

SIXTH EDITION 2020

Revised and updated



KEY MAPVICTORIAN RAIL TRAILS







Walking, cycling and horse riding trails

SIXTH EDITION 2020

Alexander McCooke, Damian McCrohan

Previous editions: Vince Aitkin, Ray Peace, Stephen Lodge, Fiona Colquhoun





Rail Trails of Victoria

Sixth Edition, 2020 Published by Rail Trails Australia Inc, PO Box 2127 Oak Park Vic 3046 Illustrations by Chris Colguhoun.

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Rail trails are rapidly developing all over Australia. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this guide is as accurate and up-to-date as possible. We welcome advice of any changes, additions of trails and corrections for future editions. Please send feedback to the address above or email admin@railtrails.org.au

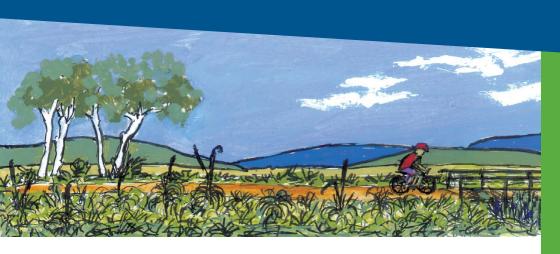
Disclaimer: Rail Trails Australia accepts no responsibility or liability for loss or injury sustained in using the trails described in this book.

Graphic design based on original designs by Scimitar, 370 Bay St, Port Melbourne VIC 3207

ISBN 978-0-9579759-3-6 (e-book)

Front cover: Cheviot Tunnel on the Great Victorian Rail Trail. ROSS VAUGHAN

INTRODUCTION



All over Victoria there are fabulous cycling, walking and horse riding trails along routes of former railway lines.

There are trails through tall forests, rich farmland, along the coast and through the hills. There are trails for people of all abilities and types of bikes: sealed paths, fine or rough gravel and undeveloped grass surfaces best suited to walkers and mountain bikes. Whatever your interest, there is a rail trail for you.

Plan your trail journey for a day, a weekend or a whole week of touring combining different trails across a region. Like the railways of the past, rail trails take to towns and places where you can eat, stay and explore. You can often make your journey a circuit, use local shuttle services, or organise your own car shuffle.

Rail trails are also places of cultural and natural history and conservation. Look for relics of railway past: examine the construction

of bridges, culverts and tunnels. Some former stations are now home to historical societies or other community groups.

The ecological value of railway corridors has long been recognised and has been a factor in government involvement in the retention of these corridors as public land. Rail trails are great places to see plants, birds and other wildlife.

All rail trails have been developed with local community support and effort.

They are wonderful community assets

for everyone to enjoy and are becoming important places in our hearts and minds. To do your bit to help rail trails, join Rail Trails Australia, local friends or land care groups.

Enjoy your journeys, become involved, share your experiences and continue to help the rail trail network grow!

Blue pincushions (Brunonia australis)

E-BOOK EDITION FREE SAMPLE

This is a free sample of Rail Trails Australia's Victorian Guide Book.

You can purchase the full book at www.railtrails.org.au

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This sixth edition of *Rail Trails of Victoria* draws on the previous editions, and is a minor update to ensure all existing trails are accurately portrayed.

A lot of this is due to the unending efforts of a relatively few volunteers (and some paid staff going beyond the norm) on many of the rail trail committees of management and Friends of Rail Trail groups. Please think of them as you enjoy our wonderful rail trail network.

Rail Trails Australia would like to sincerely thank again all those involved with the previous editions.

Maps

Most maps in this guide are based on the Road Network database, used with the permission of VicRoads. Melbourne metropolitan core mapping information is reproduced with the permission of Land Victoria, DELWP.

Photographs

Many thanks to everyone who provided photographs.

Thanks to Train Hobby Publications, the Australian Railway Historical Society (ARHS) Archives, the Puffing Billy Preservation Society (PBPS) Archives and the Port Dock museum for providing historical photographs.

Photo credits:

AM Alexander McCooke DM Damian McCrohan

FC Fiona Colguhoun

RTA Rail Trails Australia Archives

ARHS Australian Railway Historical Society Archives

PBPS Puffing Billy Preservation Society Archives

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TRIP PLANNING

When to go

The mild temperatures of spring and autumn are often best. Trails with less developed surfaces may be muddy in winter. Be prepared and carry plenty of water on trails when the weather is hot. Trails north of the Great Dividing Range can be very hot and dry in summer and are at their best in spring when wildflowers are in bloom. Metropolitan and southern rail trails are generally good all year round.

Trail Surface

The trail surface is particularly important for cyclists. Check our recommendation and take the most suitable bike. A mountain bike (MTB) will take you anywhere you want to go in comfort, especially if it has suspension. A hybrid bike fitted with knobbly tyres is also versatile. Few trails have surfaces suitable for road bikes, but metropolitan trails and any other sealed trails are usually fine for touring bikes.

Recumbents, tag-alongs and bike trailers may also have difficulty at road crossings on some trails where barriers have been placed to stop unauthorised vehicle entry.

For your Enjoyment and Safety

- Exercise caution at road crossings; young and inexperienced cyclists should dismount
- Carry sufficient water for the weather conditions to last between towns
- · Take light snacks
- Take appropriate clothing for the conditions and apply sunscreen in warmer months
- Cyclists and horse riders wear an approved helmet and ride in control
- Maintain your equipment and carry repair and first aid kits
- Let someone know your plans before you go
- Observe local fire restrictions and be particularly cautious on total fire ban days
- On bush trails, check occasionally for leeches when conditions are wet and take salt to assist in removing them
- Note that some trails have limited mobile coverage, although where coverage is marginal SMS can sometimes still be used

TRAIL USAGE LEGEND



Walking



Horse riding



Wheelchair access



Scooters



Cycling



Mountain bike riding



Prams



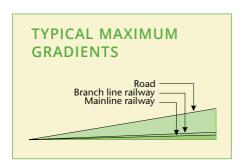
Tourist railway



Bass Coast Rail Trail. FRANK KINNERSLEY

Gradients

Although every rail trail is different, they all have one thing in common: gentle gradients. Trains are not good at climbing hills. Railways avoid steep gradients by contouring around hills, going through cuttings and over bridges. Some gradient profiles look steep but in reality they are never severe, except if the trail leaves the original railway alignment.

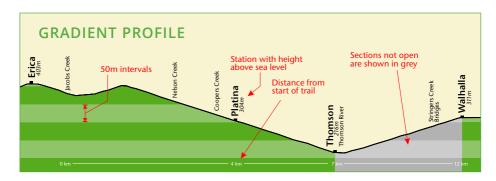


On most railways, the steepest gradients were 1 in 40, meaning the line would rise 1m for every 40m travelled. On narrow gauge lines such as the Beechy, the steepest gradients were 1 in 30. Railway grades are more gentle than those of most roads, which can have gradients as steep as 1 in 6.

Gradient profiles are great for trip planning. Walk or ride the trail one way; return by public transport or organise a car shuffle, or book a shuttle services where available.

Maps

The regional map at the front of the book shows highway routes to the trails. Map references in the book are from the VicRoads Country Directory and Melway.



TRIP PLANNING

TRIP PLANNER

To help you plan your day or weekend rail trail journey.

Trail Name	From/To	Dist. from capital	Length			
Melbourne Metropolitan Rail Trails						
Sandridge Railway Trail	Melbourne to Port Melbourne	0km	5km			
Webb Dock Bridge	Docklands	2km	0.5km			
Inner Circle Rail Trail	Rushall Station to Royal Park	5km	4km			
Hawthorn to Kew Rail Trail	Hawthorn to Kew	5km	1km			
Outer Circle Rail Trail	Fairfield to Hughesdale	6km	14km			
Rosstown Railway Heritage Trail	Hughesdale to Elsternwick	9km	7km			
Belgrave Railway Trail	Belgrave to Upper Ferntree Gully	40km	5km			
Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail	Lilydale to Warburton	40km	40km			
Powelltown Tramway Trail	Powelltown area	80km	43.5km			
Yarra Valley Trail	Lilydale to Yering	40km	7.5km			
Bellarine Peninsula Rail Trail	South Geelong to Queenscliff	75km	32.5km			
Red Hill Rail Trail	Merricks to Red Hill	90km	6.5km			
Gippsland Rail Trails						
Great Southern Rail Trail	Leongatha to Toora	130km	66km			
Port Welshpool Rail Trail	Welshpool to Port Welshpool	195km	5km			
The Tarra Trail	Yarram to Port Albert	220km	13km			
Bass Coast Rail Trail	Woolamai to Wonthaggi	130km	20km			
Noojee Trestle Bridge Rail Trail	Noojee to Trestle Bridge	100km	3km			
Moe - Yallourn Rail Trail	Moe to Yallourn	130km	8.5km			
Walhalla Goldfields Rail Trail	Erica to Thomson	165km	7km			
Moondarra Rail Trail	Moondarra	160km	7km			
Tyers Junction Rail Trail	Collins Siding to Tyers Junction	160km	11km			
Grand Ridge Rail Trail	Mirboo North to Boolarra	160km	13km			
Gippsland Plains Rail Trail	Stratford to Traralgon	190km	67km			
East Gippsland Rail Trail	Bairnsdale to Orbost	280km	94km			
Gippsland Lakes Discovery Trail	Colguhoun to Lakes Entrance	315km	17km			
Northern Victorian Rail Trails	·					
Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail (1)	Wangaratta to Beechworth and Bright	250km	97km			
Milawa Gourmet Trail	Wangaratta to Oxley and Milawa	250km	9km*			
Wangaratta to Whitfield Heritage Trail	Wangaratta to Whitfield	250km	48km			
Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail (2)	Rutherglen to Wahgunyah	300km	9km			
Great Victorian Rail Trail	Tallarook to Alexandra and Mansfield	100km	134km			
O'Keefe Rail Trail	Bendigo to Heathcote	150km	45km			
High Country Rail Trail	Wodonga to Shelley	300km	80km			
Western Victorian Rail Trails						
Old Beechy Rail Trail	Colac to Beech Forest and Crowes	150km	46km			
Camperdown to Timboon Rail Trail	Camperdown to Timboon	190km	30km			
Port Fairy Warrnambool Rail Trail	Port Fairy to Warrnambool	260km	37km			
Tiger Rail Trail	Forrest	200km	7km			
Ballarat – Skipton Rail Trail	Ballarat to Skipton	110km	54km			
Hamilton to Coleraine Rail Trail	Hamilton to Coleraine	302km	22km			
Grampians Rail Trail	Halls Gap towards Stawell	233km	11km			
The Domino Rail Trail	Trentham towards Woodend	85km	6km			
Great Divide Rail Trail	Wombat and Jubilee Lake	110km	8km			

^{*} Rail trail section

Trails described in this book are in regular type. Other trails mentioned are shown it italics. For further information on these trails visit **www.railtrails.org.au**

KEY ● = For whole trail ○ = For part of trail	Walking	Cycling – MTBs	Cycling – Hybrid Bikes	Cycling – Touring Bikes	Horse Riding	Wheelchairs and Prams	Train	Tram	Bus/Coach	Tourist Railway	Wineries Nearby	Page Number
Trail Name	Suitable for				Transport			Features		Pc		
Melbourne Metropolitan Rail Trails												
Sandridge Railway Trail	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•			2
Webb Dock Bridge	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•			5
Inner Circle Rail Trail	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•			6
Hawthorn to Kew Rail Trail	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•			8
Outer Circle Rail Trail	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•			9
Rosstown Railway Heritage Trail	•	•	•	•			•	•	•			13
Belgrave Railway Trail	•	•	•	•			•		•	•		15
Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail	•	•	•	•	•	0	•		•		•	18
Powelltown Tramway Trail	•											21
Yarra Valley Trail	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	24
Bellarine Peninsula Rail Trail	•	•	•	•	0	0	•		•	•	•	26
Red Hill Rail Trail	•	•			•						•	30
Gippsland Rail Trails												
Great Southern Rail Trail	•	•	•	•	•	•			•		•	34
Port Welshpool Rail Trail	•	•	•	•					•			39
The Tarra Trail	•	•	•	•					•			36
Bass Coast Rail Trail	•	•	•	•	•	0			•			40
Noojee Trestle Bridge Rail Trail	•	•	•	•	•				•			44
Moe - Yallourn Rail Trail	•	•	•		•		•					46
Walhalla Goldfields Rail Trail	•	•	•		•					•		48
Moondarra Rail Trail	•	•										50
Tyers Junction Rail Trail	•	•			•							51
Grand Ridge Rail Trail	•	•	•		•				•			53
Gippsland Plains Rail Trail	•	•	•		•		•		•			56
East Gippsland Rail Trail	•	•	•	0	0	0	•				•	60
Gippsland Lakes Discovery Trail	•	•	•						•		•	66
Northern Victorian Rail Trails												
Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail (1)	•	•	•	•		•	•		•		•	70
Milawa Gourmet Trail	•	•	•	•		•	•		•		•	76
Wangaratta to Whitfield Heritage Trail							•		•		•	76
Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail (2)	•	•	•	•		•			•		•	77
Great Victorian Rail Trail	•	•	•	•	0	•	•		•	•	•	78
O'Keefe Rail Trail	•	•	•	•	0		•					82
High Country Rail Trail	•	•	•	0	0	0	•		•			88
Western Victorian Rail Trails												
Old Beechy Rail Trail	•	•					•					96
Camperdown to Timboon Rail Trail	•	•	•		•		•					102
Port Fairy Warrnambool Rail Trail	•	•	•	•	0		•		•			106
Tiger Rail Trail	•	•	•	•					•			109
Ballarat – Skipton Rail Trail	•	•	•	•	•		•		•		•	110
Hamilton to Coleraine Trail	•	•							•			114
Grampians Rail Trail	•	•										114
The Domino Rail Trail	•	•	0						•	•		115
Great Divide Rail Trail	•								•	•		117



Bonnie Doon railway bridge. FRANK KINNERSLEY

Bikes on Public Transport

Bikes are carried free on suburban trains but avoid peak hours. Bikes cannot be carried on trams. For more information, visit Public Transport Victoria's website,

Country train services vary in their capacity to carry bikes. Locomotive-hauled trains generally have plenty of room in luggage vans. Sprinter and VLocity trains have limited space but can usually fit a few bikes. For more information, contact V/Line. Ph. 13 6196, www.vline.com.au

Bicycles cannot generally be carried on V/Line coach services.

Parks Victoria

There are state and national parks near many Victorian rail trails. For more information, contact Parks Victoria on 13 1963 or see www.parks.vic.gov.au

MAP LEGEND

Rail trail
Future rail trail
Trail continues on road
Other trail
Railway with station
Former railway

River/creek

Major/minor road

Unsealed road/4WD track

Café

Picnic area

Toilets

Parking area

Water available

Caravan park

Accommodation

▲ Camp ground

Winery

Sawmill site

i Information board/ Visitor information

RAIL TRAILS AUSTRALIA

Rail Trails Australia is a not-for-profit group, which works for the development and promotion of the rail trail network throughout Australia.

Our Victorian, South Australian and Tasmanian guidebooks, along with our website, introduce people to the concept of recreational trails created from former railway lines, impart some of their cultural and natural history and facilitate use of the fabulous rail trail network.

Our website www.railtrails.org.au has information on over 100 rail trails in all states of Australia. It includes news, updates, links and forums where you can share your rail trail experiences.

We also assist local groups to establish rail trails through a range of resources, including our Rail Trail Establishment Manual. One of the key issues is the long term management of rail trails as many committees of management rely on incredibly dedicated volunteers while visitor expectations continue to rise.

Your membership of Rail Trails Australia will assist us to help these committees.



In addition you will receive our *Connections* magazine detailing rail trail progress Australia-wide and overseas. Join at www.railtrails.org.au

We also encourage bequests as part of a 'Rail Trails Forever' program.

You can follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

KEEP UP TO DATE

with Rail Trails Australia's

CONNECTIONS

magazine

Join online at www.railtrails.org.au



USING AND SHARING RAIL TRAILS

Trail Etiquette

When using rail trails please respect the rights of other users, the natural and cultural environment of trails and the local communities who care for trails.

Sharing

- Respect others' rights for an enjoyable trail experience
 - be patient and friendly
- Keep left and do not obstruct the trail
- Cyclists: alert other users of your approach and pass others at walking pace
- Approach horses with care and move quietly near stock

- Park in designated areas where provided and do not block access tracks
- Leave gates as you find them
- Observe local signs and regulations, eg. restrictions on dogs

Environment

- Keep on the trail
- Native plants are protected and should not be disturbed
- Thoroughly clean bikes, walking boots and other equipment before and after your trip to minimise the spread of plant and animal diseases
- Take your rubbish home with you for recycling
- Minimise damage to unsealed trail surfaces by avoiding trails when they are wet and muddy





Left: Sharing the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail. DAVID HEALE

Opposite page: The former Sandridge rail bridge over the Yarra. AM















GIPPSLAND PLAINS RAIL TRAIL

Stratford to Traralgon

SUMMARY

Location: Gippsland, 190km east

of Melbourne

Distance: 67km

Surface: Compacted gravel

Suitable for: Walking, MTBs, hybrid

bikes and horse riding

Terrain: Flat

Environs: Farmland and bush

Other maps: VicRoads map

98 A4 - 85 C9

Public V/Line train to

transport: Traralgon or Stratford

Best seasons: All (some crossings

may be difficult after

heavy rain)

Status: Fully open except for

a 5km on-road section on quiet back roads, between Cowwarr and

Dawson

Features

This trail passes through prime agricultural land. Towards Maffra, the trail enters the Macalister Irrigation District, one of Victoria's premiere dairy farming districts. Views of the Great Dividing Range to the north are a feature along most of the trail.

Options

 The trail is unique in that it is served by V/Line train at both ends. Users can walk or cycle one way and return to their start point by train.

Start Points

Stratford: Apex Park by the Avon River.

Maffra: Macalister River Park, beside the Macalister River. A trail joins the rail trail beside the Macalister River road bridge.

Cowwarr: 50m west of the town on the

Traralgon-Maffra Rd.

Toongabbie: Corner of Stringer Rd and

Traralgon-Maffra Rd

Glengarry: old railway station, 200m

along Main St opposite hotel.

Traralgon: Marshalls Rd.

Top: Near Cowwarr. CHRISTINE RICHARDS



Toongabbie. GRAEME MOORE

Description

Stratford to Maffra

- The trail commences in Stratford's Apex Park, beside the Avon river. The trail goes under the busy Princes Hwy to a shared path on the Avon river road bridge. The first kilometre of trail runs beside the highway.
- The trail crosses the Maffra Stratford Road and goes up a steep ramp onto the original railway embankment.
- The trail runs beside the Stratford –
 Maffra Road for its entire distance.
 After 3km, at Powerscourt, there are
 remnants of the siding where sugar
 beet was delivered by horse and dray.
 It was taken by rail to the factory in
 Maffra.
- In Maffra, follow Johnson St through town. Maffra has backpacker accommodation and a local museum at the former sugar beet factory.

Maffra to Heyfield

• Leaving Maffra the trail runs beside the Traralgon – Maffra Road.

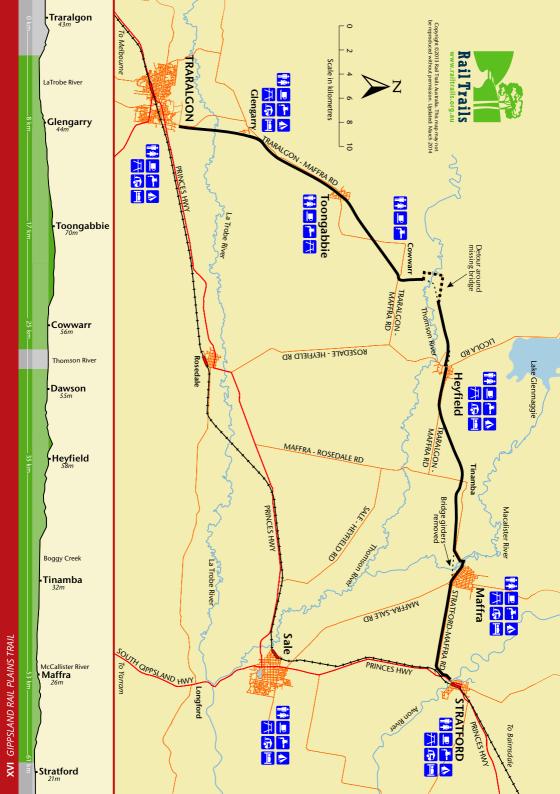
Heyfield to Cowwarr

 On the western side of Heyfield, the trail travels several hundred metres down quiet Racecourse Rd then continues over the Heyfield – Seaton Rd towards Dawson. The former Dawson Railway Siding is now a flora reserve.

- The Dawson to Cowwarr section is not yet completed. There is currently no rail trail bridge over the Thompson River. A signposted on-road route uses quiet back roads. The trail re-commences at the Cowwarr – Heyfield Rd. There is a bridge across the Rainbow Creek
- The trail continues a short distance into Cowwarr where there is a hotel and general store. The station platform can be seen 150m along the trail

Cowwarr to Glengarry

- As the trail continues south west toward Toongabbie there are gates at the busy Traralgon – Maffra Rd crossing.
- About 6km from Cowwarr the path crosses a deep gorge with stone walls and metal barricades. This is where the Fells Creek has eroded the surface to form a gorge over a fairly short time. The barriers were constructed in the 1950s to slow down the erosive progress. The Fells Creek starts in the nearby Great Dividing Range and flows under the trail.



- · The trail again crosses the Traralgon -Maffra Rd at this point and continues to a rest shelter at the site of Toongabbie railway station.
- Between Toongabbie and Glengarry the trail crosses Emu Creek. Crossing may be difficult after heavy rain. The adjacent road can be used, with caution, as an alternative route.
- Glengarry is a pretty town with a few shops, a park and picnic facilities.

Glengarry to Traralgon

- · This newest section of trail was completed in 2014. Three bridges across the Latrobe river and its floodplain have recently been restored for use by cyclists and walkers. There is a rail trail car park at Burnetts Road.
- · The trail finishes at Marshalls Rd, about half a km before the Princes Hwy.

Background Information

The railway from Traralgon to Stratford via Maffra was built in 1883. Sugar beet from Maffra and timber from Heyfield kept the line busy until the 1950s. The line was closed in stages between 1986 and 1995 and the rails were removed shortly after.



Locomotive J535 near Maffra, 1965. KEITH W. TURTON/ARHS

The trail reserve has significant remnant strands of native trees, shrubs and grasses. The Dawson Station flora and fauna reserve, between Cowwarr and Heyfield, has rare native grasses. A section between Cowwarr and Toongabbie also has rare native grasses along the trail reserve.

Further Information

- · Gippsland Plains Rail Trail Committee of Management RMB 4702, Maffra 3860. Ph: (03) 5148 9233.
- · Traralgon Visitor Information Ph: 1800 621 409.

