

Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

Summary of Community Consultation Methodology and Outcomes

In the development of the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP), GSCORE employed a range of different methods to maximise engagement opportunities.

Phase 1 (February – May 2019): Capturing Community Aspirations

The aim of this phase of the project was to inform the community about the project, collect ideas and suggestion for potential trails, and identify any community concerns about trail development.

Method	Description	Outcome
Community workshops	<p>We facilitated 15 community workshops across the region. These were promoted by local government and other stakeholder groups in newspapers, newsletter and on social media. 184 people attended the workshops, including residents, Noongar Elders, community organisations, and outdoor enthusiasts.</p> <p>An open community consultation workshop was not held in the City of Albany as the RTMP aims to align with the existing Albany Trails Hub Strategy. Community consultation was already taking place on three key trail projects in the City of Albany in 2019 and the Stakeholder Reference Group was concerned that additional consultation on the RTMP could lead to community fatigue or a community backlash about ‘over-consultation’. We took this feedback on board and developed an alternative strategy that included meeting with Albany-based trail user groups and clubs to review the Trails Hub Strategy. A significant number of Albany residents completed the online survey and attended the 2019 Trail Forum.</p>	<p>This phase of the project resulted in the collection of 250 separate trail ideas.</p> <p>Trends and recurring ideas were clear by the mid-point in this phase of the consultation. We are therefore confident that we reached saturation point in relation to the open-ended responses for input into trail ideas.</p>
Online Survey	<p>An online user survey was widely promoted via Facebook, on the GSCORE website, and at community workshops. 367 responses were received.</p>	

Phase 2 (June - November 2019): Ground truthing

The aim of this phase of the project was to collect feedback on a longlist of trail proposals and seek community input into trail design and management issues.

Method	Description	Outcome
MCA Assessment workshops	We facilitated 6 workshops across the region. The purpose of these workshops was to review the longlist of trail ideas generated through the Multicriteria Assessment (MCA) process. We invited representative groups from a diversity of organisations to participate in the MCA review. This included land management/landcare groups, trail managers, business organisations, tourism marketing organisations, heritage groups, arts and cultural groups, and recreation user groups, as well as traditional custodians. A total of 71 people participated in these workshops.	This process reduced the shortlist from 80 to 11 proposals. Forum proceedings provided insight into trail experience development.
Great Southern Trail Forum	As part of the Great Southern Trail Forum held in Albany on the 2 August 2019, we organised a workshop session to collect community feedback on: What are the barriers to using trails?; How do we make trails more inclusive?; and How do we ensure that trails deliver strong health benefits? 100 people from across the Great Southern region attended the Trail Forum and contributed their ideas to the discussion. The forum proceedings are available on the GSCORE website and were circulated to all participants via email.	
Expert Trail Consultants	Three expert trail consultants were recruited to develop "Trail Activity Plans" for the RTMP. These consultants conducted additional community and stakeholder consultation sessions throughout the region as per their brief.	
Community Values Workshops	We conducted a community values workshop in Denmark to examine the values associated with the Mt Hallowell trail proposals. We invited representative groups from a diversity of organisations to participate in the values workshop. 17 people attended. An offer to undertake a similar workshop in the Porongurup community was rejected. Instead, the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group organised a panel discussion on the RTMP and a GSCORE representative was one of the six panellists. Approximately 100 people attended this forum.	Understanding of community values associated with trail development, with specific reference to Mt Hallowell. The workshop report has been provided to the Shire of Denmark (the land manager).

Phase 3 (December 2019 – January 2020): Broad-scale Community Input

The aim of this phase of the project was to collect feedback on the shortlist of trail proposals and seek community input into trail design and management issues.

Method	Description	Outcome
Public Comment	<p>We circulated the draft RTMP for public comment from 16 December 2019 to 19 January 2020 (35 days).</p> <p>In accordance with the directions of the Stakeholder Reference Group, each local government was responsible for promoting the public comment period and process in accordance with their existing public consultation protocols. This included placement of the notice on websites, posting on Facebook accounts, placement of flyers and posters on public noticeboards, and inclusion on resident or community newsletters.</p> <p>GSCORE also sought feedback from relevant groups and organisations via a direct email invitation. A number of these organisations also circulated the call for public comment via their membership databases (email or e-Newsletters) and on social media.</p> <p>GSCORE also promoted the public comment process via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • media releases to all regional newspapers and local radio stations • Facebook banners and posts • e-Newsletter – GSCORE database • e-Newsletter – individuals and groups who participated in stages 1 and 2 public consultation process; and attendees at the 2018 and 2019 Albany Trail Forums 	<p>The project website received 1578 hits during this period.</p> <p>We received 201 responses to the public comment process.</p>

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Methodology and Outcomes

GSCORE employed a range of different methods to maximise stakeholder engagement opportunities.

Target Group	Method
Funding stakeholders	All local government funding stakeholders are represented on the Stakeholder Reference Group, which has met every 4-6 weeks throughout the project.
Noongar Community	<p>The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) appointed an Aboriginal representative to the Stakeholder Reference Group. A representative of the Wirrpanda Foundation also sits on the SRG. These two representatives played an important role in helping to engage members of the Aboriginal community in the project.</p> <p>We recognise that the history of colonisation and disadvantage creates unique challenges when engaging the Noongar community, many of whom are unfamiliar with or unable to attend structured consultation workshops. For this reason, we have worked with the Wirrpanda Foundation to design alternative ways of engaging Elders and emerging leaders. In Tambellup, for example, rather than a workshop, we held a morning tea with Elders.</p> <p>In Albany, we organised a workshop with Deloitte and the Wirrpanda Foundation to explore opportunities for Aboriginal people to be involved in trail development. Elders and Aboriginal business owners were invited to the session. The workshop had to be postponed as a sign of respect to the local Noongar community who had experienced several deaths in the week prior to the scheduled workshop date. The workshop is rescheduled for 2020.</p> <p>We ran a 2-day trail building workshop in November 2019 and worked with local land manager, trail managers and Aboriginal business owners to offer free or subsidised places for Aboriginal people to attend.</p>
Elected representatives	GSCORE presented to the eleven Councils on the project and collected feedback from elected representatives. Briefings have also been held with Federal and State elected representatives.
Business and Tourism Groups	<p>Through the Stakeholder Reference Group, the project is engaging with business organisations and tourism bodies in the region, including Australia's South West, Great Southern Treasures, the Amazing South Coast Tourism Incorporated, Regional Development Australia – Great Southern, the Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Denmark Chamber of Commerce, all of whom are represented on the SRG.</p> <p>We also partnered with Fathom Co. to run a trail innovation workshop that involved individuals and organisations from the business, tourism and arts and cultural sectors.</p>

Publicity and Promotion

Social media	GSCORE and its partners have promoted the project extensively via social media, particularly Facebook.
eNews	An eNewsletter is distributed monthly. Individuals and organisations that completed the RTMP Online Survey and/or attended the 2018 or 2019 Albany Trail Forums were invited to subscribe to the eNewsletter. Of the 708 subscribers to the database, 477 were subscribed via these events.
Media Coverage	In 2019, 25 news stories or interviews appeared in local and state print media and on radio about the RTMP.