



Hoddle Mountain Trail Management Group
PO Box 90
Fish Creek
VIC 3959

Wednesday 17th May, 2017.

Dear Councilor,

Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today our proposal seeking Council support for the ongoing development of the Hoddle Mountain Trail and recognition of the Hoddle Mountain Trail as a major community asset.

This project is an attractive tourism feature that brings visitors to our towns and the region, along with the associated economic benefits. On a broader level, it provides health and recreational benefits and promotes awareness of the local environment and respect for the region's natural attributes.

The experience of walking the trail is one that can be enjoyed by locals and visitors and brings clear benefits to individuals and the community.

The Hoddle Mountain Trail Management Group is a community-based volunteer group working to further develop and maintain a community and economic asset for our region.

We hope you will support our proposal. We believe the benefits to the Shire are clear; they lie in the benefits to the broader community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Dargaville".

Richard Dargaville
President
HMTMG

The Hoddle Mountain Trail

Walking to discover South Gippsland

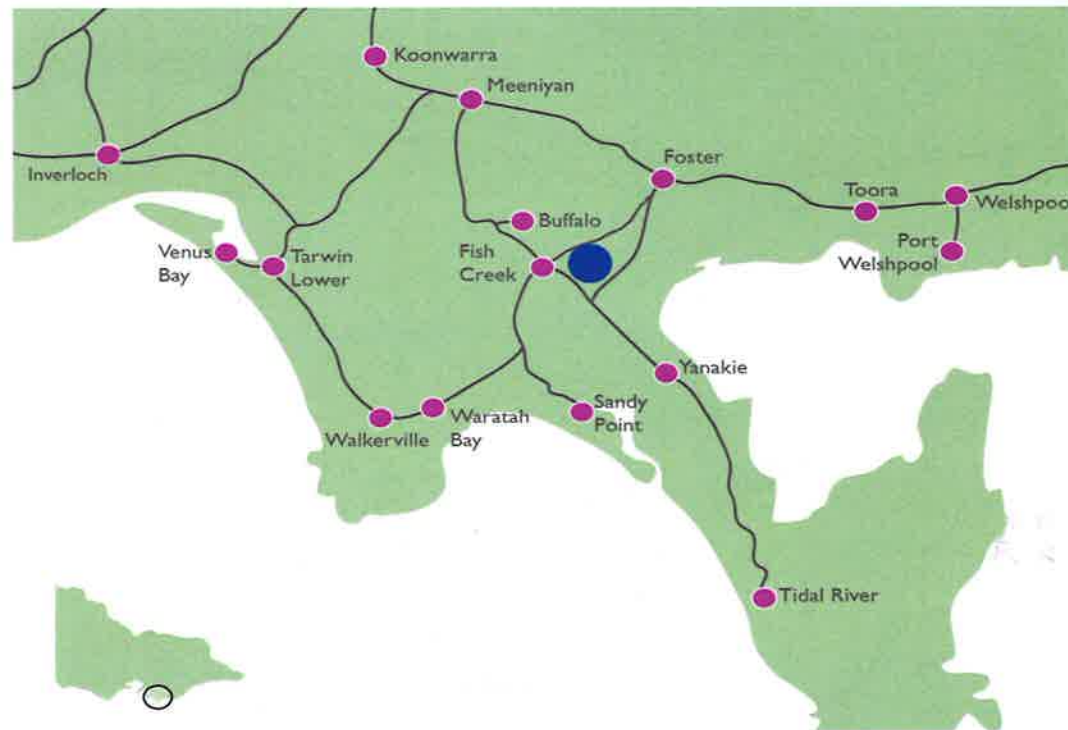


What we are seeking

- Further development of an asset already in use by walkers in the South Gippsland community and by visitors.
- That Council recognises and supports the Hoddle Mountain Trail as a worthy community asset.
- That Council recognises, supports and engages with the Hoddle Mountain Trail Management Group as the body that takes responsibility for improving and managing the Hoddle Mountain Trail as a community asset.

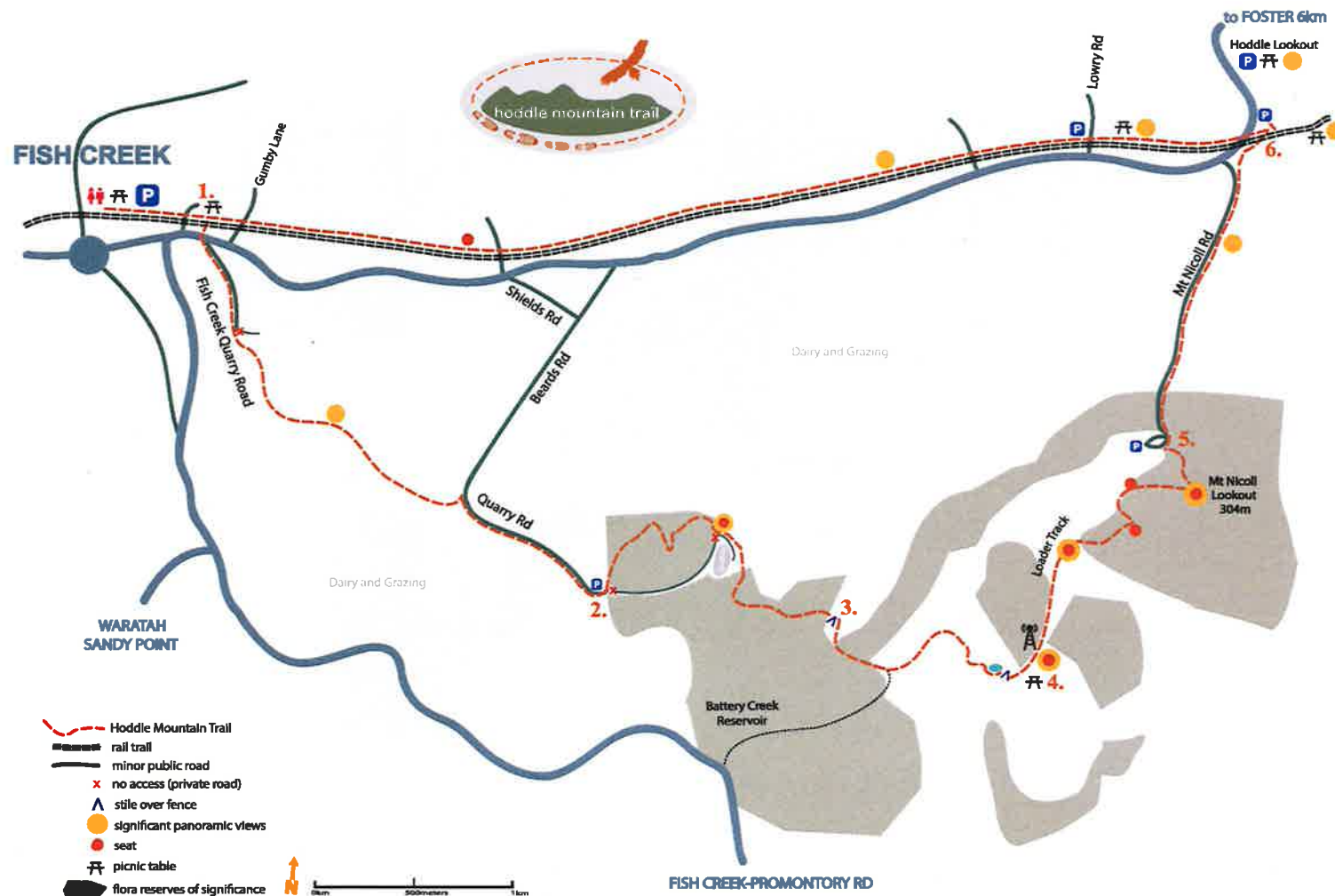


Locating the Hoddle Mountain Trail in South Gippsland

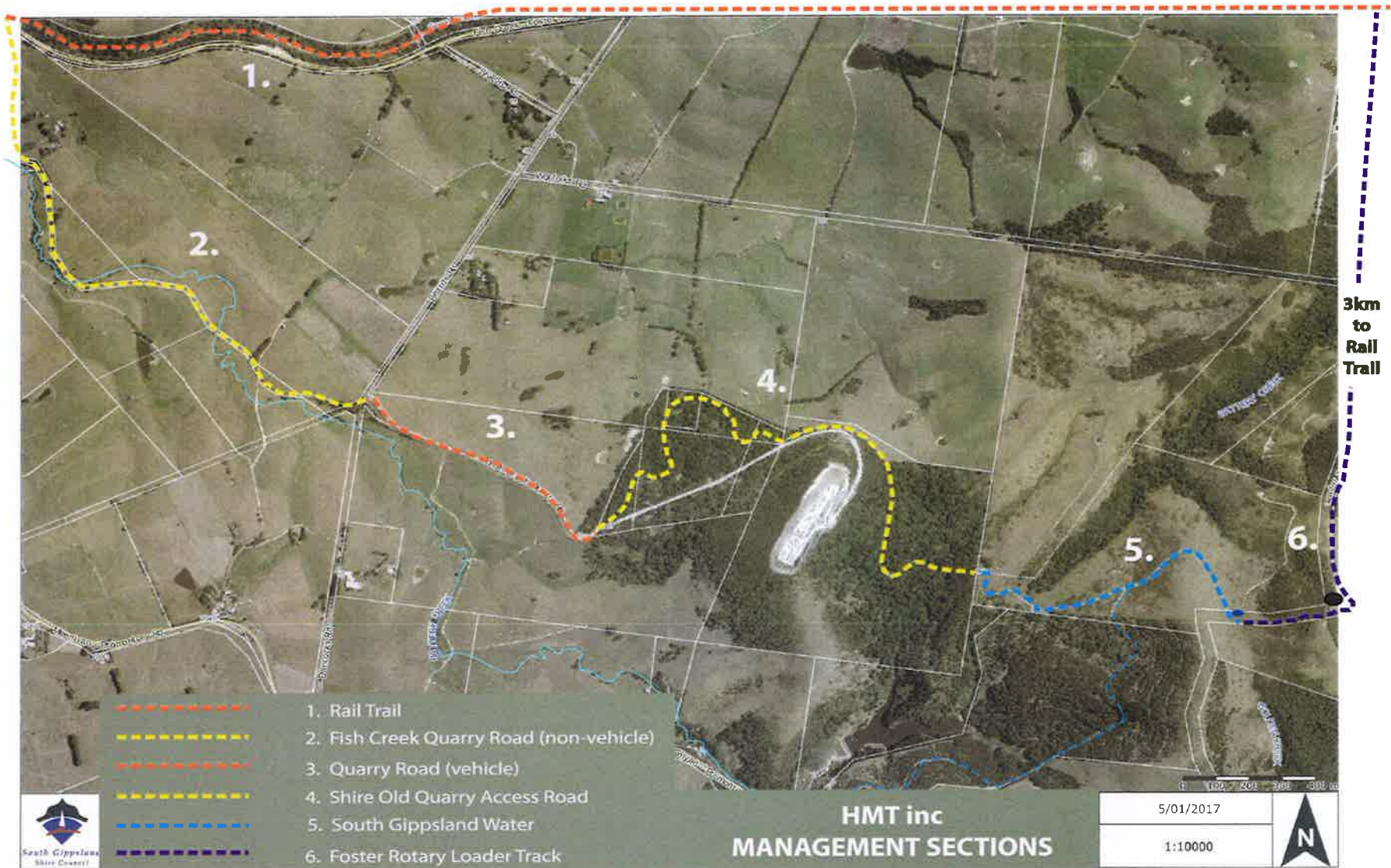


The Hoddle Mountain Trail

A 17-kilometre return journey from Fish Creek



.3 km from Fish Creek



The Hoddle Mountain Trail provides some of the **best views of Corner Inlet and Wilsons Promontory in the region.**



History of The Hoddle Mountain Trail

- Many decades of informal use.
- Well known to local residents.
- Now virtually all on public land.
- Past expenditure and volunteer work on some sections + wide local group & organisation support & involvement.
- Now ready to go.



Examples of environmental, rural & scenic landscape features encountered on the Hoddle Mountain Trial

- Displays the wide range of rural landscape uses in South Gippsland.
- Hoddle Range contains the **largest patch of native vegetation and habitat**, on private land, in the local rural landscape.
- The Hoddle Range is in the middle of the “**Strzelecki Lyrebird Link**”.
- Hoddle Mountain Trial passes through woodlands of **Gippsland Mallee** - a plant species of national conservation significance - and a diverse range of heathland, damp forest and temperate rainforest native vegetation types.



The Hoddle Mountain Trail Management Group

- Community-based, locally supported, incorporated & affiliated with South Gippsland Landcare.
- Based in Fish Creek.
- **Hoddle Mountain Trail Management Group's**

Vision:

Within the next five years, the Hoddle Mountain Trail Management Group will have led the way in improving and maintaining an outstanding community and economic asset for our region, offering recreational and economic benefits to visitors and the broader community.



The Proposal

- That the HMTMG be regarded by Council as principal “go-to” group on HMT matters.
- That SGSC considers bringing its section (3 out of 17 kilometres) of HMT up to a suitable standard.
- That SGSC to “hand over” HMT to HMTMG, with agreed, appropriate conditions, viz:
- That HMTMG maintains conditions to agreed standards (slashing, weed management, signage, safety oversight)



Land Ownership & Community Support

- Most adjacent land holders are supportive.
- Where there is concern (eg, 2 land holders), HMTMG believes it can be mitigated by signage outlining user standards - “no trespass”, “no camping”, respect for stock & farm property etc. - adequate fencing, cattle-management gates.
- Letters of support from local businesses.
- Petitions of support with >100 sign



Work & cost estimates

- Most of the HMT is in good order and managed by existing organisations (Foster Rotary, SGWB, Shire for road sections).
- SGSC cost estimates for:
 - Fencing & gates
 - Track surface in “boggy” area
 - Culvert repairs
 - Washouts & swales in gravel pit area
 - Tree trimming
 - Signage
- HMTMG will seek funds through all levels of government, private & philanthropic organisations to cover regular minor works - weeds, slashing, signage, trail maintenance etc.



Hoddle Mountain Trail Panoramic View 1. Fish Creek Section. Fish Creek Quarry Road.



Hoddle Mountain Trail Panoramic View 2: Fish Creek Section 2. “Old Quarry” track.



Hoddle Mountain Trail Panoramic Views 3: Fish Creek section 2. Access track to South Gippsland Water Land.



Hoddle Mountain Trail Panoramic Views 4: Foster Rotary section 4. Telecommunications Tower.



Hoddle Mountain Trail Panoramic View 5: Foster Rotary section 3. Loader Track.



Hoddle Mountain Trail Panoramic View 6: Foster Rotary section 2. Loader Track.





THE HODDLE MOUNTAIN TRAIL - TIMELINE

1880-90's Pre-Fish Creek township - popular walk used by the local pioneer community to walk along Battery Creek and up to the top of hill, know as Larry's Lookout (Owned by Larry Farrell) now called Lavers Hill.

1900 walk was colloquially known as Lover's Lane - very popular walk with young couples after Sunday Church. A number of seats were made from logs along the way for people to sit enjoy the view.

1900-10 Shire Council purchased the land now known as Quarry Road, making it an official road to ferry gravel from Lavers Hill to Fish Creek station.

1959 Fish Creek Community builds its own reservoir and applies to purchase the entire 450 acres of heavily forested catchment for £1000 to safe guard water and remnant vegetation and for walking etc.

State Gov steps in and stops purchase.

1986 Local Shire Councilor, Jack Symmons, first mooted developing the Hoddle Walking trail, sighting local and regional tourism/economic benefits.

1910-2003 Quarry closed in 1970's but walk continued to be used by local community.

2003 Local community comment about increasing walkers on Quarry Road and possibility of trail.

2003 The Hoddle Mountain Trail community project began in earnest in 2003 with discussions between the Fish Creek Development Group and local councillors and Fish Creek Landcare.

2004 The Hoddle Mountain Trail nominated as one of the most popular major projects during the town planning process (60 votes). **Community and all adjoining land holders consulted and support project.**

2004 a presentation was made to Council and support staff who supported the proposal and gave us their permission to commence the project and access Council land etc.

02/04/2004 Councillors donate \$1040.00 to seed the beginning of the project from their discretionary funds.

2006 an additional \$1000.00 donated from local community members. Project started with purchase and installation of new bridge for Battery Creek.

2006 The Foster Rotary Club has completed 2 kms of trail from the Mt Nicoll look out across the Hoddle Mountain Range.

2007 Co-presentation by FCCDG and Fish Creek Landcare to full, closed, council meeting re: project and its economic/tourism and social benefits. Council unanimously supported the project and gave us permission from various council departments (including legal) to continue accessing the relevant council lands working on the area as a community project. However, they stated that they would be happy to assist us with community grant applications but did not have sufficient funds to fund the project at this stage.

2004-7 FCCDG and FC Landcare worked with South Gippsland Water Authority, to purchase last section of land needed to complete the trail. Fish Creek and Foster community groups worked with Parks Vic, Greenfleet and other groups to strategically restore native vegetation on land adjoining the Hoddle Mountain Trail.

2007 South Gippsland Water Authority raised \$500,000.00 and purchased land to complete walking trail and revegetate the catchment for Fish Creek reservoir. (It took approximately 50 years from inception to reality).

2008 South Gippsland Shire Environmental Officer Mr. Chris Rankin's assessment of areas in and adjacent to the old Gravel Pits showed that they contained important remnant areas of native vegetation of high to very high regional conservation significance.

2010 References to Mt.Nicoll – SGSC Quarry Road circuit walk in **2010 Council Paths and Trails Strategy**

Extract from page 212 Listed as a "Regional Project"

REGIONAL PROJECTS											
Implementation Priority	Map	Initiative Objective	Facility Name	Facility Type	Works Required	Link	Responsible Authority	Est. Length	Preliminary Estimated Cost	Potential Non-Council Funding Source	Estimated Annual Maintenance Cost
IPS		CTR & O	J. D. Loader Walking Trail – Mt. Nicholl to Hammans Road	ORWP	Land clearing & creation of dirt walking tracks		REC	DSE	N/A	N/A	Note – awaiting Native Title Claim
IPS	S-E	O, RT & CTR	Mt. Nicholl – SGSC Quarry – Fish Creek – creating a circuit walk when incorporating The Great Southern Rail Trail.	ORWP	Gravel walking track on unused road and walk bridge. Fish Creek Quarry Road – Gravel Pits – Hoddle Road		REC	DSE	7km (12km Total circuit)	N/A	

Extract from page 233 "Project Objective"

Project Code	Initiative Objective	Facility Type	Project	Objective																			
				Strategic	Connectivity				Economic				Safety				People and Communities				Requirements		
				Sub- Objective																			
				Completion of local networks	School	Employment Sites	Recreational	Recreation	Public Transport	Mobile (off-site) vehicle parking	Impact on motor vehicles	Current Projects	Existing Safety	Pedestrian safety	Level of service	Recreation urban planning	Public Consultation	Local Plan	Endorsement of local groups	Acceptable design standards			
MT N1	CTN & O	CTN	J.D. Loader Walking Trail - Mt. Nicholl to Savages Rd	8	10	30	15	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
MT N2	CTN & O	CTN	MT. Nicholl - SAVAGES ROAD - Fish Creek - creating a direct walk which incorporates The Great Southern Rail Trail	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	

"Project codes Mt N 1 and Mt N2" "Priority 72" "26,500m length"

Quarry Road references: Pages 177, 212, 219

J.D. Loader Walking Trail – Mt.Nicholl to Savages Road references: Pages 176, 212, 220, 225

2006 to 2016 Local residents have maintained and improved the trail, installing Post and Rail Fences, Swill Gates and Farm Gates on Quarry Road and Old Gravel Pit sections. Community investment to date (including assistance from adjoining land owners). Fish Creek Landcare have donated time and materials for fencing, gates and weed control on Quarry Road section. Multiple Melbourne and local walking groups walked and rated trail - over 100 nights local accommodation and expenditure we know of.

2017 Total estimated Community expenditure to date : approximately, \$16,632.00 of direct or in kind community funds with only \$1040.00 of Council money used as initial seed funds. (@\$20 / hr)

Features on the Trail

- Geologically the Trail provides one of the best views of the diverse local landscape. The 120 million year old dinosaur aged rocks under Fish Creek and of the Strzelecki Ranges to the north, 400 million year old granites on the Prom and its islands, which continue for 500km to the south west coast of Tassie. Bass Strait views to a flooded coastline resulting from 120m rise in sea levels during the last 20,000 years following the end of the ice age.
- The Trail from Mt.Nicholl follows the tectonic uplifted Hoddle Ranges, an extension of the Liptrap Peninsula, with 400 – 500 million year old marine mudstone and sandstone, some of which contains blue-green turquoise! The Waratah Fault escarpment is still active and earthquakes are often felt locally.
- The Hoddle Mountain Trail provides some of the **best views of Corner Inlet and Wilsons Promontory in the region.**
- The trail displays examples of the wide range of rural landscape uses in South Gippsland, from dairy, beef and sheep farming, to rock extraction and a town water supply. It

provides views of more recent, diverse agricultural enterprises such as olive groves, vineyards and agoforestry – all parts of the economic success of the region.

- The trail provides unique public access to land owned or managed by Parks Vic (Harmon Reserve), South Gippsland Water Authority (Battery Creek Reservoir catchment) and South Gippsland Shire Council (Lavers Hill).
- The Hoddle Range is in the middle of the “Strzelecki Lyrebird Link”. This major biolink for wildlife has attracted hundreds of thousands of dollars of government funds, for revegetation through West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, South Gippsland Landcare Network, Greening Australia, and private funding groups such as Greenfleet, since the late 1990s.
- The trail passes through woodlands of Gippsland Mallee (*Euc. Kitsoniana*), a plant species of national conservation significance, and a diverse range of heathland, damp forest and temperate rainforest native vegetation types.



HODDLE MOUNTAIN TRAIL SIGNAGE

Aims

1. Safety and enjoyment of walkers on the trail.
2. Consideration of interests of adjacent landholders, including privacy, protection of property and stock.
3. Satisfying requirements of interests of relevant bodies, including South Gippsland Shire Council, Great Southern Rail Trail, South Gippsland Water.



Specific placement of signs

- Crossing from Rail Trail near Fish Creek (Rail Trail).
- Beginning of road easement 800m along Fish Creek-Quarry Road (a).
- Entrance to driveway to private property (b).
- Farm tracks crossing Fish Creek-Quarry Road easement (b).
- Two sites: Beards Road-Quarry Road corner, indicating alternate route to Fish Creek via Shields Road (d), and; point of entry into old Gravel Pit track lower Quarry gates (c).
- Junction of track to Telecom Towers and track to Fish Creek-Promontory Road (South Gippsland Water Board land) (c).

- Stile below Telecom Tower (on fence) (c).
- Telecom Tower (c).
- Junction of access track to Telecom Tower and track along Hoddle Range (c).
- Mt Nicoll car park (a).
- Access point to track down to Rail Trail, near beginning of Mt Nicoll Road (d).
- Point of departure to Hoddle Mountain Trail from Rail Trail, on Foster side of road bridge over trail (a).

Signs need to consider walkers proceeding in either direction, and on alternative circuit via Shields Road.

Typical signs

- a) Approximately 400 x 600 sign specifying direction, restrictions, keeping to track, respecting landholders and stock, and where appropriate, restrictions on parking (e.g., Fish Creek-Quarry Road).
- b) "Private Property No Entry" (approx.. 600 x 1.5).
- c) "<-HODDLE MOUNTAIN TRAIL->"
- d) Other signage, e.g., "<-Rail Trail" (for alternative circuit along Shields Road).

It is anticipated that signs would be black paint, with HMT logos, on white background on steel sheet, supported by one or two posts, as appropriate.

(Prepared by HMTMG May, 2017).

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