

GRAMPIANS PEAKS TRAIL

TM

Walk Victoria's Icons

Project Update - May 2014

The Grampians Peaks Trail will be a world class, long distance walking experience, showcasing the beauty and majesty of the Grampians' natural and cultural landscapes.

What is the Grampians Peaks Trail?

A 13 day/12 night walk is currently being created to provide visitors with an intimate and unforgettable experience of the peaks and panoramic views of this ancient and rugged landscape.

The 144 km Grampians Peaks Trail will connect some of the Grampians' most spectacular peaks, from the massive sandstone outcrops around Mount Zero in the north to Mount Abrupt overlooking the Dunkeld township and the surrounding volcanic plains in the south. The trail will wind through vegetation varying from low lying heathlands to high elevation woodlands. Walkers will experience natural beauty on a truly grand scale. On completion, the Grampians Peaks Trail will become a drawcard for local and international experience seekers, in a similar way to the renowned Overland Track in Tasmania and the Milford Track in New Zealand.

The Grampians Peaks Trail is being developed under the Walk Victoria's Icons program which will position Victoria and the Grampians as a key nature-based tourism destination. Other walks within the portfolio are the Great Ocean Walk, the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing and the Coastal Wilderness Walk in East Gippsland.



Lookout - Grampians National Park



Healthy Parks
Healthy People®





Trail construction - Grampians National Park

What needs to be developed for the full trail to operate?

The trail will be constructed over a number of years in a staged process. The track and hiker campsites form the basis of the core infrastructure necessary for the trail to operate. To create the 144km long Grampians Peaks Trail will require the development of approximately 80km of new trail and the upgrade of 64km of existing trails. Although the full trail will be 144km in length, shorter sections of the trail will also be available.

Benefits of the Grampians Peaks Trail to the Grampians Region

Once the trail is complete it will be a world-class nature based tourism attraction, the creation of which will generate multiple benefits to the region and the Victorian economy. It is expected that once completed the trail will generate:

- An additional 86,000 visitor nights in the region annually (2024 projection);
- \$6.39 million annual expenditure by visitors directly attributable to the trail;
- 35 direct full time jobs in the region from the operation of the trail, including employment associated with walking tours, supporting infrastructure and services;
- 25 indirect full time jobs regionally and further afield;
- 45 direct and 70 indirect full time jobs through the construction of the trail; and
- Additional jobs and expenditure in the local townships during the construction phase.



Newly constructed bridge over Fyans Creek - Grampians National Park

Stage One: Halls Gap to Borough Huts (3 days/2 nights)

Delivery of Stage One is well underway and includes a three day/two night loop walk from Halls Gap to Borough Huts covering a total of 19 kilometres for the return trip. This stage is being delivered by Parks Victoria through \$1.3M in funding provided on behalf of the Victorian Government by Regional Development Victoria.

Stage One achievements to date:

- An 8.7km track realignment from Mt Rosea to the Belfield Fire Line is complete;
- Development of a design manual which sets a consistent style for tracks, bridges, signs and hiker camping areas across the whole trail;
- Detailed planning for the new 24 people capacity hiker campsite at

- Mount Rosea Construction of a new footbridge over Fyans Creek;
- Construction of a lookout platform at Mount Rosea;
- The location of a group camp on Stony Creek road close to the Mount Rosea Hiker Camp has been determined; and
- Desktop environmental risk assessment and cultural heritage management plan undertaken for the entire trail.

Stage One Works Remaining

Planning requirements relating to the application of a Bushfire Management Overlay at the Mount Rosea Hiker Camp site being undertaken prior to any construction commencing.

What is a Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO)?

Parts of our landscape are particularly exposed in the event of a bushfire, and as such are protected by a BMO. The appropriateness of all new developments on these sections of land is assessed, with the overlay ensuring that if development does proceed, the necessary bushfire protection measures are in place.



Camper enjoying the Grampians National Park

Stage Two: Borough Huts to Mount William

The next stage of the project will be extending the trail 13 km from Borough Huts towards Mount William. Planning has yet to commence on this stage of the trail. Victorian Government funding of \$1.2 million has been allocated to progress this segment.

Minimising impacts on the environment

The trail is being developed in accordance with the Grampians National Park Management Plan. Existing trails will be used where possible and any trail and associated infrastructure development will be planned to minimise disturbance of sensitive ecosystems, vegetation and fauna.

Recent fire activity- effects on the trail

Although significant sections of the Grampians National Park have been burnt during recent bushfire activity, there has fortunately been no damage caused to the recently built track from Mount Rosea to Borough Huts.

The Grampians Peaks Trail Master Plan

A master plan for the Grampians Peaks Trail is currently being prepared and the draft is nearing completion. It is being overseen by the Grampians Peaks Trail Task Force, which is a group comprising representatives of local shires, tourism bodies, walking clubs and state government agencies including Regional Development Victoria, Tourism Victoria and Parks Victoria.

The plan will highlight the opportunity for local towns to become “walking hubs”, providing services and support to walkers and assisting the regional economy to prosper. The master plan will be a critical tool in securing additional funding for future stages of the project.

Fundamental to the preparation of the master plan is the conservation of the natural and cultural values of the Grampians, in accordance with the Grampians National Park Management Plan. Protecting this unique environment is integral to creating an exhilarating and sustainable walking experience.

The master plan will consider the services and facilities required to support the long distance walk, including potential opportunities for suitable

hiker accommodation within the park, as well as in areas outside the park boundaries. Opportunities for licensed tour operators to guide walkers will also be important.

The Master Plan- next steps

The draft of the Grampians Peaks Trail Master Plan will be released in May 2014. It will be made available on the Parks Victoria website and there will be opportunities to meet with members of the project team to discuss the draft and offer feedback.

For more information:

If you would like to register your interest in the Grampians Peaks Trail project, and to be kept informed about progress of the master plan, please email Parks Victoria at:
grampiansPTmasterplan@parks.vic.gov.au