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# Council awards contract for Creswick Trails Network

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Hepburn Shire Council has awarded a contract to construct the 60-kilometre Creswick Trails Network to Australian company Dirt Art, a world leader in mountain bike trail construction.

Dirt Art has constructed mountain bike trails overseas and around Australia, including at Harcourt, the Grampians, Gold Coast, Thredbo and Tasmania.

“The 60 kilometres of mountain bike and shared trails will be an enormous drawcard for Creswick and our Shire, bringing with it a host of economic, tourism and employment opportunities,” said Mayor, Cr Brian Hood.



“As the venue for mountain biking at the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games, the trails will put Creswick and Hepburn Shire in the global spotlight,” he said.

“The trails will contain a variety of ride experiences and difficulty levels. We know there are plenty of people looking forward to trying out the trails once they are completed.”

The network's planning and design occurred throughout 2019-2021 in consultation with the community, multiple land managers, stakeholders and Traditional Owners, and received a planning permit in early 2022.

The Network's trails are mostly Green/Beginner (20%), Blue/Intermediate (42%), Black/Very Challenging (13%) and forest road (5%). Approximately 30% of these trails are designed and constructed to be adaptive and are suitable for use by hand cycles. Hammon Park on Water Street in Creswick serves as the trailhead for the Creswick Trails.

Works are expected to begin on the trail network in early 2023. Construction will take around 18 months.

An economic analysis over a period of 25 years, was prepared for the project and the report highlights these economic impacts:

- Attraction of regional and national events and the creation of new ones and capturing the domestic tourist post pandemic;
- Create 19 jobs during construction phase and an estimated 14 ongoing jobs post construction;
- Estimated additional 7,700 visitors to the Shire annually;
- The trails 2-3 day ride experience will increase overnight visitation, and there will be an estimated increase in the Shire's annual economic output of \$4M annually.

David Tannard, President of VOGA Cycling Club, said the trail network will have far-reaching benefits for the community.

“Mountain bikers will be over the moon the trails are progressing. Well-built and safe new trails will help people to ride in safety and comfort. Riders will be able to appreciate the area with minimal impact on the environment,” he said.

“The great thing about Creswick as a destination is there’s already so much infrastructure – there’s terrific cafes and restaurants, a supermarket, all kinds of accommodation, and public transport all very close to the trailhead. It gives people the flexibility to just jump on the train from Melbourne or Ballarat with their bikes and stay for a night or two.

“VOGA holds the Brackenbury Mountain Bike Classic competition and we will be able to grow these opportunities once the trails are complete. I think there will be a race to be the first person to ride the new trail!”

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