Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**
GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

GSCORE
Great Southern Centre for
Outdoor Recreation Excellence

REPORT ON THE
ALBANY TRAIL TOWN FORUM &
WORKSHOPS

31 May – 1 June 2018

Volume 2 – Interactive Workshop Notes

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1.0   BACKGROUND

The Albany Trail Town Forum, which was held on the 31 May 2018, attracted over 100 participants from across the Great Southern region representing local government, state government agencies, industry and community organisations, local trail groups and clubs, business owners, and trail users.

The forum was structured into three parts:
  i.   The first part focused on case studies of successful trail towns;
  ii.   The second part focused on the strategic planning environment currently governing trail development in Western Australia; and
  iii. The third part was an interactive workshop in which participants were invited to reflect on their own trail experiences, their understanding of specific trail user needs, and their knowledge of regional trail opportunities, to develop recommendations for future trail investment.

Volume 2 of the forum report focuses on the interactive workshop discussions.

2.0   STRUCTURE OF THE INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

Participants in the interactive workshop were broken into the following trail user groups:

- Bushwalking/hiking
- Trail running
- Equestrian/Horse riding
- MTB (X-country, downhill, enduro)
- Cycling (road, BMX, bike-packing)
- Paddling (canoe, kayak, stand-up paddle board)
- Aquatic (snorkelling, diving, and open water swimming)

Each group was asked to consider a series of questions:

- Where are the world's best trails for your activity?
- What makes them the best?
- It's 2040: What kind of trails do we need and what will be different about the way people use trails?
- If you had the power and resources to build the best trails here in the Great Southern, what would you build?

A copy of the workshop notes from each trail user group is contained in Appendix A.

3.0   WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THE WORLD'S BEST TRAILS?

Each trail user group was asked to identify where the world's best trails for their activity are located (see Appendix A). In reflecting on what makes these trails the best in the world, each group identified a list of consistent attributes. These features were shared across all trail types and trail users; neither the trail activity (e.g. hiking vs paddling) nor the trail type (terrestrial vs aquatic) was a significant factor in describing what makes a trail or a trail destination stand out above the rest. In other words, all trail users value the same features and attributes (see Table 1). **These eight attributes should form part of the planning for all local and regional trails in the Great Southern.**

Table 1: Features of the world's best trails

Attribute	Description
Natural Landscape	Pristine environment, wildlife interactions, stunning scenery, wilderness, remoteness, environment is protected/managed well, seasonal changes, points of difference
Cultural Experience	Strong link to local history and culture (quirky, authentic, unusual, unique), interpretation, local knowledge
Attitudes	Visitor friendly, acceptance, understanding, welcoming
Accessible	Easy access to trails, links between trail centres
Services	Access to tours and trail services (accommodation, transport, shuttles, cafes, gear hire, food/hospitality, toilets and showers, wash down stations, storage, water refill, parking); knowledgeable guides
Complementary Activities	Availability of other experiences and attractions, including other trail types and events
Safety	Clear trail heads and signage, access to maps and digital apps, well-constructed and maintained trails, minimal user conflict (unidirectional, single use, restricted numbers)
Diversity	Trails that cater to all ages and abilities (beginner to advanced) and degrees of difficulty; and cater to different physical and mental challenges

4.0   ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF TRAILS IN THE GREAT SOUTHERN

Each trail user group was invited to imagine what trails would look like in 2040. Participants were encouraged to think about what would be different about trails and trail use in the future. **All groups imagined a future in which well designed, constructed, and maintained trails catering to the needs of diverse trail users would be connected across the entire region.**

Three key issues emerged out of their discussion of the future: the impact of technology, environmental pressures, and the need for strong community involvement. Technology featured strongly in all the discussions (see Table 2).

Table 2: Impact of technology on trails

Description	Example
Improved access	• Current technologies such as e-bikes, handcycles and gophers would give the elderly and people with health issues or disabilities greater access to trails; • Technologies would emerge that open opportunities for trail use in new locations (e.g. deep water, in the air), new times of day (e.g. night time), or would enhance trail use by better managing weather and climate (e.g. cold resistant wetsuits); and • Virtual reality would change the way people access trails.
Improved management	• Trail monitoring indicators could be captured by trail users; and • New technologies could emerge that would improve our ability to manage the environmental impact of trails and improve access to remote wilderness areas.
Improved safety	• Personal safety devices will improve trail experiences and emergency management; and • Smart design has the potential to improve trail construction and maintenance.
Information/interpretation	• Improved access to information and interpretation (e.g. maps, interactive trails, digital apps) will improve user experiences of trails.

Many of the groups identified environmental pressures as a key concern for future trail users. Climate change, increasing urbanisation, and environmental degradation would lead to increasing demand for the types of natural and wilderness experiences that trails provide. This would put pressure on existing trails and require greater attention to ongoing management and maintenance.

On a positive note, growing environmental awareness could lead to opportunities for trail users to get involved in conservation activities. Strong community ownership would lead to partnerships between trail user groups and land managers, better acceptance of all trail users, and a more engaged trail community. The health benefits of trails would be acknowledged and well promoted.

5.0   WHAT TYPES OF TRAILS DO PEOPLE WANT TO SEE IN THE GREAT SOUTHERN?

Having considered the features of the world's best trails, and imagined the future of trails, workshop participants were then asked to 'Wave their Magic Wands' and design their ideal trails and trail networks. Their responses were creative, innovative, and passionate. Many provided specific examples of potential trail routes and networks (see Appendix A).

One of the overwhelming themes to emerge from the workshop is that trail users want planning to focus on the 'whole user experience' rather than just one trail or trail type. They want:

- trail activities to be linked to other experiences;
- a diversity of trails that meet the needs of different user groups (activity type, age, ability, etc);
- improved connectivity between trails, trails of different lengths, and looped trails;
- improved access to information and interpretation about trails; and
- well-designed, constructed and maintained trails that enhance environmental values.

The common features that they identified are listed in Table 3 (see next page).

6.0   SUMMARY

The interactive workshops revealed that trail users across the region share a common vision:

> **They want well built, environmentally sustainable trails that cater to a diversity of trail experiences.**

This vision needs to be at the forefront of regional and local level planning as we begin to develop a comprehensive Regional Trails Master Plan.

The ideas captured in the interactive workshop could form a set of draft principles or framework upon which future master planning takes place. These principles are:

1. Trail information needs to be easily accessible in multiple formats.
2. There should be consistent and clear trail signage across the region.
3. New and existing trails need to be connected to identified trail hubs through loops and networks. These hubs should cater to different trail user groups.
4. New trails need to be built using best practice design and knowledge, particularly in relation to environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation.
5. Existing trails need to be monitored and maintained to the highest standards.
6. User safety and service support needs must be incorporated into trail and trail hub design.

The next step will be to go back to the community through a comprehensive program of community consultation to:

- Test and affirm these principles; and
- Identify specific trail locations and networks that will meet the needs of different user groups.

Table 3: What types of trails do you want to see in the Great Southern?

Area	Description
Information provision	• Better signage, including in multiple languages • Consistent and clear colour coding of trails (by type and ability) consistently across the entire region • Well-developed trails website with links to apps • Interpretation, including links with cultural experiences (art trails) • Public notice boards/digital noticeboards
Connectivity	• Linkages/connections between trail centres/towns • Link different trails together through shared hubs (multi-interest options) • Multiple access points • Access to multiple land tenures (including private property) • Internet access on trails
Safety	• Well designed and constructed trails • Better access to safety information • Access to safety devices • Safe parking • Improved access for aquatic trails • Separate trail users where possible and promote share the path/etiquette information • Environmentally well managed (Dieback hygiene, weeds)
Diversity	• A variety of trails of different lengths • Graded to different abilities/accessibility • Variety of locations (diversity of landscape experiences) • Skills parks
Services	• Food, Water • Accommodation (bike accommodation, horse accommodation), Camping • Hire, Shuttles • Parking, Lock and leave facilities • Events • Club houses • Guides
Research	• Citizen science opportunities

APPENDIX A: WORKSHOP DISCUSSION – RESPONSES BY TRAIL USER GROUP

Trail Activity Group	Where are the world's best trails for your activity?	What makes them the best?	It's 2040: What kind of trails do we need and what will be different about the way people use trails?	If you had the power and resources to build the best trails here in the GS, what would you build? Wave Your Magic Wand!
AQUATIC				
SNORKEL, DIVE AND OPEN SWIM	Ningaloo Great Barrier Reef Caribbean Hawaii – Hanauma Bay	• Diversity • Pristine • Clarity of water • Quality/access of trail • Availability of tours • Logistics • Access, availability of other experiences • Cater for all ages/abilities • Connecting aquatic trails to other activities • Safety • Facilities – gear hire, accommodation	**DIVE:** • Night drops • Breathing technology improvements • Shark deterrent technology • Underwater drone • Underwater scooters • Wetsuit technology • New trails accessibility • Dive computers **SNORKEL:** • Snorkel technology improvements • Better quality masks • Safety improvements – GPS tracking • Virtual reality options **SWIMMING OPEN WATER:** • Improved access • Improved wetsuits to withstand cold • Shark deterrent • Personal safety devices	• Identify key areas for snorkel trails – William Bay, Elephant Rocks, Greens Pool • Signage (languages) and interpretative/interactive apps • Colour code trails consistently across the region • Links to other trail types – walks/bikes • Businesses supporting trails - gear hire, transport • Value adding – cultural, environmental, cultural, educational, (TO) • Safety devices and information • New trails and open water swim options • Variety of trails – different lengths, graded to different abilities/accessibility • Community buy-in • Self-serve gear hire and return • Well developed website with links to trails/apps • Focus on the whole experience – not just the trail activity > link to other sectors **DIVE:** • Greens Pool, William Bay, Wreck in Albany, Reef Survey tourism, combining social/rec dive with research/survey/data collection **ADVENTURE SWIM:** • Point to point • Island circle • Variety of lengths and skills • Variety of locations in GS (eg. Beach, reef, offshore, inlet)

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KAYAK/PADDLE	Freycinet Coromandel New Zealand The Franklin The Barron River South Coast British Columbia Northern China (Natali National Park)	• Pick-up/drop-off (end to end) • Wildlife interactions • Scenery • Remoteness • Facilities/amenity • Knowledge of local guide • Safety • Unique • Quirky • Service	• Connections with nature • Opportunities to access • Conservation • More info at hand • Well serviced • Safety • Technology	• Diversity of experiences • Well promoted • Great facilities • Food and drink offering • Accommodation • Activation of rivers • World class • Club development • Interpretation on buoys • Geo trails • Storytelling • Interpretive, Indigenous and nature stories • Floating and submerged art • Launch points with facilities • Emu Point to Two Peoples Bay with stay over night

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BRIDLE				
EQUESTRIAN/HORSE RIDING	USA Snowy Mountains Mustering routes/droving routes	• Scenery, cultural experience, history • Welcoming • Other activities/events associated with equestrian	• Network of horse accommodation (pony clubs/showgrounds) • Themes: • Lighthorse ANZAC • Learning about nature/interpretation • Partners – Albany Natural Trailriders • Infrastructure • Environmental protection/promotion of best practice (eg. Dieback, weeds) • Using the periphery of the Fitzgerald River NP and Walpole Wilderness	• Expand trails to different localities and styles – along rivers, private property, stock routes • Expand the trails between Little Grove to the Hay River, through Muttonbird • Doubtful Islands/Qualup Homestead • Historic Camballup Moriaty Stock Ride (Mt Barker – Walpole) • Multi or single use trails through bush, coastal, views, historical and environmental interpretation and signage • Accommodation (horse and rider), parking and transport • Branding and different degrees of difficulty with links across the southwest

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CYCLING				
BIKE PACKING & ROAD CYCLING	France Italy Germany Cambodia New Zealand Margaret River Tasmania	• Nature scenery uniqueness • Physical/mental challenge • Local culture and history • Nature • Business shuttles • Acceptance, understanding, attitude • Food/hospitality • Technology/apps/maps • Infrastructure accessibility • New experience	• Ebikes with charging stations • Courtesy • Dispute resolution • Safer main/regional roads • Maintenance/construction techniques • Community ownership • Fully funded • Better planning • Connectivity • Climate difference	• Marked, mapped, marketed and branded trails • Promo videos/media • Loops off Munda Biddi Trail and huts • Stirling Range NP Bike Packing Route • Trail design and slow points • Bike focused accommodation and other businesses • United cycling voice • Money shot points • World famous downhill track at potato paddock • Foreshore cycle path • Ambassador for local area • Sanctioned xtrail network • Trail use separation • Exhibition/exposure event • Share the path/trail etiquette • Extension of Munda Biddi to Esperance – new brand/section • Packs and shelters with lock and leave facilities • Regional routes • Upgrade existing • Tourism attractions • Conservation activity • Trails – coastal, mountains, historic, 10 great rides •
MTB DOWNHILL, GRAVITY ENDURO	• Whistler, Canada • Rotorua and Queenstown, NZ • Europe – France • Tasmania – Derby and Maydena • Alpine NSW and Victoria	• The better the trail is, the better it is! • Diverse experiences (DH, XC, Enduro) • Facilities and infrastructure, showers, bike wash • Range of difficulty, variety of options to trail heads for gravity and flow	• Access to high points (chairlift/gondola) • Handcycling, wheelchair accessible • Access to wilderness, Porongurups/Stirlings • Advanced trails to allow for improved skills in life-long MTB users • The Munda Biddi to finish in Albany as a dirt trail not a road ride	• Skills park • Trails mix of natural technical and flow trails • Shuttle transport for downhill and endure • Hold international events • Jump tracks – diverse skills, beginners – advanced with big berms, rock gardens, large jumps • One venue that has multiple gravity trails • First class trails to accommodate high level riders • Club house facility at major trail venue • Gondola to top of Bluff Knoll or Castle Rock • Epic trail – Muttonbird to Sandpatch

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		• Variety of trail options – green, blue, black	• One venue with multiple DH and endure lines – 8 descents or more that is car/bus shuttle • Expression Park – a place where people can build trails/jumps	• Mt Elphinstone • Epic Trail – Mt Hallowell, Mt Lindesay • Gravity association to coordinate trail/event development • Access to Gull Rock NP, trails on Mt Martin with boat access across Emu Point • Mt Clarence, Mt Melville (black and blue on hill and green on rehabilitated tip site) • Pump track/dirt jump park to practise close to town
MTB – XC	Tasmania New Zealand Wales Canada Scotland North America South Africa (not so well known) Alice Springs	• Infrastructure – support from businesses eg transport • Scenery • Terrain/topography – elevation! • Easy access • Visitor friendly, community support • Population size? • Diversity of other attractions e.g. Queenstown • Linkages between trail centres • Highlighted/involved in high profile events	• Environmentally friendly • Highly connected • Power access, apps, friendly, phone coverage • Ebike friendly • Link to major towns via trails • Rail trails • Clear demarcation of trails of different levels • Trails for disabled people • Greater appeal to global visitors • Greater diversity of trails – short, long, etc • Better acceptance of all trail users	• Encourage access to private property, diversity of tenure • Interpretation centres and stop off points • Extend trails • Alternative trails (wine) • New loop trails • Ocean side and mountain trails • Diversity of attractions, elevations, terrain, scenery • Infrastructure and transport access, links to city, Linkages between trail centres • Visitor friendly community, support • Quality trails with drainage and environmentally sustainable, year round usage • Diversity of trails, short, long, looped • End of Munda Biddi trail in Albany should be a trail or pathway, not a road ride • Not blue metal trails! • Mixed levels • Not too much sand – surface that will hold up • Good drainage • Can use all year round • Major hubs in Albany, Denmark and Mt Barker • Ready access to trails from the city via free shuttle service for locals and circular/looped trails of all levels • Multiple access points to network of trails that are distributed over the geographical area

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				- Access to a diversity of land tenure - Encourage private landowners to offer access across their properties/facilitate access to /across private land - Use of firebreaks? - Interpretation centres /stop off points strategically placed along parts of the trail - Sustainable trails - Wine tour on bikes 40 km in Torndirrup NP 20-30 km for each trail hub town 40 km around Mt Richard/Gull Rock NP - Suggested loops – Marbellup Loop (bluegum forests) - Ocean Beach Road – Wow Trail – Munda Biddi – Nornalup heritage trail - Torndirrup – Sandpatch – Muttonbird – Albany Town Centre * - Harbour crossing with bikes by barge - Emu Point to Mt Martin by barge – Gull Rock – Mt Richard – Matraya/Nanarup and back - Kalgan River – Ski club – Luke Penn (Parallel track) – Upper Kalgan bridge – down riverbank on otherside through private property - Willyung Hill Loop – linked to Lower King Loop - Stirling Range NP loops (Gnowangerup-Cranbrook) parallel endure/gravity trails - Pallinup River?

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WALKING/RUNNING				
BUSHWALKERS/HIKERS	New Zealand Europe UK Rocky Mountains Tasmania Kokoda Alaska France Spain (Camino) Canada England's Bridlepaths Great Southern – Fitzgerald (Hakea and Menang Trails) Stirling Range Porongurups Luke Penn Bald Head Stoney Head Peak Trail Swiss model of digital information	• Cultural heritage, natural • Wildness • Preservation systems in place (dieback) • Where nature is intact and in sync with land use and capability and purpose • Safety and systems in place – designated trails, history • Interpretation and signage, planning, maintenance, genuine and meaningful consultation • Minimise user conflict • Pick-up and drop-off • Different physical abilities • UK > range of trail types within a region • Variety of scenery, landscapes, seasonal changes, history, points of difference • Quality of maintenance*: • Good accurate signage • Effective protection (one way, numbers, closed to protect) • Ensure that trails are sustainable to maintain values, culture,	• Don't be dazzled by fads and fashion • Importance of walking • Connectivity – internet and nature* • No need for hard signage (technology) • Multi-option – triathlon model, multi-activity • Peer to peer policing of users (e.g. ring the bell) • Whole of community/society engaged* • Social media presence • Electric cars and segways, 4WD gophers • Increase in order users – disabilities, more leisure time • Seeking wildlife and natural experiences (untouched and rare species) due to less habitat and less nature animals and birds • Variety of experiences – increased demand for crazy and multi-experiential trails • Build on our natural landscape and flora and fauna (it will be unique and rare) • Adventure focus (air trails, drone navigation) • Cultural/environmental linking opportunities – Gondwana Link, Extend Bibb to Esperance • Indigenous cultural interpretive trails that are owned and managed by indigenous community – stories on apps?	• More long distance trails with loops and stopover points • Albany aged population – walkers • Stirling Range Ridge Walk formalised – quality is important • Linkages between Shires (on and off road) • Inland trails, • Noongar engagement – Gondwana Link • Connectivity – internet!! • Guided walks • Interpretation options – signs, apps, link with nature groups, trail groups, local history, info about farming and land use • Keep trails off roads • Famous nature values – protection and knowledge • Short trails – daily use (public health) feeding into looped with long trails • Torndirrup walks extended with loops and linkages • West Cape Howe – extend Bib track • Destination focused • Multi-interest options – walking with kayaking, hiking and cycling • Guided walks in nature • Planning for maintenance – environmental resilience, indigenous engagement • Social hospitality needs to be improved (extended hours) • Walking groups promoted (visibility, communications, technology, social media) • Amazing South Coast – tap into • Understanding the users – visitor and local • Publicity – community notice boards and easy to use and access

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		environment, some need to remain less well known • Weed maintenance • Clean maintained toilets • Water refilling stations • Safe parking • Up to date interpretation and signage • Parameters that manage glow/cap numbers • Maintain the allure which inherently creating long-term demand	• Account for and modify trails to protect from climate change (e.g. need additional shade) • Profession • More people in region demands digital technology – incorporating into trails • Comprehensive development of road systems that accommodates caravans, buses, cyclists, hikers, road trains	• Coastal trail connecting Walpole to Esperance incorporating digital technology and restoring significant ecological and cultural sites • First step – look at what is already there – reassess and look for gaps so that existing ones are maintained, managed or scrapped • Board-walk trail – climbing frame trail that gets up to Mt Adelaide from Middleton Beach • Safe, environmentally responsible trails network across region • Economically, environmental and socially sustainable trails • Loop trails to get people back to their start and access points that are well serviced and 5 star • More trail heads with facilities and transport services • Amazing accommodation on trails • Links to Gondwana trail* • Tourism infrastructure in the Porongurups • Decentralised network out of Albany • Use the community support in little towns • Time-constrained "Feature Loop Trails" • Aspire to include a diversity of landscapes and activities (coastal, heritage, mountains, wine based, cultural) • Arterial access to Albany but build the trails network to the east – small town based hub trails connecting all existing towns, link to them and promote their unique attributes • Kalgan Trail – expand and upgrade – large / small vehicle parking and access • Multi day looped and point to point trails • Stirling Range to huts, Red gum pass – use the firebreak trails but upgrade and have maps • Multi-day trails that are walk only trails • Bibbulmun to Jerramungup-Ravensthorpe-Esperance

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				- Or a separately branded trail from Albany to Esperance offering options to Stirlings, and various small towns, beaches, cultural sites and accommodation - Time-constrained – short distance trails with focus on identity spots, kids, elderly, disabled, prams - Appropriately prepared road access and system must have turning points for coaches and safe pedestrian drop-offs and parking - Distance and time guides on signage - Small circuits for half hour walks for all abilities - Digital technology and connectivity; app based guides - Review existing trails and look for gaps in provision - Dedicated walker only trails on Mounts in Albany - Build on natural landscapes, flora and fauna - Understanding user's needs – local and visitor - Trade ready tour operators with packaged tour products (accomm, transport, food and wine) marketed internationally. These products provide tour experiences for one swipe card payment
TRAIL RUNNING	Glow worm Victoria Tasmania NZ Larapinta Vic Alps West Coast US – Canada, BC, Rockies French Alps – Italian - Swiss	- Underlying infrastructure - Amazing natural features/scenery - Existing service providers - Accessibility for target demographic (e.g. transport to hub) - Local knowledge - Point of difference – mountains, technical trails, event - Variety of trails available (length and difficulty)	- Interactive trails – depending on trails – for different users - Sense of 'escape' sense of challenge – achievable depending on what levels - A variety of trail surfaces - Smart design – access to water, access to charge points, Info on routes	- Dream Trail – no concrete, no people, not too well groomed (Variety of surfaces) - Transport options to trail head and support - Scenery and bragging points - Different access points - Loop options, different distances - Variety of gradients - Good dieback hygiene at all times - Really liked stacked loop model – variety is the key - Opportunity to engage with other trail activities (MTB, snorkel, SUP, hike, surf) for families - Mt Hallowell - Wilson Head - Torndirrup - Mt Martin - Walpole - Multi and single day events, multi activity events

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				• Potential for multi activity events similar to Augusta • Any trail construction done to minimise/negate impact by runners • Educate runners at trial heads on minimising environmental impact • Infrastructure, landscapes, service, transport, point of difference, local knowledge – make good trails • Sense of escape and challenge