

Post script. Part of the proposed route near the St George was misidentified by the writer of this response.

## Response from Friends of Lorne to Fairhaven to Skenes Creek coastal trail study

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Friends of Lorne (formerly the Lorne Planning & Preservation League) was established in 1966 to encourage and contribute to:

- the planning and development of the environment within Lorne and its environs consistent with the need for preservation of flora and fauna of the district
- the planning, development and maintenance of community services and activities within Lorne and its environs consistent with the balanced needs of permanent residents, non-permanent residents, campers and tourists

Friends of Lorne includes members who have walked the bush around Lorne (and beyond) for many decades.

The main writer of this response is hampered by the inaccessibility of her maps and walk notes. She requested an extension of time (email sent 1/8/2019) but has not received a response. There are therefore a considerable number of uncertainties in the comments that follow.

### **General comment**

Friends of Lorne supports the overall concept of the walking trail. We believe that the objective of representing a range of landscapes with their associated diversity of life forms will be achieved with the current route (but suggest some minor changes). Our support for the walking track is however provisional because of our problems in interpreting the maps presented (see below).

We note that some of the tracks incorporated in the route are at present open to 4WD and mountain bikes as well as walkers and will presumably continue to be so. We are not aware of any serious incidents at the current rate of use, which is low, but in an ideal world these different classes of users would be separated.

We suggest that some marine features should be incorporated into the walk and noted as 'key features'. For example, kelp forests.

We think that the incorporation of man-made structures (suspension bridges) as a tourist attraction is inappropriate, and contravenes the main objective of creating an experience of the natural world.

We think it appropriate that vehicle access to potential drop-off and pick-up points means that most parts of the walk can be done in relatively small sections (~5-14 km). There is a case, however, for having one or two more strenuous and/or long options for the most serious walkers.

Parts of the route to the east and west of Lorne are reviewed in more detail below.

### **Comment on the maps provided**

The maps provided on the Engage Victoria site lack detail, making it difficult to identify proposed routes with confidence. A key deficiency is the absence of inland roads to the coast. Another is the failure to identify parts of the route that use existing tracks by name.

The legend is confusing. This writer looked in vain for the legends' grey/white 'concept trails' on the map. In fact, a thin grey/white line, which is next to invisible on small to medium monitors, is all that exists. The main trail is evident more because of the thickness of lines than because of the border. To avoid frustration and misinterpretation in future, versions for comment should be checked on small monitors before release.

## **Route from Fairhaven to Lorne**

The route marked is, as far as we can determine, an acceptable one but we offer the following comments.

- The 'flora and fauna experiences' of this section would be better described as 'varied' than 'unique'.
- Some routes identified as 'existing walking trails' appear to be seasonally open 4WD tracks, eg parts of the Gentle Annie Track from the Seaview Road, and of the Big Hill Track from the Lorne/Deans Marsh Road. If this is correct, the description of them as walking tracks is misleading. At the current rate of use by walkers and 4WDs, we don't see this combined use as a problem.
- The eastern part of the route appears to follow the Coal Mine Track near Moggs Creek. The coal mined here was brown coal. When the track reaches the sections inland from Big Hill, it will be close to the remains of old (and very minor) black coal mines. These are but one sign of a significant (and quite sharp) change in regional geology that we hope will be covered by the track notes for walkers (and noted as a 'key feature').
- At least one free camping area that is not far from the concept route is not identified on the map (Big Hill campsite). Some people walking up the Big Hill Track will be surprised to see it described as 'slightly steeper' than flat.
- The 'new walking trail' running approximately NS from the Big Hill Track to the power line above Cathedral Rock (again a guess, in the absence of detail) is probably a derelict track that is already used by walkers in-the-know. If so, reopening it would probably be less damaging than creating the other 'new walking trails' as marked.
- The extension of the new walking route (see point above) from the power lines to the coast near Cathedral Rock would be useful. There is at present no clearly defined track through public land, but plenty of warnings about private land.
- The vegetation near the powerline above Cathedral Rock is unusual in that it contains a lot of heath plants. This island of heath is of interest in itself, but also significant for walkers who do not reach the extensive heathlands further east.
- We suggest that at the western (Lorne) end the route is brought down to the Great Ocean Road at Stony Creek, using either the domestic road system or passing through the Stony Creek Reserve. This option eliminates some track construction work. It also allows walkers to cross the Ocean Road safely by using the existing bridge underpass.

## **Route from Lorne to Wye River**

Again the labelling of the map makes it difficult to identify the elements of the route with confidence.

- As they leave Lorne walkers apparently have to walk along the Great Ocean Road – not advisable. At high tide walking around the rocks is a poor and dangerous option. The 'new walking trail' above the road appears to be the existing, and once colourfully

named, Slaughterhouse Track (now neutralised to being a Tramway Track or some similar name). The last is the safest coastal route to the George River.

- Moving inland from the George River mouth the route appears to be that of the Cherry Tree Creek Track. Using the Cherry Tree Creek Track means that walkers must use the road to get to Allenvale, or that a new section of track must be created. It is not clear why the existing Allenvale-George River walking track is not used.
- From Allenvale there is again an element of confusion because the ‘existing walking trail’ appears to be the quite heavily used, unsealed road to the Sheoak picnic area. It is not a desirable route for walkers.
- The ‘new walking trail’ to the Sheoak Falls from the picnic area appears also to be an existing trail and the same is true for further sections of the route.
- Is there any compelling case for making a new track from Castle Rock to the Cumberland River given that this can already be done if walkers backtrack slightly? The existing descent to the Cumberland, which is probably marked as ‘new walking trail’, is steep and would benefit from some realigning.
- The ‘key features’ for this section do not include the shipwreck and grave near the Jamison.
- Suspension bridges. Why would we want to insert man-made structures into a National Park? Are not National Parks places for protecting and observing natural features? Why would we want environmentally and monetarily expensive structures built into an otherwise low-impact activity? We oppose these structures unless they can be shown to be the least environmentally damaging option, in both the short and long terms.

## **Mountain biking route**

Friends of Lorne does not favour combined trails but recognises that compromises are sometimes called for.

- Many of the tracks shown can already be used by mountain bikes and 4WD, so combined use is not new. We assume that particular attention will be given to visibility on high-speed sections of track.
- We note that a part of the route into Lorne from Mt Cowley appears to be the Henderson Track. This track was almost completely overgrown a few years ago but has been reopened. It is used by walkers. Sharps Track travels a similar route but is probably less used by walkers and could be a better option. Sharps track however is seasonally open to 4WD. The Garvey Track appears to be the optional route for leaving Lorne in a westerly direction. We note that this track is used by 4WD and sections of it are part of walking routes.

Mary Lush

Secretary, Friends of Lorne

4/8/2019