

A snapshot of the economic impact Rail Trails have on their communities

1. **Snowy River Cycling** – East Gippsland Rail Trail, based in Orbost, Victoria
2. **Esk Caravan Park and Brisbane Valley Rail Trail (BVRT) Motel** – Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, located in Esk, Queensland
3. **Cycling Vine Tours** – numerous locations, based in Brighton, Victoria
4. **Scottsdale Art Gallery** – North East Rail Trail, located in Scottsdale, Tasmania
5. **Bella e-bike hire** – located on the Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria
6. **Out There Cycling** – Brisbane Valley Rail Trail & Kilkivan Kingaroy Rail Trail, based in Toogoolawah, Queensland



Snowy River Cycling

East Gippsland Rail Trail

Business type: Cycle tours, cycling events
Established: 2009
People employed: 1 owner fulltime, intermittent casual staff equivalent to approx. two fulltime staff over the year
Business from the rail trail: estimated 15% during warmer months, 70% during cooler months



The Business

Snowy River Cycling offers a range of cycle tour experiences: self-guided tailored cycle packages along the rail trail (bike hire, luggage transfers, accommodation, return shuttle transport); fully guided tours, some of which include the East Gippsland Rail Trail and other rail trails; one annual 3-day cycle tour event on the East Gippsland Rail Trail, plus a small amount of day bike hire.



Economic benefits

The East Gippsland Rail Trail is core to the business; without it the owner would not have started this business. In developing Snowy River Cycling, the owner has created her own job and brought significant business to accommodation, dining and other businesses in the region.

Demand and interest in cycling along rail trails has steadily increased since this business commenced. Rail Trails are an outstanding example of how strategic government investment in a public asset can create a springboard from which small businesses grow and

generate enormous economic activity for their town and region: and they are nearly all regional trails. Continued support from the Victorian State Government, with ongoing maintenance and trail improvement, will enhance the user experience.



Future trends

The surge in popularity of cycling will continue to see this business grow. In 2021, with no overseas travel, it is anticipated there will be a dramatic increase in demand for cycle tours.

Rail Trails are an attractive cycling opportunity for the growing market of 'everyday' leisure cyclists (as opposed to sport cyclists). The 'Over 55' and 'family' tourism market are an emerging growth sector in this market. Rail Trails are therefore a particular 'brand' with immense appeal for this group. There is untapped potential in promoting this single 'brand' message for the benefit of countless regional areas.

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Esk Caravan Park & Brisbane Valley Rail Trail (BVRT) Motel

Business type: Accommodation & Tourism

Established: 1960's, current owners purchased in 2013

People employed: Fifteen = 7 full time, 6 casual, 1 contract, 1 trainee

Business from the rail trail: In 2018 estimated 12% of visitors linked to the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, 2019 estimated 25%



The Business

The Esk Caravan Park & Brisbane Valley Rail Trail Motel is located in the regional town of Esk, 90 minutes north west of Brisbane. The Property is beside Sandy Creek, which runs beside the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, a perfect base for cyclists. They offer powered, unpowered and ensuite caravan sites, motel rooms and cabins.

Facilities include fully equipped camp kitchens with an open fire place, BBQ's, pizza ovens, free Wi-Fi and live entertainment on selected weekends. Two heated pools for all guests together with 'The Sanctuary' adults only pool & spa.

Winning the coveted Caravanning Parks Association of Queensland 2020 Gordon Harris Turnaround Award acknowledged Esk Caravan Park's work developing their Property.

The BVRT is an important component to it's business growth with accommodation, hospitality provided and the local's that visitors meet along the trail contributing to a memorable and enjoyable holiday.



Economic Benefits

Esk Caravan Park & BVRT Motel is an active and engaged member of the community. They support the local economy with employment, community sponsorship & events. They host large travelling caravan and car clubs that contribute to the local economy and businesses. Collaboration with other local businesses helps the local economy. When Out There Cycling drop off their client's at Esk Valley Caravan Park who, in turn, make their way to The Grand Hotel for dinner the local economy wins. Somerset Regional Council identified an opportunity to increase tourism in the region when they purchased Mount Glen Rock, near Esk, to develop recreational facilities. The flow on from this development will assist with business growth in the area.



Future trends

Esk's proximity and easy access to Queensland's major and regional cities ensures Esk Caravan Park is well placed for organic tourist growth, especially in 2021 with Australian's "holidaying at home".

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Cycling Vine Tours

Location: Red Hill Rail Trail, Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail, Bellarine Rail Trail

Business type: Tour Operator – self-guided and guided cycle tours

Established: 2010

People employed: Two – Owner/Operators Allison Hatton and Libbie Geason

Business from the rail trails:

50% related to cycle route, 50% related to expert guides who are knowledgeable about the local area. Where possible Cycling VineTours tours utilize Rail Trails for a safe cycling experience. If there is not a Rail Trail, paths that are designated cycle walk paths are used and in the majority of cases these are extensions of the Rail Trail network.



The Business

Cycling VineTours is a boutique company offering leisurely cycle tours through Victoria's food and wine growing regions. Clients can enjoy local food and wine, cycle on idyllic back roads and rail trails past vineyards and local food producers, and along the way enjoy wine tasting at intimate boutique wineries away from the crowds.

Economic benefits

Prior to the global covid-19 pandemic Cycling VineTours business was steadily growing with increased tour bookings from both local, interstate and overseas clients. There has been demand for small and large group bookings. The use of online booking sites such as 'Get your Guide' and 'Viator' allow clients to easily find this company's tours and identify that it provides a safe cycle experience predominantly on rail trails with local guides. TripAdvisor reviews have also been a great way to promote its products.

As Cycling VineTours has grown, additional equipment for providing a unique cycle experience for our clients has been purchased including items such as bike trailers, helmets, pack racks.

Cycling VineTours support local businesses along the Rail Trails including restaurants, cafes and local produce stores.



Future trends

The company sees growth opportunity in both the guided and self-guided tour market. Clients are interested in a range of tours including single day 'beginner' cycle tours to the longer 2 or 3 day tours. The emphasis is always on experiencing the local region, fauna, flora and of course food and wine.



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Scottsdale Art Gallery Café

North East Rail Trail, Tasmania

Business type: Multi-faceted business comprising art gallery, custom picture framing, café, plus bike hire

Established: 2005

People employed: Two owners, one full time apprentice, two casual employees

Business from the rail trail: Income from the Rail Trail, bike hire and trails cafe lunches, etc. may be approximately 10% as at December 2019.



The Business

The business comprises a major Tasmanian art gallery, cafe, custom picture framing, Tourist Information Hub and bike hire.

Scottsdale Art Gallery Cafe showcases some of Tasmania's best artists with regular major exhibitions being held throughout the year. In conjunction with Arts Tasmania, they operate The COLLECT Art Purchase Scheme, an interest free loan program that enables visitors to purchase works by contemporary Tasmanian artists.

The Café provides a range of rich blends of coffee, tea and Belgium Chocolate together with lunches, cakes or treats - all baked on the premises.

The Café started hiring bikes in 2015 with 6 mountain bikes. In 2020 there were ten mountain bikes and three electric mountain bikes for hire to explore the North East Rail Trail, just 50 metres from the Café.



Economic Benefits

The Gallery is an accredited White I information hub, this is a positive and economic benefit enabling staff to share information and educate visitors about the region .

The benefits to the business are two fold, patrons who hire bikes also often stay for refreshments in the cafe, and those who bring their own bikes will stop off in the gallery at the beginning and or end of their ride.



Future trends

The business is looking forward to the establishment of the link between the North East Recreational Trail and the Scottsdale to Lilydale bike trail, estimated to increase business by 80-100%

The business has purchased a purpose built 12 bike rack which will increase current capacity to transport bikes and patrons from the top of The Billycock (26.2 kilometres from Scottsdale) and at appointed points along the Rail Trail.

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Bella E-bikes

Location: Bellarine Rail Trail

Business Type: Family business run as a sole trader operation

Year established: 2017

Number of people employed: Family members used (Part time)

Estimated percentage of business from the Rail Trails:

Approximately 30% of e-bike hires are to ride on the Bellarine Rail Trail



The Business

Bella hires e-bikes to the general public taking the bikes to where people need them. Having a total of 12 e-bikes, the business operates from a garage using it as the workshop and storage. Some customers collect their bikes from the business premises, but it is usual to deliver to the location where its customers want the bikes. Delivery locations include:

- Queenscliff, which is one end of the Bellarine Rail Trail, also where the Sea Road ferry from Sorrento docks
- Drysdale, the middle of the Bellarine Rail Trail and delivery here is included in the hire price
- South Geelong Station, which is the other end of the Bellarine Rail Trail and is a direct V-Line connection to Melbourne
- Portarlington, which is where the Port Phillip Ferries service from Docklands docks and is a 30 minute ride from a cluster of 7 boutique wineries and an award-winning distillery

An ancillary service is available for carrying riders, their bikes and luggage as required



Economic benefits

E-bike hire is a valuable enhancement to the activities and attractions of the Bellarine Peninsula. Significant local operators use Bella E-Bike Hire as part of the overall mix of local attractions. The ferry service from Docklands and B&Bs use Bella in this regard.

Bella was experiencing an effective 70% year-on-year growth in bookings but the bushfires then COVID stymied this trend. However a month-to-month comparison to the prior year indicated that the earlier trend was returning. Other businesses that have benefitted from having e-bike hire in the area include B&Bs with guests enjoying riding the bikes and returning again, wineries where riders have used the bikes as their means of transport, and cafes being visited during rides.

Future trends

The future is bright for e-bike hire on the Bellarine. Multi-use trails are being regularly upgraded and there are plans for new trails in the area. Connecting the Bayside Trail managed by Bellarine Bayside to the Bellarine Rail Trail near Queenscliff at one end and connecting the other end to the trails in Clifton Springs will provide a 40km loop off the rail trail. It could be expected that this will encourage some day visitors to stay overnight for the extra riding opportunities with a greater spend in the area.

For Bella E-Bike Hire there are many opportunities as the operation is currently a part-time operation with very little promotion of the service. Opportunities include:

- Guided tours around the local wineries and farm gates
- Packaging with accommodation
- Establishing commercial premises to simplify operations and allow more hires

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Out There Cycling

Location: Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, Kilkivan to Kingaroy Rail Trail

Business type: Cycling tours, bike hire, bus shuttles, luggage transfers, bike retail, servicing and retail outlet (2 store fronts)

Established: 2016

People employed: 6 - 2 full time bike apprentices, 3 part time trainees, 1 full time

Business from the rail trail: 80% business from the trail / 20% from local bike riders



The Business

The business caters for the needs of trail users by assisting them with all their riding needs. Clients are collected from one end of the trail, are shuttled to the other end, hire them a bike if needed, transfer their luggage, book their accommodation and anything else they require. Services are provided as required by the clients.

Economic benefits

The business has been able to employ local staff. In addition, through the transfer of riders, it has encouraged riders to stay in accommodation and eat locally while riding through each town. Other economic benefits are achieved through pointing out areas of interest that riders may like to stop and look at along the way, and assisting locals wishing to provide Air BnB type accommodation with what cyclists and trail users enjoy and need.

the whole trail and more about enjoying the experiences along the way. Furthermore, the business plans to share the opportunities that are available and the areas that need addressing, eg. more accommodation in certain towns, with others who wish to invest in the trail.

Other future trends that have been identified will be the need for more 'unique' accommodation as well as a bunkhouse style of accommodation, creation of authentic farm stays or visits to working farms, establishment of boutique breweries, introduction of history tours of towns and the stations along the trail, offering of boutique tours and rides, provision of long table lunches or dinners showcasing local produce, innovative quirky modes of transport along the trail.



Future trends

Future trends would be to provide boutique type tours, showcasing the best of the region, with less focus on riding



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