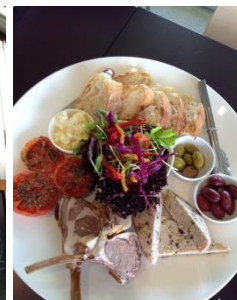


South Australian Rail Trails



The experience, lessons + opportunities...



Report by Sarah Hirst and Susie Bower

September 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the construction and management of the Riesling and Rattler Trails in the Clare Valley in South Australia.

Key Findings

- The name North East Rail Trail needs a rethink. The key comment was that it could be the North East anywhere in the world. The name needs to be easily identifiable as Tasmanian.
- The Clare and Gilbert Valley Council have designs signed off by an engineer to put concrete structures over the existing wooden bridges. This method saved time and money by not having to remove the existing bridge.
- The Clare and Gilbert Valley Council have access to the design of a structure that was towed behind a truck that made the crown of the trail. This allowed for the trail to be constructed quite quickly with excellent drainage to reduce ongoing maintenance costs.
- It might be possible to lay geo tech fabric to stop the ballast from rising to the surface, thus cutting down considerably on the cost of construction.
- Where possible bridges should only be pedestrian width which cuts down the cost of construction considerably.
- Drainage is a key component to identify and address before constructing the trail.
- Road crossings have very basic signage, just a give way sign. Very few road crossings, we only saw one that had chicanes.
- Quite a few properties had driveways intersecting the rail trail to access their home.
- The Friends of the Riesling Trail do not have a shortage of volunteers, often they have too many people wanting to volunteer and not enough for them to do.
- The Friends of the Riesling Trail receive \$20,000 per year from the State Government for maintenance.
- Marketing of the trail only consists of the website and brochures.
- Approximately 50% of people that use the rail trail are locals.

Conclusions

One of the key differences between the Clare Valley and the proposed Launceston to Scottsdale rail trail is that the businesses in the Clare Valley already existed and then the rail trail was put alongside the businesses, hence the rail trail became a value add to the businesses and from the people we spoke to it has strengthened the businesses but was not critical for their success. The challenge and opportunity for the Launceston to Scottsdale rail trail is the lack of product and businesses along the rail trail outside of the three main centres of Launceston, Lilydale and Scottsdale. There is a real need to enhance the opportunities for bike riders/walkers to stop between Lilydale and Scottsdale as for this target market 40-50km of riding without amenities or refreshments is not viewed favourably.

Recommendations

- Change the name of the North East Rail Trail
- Investigate and price the option of using geo tech material to keep the ballast from rising to the surface
- Walk the trail to identify where drainage points may be required

-Rail Trails are essential tourism infrastructure. If you don't have trails, you are behind the eight ball in tourism." -Clare Valley Mayor Allan Aughey

HISTORY/OVERVIEW

The Riesling and Rattler Trails are located 130km north of Adelaide in the Clare Valley, and were once part of the railway line from Adelaide to Spalding. It was built in stages between 1860 and 1918. In August 1983 the future of the railway was decided after many sections were destroyed by bushfire. In 1994, the section from Auburn to Clare became the Riesling Trail – the first South Australian conversion of a railway line into a recreational trail for walking and cycling. The trail was instigated by the Clare Valley Winemakers with funding support from the South Australian Government through the office for Recreation and Sport.

BHP donated a significant amount of steel to repair bridges and volunteers donated hundreds of hours to work on the trail. Clare Quarries was awarded the contract to construct the trail. South Australia Tourism offered a \$250,000 grant in the early 2000s to extend the track 8km to the north.

Additional grants have been approved to produce a brochure on birds that can be spotted on the trail, a study on the rocks and soils of the area, additional track works and more.

The section from Clare to Barinia was opened in 2009 and the Rattler trail between Riverton and Auburn was opened in 2010 and overhauled after a severe weather event in mid 2014. The total distance from Auburn to Barinia is 33km (Riesling trail) and Riverton to Auburn is 19km (Rattler trail).

The Rattler trail received a \$425,000 grant through RDA (3) after a one-in-100-year flood that caused more than \$10 million damage to the region. This grant was managed by the Clare Valley Council and enabled the track to be resurfaced, additional drainage to be added, three new bridges to be constructed and three existing bridges repaired.

While the Rattler Trail only re-launched its upgrade in mid 2014, the small committee does not have a model in place for future maintenance work or for incidental costs. The Rattler Trail is hoping the Riesling Trail will take it over and incorporate the ongoing maintenance into the Riesling Trail Committee's Management Plan.

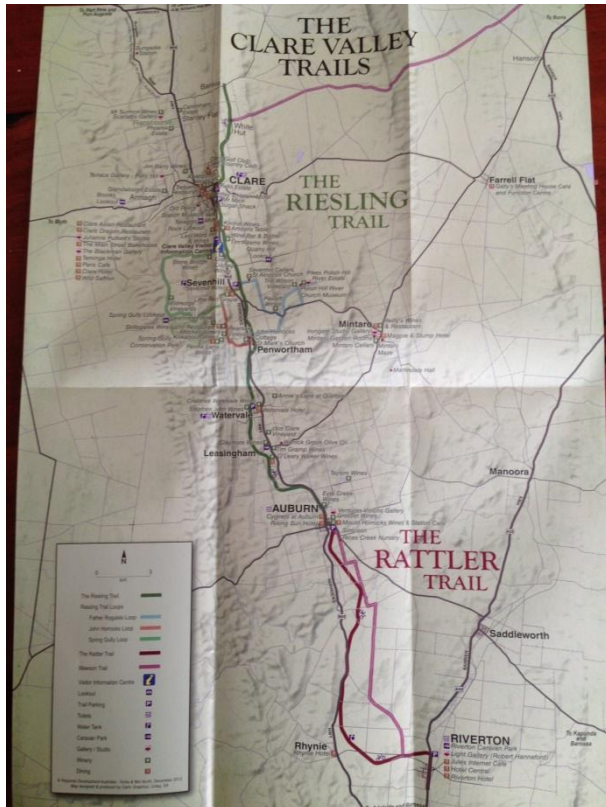
The Barossa Trail is considered a benchmark for rail trails in terms of its fully-sealed surface from Tanunda to Gawler. It is understood that a \$5 million grant was provided to construct 27km of trail. The Barossa Council, in partnership with the Federal Government, are currently constructing a \$260,000 cycling hub in Tanunda next to the Visitor Information Centre. This facility will have coin-operated lockers and bike holding facilities, public toilets, filtered water station, air pumps and other cycling related facilities.

The Visitor Information Centre is planning to open a bike hire business to complement the new facility.



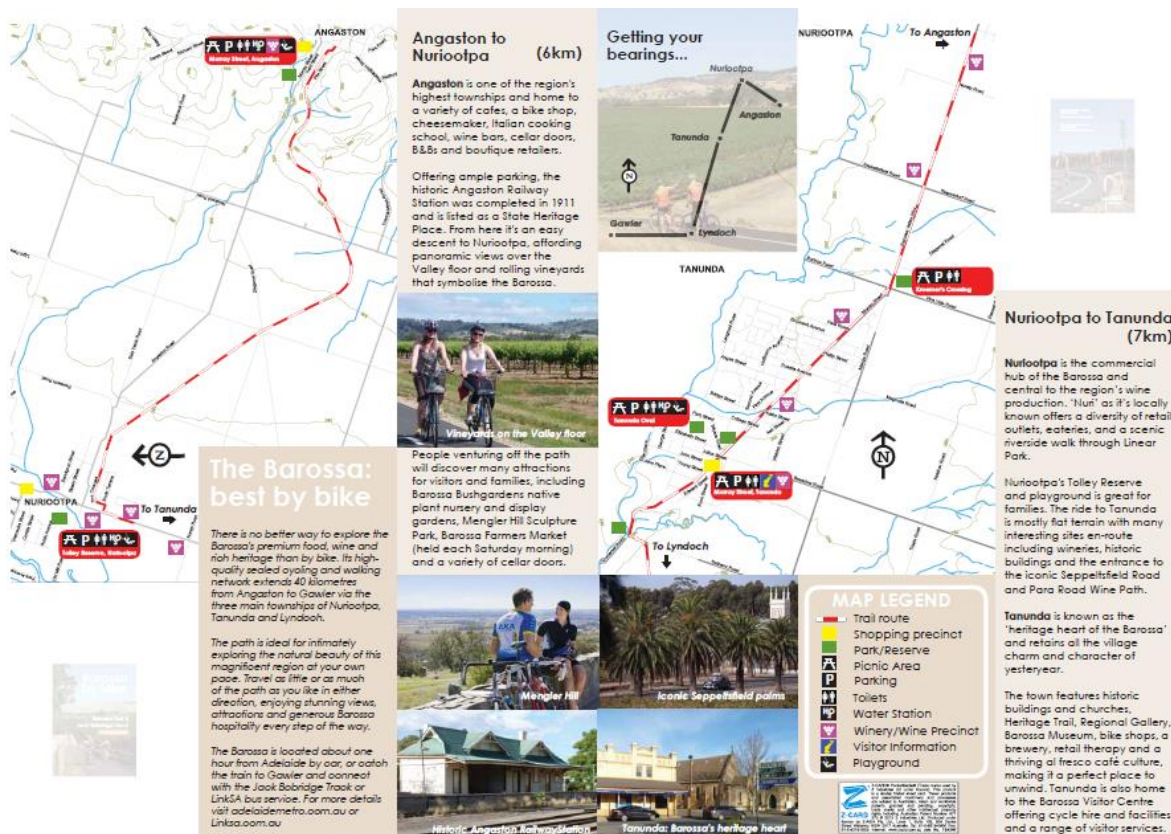
The community, State Government, Local Council and Federal Government have realised the importance of cycling tourism to the Barossa region and are working cooperatively to offer better facilities – including the Barossa Cycle Hub

Riesling Trail and Rattler Trail Map...



All businesses along the trails, as well as the Council and Visitor Information Centre, stock copies of the brochure which folds out to an A3 size of the map. We also heard stories of a trail that prints the map on a piece of fabric and sells each for \$5 to raise funds for maintenance. The cloths can be “stuffed” into a pocket and are water proof – unlike the paper brochures...

Barossa Trail map...

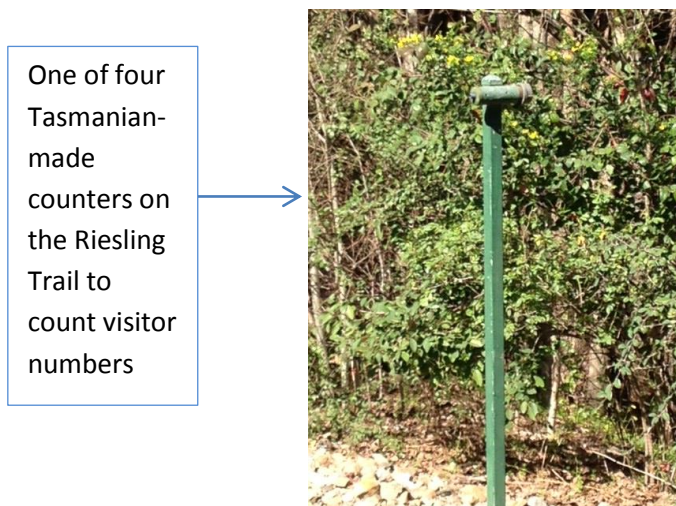


Attractions on the trails include wineries, vineyards, farms, bushland, historical buildings, sculptures, cafes, bakeries and much more.



Business owners, community members and elected officials all agree that the rail trails have boosted tourist numbers, increase visitor spend and added an exciting dimension to tourism in the regional towns.

Four counters have been placed on the Riesling Trail, which show the following visitor numbers:



One of four
Tasmanian-
made
counters on
the Riesling
Trail to
count visitor
numbers

Visitor Numbers...

Year	Clare	Watervale	Auburn	White Hut Rd	Total
2011	25,232	8,497	6,250	3,901	43,880
2012	26,806	8,768	5,811	2,247	43,632
2013	27,512	8,272	5,835	4,358	45,977
2014 – 1 Jan – 31 August	18,774	5,973	3,485	3,143	31,375

In 2014 the busiest months for the rail trail have been March, April and May, with 4,195, 5,885 and 4,090 respectively.

South Australian cycling and tourism officials hope that a more coordinated branding and marketing effort will assist in consolidating existing rail trails around the State, with a longer-term view to link the trails from Clare through the Barossa back to Adelaide.

“I think as many people come to Clare to ride the Riesling Trail as they do to taste wines.”

-Peter Wood, Treasurer of Riesling Trail Management Committee Inc. Association

STRUCTURE

The Riesling Trail is managed by a not-for-profit community-based organisation named Friends of the Riesling Trail, which has been set up as incorporated association. The committee comprises nine members and is currently chaired by Allan Mayfield. The committee is responsible for marketing, fundraising, maintenance, development and events.

The Committee meets bi-monthly and has sub-committees for signage, marketing, maintenance and art. A marketing committee representative is currently responsible for the website, e-newsletter and facebook site.

The model has changed in the past three years to become more commercial – mainly due to the State Government cutting its annual maintenance payment from \$30,000 per year to \$20,000 per year.

The majority of fundraising is undertaken through the following four levels:

*Business Partner – a maximum of 20 businesses can belong as a Riesling Trail Business Partner that costs \$500 a year for a minimum of two years. The major benefit is a commercial sign can be erected on the trail directing cyclists to their business. The signs cost \$400 each and this is included in the \$500/year payment. There is a waiting list of businesses wishing to take up this opportunity. The committee is focused on balancing the commercial infrastructure with a natural experience.

*Business Friend – no limit on the number of members (currently about 45) and each business receives a logo on a large sign at Clare, as well as a listing on the website and on facebook. The cost of being a business friend is \$150 per year.

*Individual Friend – a donation of \$40 per year is required to be recognised as an individual friend (currently about 100).

*Friend For Ever – a one-off payment of \$400 but many continue to offer an annual contribution

The committee has investigated taxation law and businesses' contribution is tax deductible. Unfortunately an individuals' contribution is not tax deductible.

The Riesling Trail also has a donation box on the trail at the Clare end of the trail.



The Riesling Trail's new fundraising program is a "buy a paver" for \$90 to assist with paving an area at the Clare end of the Trail....

Funds are also raised through events, such as the half marathon where the organisers donate \$1000 to the Friends of the Riesling Trail for use of the track.

The Rattler Trail committee does not have any of the above in place at this time.

The committees are tasked with full maintenance and operational responsibilities, including public liability insurance, but they have not been awarded a lease over the Crown Land rail corridor. The State Government provides \$20,000 per year (previously \$30,000) to the Riesling Trail to manage the corridor between Clare and Auburn. The Committee is responsible for funding the maintenance on the 8km heading north to Barinia.

The Riesling model has proved a great success and the committee currently has more than \$40,000 in the bank. They have a large pool of volunteers – many of whom have specific duties such as monitoring the trail for debris, spraying around sculptures, updating facebook, working with sponsors to ensure their investment is valued etc.

“If I can give any advice to you in Tasmania, it is just do it, do it, do it!”

-Allan Aughey, Mayor of Clare and Gilbert Valley Council

CONSTRUCTION

The Rattler Trail received a \$425,000 RDA grant and completed a new track surface in August 2014. The original track consisted of crusher dust being spread over the existing ballast. This did not work due to the crusher dust being washed away and falling through the ballast.

However, this has now formed a solid base and was deemed the best option for a 100-150mm top layer of crusher dust.

Grant McKenzie, Planning and Works Manager at Clare and Gilbert Valley Council, warned that if the ballast is still loose without a binding agent, then crusher dust over the top will not be sufficient.

“The advantage of leaving the ballast is that it is open and porous so if it’s left out to the side, it will help with drainage,” Grant said.

“The most important element of the track is shape. You need a good crown with 3-5% fall to get the water off.

The Rattler trail used PVC stormwater pipe for drainage in low-lying areas.

According to Rattler Committee member Judy Searley, the owner of Cogwebs Café and Bike Hire, the Rattler trail has now been taken from a rough adventurous trail to the same standard of the neighbouring Riesling Trail.

She described the sealed surface of the Barossa as the “ultimate” option. Others disagreed, saying the gravel experience gave a more authentic rail trail cycling experience.

Judy said the following steps were taken to re-construct the 26km Rattler trail:

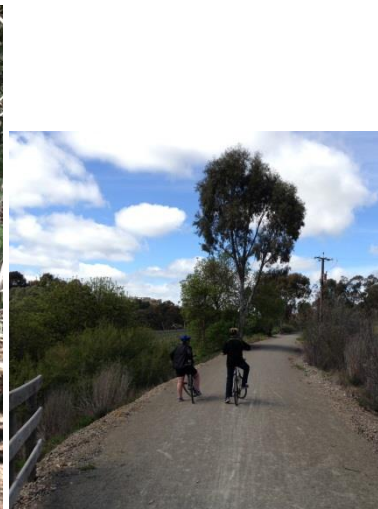
1. Drainage pipes were put in in problem areas
2. Grader went through the whole area
3. Existing ballast was left there and compacted with very large roller
4. 20cm depth of crusher dust placed over the top
5. Locally-invented 2m wide apparatus dragged over top to form crown

The Riesling Trail was constructed by Clare Quarries. Key lessons learned include:

1. Do not cut corners on drainage as a well-drained trail will require less maintenance
2. Seating and picnic tables are essential as many riders are aged 50+ and they need to rest
3. Horses and motorbikes are not permitted on the track due to issues with hooves and tyres disrupting the trail surface (this has not been a problem)
4. The correct pitch on the crown of the trail is essential to ensure not too steep for riders and not too flat for drainage
5. No problems have been experienced with vandalism
6. Regular inspections are essential, especially after extreme weather events
7. Utilise the ballast in drainage areas to the side of the track



Barossa's sealed surface runs between the railway line which is still in use and the main road. The Riesling trail is a gravel surface and is on the rail corridor



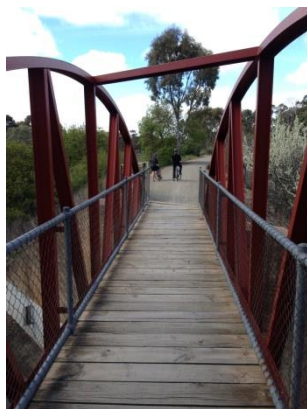
Bridges

A clear message from trail managers was conveyed regarding bridges – use existing structures where possible and ensure new or restored bridges are pedestrian width only (with vehicles able to pass underneath or via alternate access point).

Clare Council had done significant research into the three new bridges and three repaired bridges on the Rattler trail.

Grant McKenzie, Planning and Works Manager at Clare Valley Council, was responsible for obtaining quotes for track surfaces and bridges and estimated a new 30m bridge cost \$40,000 (pic one below).

He investigated a number of suitable materials for bridges, including FRP, cement and metal plate. They found metal plate to be the most cost effective as they could source this locally.



A variety of handrail options have been utilised – including the curved all-enclosed option (pic 3 above) to prevent objects being thrown onto passing traffic below.

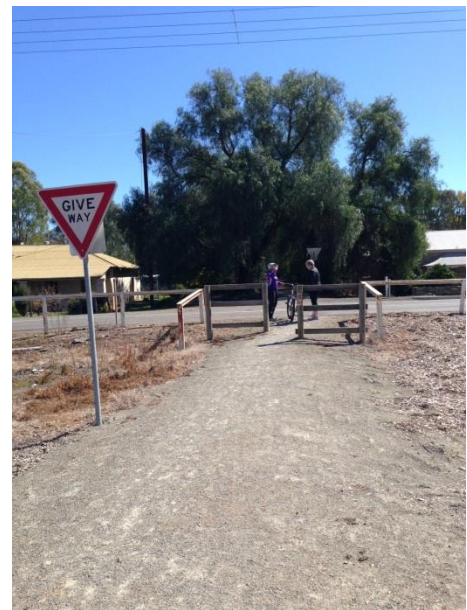
Road crossings

The Riesling and Rattler trails did not cross major roads, but did cross many driveways and smaller country roads. The majority of crossings had give-way signs as per pic below.



← The Riesling Trail utilised guide posts, paint on the surface of the trail, give way signs and black and white arrow signs to indicate road crossings

The Rattler Trail had a semi-chicane crossing. Although you were able to ride your bike through (as opposed to those that overlap and force you to dismount before crossing the road), it clearly encouraged cyclists to slow or stop.



Neither the Rattler or Riesling Trail had reported any accidents or incidents at crossings since their inception.

Maintenance

Rail Trail Management Models in Australia vary from state to state and between rail trails in the same state and Railtrails Australia Inc. guidelines suggest that the biggest factor is usually the interest of council(s),^[1] however, as evident in the most advanced rail trail network in Australia, the Victorian Rail Trail Network, many rail trails now have local volunteer groups to assist with maintenance and events, citing benefits of a sense of community ownership of the trail to deter vandalism and provide good local promotion. It notes that any such group should be incorporated, usually a prerequisite for receipt of grant funding and for some donations.

The Government of South Australia's Trails SA Guidelines for the Planning, Design, Construction and Maintenance of Recreational Trails in South Australia^[2] has a comprehensive section on Maintenance and Management. It's Planning, Design and Construction Checklist includes a four point checklist for Management and Maintenance with the critical components being:

- Confirm partnership agreements
- Develop maintenance schedules
- Monitor and evaluate the trail
- Prepare promotional and marketing material

In this section much emphasis is placed on the initial development of a Trail Management Plan, ideally during or before the construction program, to incorporate not only trail maintenance elements but also broader land management policies and trail management issues, ensuring the plan is flexible and responsive to change but setting a firm guiding outline for future directions and priorities. It warns that trails which don't have a Management Plan may suffer from decisions taken on the run, out of context or as knee-jerk responses to critical situations.

As trail projects inevitably involve a range of partners the clear establishment of roles and responsibilities is critical and a clear and concise Management Plan with a regular maintenance program written into it will aid significantly in managing ongoing resource demands.

The Management and Maintenance Guidelines in this paper suggest that maintenance on trails can generally be divided between regular inspections and simple repairs, largely a one or two person job, and probable twice yearly programs to undertake larger jobs such as significant erosion repairs or weed control. It suggests the former as ideally suited to well-trained and regular volunteer programs, whilst the latter be either volunteer(s) under skilled supervision, land manager's staff or contractors.

Hazard Inspections – Risk Management

Crucial to ongoing management a Hazard Inspection process plays an obvious part in defining activities and management decisions and will be vital in dealing with any liability claim which may arise. Hazard identification, controls and treatments are an integral process to managing a trail and typically a Hazard/Risk Inspection could include

- Adequacy of warning and other signage, especially at road crossings
- Dead trees and/or overhanging limbs
- Slippery rock or clay sections
- Exposed tree roots or other significant trip threats
- Security of viewing platforms and other structures.

A typical maintenance schedule might be similar to the table below, drawn from Trails SA Guidelines:

Task	Frequency
Check trail head and other facilities for damage or vandalism	Monthly if possible
Check all signage and trail marking and replace any missing or damaged signs	Two monthly at minimum
Clean and/or repair erosion control devices and other erosion/water issues	Three monthly (if possible)
Check and clear all trail surfaces, especially regrowth vegetation	Annually, in spring (or when dry enough) at least
Prune trail-side and overhanging vegetation	Annually
Check major structures such as bridges, boardwalks and walkways	Annually
Arrange a regular Hazard Inspection Report	Annually
Check currency and distribution of brochures and promotional material, updating when necessary	Annually

Monitoring and Evaluation

Some changes to trails will be obvious and noticed by users or as part of a regular maintenance program but others can be quite subtle and may occur over extended time periods. Additionally, change may occur not only of the physical trail structure but also in the wants and needs of the trail users.

Monitoring of trails requires accurate record keeping and includes interaction with trail users. Mechanisms to enable and encourage feedback are recommended and may include:

- Erection of signs encouraging feedback via email addresses or telephone numbers
- A website with facility to log on and report
- Use of social media
- Contact details on brochures and maps

Note: many grant funding agencies will respond positively to the inclusion of a monitoring and evaluation program. **Thanks to Rosemary Calder at Dorset Council for her assistance with this information...*

The Riesling Trail Maintenance is primarily on an 'as needs' basis with needs identified and prioritised by the Maintenance Sub Committee and performed primarily by community volunteers.

Typically, State Government funding is for preventative maintenance, Local Government for community assets and fundraising provides ongoing maintenance.

A set six-monthly program for weed control, primarily Wild Olive and Briar Rose, is funded by Sport & Recreation and conducted by spraying contractors. Spraying for weed control previously occurred twice a year but has now been ramped up to three times per year.

Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council provide in-kind support assisting with Grant Funding Applications and maintenance primarily of assets impacting on Council such as public toilets and car parks. Some financial support has been gained from application for Council grants.



The Riesling Management Committee relies on volunteers and users to report any maintenance issues. These signs are erected regularly along the trail...

Vehicles being utilised for maintenance on the Riesling Trail carry these signs to alert cyclists to vehicles on the road...



Seasonality

Business owners reported the trails in the Clare region were predominantly used in Spring and Autumn when the weather was slightly cooler. The summer months when temperatures hit 40 degrees tend to be too hot for cyclists and walkers. Kent, from Riesling Trail Bike Hire, says the optimum temperature for cyclists is 23 – 30 degrees.

Usage

Motorbikes (2-wheel and 4-wheel), vehicles and horses are not permitted to use the trail. Dogs are allowed on the trail.

LOOPS

The Riesling trail identifies five additional loops and trails for cyclists – ranging from 9km to 900km. The loops encourage riders to visit businesses not located directly on the trail, such as bakeries, wineries, art galleries etc. The Mawson trail starts in the Adelaide Hills and ends at Blinman in the Flinds Ranges. The Mawson trail merges with the Riesling Trail between Auburn and Clare then diverges off towards Burra.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Water – drinking water is available beside the trails shelters located at Watervale, between Sevenhill and Quarry Road, and at the Lennon Street Car Park in Clare. Sponsorship was offered from a tank supplier and a plumber to supply and install the tanks.



Toilets – There are no public toilets located on the trail but there are signs now being erected directing cyclists to facilities in towns and private business.

Carparks – designated carparks are located at Auburn, Watervale, Sevenhill, Clare and Barinia.

Seats – a number of picnic tables and seats have been constructed along the trail, especially catering for the high number of inexperienced or irregular riders that like to frequently stop, as well as the elderly local walkers. Some of the seats have been constructed using railway sleepers and railway iron. Others utilise cut logs from the trail.



Sculptures - a number of sculptures have been erected along the trails, adding another educational and inspirational element to the trails. Many riders disembarked at the sheep sculpture to marvel at the handwork of the artist...



Farmers paid for each of the sheep (identified by eartags) and art grants were sought for other sculptures along the SA trails

There is a huge opportunity to incorporate art, education, interpretation and other elements to add another experience and dimension to our trail...

Businesses

A number of businesses were already established along the Riesling Trail. A number have since established to take advantage of the increase in visitor numbers.

Wineries – The Riesling Trail has a large number of wineries through Stanley Flat, Clare, Seven Hill, Mintaro, Penwortham, Watervale, Leasingham and Auburn. All wineries that we visited reported strong sales and strong visitation from cyclists....

Business Profile – Seven Hill Winery

Seven Hill Winery, established in 1851 in the Clare Valley, attracts 50,000 visitors per year. Seven Hill General Manager Mike Christophersen says an increasing number of these are arriving by bike. “Our proximity to the trail is fantastic,” he said. “We see cyclists coming in all year round but from this time on (September), I am amazed at the number of bike riders that come on the trail every day.” Mike says while a number of cyclists are only interested in tasting, the option of free freight on any case of wine ensures sales remain high. “Many will come back the next day in their car to pick up wine they tasted while riding,” the cellardoor manager added. “If riders are truly purchasers, riding a bike won’t prevent that.” Seven Hill has bike racks on the lawn in front of cellardoor and offers lunch platters on the grass for riders. They have also introduced their own bike hire business so riders start and stop at Seven Hill, and a picnic shelter beside the lake. Mike said having a definitive starting point for a trail was crucial. He described the characteristics of a traditional rider being 50+ in age, mainly interstate and overseas, not “head down, bum up” cyclists, higher income and experience seekers... **see video interview*



As per www.sevenhill.com.au: “Welcome to Sevenhill Cellars, the first winery in South Australia's Clare Valley, where you can enjoy outstanding wines and experience our unique heritage and spiritual character.

Sevenhill was established by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1851 to produce sacramental wine. While this tradition continues today, Sevenhill is also highly regarded for its premium table wines, which are recognised for the regional qualities that have put the Clare Valley on the world stage.”

Bike hire – Bike hire is available at five locations along the trail (four in Clare and one in Auburn). One business has also made bikes available from the Country Club as a trial. Maintaining bikes (often less than one year old) is crucial, with one business doing the mechanics himself and the other having a mechanic available for repairs.

Clare has a population of approximately 3000 and the municipality about 8500. There are four bike hire businesses in Clare alone. This indicates that there is a significant opportunity for additional bike hire businesses to open in Scottsdale, Lilydale and Launceston.



Prices are on average as follows:

	Half Day	Full Day
Mountain bike or Retro Cruiser	\$25	\$40
Tandem bike	\$40	\$60
Kids bike	\$15	\$25
Tagalong or Kiddie Carrier (with bike hire)	\$15	\$20
Baby seat (with bike hire)	FREE	FREE

***Hire also includes a helmet and a bottle of water**

Business profile – Riesling Trail Bike Hire

Riesling Trail Bike Hire was established eight years ago by a B&B in Clare. Kent moved from Adelaide seeking a lifestyle change and purchased the business five years ago. He runs the 35-bike business from a rented shed and his busiest periods are mid September to late December and from March to July. About 50% of customers pre-book their bikes. Kent has a considerable focus on maintenance, especially tyres, chains, gears etc, and provides a service of collecting bikes with punctures from the trail to fix in the shed (rather than supply puncture kits for each bike) ***See video interview**

Cogwebs bike hire provides a pick-up service, enabling cyclists to ride in one direction and then be collected. This service is widely utilised and offers a big opportunity for someone in Tasmania's North East.

Business profile – Judy Searley, Cogwebs Café, Auburn

Judy was a registered nurse in the UK and decided to pursue her dream of owning land and animals so moved to the Clare Valley. Within a year, Judy had taken up cycling and set up Cogwebs Café – a small café that started with internet access and bike hire in Auburn (the other end of the Riesling Trail from Clare). “I was continually asked why we didn't have bikes at this end of the trail so I decided to open my business to cater for this market,” Judy said. The business has evolved, internet access has disappeared due to mobile technology, the café has grown and a book store will open very soon. Judy's key service she offers is a drop off or pick up option for her riders. If someone only wants to ride one way, they will call Judy and she will come out in her ute to collect bikes and riders. “The vast majority of my riders haven't ridden for a long time so we pick them up if they've had enough,” she said. “The Rattler trail doesn't have cellardoor or tourist attractions. It's just a beautiful ride through open farm land. You can breakfast on all the fruit that is growing on either side of the trail!” **See Video Interview*



Signage

All involved in the management of the Riesling Trail said it was a balance in maintaining the natural integrity of the trail versus commercialisation through signage to raise funds for maintenance.

For this reason, the Riesling Trail Management Committee limits the number of business partners to 20, meaning only 20 signs are erected along the trail.



Example of a Business Partner sign on the trail offering directional and promotional information

All business partners have a sign on this structure in Clare at the start of the trail

The map of the trail is also mounted at the Clare end of the trail



The Riesling Trail also incorporates other Short Walks and is part of the much-longer Mawson Trail from Adelaide to the Flinders Ranges. Joint signage is featured on many posts...



Any signage on the trail had to be approved by the Management Committee and was uniform in style, size and erection. We had a great deal of positive feedback regarding our planned use of rail materials in our signage....



The first sign we noticed in the Adelaide Airport showing bicycle friendly services from our arrival



Consultation

The Riesling Trail benefited from having so many businesses along the trail that could see the immediate benefits from the construction so were supportive from the day the trail was mooted.

The Winemakers Group originally came up with the idea so it was the grass-roots business community that drove the development.

The Rattler Trail differed in that much of the trail passed through open farmland, instead of wineries with tourism businesses.

The Rattler Trail Committee admitted they did not handle consultation effectively, and their softly-softly strategy resulted in issues with landowners.

While the rail corridor was owned by the Crown, farmers legally did not have rights to the land. However, in many areas the fencing had been dropped and the farmers were utilising the additional acres of land.

Landowners were offered grants to move their fences but there was no official consultation committee to meet with the landowners to discuss the options.

A local dairy farmer is continuing to cause trouble for the Rattler Trail. His cows cross the trail 2-3 times a day and he refuses to take advantage of any of the options that have been put to him, including the construction of an over or underpass. He has been approached many times over the past four years to no avail. Within one day of the new surface being completed, his cows were on the track and damaged almost 1km.

He also erects a single electric wire across the track, which is potentially a very serious hazard to cyclists. Discussions are ongoing.

Advice from the Rattler Trail:

- Let everyone know in advance....communication is the way.
- Meet individually with the landowners, listen to their thoughts and address any concerns
- Lock in a champion with a big face. Look at sports people, especially cyclists, to champion the project
- Even though there was an objection, it still went ahead

Business Opportunities

All people we interviewed spoke extremely positively about the social, environmental and economic impact of the rail trail on the region.

Kent, from Riesling Trail Bike Hire, said it was fabulous to see so many locals walking the trail and so many visitors breathing in the fresh air, exercising and exploring the region.

He said families, wine lovers, relaxed cyclists, Mums and Dads, singles and 50+ were the main users...

The Clare Valley municipality has a population of 8500.

Mayor Allan Aughey said the Council was 100% supportive of the Riesling Trail. “We see this infrastructure as so important to our municipality that we insist that the Mayor himself is the Council’s representative on the Riesling Trail Management Committee.

“We have no shortage of volunteers. If I need to line up 10 people for four hours to clean up, we can do it.

“It’s all about giving community ownership of the trail as they are not going to work for a Council asset. We see that as the way to go. We are using this model to use in other areas of the community where grants are going to be made.

“The world is waking up to the value of these cycling trails. We can’t fall behind as we need visitors to come back and not have a second-rate experience,” Mayor Allan said.



The Mayor's other key points include:

- Keep adding to the trails. Loire Valley now has a 700k track and Singapore has a cycling track around the island
- The commerciality is leaping forward.
- The add-ons are so important
- Gradients on the map are very important
- Give landowners reassurance
- Advice: Lock the Government in. The value is established and we need governments to provide ongoing support.
- A horse trail along the side would be perfect.
- Clare is still trying to link the trail more to the towns
- More lights along trail would be beneficial so locals and tourists can walk from the local pub and restaurants to B&Bs.
- Don't over commercialise – it's a natural environment.

Monika Trengove, who manages the online marketing for the Riesling Trail, moved to Clare from Melbourne 18 years ago. Her "office" overlooks the trail.

"There is a constant stream of young Mums walking prams, joggers, cyclists, tourists, locals and a man in a motorised wheelchair," Monika said.

"Three quarters of the Clare Valley walk on the trail."

Those in the Clare Valley and Barossa listed endless business opportunities for those in Tasmania – from accommodation to restaurants to picnic hampers to bike hire to bike maintenance to tour organisers and much more...



Cogwebs Café also runs a Chooks and Chicks Ride every Friday morning, encouraging Mums and elderly riders to join Judy for a leisurely two-hour ride on the Rattler Trail. Judy value-adds by including cake and coffee in the price of the ride...

List of meetings

- *Lee, Owner of Clare Valley Motel
- *Kent, Riesling Trail Bike Hire
- *Peter Wood, Treasurer of Riesling Trail Management Committee
- *Mike Christophersen, General Manager of Seven Hill Winery
- *O'Leary Walker Cellardoor
- *Allan Aughey – Mayor of Clare and Gilbert Valley Council
- *Allan Mayfield, Chairman of the Riesling Trail Management Committee
- *Monika Trengove, Riesling Trail Marketing Committee
- *Judy Searley, Owner Cogwebs Cafe, Auburn
- *Grant McKenzie – Planning and Works Manager at Council – 0447 07912
- *Cathy Wills, Regional Tourism Manager at Barossa Visitor's Centre