

Rail trail study is on track

By BRONWYN LUMSDEN

Wallan to Heathcote trail review

THE Wallan to Heathcote Rail Trail feasibility study formally began on February 22, with the selected principle consultants RMCG meeting with the study's steering committee.

The Victorian Government has provided major funding for this study, in conjunction with funding contributions from the Mitchell Shire and City of Greater Bendigo, plus 'in kind' direct community input.

With the selected consultants RMCG engaged, they also have the

services of a number of specialist companies to assist. Those being:

■ **Communityvibe:** A specialist in community planning, sport and recreation based projects; with involvement in a number of studies relating to tracks and trails in Victoria

■ **Spire Consulting Group:** Providing specialist engineering, specifications, and cost estimates

■ **Trafficworks P/L:** Preparation of safety audits and advising on crossing details for major road crossings

■ **Biosis:** Undertake ecological and heritage assessments.

The Steering Committee's representation comes from the Mitchell Shire Council, the City of Greater Bendigo Council, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, with com-

munity involvement from the Mitchell Bicycle User Group and the Friends of the Bendigo-Kilmore Rail Trail.

As the study progresses, engagement with landowners and communities will take place to inform, seek a better understanding of and take into account the various land ownership and use changes that have occurred

since the former railway was recovered.

The study is also expected to highlight engineering, associated road traffic, heritage and environmental matters that would need to be taken into account when considering this trail proposal.

The study will conduct a full investigation of all related aspects relating to this proposed trail, plus possible linkages with other trails in this area of regional Victoria.

A final report is expected later in 2016.

Heathcote youth get behind rail trail marathon



HEATHCOTE'S young leaders are putting their muscle behind the inaugural O'Keefe Rail Trail Marathon on May 1.

Jesse Bruce, Gabriel Bradshaw, Triniti Cooke and Lily Edsall-French are preparing to visit district schools to encourage participation in the Interschool Challenge, but are urging residents of all ages to take part in the marathon.

"The community should be getting behind this," Jesse said.

"This is a great event for Heathcote and we've even been drawing these little sketches, like the turtle and the Flash, because it doesn't matter if you think you're more like a turtle or you think you're the Flash, you can do this," Gabriel said.

The young leaders are especially keen to see as many schools from Central Victoria taking part in the Interschool Challenge at the marathon and are planning to visit as many schools and radio stations as possible to promote the event.

"People think that a mile sounds like a long way, but it's just 1.3km which is the distance from the Caltex to the Post Office," Gabriel said.

"You don't have to run, you can walk or hop on a motorised scooter, or you could come along and be part of the cheer squads cheering on our schools," Jesse said.

Promoting Heathcote as a great place to visit has also been important to the young leaders, who are proud of their town and everything it has to offer.

"We have people coming from all over the place for the marathon, so this is Heathcote's chance to show them there's more to our town than the marathon," Gabriel said.

"Or wine," Jesse added.

"We live in the country, out in the open, where there's no traffic and traffic lights, it's calm and we've also got plenty of kangaroos," Gabriel said.

"You don't know that things are on because they are all 'camouflaged' in Bendigo, but here everything is out on the open and everyone takes part," Jesse said.

"We want to tell everyone to come and see Heathcote and everything we have to offer because this is a great town, so even if you don't run or walk

in the marathon, there is still plenty to do and see like out native wildlife, our food and wine, and entertainment," Gabriel said.

Triniti Cooke said she was focusing on getting more children to take part in the marathon, and encouraged the rivalry between Heathcote and Holy Rosary primary schools after the former took home the Fazzi Perpetual Cup from the Heathcote Community Games in February.

"It's good exercise and good fun, and Heathcote won the perpetual cup so it's another chance to win again, or for Holy Rosary to win the challenge cup," she said.

"There were a lot of schools who didn't get to take part in the Community Games, so we would like to invite them to take part in our marathon instead."

"Even if your school wins, you can't say it was because of just one group of people, it was everyone who took part," Jesse said.

"And if your school doesn't win it doesn't matter because everyone wins anyway, you get a ribbon just for trying so I am going to try," Gabriel said.

"Instead of being inside on your own, come outside and have some fun with friends."

The Young Leaders team have already undertaken official duties as part of the 2016 Heathcote Community Games and are helping the games committee plan for 2017, but are enthusiastic about the marathon, which has around 500 registered participants to date.

The Interschool Challenge is run over the mile and the winning school will be decided by points scored by the first three finishers, male and female, for grades 3/4 or below and grade 5/6.

Bonus points are awarded for the school with the most entries, with the winning school awarded an individual trophy to keep as being named on the Perpetual Cup.

For more information contact the event co-ordinator Sandra Slatter on 0417 350 911 or contact race director Craig Green on 0437 250 056.

Anyone who would like to volunteer to help out on the day should contact Vicki Forde on 5433 0930.

Heathcote Community Games ambassadors and Young Leaders Gabriel Bradshaw, Jesse Bruce and Triniti Cooke are calling on Heathcote residents to support the O'Keefe Rail trail Marathon on May 1.

We have a Hunger for movies

THE final instalment of The Hunger Games series will be screened at a free movie night in Heathcote on Friday April 15.

The City of Greater Bendigo's YO Bendigo Team have organised the free event to

coincide with National Youth Week 2016.

The City's Acting Manager Community Partnerships Deb Simpson said the event responds to the City's commitment to provide entertainment options for young people who live in and around Heathcote.

The event is smoke, drug and alcohol free, and starts at 7pm in the multipurpose room at the Barrack Reserve hall.

Contact the city's youth participation officer, Marie Scholtes on 5434 6094 or m.scholtes@bendigo.vic.gov.au.



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