



**Kentish Council**

**KENTISH MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS  
MASTER PLAN**

**PROJECT BRIEF**

## ***PROJECT INTRODUCTION***

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### **Project rationale:**

The Kentish municipality is a traditionally rural, regional district of 6312 people (ABS, 2011) in an area of 1087 sq km.

Since 1990, tourism has become the most significant industry in the municipality. The primary sectors that make up the tourism sector: accommodation, food, transport and retail, employ 400 people in the municipality (ABS 2011). The next largest employer sector is agriculture at 181 (ABS, 2011).

The district is naturally endowed with a spectacular wilderness, including dramatic mountains such as Mt Roland, waterfalls, valleys, lakes, hills and plains and significantly large areas of uninterrupted forest. These natural assets have significant tourism potential given the greatest motivation for visitors to holiday in Tasmania is wilderness (Tasmania Visitor Survey, 2012) and that tourists are increasingly seeking experience-based holidays, rather than sedentary ones (TVS, 2012).

The Kentish tourism industry is presently based on murals and the fact it is on the main access route to the world-renowned Cradle Mountain. If the tourism sector is to grow, it must diversify and attract new visitor types. To do so, it is well placed and has the natural assets to develop a new tourism industry sector – wilderness-based adventure tourism. A mountain bike park that is attractive to locals and state, national and international visitors, could be the central feature of a diverse, authentic, wilderness-based adventure industry in the municipality that includes other adventure activities such as abseiling, sky diving, luge, tree canopy rides, kayaking, plus existing canyoning, trail riding and caving operations. The full list of possibilities is identified in the *Mount Roland: Developing a Destination* study.

A central tenant of the adventure-tourism focus is mountain biking, for which the municipality is well-suited and has many outstanding features, including:

- Undulating topography well-suited to an enjoyable and diverse mountain biking experience. This topography includes a medium-sized river, multiple smaller creeks and streams, rolling hills, steep hills, a mountain, gorge, valleys and flat areas;
- Spectacular local scenery and backdrops that provide a myriad opportunities for attention-grabbing promotion;
- Large tracts of publicly owned land;
- Long tracts of uninterrupted forest that in some cases stretch 35km northward to the coastline and 50km southward to Tasmania's central highlands;
- Diverse ecology including native forest, regrowth forest, and marine environments plus a diversity of wildlife;

- Capacity to link mountain bike trails to multiple population centres with services and facilities;
- Accommodation and other services and facilities close to and within the proposed mountain bike precinct;
- Direct sea and air interstate access points within 15 minutes' drive of the proposed mountain bike site

Creating trail networks between towns would be a unique feature in the Tasmanian mountain bike offering as it would provide the option for participants to ride from one town to another, stop for lunch or a coffee, then return to the set-out point via a different trail or trails. This experience involving multiple towns along the journey would:

- boost the local regional economy generally, but also the economies of four individual towns specifically, by linking mountain bike users to local business activity;
- provide a point of difference against existing Tasmanian and mainland Australian mountain bike experiences;
- Facilitate the development of new businesses to service or supply mountain bike visitors, including cafes and coffee houses, bike maintenance and services, accommodation, and other attractions;
- enable experienced riders to complete the full trail loop (approximately 50km) in a day, or stay multiple days to experience the trail network in more detail.

The development of a mountain bike precinct in Kentish was a recommendation in the *Mount Roland: Developing a Destination* (2011) and *Mount Roland: Blueprint for Development* (2013) reports. A mountain bike facility advances the economic and social strategies identified in the *Kentish Economic Development Strategy* (2010); *Tasmanian Economic Development Plan* (2012); *Kentish Strategic Plan 2014-24* (2014); and the *North-West Economic Development Plan* (2012). A mountain bike facility also advances the strategies and goals of the *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan* (2009); the *Trails Tasmania Strategy* (2009) and the *Cradle Coast Tracks Strategy* (2003).

The above plans and documents or links to them can be found on the websites of Kentish Council ([www.kentish.tas.gov.au](http://www.kentish.tas.gov.au)), Cradle Coast Authority ([www.cradlecoast.com](http://www.cradlecoast.com)) or Sport & Recreation Tasmania ([www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/csrt/sportrec/publications](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/csrt/sportrec/publications)).

It is proposed the Kentish facility actively collaborate with the managers of the existing mountain bike facility at Glenorchy, and that being built in Launceston and Tasmania's north-east, to create three world-class experiences which mountain bike industry figures suggest would achieve the critical mass of world-class mountain bike experiences required to make Tasmania an international mountain biking destination.

## ***SCOPE OF PLAN AREA***

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The area to be developed for this Kentish Mountain Bike Trails Master Plan (the Master Plan) is identified in Appendix A and will form part of a broader multi-municipality cycling concept (Appendix B). The Master Plan refers only to those trails shown in Appendix A and detailed in “Stage 1” below. Stages 2 and 3 (summarised below and illustrated in Appendix B) are not part of this Master Plan and are included only as context.

### **Kentish-Latrobe-Devonport Concept:**

Kentish Council proposes to lead the development of a world-class mountain bike facility based in the Kentish Municipality, with links to the neighbouring municipalities to ultimately create a 50km off-road MTB track system linking Devonport, Latrobe, Railton and Sheffield.

#### **Stage 1:**

- a clustered loop network of tracks at The Badgers, between the townships of Railton and Sheffield (referred to here as the Kentish MTB Park), in the Kentish Municipality;
- Transition trail across The Badgers ridgeline linking Kentish MTB Park to Spreyton;
- Transition trails linking MTB Park to Railton main street and Sheffield main street;
- Transition track from Railton to the Mersey River.

#### **Proposed Stage 2:**

Latrobe Council is separately exploring the development of:

- A cluster of MTB trails within Warrawee Reserve;
- Link track from Warrawee Reserve to Latrobe township via Shale Rd
- Means of crossing Mersey River to link to the Railton-Mersey transition trail

#### **Proposed Stage 3:**

It is proposed Devonport and Latrobe will be connected through an existing proposal to extend the North-West Coastal Pathway from Devonport to Latrobe, via River Rd which follows the banks of the Mersey River. Both Devonport City Council staff and Latrobe Council are enthusiastic about possible future links to Kentish Trails.

**Note: The proposed Stages 2 and 3 of this project are not part of this Master Plan and are included only as perspective and context for the engaged consultant.**

### **Kentish MTB Park scope:**

It is proposed the Kentish MTB Park be sited on Forestry Tasmania-managed land on the eastern side of The Badgers between Sheffield (E: 445980 N: 5417970, GDA94) and Railton (E: 446681 N: 5419086).

It will include:

- Approximately 28km of trails (in various disciplines and of varying difficulty) within this identified area; plus:
- MTB track linking the Kentish MTB Park to central Sheffield and to central Railton;
- MTB track from Railton to a Mersey River crossing point adjacent to Warrawee Reserve (or alternative route if this is not feasible);
- Multi-direction, multi-use trail from Kentish MTB Park to Spreyton by formalising existing informal trails along the ridgeline of The Badgers. Note the scope of this project only extends to the Kentish municipal boundary. While the municipal boundary crossing point should be assessed and identified in this Master Plan, Devonport Council would be responsible for the planning and works associated with the few hundred metres between the municipal boundary and the end of their existing bike path at Spreyton. This trail need not be heavy in “track furniture” but be more an overland Point A to Point B trail. Assessment should include the potential route and approximate cost of this route and should avoid, where possible, transit across privately owned land (except where the landholder is agreeable).

The Forestry Tasmania-managed land comprises 2 lots: PID Nos 2539309 and 2539296 on the eastern face of The Badgers and covers an area of approximately 26 sq. km. This space covers the area between Sheffield (E: 445980 N: 5417970, GDA94) and Railton (E: 446681 N: 5419086) and could potentially extend as far north as the Latrobe municipal boundary (E: 448727 N: 5426844).

This location provides an excellent diversity of terrain, including varying steepness and difficulty, varying forest types, and opportunity for “easier” tracks for youngsters and families as well as difficult and technical terrain that would be attractive to elite riders.

Within the Kentish MTB Park site, several historic and natural features could provide interesting attractions, including Redwater Creek, caves, waterfalls, historical timber milling and mining sites, and the Stoodley Forest Walk, which documents the history of the forestry industry in Tasmania, as well as any sites of European and aboriginal historical significance. These features should be incorporated in the track design, where possible, and interpretation provided, to supplement the experience for recreational users.

## ***PROJECT OBJECTIVE, OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS***

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### Objective:

The purpose of this project is to develop a Master Plan for the Kentish MTB Park that will:

- Provide the blueprint for a world-class mountain bike experience in the Kentish Municipality that will attract international mountain bikers;
- Provide a Master Plan appropriate for use to support Kentish Council applications for grants and government programs to construct the facility;
- Result in a network of trails that link Sheffield and Railton to Latrobe and Devonport;
- Increase the health and wellbeing of local residents;
- Attract people to the area to provide economic benefit.

### Outcomes:

The Master Plan document will provide the following outcomes:

- Desktop-based market analysis;
- An analysis of the economic benefit to assist securing funding sources;
- Brief overview of relevant mountain biking disciplines;
- Brief overview of relevant planning and strategic documents;
- Graphically present track route identification, plus on-ground tree tagging or GPS recording of track coordinates;
- Identify and map ecological values that influence the design and placement of trails;
- Identify and map cultural and heritage values that influence the design and placement of trails;
- Identify areas (relevant to track placement) that are vulnerable to erosion and recommended methods to minimise erosion;
- Identify creek crossing points and method to be used to cross creeks and water courses;
- Identify areas too steep to construct track with machinery, and recommended methods of constructing track in those steep areas;
- Assessment of the key financial, legal and operational risks associated with the proposal and proposed mitigation measures;
- Identify access points and appropriate parking areas;
- Identify access points for emergency services;
- Identify and detail a realistic staged implementation plan that includes cost-effective construction of some stages immediately;
- Identify routes for link trails to Latrobe and Devonport and ensure those councils agree to those points of intersection between this project and their proposed trails;
- Ongoing maintenance regime with cost estimates;
- Completed Forest Activity Assessment (required by Forestry Tasmania). This can be completed by Forestry Tasmania on a sub-contract basis;

- Demonstrate compliance with the Kentish Interim Planning Scheme 2013, Forestry Practices Act and any other relevant Acts of legislation;
- Outline any likely impacts of mountain bike activity on neighbouring farming land and private land;
- Identify any private landholdings that are preferred or necessary to be crossed by Kentish MTB Park trails, or for which access would be required for trail construction purposes. This is so council can liaise with the landowner about access arrangements.

#### Outcomes: Trail design:

The trails in the Kentish MTB Park site should:

- Include trails suitable for the four most popular (or emerging) MTB disciplines;
- Include a mix of AMBA track standards (Green, Blue, Black and Double Black) to ensure an experience that is suitable for:
  - local families and recreational riders;
  - local mountain bike enthusiasts and regular participants;
  - mainland and international mountain bike enthusiasts who are prepared to travel to experience high-quality mountain bike experiences; and,
  - Mountain bike competitions and elite riders.
- Meet Australian Mountain Bike Association (AMBA) criteria for hosting national events;
- Incorporate the existing Tasmania Trail between Railton and Sheffield;
- Include a trail connecting the Kentish MTB Park trail network to central Sheffield, and another connecting it to central Railton (these could utilise existing roadside reserves or other council land);
- Be of a total combined length of no less than 28km;
- Approximately 25% of the Kentish MTB Park trails length should be loop trails for beginners (AMBA Class 1/MTB green classification). This portion should include:
  - the Tasmania Trail, which passes between Railton and Sheffield.
  - easier, lesser-gradient tracks for families and inexperienced riders.
  - Green standard trails should pass close to as many of the “points of interest” in the precinct as possible, including historical sites, waterfalls and caves on Redwater Creek, Stoodley Forest Reserve, plus other environmental, aboriginal and historic interpretation opportunities.
- Approximately 40- 50% of trails intermediate (AMBA Class 2/Blue classification).
- Approximately 25% of trails advanced (Class 3/Black Diamond classification).
- An appropriate length and diversity of trails of Severe classification (Class 4/double black diamond) to attract AMBA events.

The Black and Double Black classifications could include extreme cross-country trails, downhill and/or free-riding trails; and any other discipline required by AMBA for a facility to host national events.

#### Outputs:

All documentation will be provided to Kentish Council in electronic format as Microsoft Word with all plans and track mapping in GIS/Map Info. Three hard copies of all documentation should be provided to Council.

### ***INPUTS***

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#### Site assessment:

It would be expected that:

- A preliminary site visit be undertaken with Kentish Council Tourism & Economic Development Officer before any significant planning or assessment is undertaken;
- A minimum of two site visits of the whole trail network be conducted;

#### Community consultation:

Prior to significant commencement of trail design, community consultation by the contractor will involve:

- Liaison with, and reasonable consideration of recommendations provided by, an (identified and defined) community reference group which comprises local MTB enthusiasts who wish to be involved in this project;
- Meetings with council senior staff, stakeholders (identified in Project Governance section, below), and a public meeting to gain input and ideas;
- Kentish Council Tourism & Economic Development Officer Chris Frankcombe should be updated on findings and progress at least monthly.

After significant trail design has been undertaken, community consultation by the contractor will involve:

- Meetings near the conclusion of this project, with the community reference group, stakeholders and council staff identified earlier, plus a public meeting, to gain feedback on findings and recommendations before the final report is drafted;
- A presentation to the elected members of Kentish Council of the final draft of the report;
- Final draft of the report is to be open for public comment for a period of two months after its presentation to Kentish Council. Community responses will be directed to



Kentish Council Tourism & Economic Development Officer Chris Frankcombe. Council may request changes in line with those public comments, to be included in the final document.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

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Reporting dates will be negotiated with the appointed consultant and payment will be tied to adherence to these agreed dates.

## **PROJECT GOVERNANCE**

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The project will be coordinated by Kentish Council's Tourism and Economic Development Officer, Mr Chris Frankcombe.

The *Mount Roland: Blueprint for Development* report (2013) addresses governance arrangements relating to compliance with relevant local, state and federal planning regulations about land use, environment, culture, construction and public liability.

Stakeholders:

- Kentish Council
- Forestry Tasmania
- Sheffield School
- Parks & Wildlife Service
- Cradle Coast Authority
- Sport & Recreation Tasmania
- Dept of Economic Development
- Cradle Coast Mountain Bike Club
- Tasmania Trail management committee
- Existing land users (such as off-road motorcyclists and horse riders)
- Latrobe Council
- Devonport City Council
- Lake Barrington Recreation Management Committee

## ***PROJECT BUDGET***

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It is envisaged the cost of the concept master plan will be \$30,000 plus GST.

## ***COPYRIGHT***

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## ***EXPRESSION OF INTEREST***

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Firms who believe they have the multitude of skills necessary to complete this plan are asked to forward an expression of interest by August 29, 2014, to:

Mr Chris Frankcombe  
Tourism and Economic Development Officer  
Kentish Council  
PO Box 63  
SHEFFIELD TAS 7306  
(03) 6491 0200

Or email [chris.frankcombe@kentish.tas.gov.au](mailto:chris.frankcombe@kentish.tas.gov.au)

Expressions of interest are to include:

- Plan methodology
- Proposed outcomes
- Reporting processes
- ~~Plan-Budget~~ budget and timeframes
- Two referees and two examples of previous (similar) work
- Understanding and familiarisation of the proposed trail network outlined in Appendix 1, and of the Kentish Municipality.

Queries may be directed to Chris Frankcombe at the Council Office on (03) 6491 0200.

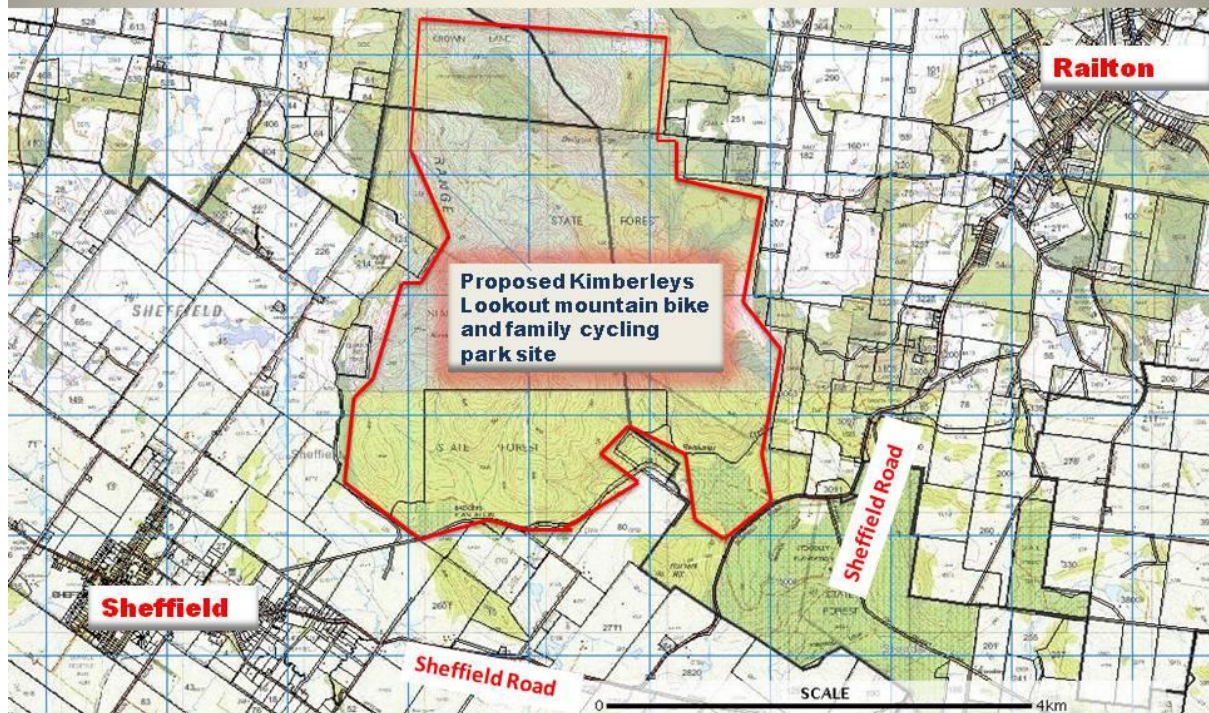
Appendix A: Kentish Mountain Bike Master Plan precinct

## Kentish-Latrobe MTB complex





## Proposed Kimberleys Lookout mountain bike site



E: 446963 N: 5417475 (GDA94)

## Appendix B: Kentish-Devonport Mountain Bike Trail Network Concept

