmania (See Action E4 above).	Moderate-Low	Lead: State MTB Working Group
J4	Support mountain bike clubs and schools to further develop rider skill programs, and to work to involve well known local, national and international level professional riders – the 'Sprockids' program should be investigated as a potential vehicle.	Moderate-Low	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: MTB clubs, Department of Education and individual Schools
J5	Work with the Launceston Mountain Bike Club, the Dirt Devils/Hobart Wheelers and other clubs and the key land managers to investigate the potential of developing trial volunteer mountain bike patrol programs for Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Wellington Park/Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park respectively.	Low	Lead: Individual land and trail managers Support: State MTB Working Group
K	Risk management	Priority	Responsibility
K1	All land/trail managers develop and implement Risk Management Programs for their trail systems, consistent with the <i>Australian Standard AS/NZS 4360 Risk Management</i> .	High	Lead: Individual land and trail managers Support: State MTB Working Group
K2	Continue to develop and distribute information regarding the <i>Civil Liability Act 2002</i> , to provide clarity for landowners, managers, clubs and riders.	High	Lead: SRT Support: State MTB Working Group
L	Research	Priority	Responsibility
L1	Continue to collect rider profile and participation data, using similar questions to that of the rider survey in this <i>Plan</i> , to provide consistency in data collection and allow for comparative analysis.	High-Moderate	Lead: State MTB Working Group
L2	Develop a methodology for collecting mountain bike tourism data, including the possibility of inserting a specific question into the Tasmanian Visitor Survey, and working in partnership with event organisers to develop an event participant data set.	Moderate	Lead: Tourism Tasmania Support: State MTB Working Group
L3	Investigate the opportunities for working in partnership with the University of Tasmania, or other institutions, to undertake research into a range of mountain bike issues and topics.	Low	Lead: State MTB Working Group Support: Individual land and trail managers
L4	Investigate the possibility of incorporating specific questions on MTB participation in the regular ABS household surveys with possible funding support from IMBA Australia, Mountain Bike Australia and various state sport and recreation departments.	Moderate	Lead: Tourism Tasmania Support: State MTB Working Group

Acronyms

BMX	Bicycle motocross
DH	Downhill (refer Attachment 2 for overview of riding disciplines)
DJ	Dirt jumping (refer Attachment 2 for overview of riding disciplines)
4WD	Four wheel drive
4X	Four cross (refer Attachment 2 for overview of riding disciplines)
IMBA	International Mountain Bike Association
LMBC	Launceston Mountain Bike Club
MTB	Mountain bike
NRA	Nature Recreation Area
RAA	Reserve Activity Assessment
SRT	Sport and Recreation Tasmania
STBAC	State Trails and Bikeways Advisory Committee
XC	Cross country (refer Attachment 2 for overview of riding disciplines)