



Two Wheeled Tourism - transforming Australia's regions

Investment in Rail Trails, cycle tourism products and cycling destinations have been transforming Australian regions and economies. Cycle tourism infrastructure is cost-effective and often makes use of existing or under-utilised assets. It stimulates local economies, creates jobs and is a catalyst for business creation. Tourists discover new reasons to visit some of Australia's unique and attractive natural regions. In a post-pandemic nation, cycle tourism is a significant regional development opportunity.

CYCLE TOURISM INVESTMENTS BENEFIT WHOLE REGIONS. KEY FACTS:

- Prior to Covid, Victoria's High Country was already a leading cycle tourism destination with 103,000 cycle tourists visiting the region each year, spending \$50 million annually. This number is project to grow to 255,000 visitors participating in cycling by 2025.
- The Victorian Government has recently invested \$12million for a 10-yr plan to enhance rail trails, signage, accommodation, facilities and attract businesses.
- Federal, state & local investment in Derby (north east Tasmania) has created a cycling mecca – saving the town and attracting 30,000 visitors annually to ride the trails – providing a ten-fold return on investment (\$30m/\$3.1m invested). Derby was once a thriving mining town but now encompasses 125km of purpose built mountain bike trails. 60% of visitors come from interstate to ride 'Blue Derby'. In the short time since the MTB trails were established at Derby around 2015, house prices have more than doubled and land prices have more than tripled.
- The 22 km Tumarumba - Rosewood Rail Trail was completed during COVID-19 in April 2020 but has already seen 15,000 users in the 8 months since opening.
- NZ's Otago Rail Trail has a significant economic impact in the region. 39% of the visitors are international, they are 41 yrs old, spend NZ \$582 and stay 3.8 nights in the region. More than half of businesses set up since the Trail was established (53%) attribute more then 60% of their turnover to the Rail Trail (2005 survey).

WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY?

Australians' focus for holidays and recreation is likely to remain firmly on Australia in the near future with limited international air travel and fears around infection from COVID-19. Riding bikes in our local neighbourhoods took off globally as we were locked down during the COVID pandemic.

There are an estimated 1.2 million residents across the key domestic markets of VIC, NSW, SA and QLD who have ridden a mountain bike in the past 12 months. Of the 1.2 million people in Australia who class themselves as mountain bikers, 46% of them also participate in road cycling, 28% ride rail trails and 54% ride on bike paths.

The 2019 National Cycling Participation Survey revealed that 13.8% of people said they rode a bike in the past week and 57.2% of households own at least one bicycle. A recent study of Cycling Typologies by the University of Monash School of Public Health and Preventative Medicine found that more than three quarters were 'interested but concerned,' that is they are prepared to ride provided conditions are safe and separated from traffic - the type of riding provided by cycle tourism.

We Ride Australia - the national independent voice for cycling - www.weride.org.au

RAIL TRAILS: shared-use paths recycled from abandoned railway corridors. They can be used for walking, cycling and horse riding.

MOUNTAIN BIKE PARKS: an area with trails & facilities designed for off-road or mountain biking - often combines natural attributes with a range of trails and adventure-based features.

RESOURCES:

- Rail Trails Australia www.railtrails.org.au - national listing of all trails.
- Ride High Country VIC www.ridehighcountry.com.au
- The Munda Biddi Trail WA www.mundabiddi.org.au
- Blue Derby TAS www.ridebluederby.com.au
- Southern Flinders Ranges SA www.southernflindersranges.com.au
- Stromlo Forest Park ACT www.stromloforestpark.com.au
- The *Cycle Tourism Resource Kit for Regional and Rural Communities* was an Australian Government funded initiative - <https://bit.ly/3JChukg>

* Images courtesy of Rail Trails Australia

