

GRAMPIANS RDV REGION CYCLING & TRAILS INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS & MASTERPLAN

REPORT SUMMARY

SEPTEMBER 2018 WIMMERA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION



This document has been prepared by Urban Enterprise for Wimmera Development Association and Regional Development Victoria.

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01. Introduction

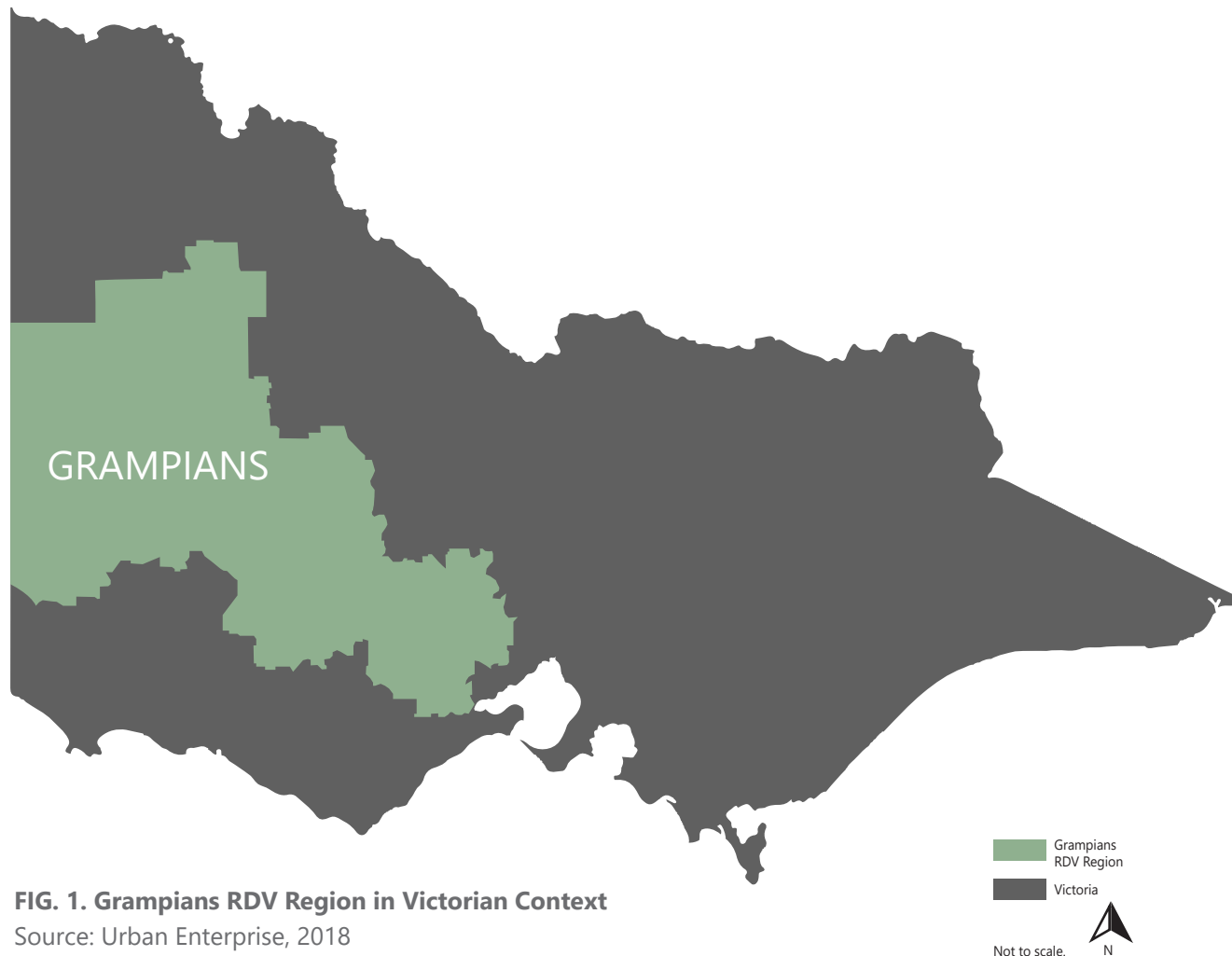


FIG. 1. Grampians RDV Region in Victorian Context

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2018

The project aims to establish the Grampians RDV region as a premier tourism destination for cycling and trail related experiences, increasing visitor numbers, expenditure, dispersal and length of stay. To realise this vision, Wimmera Development Association have collaborated with Regional Development Victoria, Transport for Victoria and eleven other Local Governments that comprise the Grampians RDV region, in partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria and Parks Victoria.

This is a highly significant project aimed at increasing visitation and visitor yield to the region, with the commensurate economic, employment and social benefits to residents and businesses. This Master Plan considers the full breadth of cycling formats, as well as the range of potential visitors to the Grampians RDV region to establish the region as a premier tourism destination for cycling and trail related experiences.

Ensuring that the benefits of tourism are spread across the study area is an integral part of this project, as regional Victoria faces low visitor dispersal, particularly from international markets, and low awareness of regional experiences. Encouraging cycle tourism in the study area provides a unique opportunity to address these issues by enhancing existing, and developing new, products and experiences that improve and expand the cycling experience within the region; therefore, dispersing visitors further and raising awareness of destinations.

This Master Plan has been prepared by Urban Enterprise drawing on initial background research and comprehensive engagement and consultation completed by Ethos Urban.

01.1 Objectives

The objectives of the Master Plan outlined in the Brief are:

- Establish the Grampians RDV region as a premier tourism destination for cycling and trail related experiences.
- Research and identify the range of cycling and trails related projects existing, proposed, recommended or nominated by local Councils, tourism organisations and other stakeholders.
- Assess the geography, topography and tourism assets of the region to identify the full opportunity spectrum.
- Identify the cycling market segments and the best opportunities to attract the relevant target market commensurate with the product.
- Develop a 10-year Master Plan for cycling and trails in the Grampians RDV region, that:
 - Identifies opportunities including potential for town trails and other trail related tourism products that will attract more visitors to the region, and build upon the region's strengths in nature based, heritage and wine-based tourism;
 - Identifies opportunities to attract both national and world class cycling and trail events to the region;
 - Capitalises on the transport and infrastructure in the region;
 - Identifies the projects that could be undertaken or commenced within the 10-year period;
 - Identifies and prioritises a range of cycling related projects, including improvements to existing trails, new trails and events in the region; and
 - Identify and prioritise the key trail projects across the region;
 - Prepare costed business cases for 3 identified projects suitable for funding submissions;
 - Engage with user groups, other key stakeholders and the broader community through a variety of means to identify opportunities, constraints and priorities for the region;
 - Involve key stakeholders in development of the Master Plan;
 - Develop recommendations for a consistent approach to marketing and promotions of the Grampians RDV region cycling and trails product;
 - Identify management structures to deliver the recommendations of the project and for ongoing management and maintenance.

02. Strategic Context

02.1 Visitation

The Grampians RDV region attracts around 5.2 million visitors annually. At a sub-regional level Central Highlands attracts most of these visitors with 4.1 million visitors per annum, whilst the Wimmera Southern Mallee attracts just over 1 million visitors per annum. (Source: Tourism Research Australia).

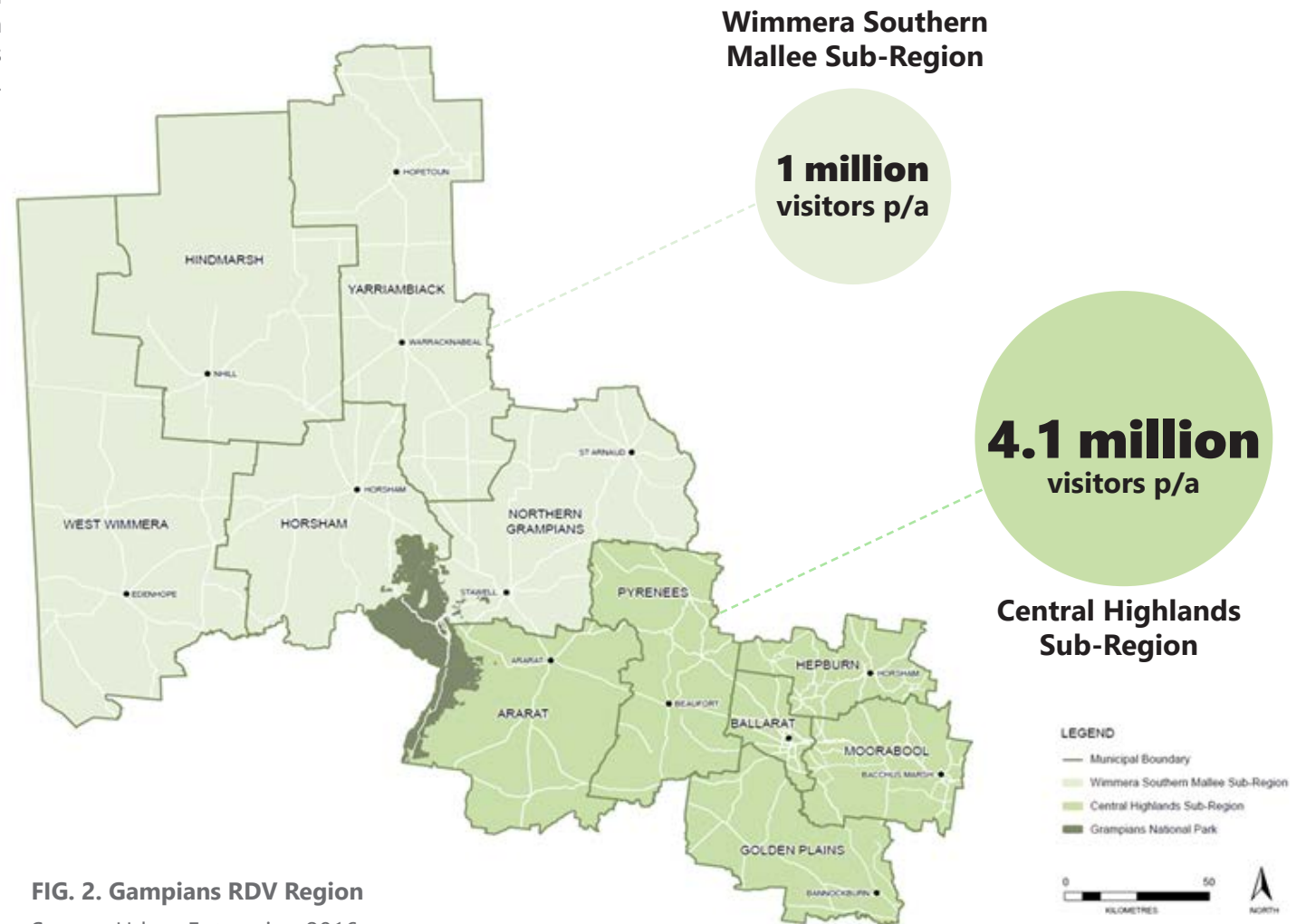


FIG. 2. Grampians RDV Region
Source: Urban Enterprise, 2016

02.2 Geographical Context

The geography of the Grampians RDV Region is diverse and hence reflects varied cycling strengths as well as opportunities for development. The Central Highlands is dominated by goldfields country and includes extensive former goldfields reserves that provide opportunity for mountain biking, whilst an equally extensive sealed road network makes it a popular location for road cycling, with mixed terrain including hilly rides and flatter loops.

The Grampians RDV Region is highly scenic and includes mixed terrain of quiet country roads suitable for road cycling and mountain climbs extending into the Grampians National Park. The Grampians RDV Region also has bushland reserves that can be explored for mountain biking.

Sandy soils in a large part of the WSM Region are not suited to typical mountain biking, however provide opportunity for fat biking as a unique cycle activity. In addition, road cycling on flat and undulating roads within the Wimmera Mallee Tourism Region presents an opportunity for visiting road cyclists.



03. Cycle and Trail Demand Drivers

Importantly, visitation to the Grampians RDV region is forecasted to grow, which is a driver for further investment in tracks and trails, providing for cycling as an activity for existing visitor markets and future visitor markets.

Within the Grampians RDV region there is a pronounced concentration of visitor activity in the primary visitor nodes of Ballarat, Hepburn, Horsham and the Northern Grampians. Other secondary nodes include Ararat City and Moorabool Shire for daytrip visitation. The tourism nodes that have the highest level of visitation also support the greatest level of complementary tourism product and infrastructure required to support potential cycle visitors. This includes the provision of accommodation, food, beverage and retail.

Horsham and Ballarat have a high level of business and visiting friends and relatives visitors, whilst Grampians National Park and Daylesford are considered holiday leisure destinations. The plan needs to consider the delivery of cycle infrastructure that can support the key tourism nodes, whilst also seeking ways to disperse visitors throughout the region from these nodes into parts of the Wimmera, Moorabool and Golden Plains, Pyrenees and Northern Grampians.

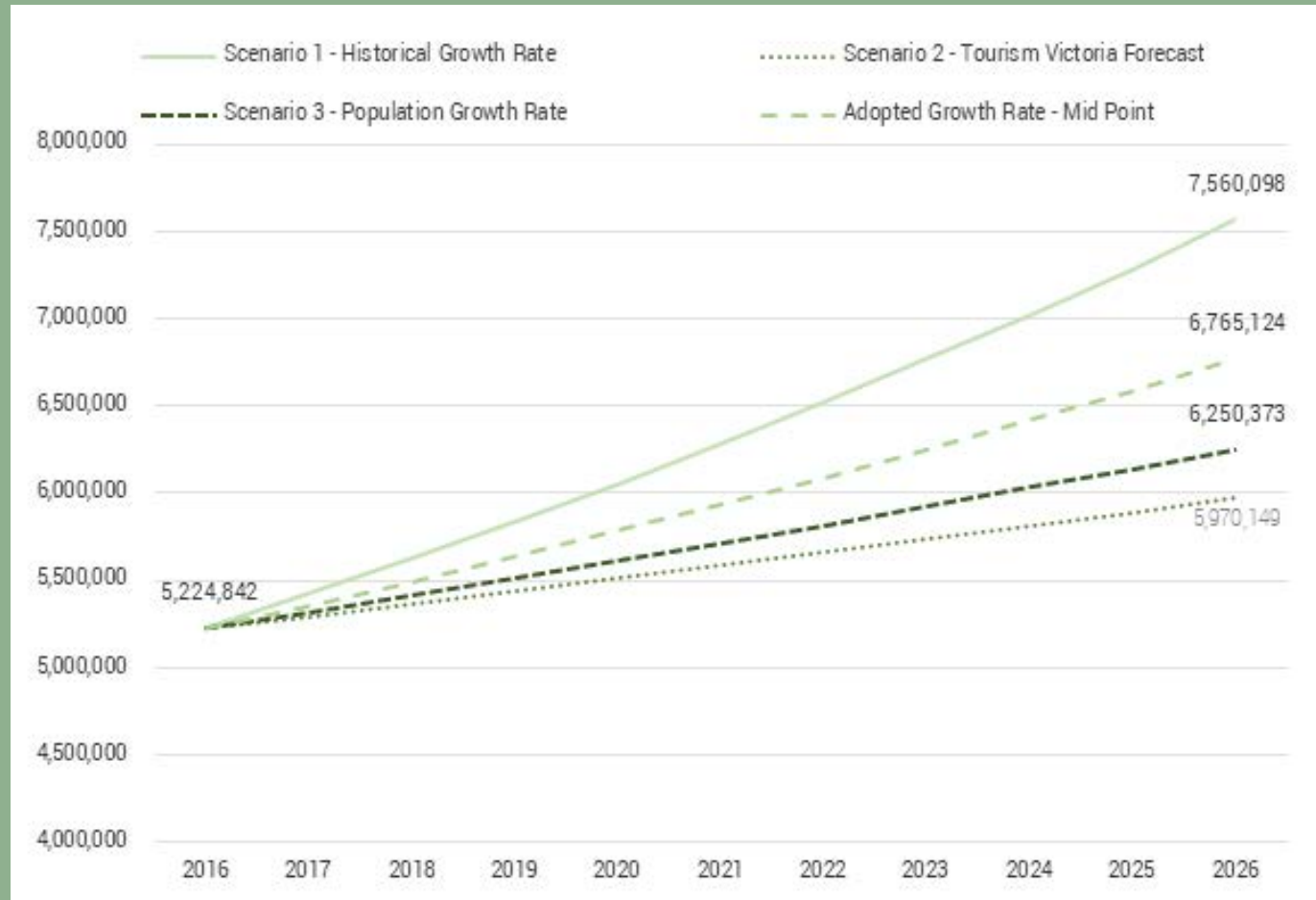


FIG. 3. Visitation Growth Scenarios - Total Visitors

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2016

Visitors who undertake cycling activity are concentrated to the Central Highlands, possibly reflecting the impact of cycle events tourism in this area and the strong road cycling culture in the Central Highlands.

There is limited recorded cycling activity in the Wimmera Southern Mallee with only 16,000 visitors nominating cycle as an activity undertaken per annum. (Source: Tourism Research Australia).

To grow cycle tourism in both the Wimmera Southern Mallee and Central Highlands, further investment in cycling infrastructure is needed. Market research shows that the delivery of quality single track mountain biking trails and short high quality recreational trails is needed to attract visitors. In addition, formalisation and promotion of road cycling in the region would support the attraction of cycle specific visitors.

The markets most likely to visit specifically for cycling include high involvement mountain bikers and high involvement road cyclists. Recreational cycling is unlikely to be a primary motivator for visit, however is an important complementary activity when visitors are in the region, allowing for increase of stay, improved experience and greater visitor yield.

Growth in visitors to the Grampians RDV region will continue with a projected 1 million additional visitors to the region by 2025, as are the number of cycle visitors likely to increase. Visitor growth projections highlight the need for continuous investment in tracks and trails to provide for growing visitor markets and delivery of tourism infrastructure such as visitor accommodation.

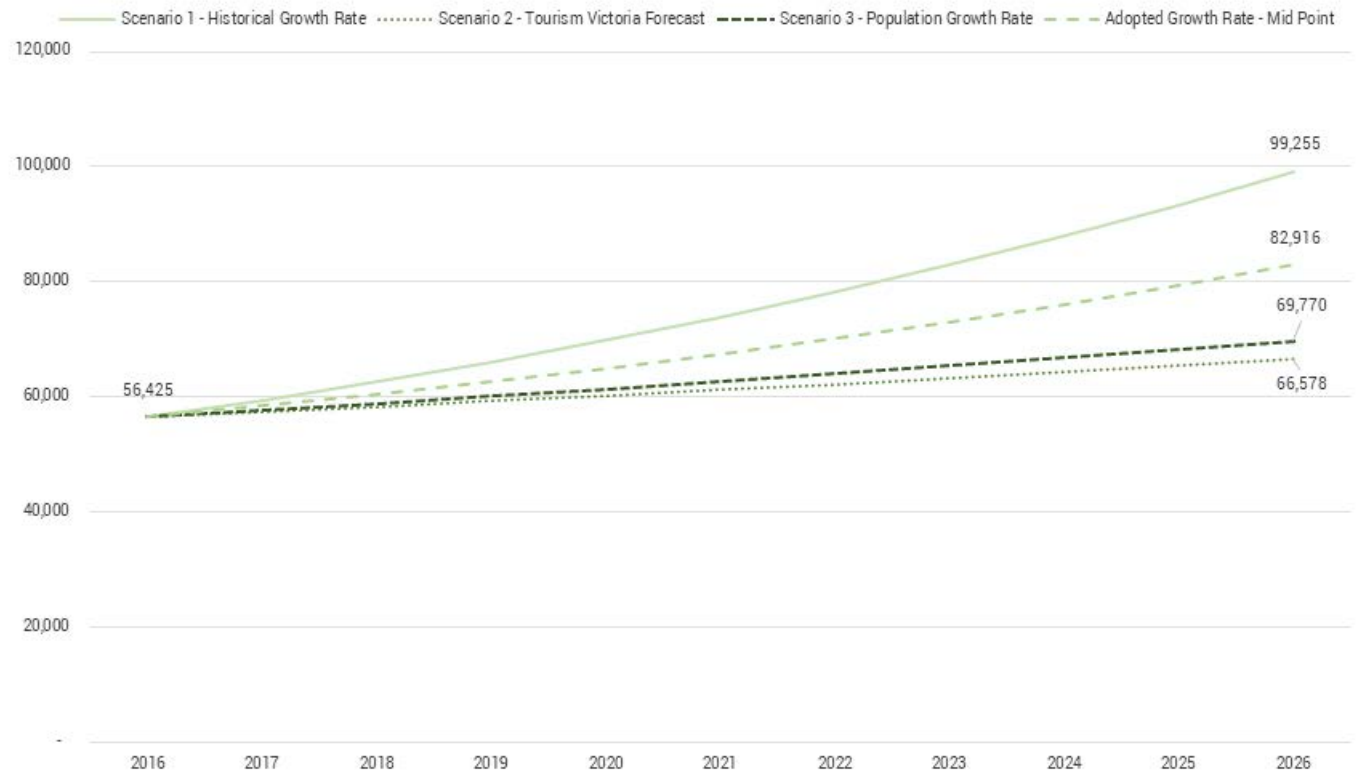


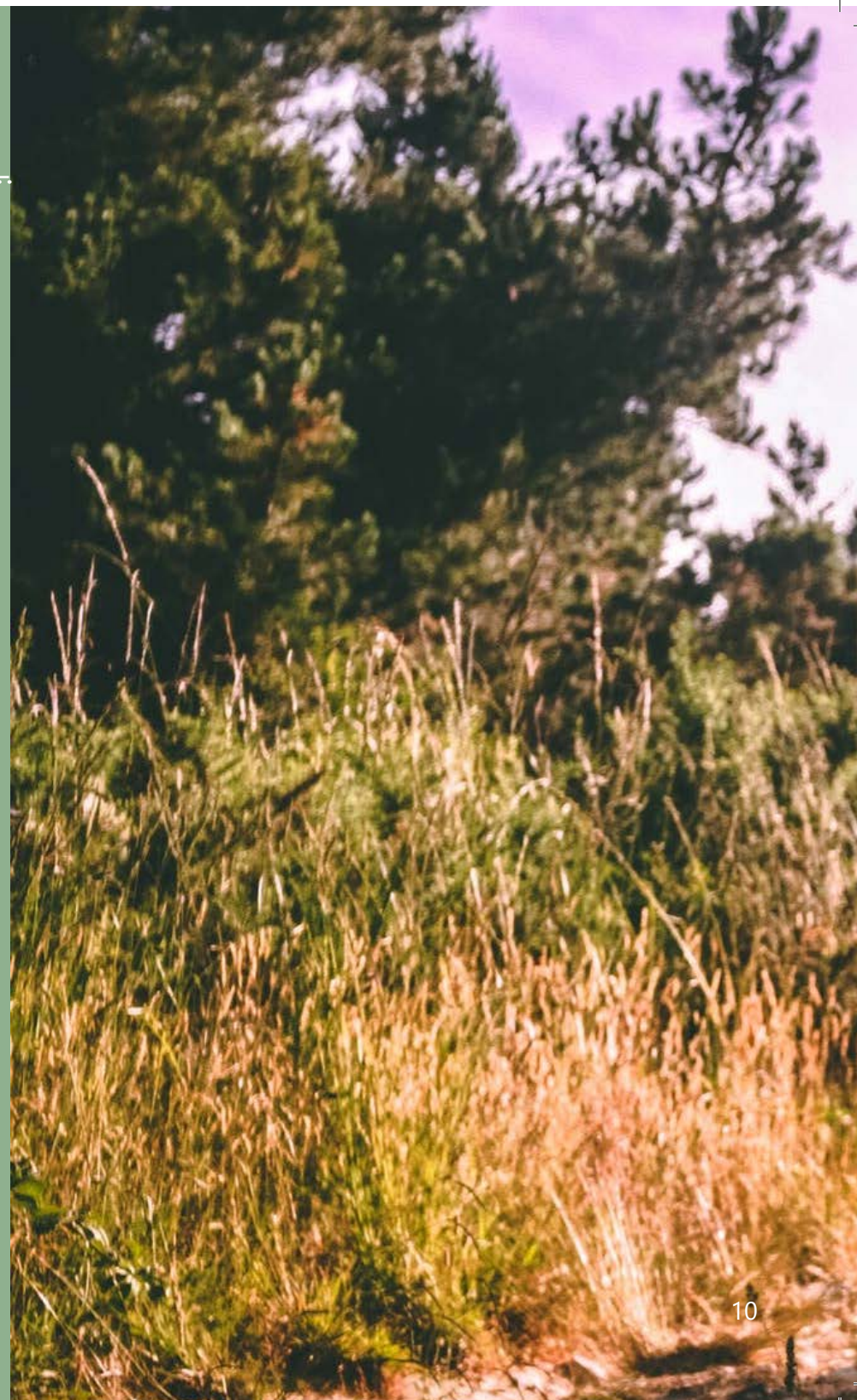
FIG. 4. Visitation Growth Scenarios - Cycling Visitors

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2016

03.1 Summary of Demand Indicators

The following provides a summary of demand indicators for cycle tourism in the Grampians RDV region:

- Clear majority of visitors are drawn to Ballarat, Daylesford, Horsham, Halls Gap and the surrounding areas - larger trail investment should consider how to leverage from these destinations;
- Cycle visitation is relatively low, considering the size of the region, with most cycle visitors visiting the Central Highlands;
- Visitation projections show using the mid – point scenario an additional 1.5 million visitors to the region between 2016-2026;
- An additional 45,000 cycle visitors are projected to visit between 2016-2018. Further investment in cycle tracks and trails will see visitation increase greater than this;
- There is a large domestic cycling market, with over 3.3 million people riding bike paths, 2.2 million undertaking road cycling and 1.1 million undertaking mountain biking within the past 12 months;
- High involvement riders – both mountain biking and road cycling are those that are most likely to visit specifically for cycling purpose;
- Mountain biking in the Grampians RDV Region was not a consideration by the current mountain bike market due to the low level of trail infrastructure in the region; and
- The Grampians RDV Region and Goldfields Tourism Region (including Ballarat, Bendigo, etc.) rated well amongst road cycling markets, reinforcing the audit work undertaken.





04. Supply of Cycling Tracks and Trails

04.1 Mountain Biking

Mountain biking in the Grampians RDV region is very limited in terms of quality single track mountain bike trails and parks. There is currently only one formalised mountain bike park with good quality trail signage and trail head facilities, that being Black Hill Reserve Mountain Bike Park in Ballarat.

Other than parts of the Goldfields Track, the remainder of mountain biking in the region is largely unformalised and difficult to locate and navigate. There is a substantial amount of investment required to develop mountain biking in the Grampians RDV region as a key 'tourism product'.

The region however is moving in the right direction with funding being made available to develop Creswick as a substantial mountain bike destination with over 100 kilometres of single track proposed. Ararat Hills is also undergoing master planning for a major mountain bike destination.

The Goldfields Track presents a unique multi day mountain biking tour, however this needs further trail development, signage and marketing to fulfil its potential.

NETWORK/ PARK NAME	LOCATION/NEAREST TOWN	Cross Country	Gravity Trails (INTERMEDIATE)	DOWNHILL (ADVANCED)	KMS OF SINGLE TRACK	LEVEL OF FORMALISATION
RACV GOLDFIELDS RESORT MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS	CRESWICK	✓			6.9	★★★
BLACK HILL RESERVE MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK	BALLARAT		✓	✓	10	★★★
BUNINYONG	BUNINYONG	✓			22	★
WIMMERA HILLS MOUNTAIN BIKE TRACK	AVOCA	✓			13	★
ARARAT TRAILS MOUNTAIN BIKE	ARARAT	✓	✓		20	★
WOOWOOKARUNG REGIONAL MTN BIKE PARK	BALLARAT	✓			15	★★
MOUNT BUANGOR STATE PARK	ARARAT AVOCA BEAUFORT	✓			20+	★
BODENS RUN	SMYTHESDALE	✓	✓		4.5	★
BLACKWOOD RANGES TRACK	BLACKWOOD	✓			6	★
GOLDFIELDS TRACK	BALLARAT/ CRESWICK	✓			100+	★★
TOTAL					197	

★★★ Formalised quality single track and signed

★★ Some formalised single track with some signage

★ Some single track, however not formalised and no signage

FIG. 5. Supply of Mountain Biking - Grampians RDV Region

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2018

Grampians National Park is a major nature-based destination in Victoria, however there is limited mountain biking development opportunity for formalised 'single track' due to environmental policy and Management Plan for the National Park. There is however opportunity to investigate public land reserves for further mountain bike development in proximity to Grampians National Park.

Whilst there is a need to invest substantial funding to develop major mountain bike destinations, there is potential to formalise existing trails that are not formalised such as Buninyong and Woowookarung Regional Park. The establishment of secondary mountain bike parks can provide additional activity for tourism destinations.

Smaller formalisation projects are achievable over a short time period and can quickly lead to growing visitation in the short term.

Given the low level of development for mountain biking in the region there are gaps across all mountain biking typologies including cross country, epic trail rides and downhill/ gravity parks. All of these typologies should be explored in the Grampians RDV region.

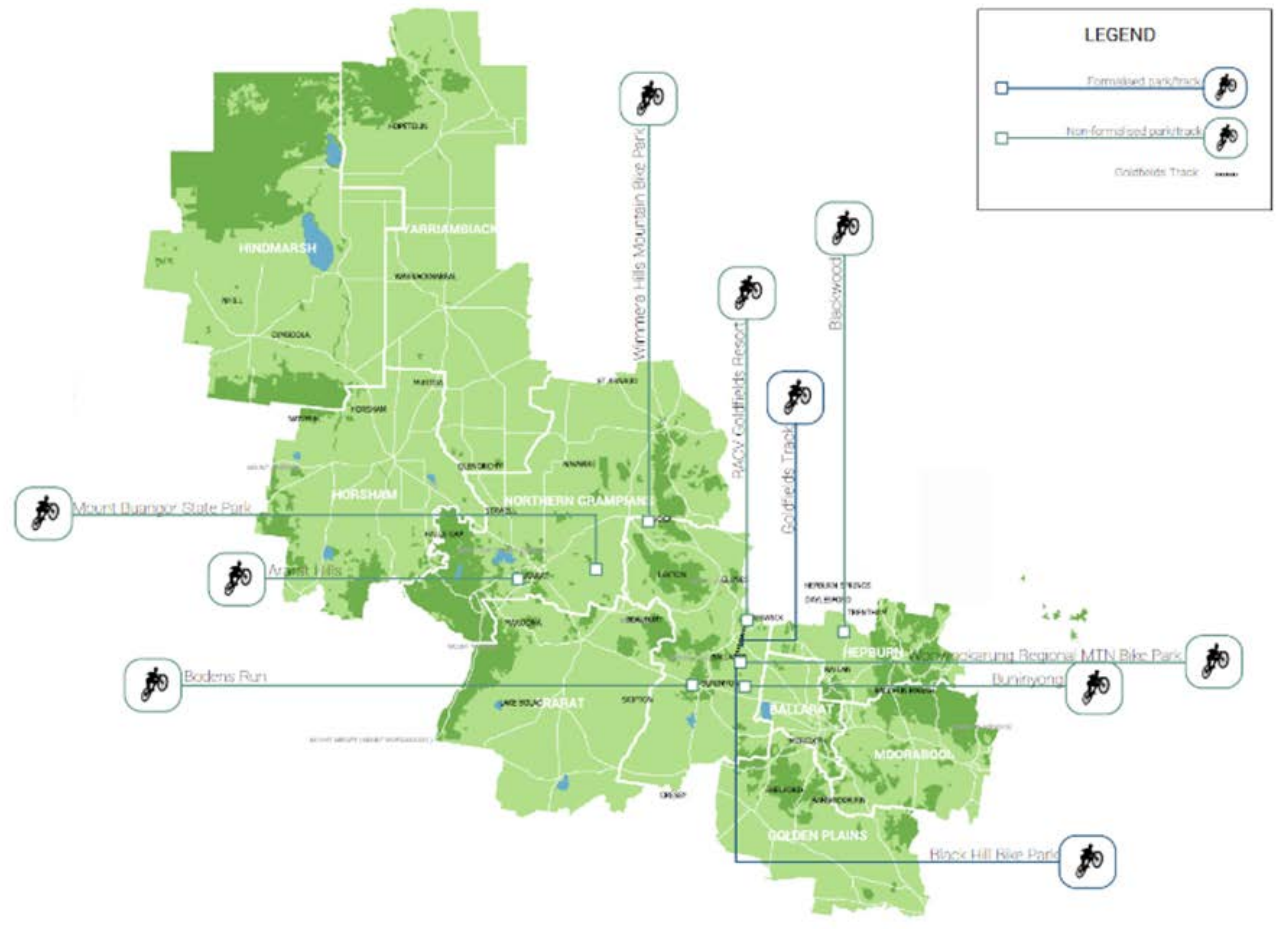


FIG. 6. Supply of Mountain Bike Parks

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2018

04.2 Road Cycling

Road Cycling in the Grampians RDV region is focused towards four identified clusters, these include:

- Ballarat/Hepburn Cluster;
- Halls Gap – Stawell – Ararat Cluster;
- Horsham – Natimuk Cluster;
- Nhill Cluster.

The attributes of each of these clusters varies, however across the region the type of road cycling that is available is suited to all road cycling market segments including cyclists that prefer flat and fast loops and those that prefer hill climbs.

The Ballarat/Hepburn cluster of road cycling shows some of the highest road cycling activity in Victoria. This is likely to be linked to the high population base in the region, the strong road cycling culture in Ballarat and the variable terrain suitable for all levels of cyclists. The gap in the Ballarat cluster is the lack of category 1 or 2 road cycling climbs.

The Halls Gap-Stawell-Ararat Cluster also provides for a mix of road cycling preferences including largely flat loops and importantly around Grampians National Park, some of the toughest road cycling climbs in Victoria. Mt William is the only Hors Category climb outside of the Victorian Alps in Victoria.

The highly scenic area around the Grampians National Park presents a strong opportunity to grow road cycling as a key visitor activity and with further promotion and some safety improvements, could become one of the leading areas for road cycling in Australia.

The WSM region includes two key nodes of road cycling activity, centred around Natimuk and Nhill. Whilst there are no mountains, there are areas within the Wimmera Mallee that have an undulating landscape and would be suited to a variety of road cycling participants and enthusiasts.

Given the diversity of the region there are not many gaps in road cycling product, with large flat loops available and a 'hors' category climb in the Grampians RDV region. The key short-term opportunity for development of road cycling is promotion and marketing of current safe loops.

Gravel cycling also presents opportunity throughout the broader Grampians RDV region with a large amount of scenic unsealed roads and fire trails ideal for this growing market.

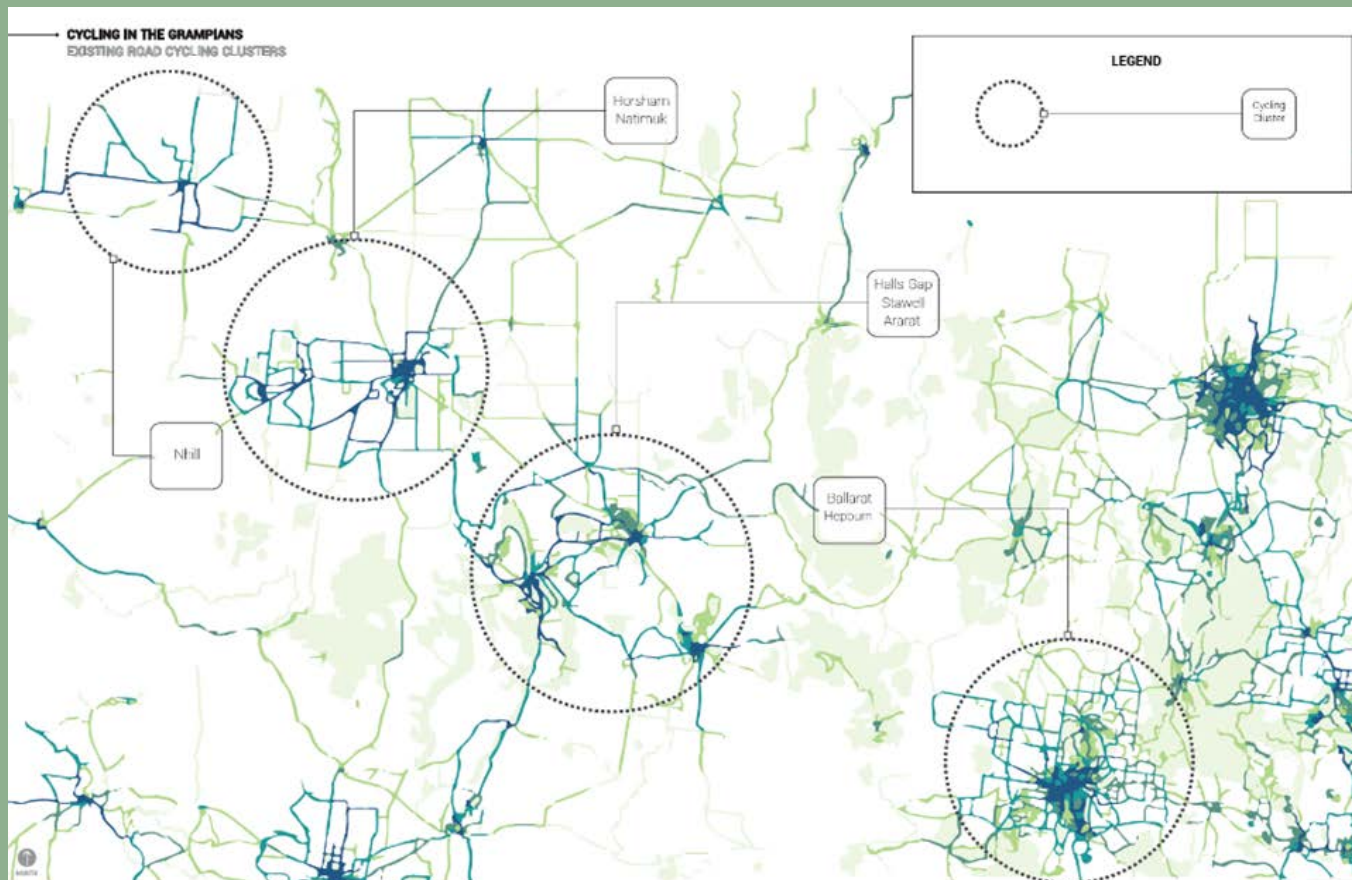


FIG. 7. Road Cycling Heat Map

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2018

04.3 Recreational and Mixed-Use Cycling Trails

Recreational cycling trails in the Grampians RDV region that are formalised and promoted for tourism use are limited. Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trail is the only extensive recreational trail that is well formalised and marketed for general recreational cycling use.

There are many other recreational cycling trails in the Grampians RDV region that present opportunity for further investment and expansion to be suitable for tourism use such as the Domino Rail Trail to be transformed into the Daylesford to Hanging Rock Rail Trail.

There are three categories of recreational trails that have been identified in the Region, these include:

- Iconic trails that have high scenic amenity and strong complementary tourism product;
- Trails that link townships, allowing for connectivity for visitors and residents and provision of clear destinations;
- Small township trails that provide activity for visitors and residents.

One of the advantages for the Grampians RDV region in the provision of trail networks is the extensive amount of public land reserves because of former mining activity which provide public land linkages between townships. Where these public land areas provide high amenity and further tourism product, they may support development for investment in cycle tourism.

Creek and river valleys also provide opportunity to create recreational cycle linkages across the region. Market research confirms that most cyclists prefer no more than 30-kilometre trails with clear destination points. Flatter trails are preferred.

Overall recreational trails are of low supply in the region, particularly those that can form the basis of a tourism experience. There are several projects identified in this Master Plan that will go a long way to meeting this opportunity.



04.4 Cycling Events

The Grampians RDV region has a limited calendar of cycling events, with the only signature event being the National Road Championships held in Ballarat. There are very few mountain bike events, which reflects the lack of formalised mountain biking in the region and very few events held within the Wimmera Southern Mallee.

Events that could be explored that address the gaps in the region and complement the strengths are identified below. These would be unique to the region and would position the Grampians RDV region better within cycling markets:

- Grampians Road Cycling Granfondo Event – A major participation event held during the off peak (cooler months);
- Grampians Gravel Grind Event – A large participation gravel event taking in some of the backgrounds around Grampians National Park;
- National Road Championship Participation Event – A participation event which allows recreational riders to cycle with the 'heroes of Australian road cycling';
- Goldfields Mountain Bike Multi Day Event – taking in Buninyong, Woowookarung Regional Park, Creswick and Harcourt as major hubs;
- Ararat 12 Hour Mtn Bike Race – Held in Ararat Hills and encouraging overnight stay;
- Mt William KOM – A prize money race which will attract Australia's elite climbers;
- Wimmera Cycling Granfondo – A 200km Wimmera loop.



04.5 Cycling Strengths and Weaknesses

	Central Highlands	Wimmera Southern Mallee	Grampians RDV region	North East Victoria
Road Cycling				
Flat and Safe Road Loops	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Hilly Road Cycling Loops	Primary	Emerging	Primary	Primary
Mountain Climbs (Cat 2 or higher)	Not available	Primary	Primary	Primary
Granfondo Loops	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Signature Events	Primary	Not available	Primary	Primary
Mountain Biking				
Formalised Cross-Country Trails	Secondary	Emerging	Secondary	Primary
Epic Rides	Not available	Not available	Not available	Primary
Multi Day Mtn Bike Experience	Secondary	Not available	Secondary	Not available
Downhill/Gravity Trails	Secondary	Not available	Secondary	Primary
Signature Events	Secondary	Emerging	Secondary	Primary
Recreational Cycling Trails				
In Town Recreational Cycling Trails	Emerging	Emerging	Emerging	Emerging
Town to Town Cycle Links	Secondary	Emerging	Secondary	Primary
Iconic Recreational Trail Products	Emerging	Emerging	Emerging	Primary
Signature Events	Not available	Not available	Not available	Emerging

KEY

	Not available	Emerging	Secondary	Primary
Cycling Strengths	Not available	Emerging	Secondary	Primary

FIG. 8. Summary of Grampians RDV Region cycling strengths and weaknesses

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2018

05. Strategic Considerations

05.1 Limited Recreational Cycling Trails

There are very few good quality recreational cycling trails that act as attractors to the region. Only Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trail presents a long and well developed recreational cycling experience in the region.

There are however several projects identified through the master plan process which will create new iconic recreational cycling experiences that can be packaged.

Investment in recreational trails that lead from key township destinations and link to secondary destinations will encourage visitor dispersal. These trails will provide a complementary experience for visitors to the region and where possible link with wineries, food and beverage experiences.

05.2 Marketing of Cycling

There are several marketing bodies across the region funded by Visit Victoria and Local Government (to varying degrees) including Grampians Regional Tourism Board, Visit Ballarat, Daylesford Macedon Ranges Tourism, Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine and Wimmera Mallee Tourism.

However, many of the cycling loops and experiences do not align with Regional Tourism Boards. As an example, the Goldfields Track traverses through three Regional Tourism Board areas and there are numerous road cycling experiences that link from Ballarat into surrounding areas that are not part of the Visit Ballarat area.

The role of Goldfields Track Incorporated (GTI) could be expanded and supported as the lead cycle tourism organisation in Central Highlands. This could be supported by RTB's and LGA's.

In combination with investment in cycling infrastructure delivery of coordinated visitor information on cycling and marketing of cycling opportunities is needed.

05.3 Need for Bike Hubs

One of the objectives for consideration of this Master Plan was to explore the need for 'bike hubs'. Bike hubs provide information and services for cycle visitors. Work undertaken in North East Victoria has identified the following activities for bike hubs to service cycle visitors:

- Commercial opportunities:
- Hire;
- Training and skills;
- Food and beverage;
- Bicycle mechanic;
- Tour businesses;
- Shuttle bus services; and
- Bike sales.
- Additional services:
- Trail network information and maps;
- Bike maintenance equipment and tools;
- Skills area including pump track;
- Bathroom and shower facilities;
- Events facilities; and
- Bike wash down area.

Bike hubs will only be feasible where there is a critical mass of visiting cyclists that require the above services. Currently, there are no destinations that have a level of cycle tourism visitation where a bike hub is required. This is not to say this shouldn't be delivered in the medium or long term. However, the immediate focus for cycle tourism in the Grampians RDV region should be focused towards formalisation, marketing and investment in trail infrastructure.

The North East of Victoria has had more than 20 years of investment in cycle tracks and trails and is only now exploring the role of bike hubs in its key cycle destinations.

05.4 Mountain Bike Park Land Tenure and Management

In the future bike hubs may be considered in the following destinations:

- Ballarat Railway Station;
- Ararat Railway Station/VIC;
- Halls Gap;
- Creswick;
- Horsham.

With continued investment in cycle infrastructure these locations may at some point require bike hub investment. Ballarat is the only location which may be able to support a bike hub in the short term.

There has been significant investment in mountain bike trails across Australia, however the sustainability of maintaining large areas of formalised single track is often overlooked.

The planning for mountain bike paths and future trail investment requires the support of land owners and land managers. The Master Plan needs to carefully consider whether projects have the support of land managers or identify strategies to gain support.

A risk to investment is the development of costly infrastructure within areas that are controlled by other users and then not maintained to a high standard.

Mountain bike parks need to be considered as a key recreation asset, similar to other sporting and recreational assets that are managed by Local Government or State Government agencies.

Responsibility of maintaining public mountain bike assets ultimately should be the respective Local Government, State Government agency or land manager due to their importance for local community health and wellbeing and economic benefits that they bring to the region.

The use of volunteers is also important as these can provide a valuable resource to support land managers or owners which may have limited resources to maintain a large trail network. The You Yangs provides an example of a partnership between Parks Victoria and the local mountain bike club to maintain trails.

The cost for trail maintenance will ultimately fall on the land manager and the raising of funds to maintain trails is an ongoing concern for mountain bike parks. Some options for raising funds to support trail maintenance include:

- Running an event with entry fees that support trail upgrade and maintenance;
- Gate entry (similar to the newly establish private mountain park: Maydena in Tasmania);
- Establishment of a trail software application that provide maps and allows for donations;
- Financial support through Local Government or State Government agencies (e.g: land managers).

Any proposals for new mountain bike investment in the Grampians RDV Region need to demonstrate how trails will be maintained and which authority or group will be responsible for this.

05.5 Former Goldfield Forests and Reserves

A large part of the Grampians RDV region is former goldfields reserves that are now mostly public land controlled by various agencies. This is a unique element to most of the region (other than the Wimmera). These former goldfields parks and reserves allow for public connections between towns and create opportunities for cycle tourism such as mountain biking.

In some of the existing informal mountain bike parks the unique character of the trails includes riding around mine shafts and along water races. This should be the point of difference that is explored in the Grampians Region further. The Grampians RDV region may not have as many former railway reserves that can be used for rail trails, however former goldfields land provides an excellent opportunity to link towns.

For the Central Highlands area and extending into the Pyrenees, Northern Grampians and Ararat, the goldfields forests and reserves provide the key public land assets that can be explored for off ride cycling and mountain biking. This should be explored as part of the uniqueness of the experience and brand proposition for cycling in the region

05.6 Wimmera Mallee as Home of Fat Bikes

An unusual niche which can be explored is the development of mountain bike trails specifically for Fat Bikes. Fat Bikes are designed for snow and sand, and the Wimmera has unique soils in the context of Victoria that are very sandy. This could be created as a niche for the area which sets it apart from other mountain biking areas in Victoria.

There is opportunity for the Wimmera Mallee to become home to Fat Biking in Victoria. This will require purpose designed tracks throughout the region.

05.7 Tiered Approach to Investment

There are a variety of trail investment opportunities identified for the region. Some of these are clearly large-scale projects that will drive tourism, others are complementary trail products to townships.

For recreational trails and mountain bike trails there needs to be a tiered approach to investment. This will allow for smaller in town trails, through to designated major investments that become key drivers for visitation.

05.8 Dry Weather in Wimmera Southern Mallee

The Wimmera Southern Mallee has dry weather when compared with other destinations in Victoria's east and south. The Wimmera Southern Mallee presents as a good winter cycling destination when much of the remainder of the State faces wet conditions.

There is opportunity to promote the Wimmera Mallee and Grampians Tourism regions as winter cycling destinations.

05.9 Service to the Cycling Market

One of the current gaps in the region is bike friendly businesses and services that support the cycling sector. This includes cycle friendly accommodation, cycle tours and shuttle buses, food, beverage and equipment hire. The implementation of bike friendly business programs should be considered in locations that are attracting large numbers of cycle visitors.



06. Masterplan Framework

06.1 Vision

By 2028 the Grampians RDV region will be recognised as a premier destination for cycling. The region will host compelling cycle related experiences for road cyclists, mountain bikers and recreational bike path cyclists.

Investment in cycle tourism trail infrastructure, supporting tourism product and improved visitor information and marketing will lead to substantial growth in cycle visitors to the region.

It is envisaged that the profile of the cycling offer will increase substantially with much improved information specific to cycling in each of the region's destination and a cohesive approach to cycling development and marketing.

06.2 Targets

By 2024:

- Attract an additional 50,000 cycle visitors per annum across the Grampians RDV Region. (Effectively doubling cycle visitors).
- Deliver five priority or tier 1 cycling projects.
- Attract \$10 million investment in businesses servicing the cycle tourism sector.





06.3 Strategic Objectives

NEW AND ENHANCED ICONIC CYCLING EXPERIENCES

OBJECTIVE A - Establish new iconic trails in the Grampians RDV region that will be a motivator for cycle tourism visitation to the region in strategic locations.

NEW AND ENHANCED TOWNSHIP FOCUSED CYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT COMPLEMENTS PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DESTINATIONS

OBJECTIVE B - Deliver improvements to cycle tourism infrastructure in the Grampians RDV region at primary and secondary visitor nodes to encourage cycling to increase length of stay and yield from visitor markets

FORMALISATION OF EXISTING TRAILS TO MAKE THEM VISITOR READY

OBJECTIVE C - Formalise existing trails to provide destinations that are visitor ready

DELIVER A PROGRAM OF CYCLING EVENTS

OBJECTIVE D - Deliver a calendar of cycle tourism events that support the cycle strengths of the Grampians RDV region.

CYCLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT, MARKETING AND SERVICING

OBJECTIVE E - Raise the awareness of cycling opportunities and provide a cohesive visitor experience for cycle visitors

06.4 Delivery

Cycling infrastructure in the Grampians RDV region is in its infancy, with very few iconic recreational trails, quality township trails and formalised mountain bike parks.

Figure 10 provides an outline of the required approach for delivery of the Grampians RDV region Cycling and Trails Infrastructure Business and Master Plan. It highlights the need firstly to formalise and improve existing assets, improve visitor information services in relation to cycling and commence investment in iconic trails to establish a cycling product which will attract cycle visitors and encourage existing visitors to cycle the region. Investment in infrastructure such as bike hubs and broader marketing of cycling needs to follow the formalisation and establishment of cycle trails.

2018-2019	2019-2022	2022-2024	2024-2028
Establish and Plan	Invest	Market and Support	Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish baseline information Establish cycle tourism delivery entities Formalise existing trail assets Undertake business cases for priority projects Commence planning for tier 1 projects Seek funding support for tier 1 projects Commence planning for township-based cycle assets Establish information and collateral for cycling infrastructure Improve digital presence of current assets Initiate cycle friendly programs Establish baseline market research for awareness of cycling product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop marketing action plans Commence market awareness programs Implement priority projects Commence planning for bike hubs at primary cycle destinations Implement township-based cycle infrastructure Expand cycle friendly business programs Undertake market research update Continued improvement in visitor information Seek partners for cycle events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver marketing programs Continue to deliver tier 1 cycle tourism projects Implementation of bike hubs at primary cycle destinations Commence planning for secondary bike hubs Update to market research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision of marketing action plans Deliver 2nd tier cycle projects Implement secondary bike hubs Update to market research Commence review of draft master plan

FIG. 9. Delivery Strategy

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2018

07. New and enhanced iconic cycling experience

07.1 Objective

Establish new iconic trails in the Grampians RDV region that will be a motivator for cycle tourism visitation to the region in strategic locations.

There are several existing and potential iconic cycling experiences in the Grampians RDV region that if developed or enhanced would be key motivators for cycle visitation.

The research undertaken to inform the Master Plan clearly identifies a lack of iconic cycling tracks and trails and those that are in existence such as the Goldfields Track require additional investment to reach a level fitting of interstate and international visitor markets.

This theme deals with projects that require substantial investment to create iconic cycling experiences.

07.2 Performance Measures

- Attraction of grant funding to support investment;
- Implementation of trail infrastructure;
- Growth in cycle visitors.

07.3 Priority Projects

An analysis of projects against the prioritisation framework highlights the following as priority business case projects.

- Ararat Trails Mountain Bike Park;
- Goldfields Track;
- Wimmera River Discovery Trail
 - Stage 1: Dimboola to Lake Hindmarsh
 - Stage 2: Horsham to Dimboola

Other Tier 1 projects identified that are also considered as potential iconic trails in the region include:

- Creswick Mountain Bike Mecca;
- Bald Hill Gravity Park;
- Buninyong Nationals Road Circuit Improvement;
- Grampians Granfondo Loop;
- Daylesford to Hanging Rock Rail Trail;
- Grampians Trail;
- Pyrenees Wine Cycle Trail.

08. Formalise Existing Cycle Tracks and Trails

08.1 Vision

Formalise existing trails to provide destinations that are visitor ready.

There are a number of mountain biking trails, road cycling loops and bike paths which require further enhancement to make them 'visitor ready'. Many of the existing trails throughout the region are not formalised and are 'hidden' from visitors due to the lack of information, signage and visibility.

08.2 Performance Measures

- Formalisation of trails;
- Growth in trail usage;
- Improved awareness of cycle assets.

08.3 Priority Projects

Trails that have been identified for formalisation include:

- Woookarung Regional Park Mountain Biking Destination;
- Buninyong Mountain Bike Course;
- Various Grampians RDV region Road Cycling Loops;
- Silo Art Trail.

These can be undertaken in a short time period and will create a base product to grow cycle tourism.



09. Deliver Cycle Tourism Events

09.1 Vision

Deliver a calendar of cycle tourism events that support the cycle strengths of the Grampians RDV region.

Analysis of cycle regions that have grown rapidly in attracting cycle visitors highlight the important role of cycle events in growing brand recognition and attracting visitors to the region. Examples include North East Victoria with events such as the Peaks Falls Creek and Great Ocean Road Region with events such as Amy's Granfondo.

To grow awareness of cycle tourism strengths in the Grampians Region, the delivery of cycle tourism events is necessary. This also has direct benefits generated from the event.

Event delivery needs to consider seasonality. The opportunity for the Wimmera Southern Mallee area to deliver events during the winter.

09.2 Performance Measures

- Establishment of sustainable cycle tourism events;
- Growth in cycle visitors;
- Improved awareness of cycling assets in the region.

09.3 Priority Projects

Tier 1 events include:

- Grampians Gran Fondo Event
- Gravel Grind Event – Grampians National Park
- National Championships Participation Event
- Wimmera Region Cycling Granfondo

These events were identified as tier one events as they have the potential to attract large numbers of participants to the region and contribute the cycle positioning of the region.

10. Delivery: Cycle Tourism Management, Marketing and Servicing

10.1 Objective

Raise the awareness of cycling tourism opportunities and provide a cohesive visitor experience for cycle visitors.

There is a need for a cohesive approach to cycle tourism management, marketing and servicing. This is a difficult task, given the size of the Grampians RDV region and the various tourism organisations across the region.

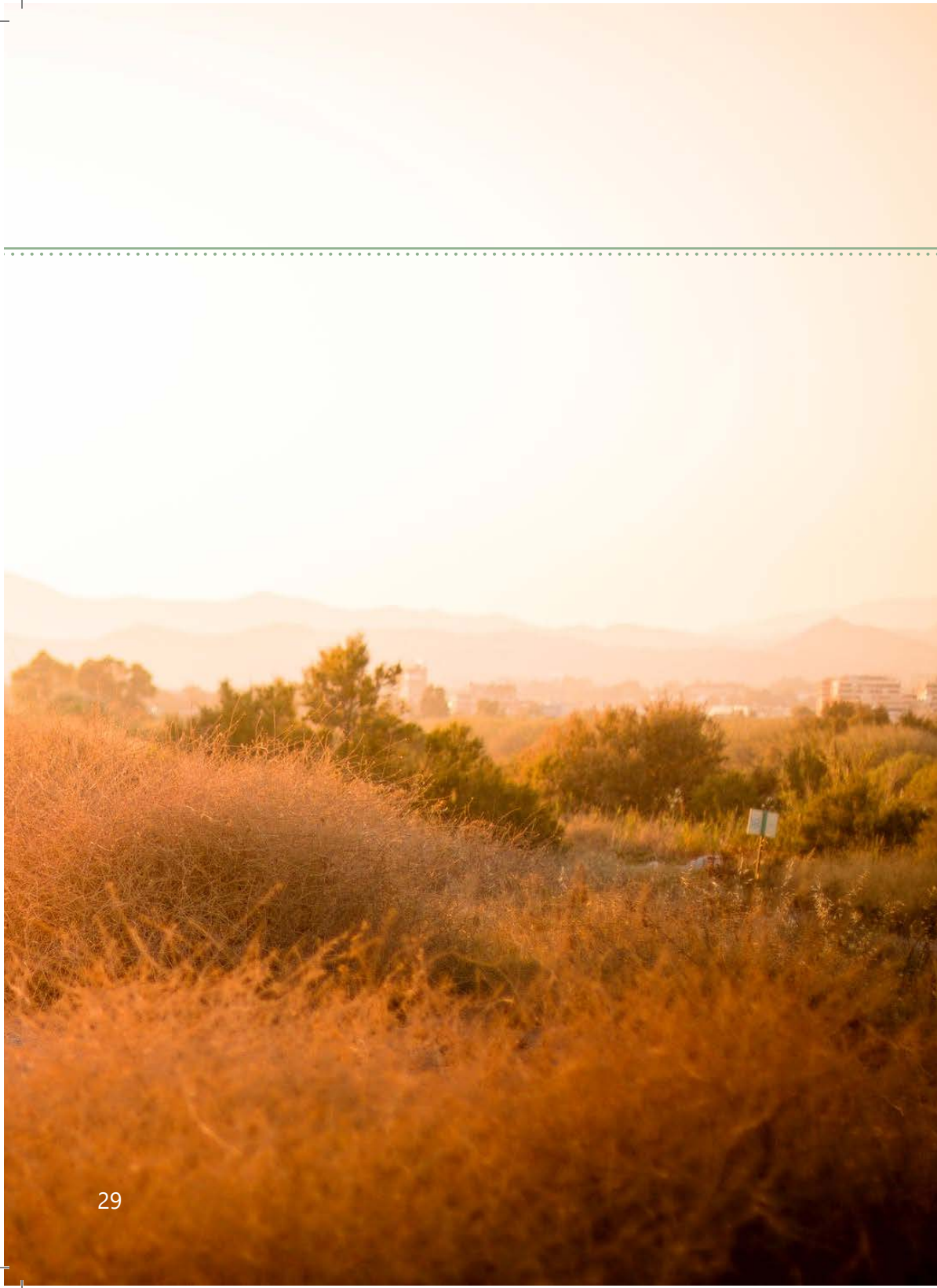
Delivery agencies responsible for management, marketing and servicing cycle tourism market need to be clearly defined.

Current information and marketing of cycle tourism product and experiences is very limited across the Grampians RDV region. This report provides an excellent starting point for defining product and experiences that can be formalised and marketed further in the region.

Considerations for information services and marketing of tourism include:

- A dedicated cycle tourism officer who works with cycle tourism businesses;
- A cycle friendly business program;
- Excellent high-quality cycle tourism content including digital content to guide visitors to the cycle tourism assets within the region;
- Marketing program targeted to cycle tourism including social media advertising and awareness programs.





10.2 Performance Measures

- Establishment of quality cycle information for pre and during trip planning;
- Clear lines of responsibility for cycle tourism across the region;
- Increased awareness of cycle product.

10.3 Priority Projects

Projects have not been prioritised for this theme as there is a logical sequence that requires implementation. The sequence is as follows:

1. Establish delivery agencies for cycle tourism management, marketing and servicing;
2. Cycle market research – this will be used to inform marketing and visitor services offer;
3. Cycle friendly upskilling program;
4. Develop collateral and visitor information;
5. Cycle marketing action plans;
6. Websites for iconic trails.

10.4 Cycle Tourism Structure and Roles

Cycle Tourism Authority	Roles and Responsibilities
Grampians Tourism	Establishment of information and collateral for cycling tracks and trails
Goldfields Track Incorporated	Implementation of cycle friendly programs
Visit Ballarat	
Daylesford Macedon Ranges Tourism	Improvement of digital media to enhance the cycling experience
Bendigo Regional Tourism	Cooperative market research across the Grampians Region
Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive	Cycle tourism Marketing action plans and implementation
	Leadership in events development

10.5 Trail Implementation

Most trail projects will need to consider the following program for development. Costings are included.

1. Ground Truthing. This will require fieldwork to determine the alignment of the new trail. The concept plan provided will be a guide, however through ground truthing the trail alignment may change depending on conditions encountered in the field. Ground truthing would need to be undertaken by an experienced trail design and construction firm and GPS coordinates collected.
2. Additional Specialist Work. In order to proceed with the planning process, the following specialist reports will be required to accompany a planning application:
 - Heritage and Cultural Heritage Study. This would need to review the proposed alignment to determine any impact on heritage sites or cultural heritage sites. This would include recommendations to the trail alignment if required.
 - Environmental Assessment. This would provide an assessment of the environmental factors relating to the proposed trial alignment. This assessment will provide advice on the trial alignment and provide recommendations in relation to trail design if required.
3. Detailed Concept Design. A detailed concept design will follow the specialist reports, with final refinement of the alignment using GPS coordinates. This will also include confirmed cost for delivery.
4. Business Case. A business case will be prepared to support the project in order to attract Government Funding. This will build on the scoping study undertaken and the above detailed concept design, ground truthing and specialist work.
5. Planning Application. A planning application will need to be prepared to seek approval from Council and the relevant referral authorities.
6. Construction. Construction of the trail will commence with funding from Government sources once secured. This will include trail construction, trail heads and signage.
7. Marketing and Branding. A marketing and brand strategy should be considered for larger trail project. This would need to align with the Ride High Country brand and also be reflected though on ground signage.

10.6 Implementation Costs

Stage	Estimated Cost
Ground Truthing	\$30K-\$80K
Heritage and Cultural Study	\$30K-\$80K
Environmental Assessment	\$30K-\$80K
Detailed Design Concept	\$30K-\$80K
Business Case	\$15K-\$60K
Planning Application	\$20K-\$50K
Marketing and Branding	\$10K-\$30K
Total	\$165-\$460

FIG. 9. Implementation Costs
Source: Urban Enterprise 2018



