



## BICYCLE QUEENSLAND SUPPORTS MOUNTAIN BIKING IN QUEENSLAND NATIONAL PARKS.

### ABOUT MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain biking as a sport, recreational and adventure tourism activity, continues to grow in popularity throughout Australia and globally. A diverse range of people are discovering the freedom and connection to nature mountain biking offers. It can provide a unique antidote to the pressures of modern living and an appreciation of our indigenous heritage. This brings both opportunity and challenges.

The social, health and environmental benefits of mountain biking are well documented<sup>1</sup>. It gets participants closer to nature, keeps them fit, healthy and active, improves mental

and physical health thereby reducing the future burden on the health system. Research also shows that mountain bikers are driven by affective motives<sup>2</sup>. Two key findings were that mountain bikers have a strong appreciation for nature and that riding has caused them to change their behaviour to take better care of the environment. These findings were also supported by Brisbane research<sup>3</sup> and evidenced with growth in the community of trail care stewards volunteering to help with trail maintenance around Brisbane.

<sup>1</sup> Queensland Mountain Bike Strategy 2018

<sup>2</sup> Trail Use, motivations and environmental Attitudes of 3780 European Mountain bikers: What is sustainable? Dec 2021

<sup>3</sup> BORRA Pre-BORC Survey Results Analysis 2020





## WHERE TO RIDE?

Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019 - 2030 identifies as their first goal to encourage "all Australians to get out into nature, whether we live in a city, the bush or by the coast, to enjoy nature and enrich our health and wellbeing"<sup>4</sup>.

In Queensland, mountain biking is recognised as a legitimate recreational activity that can occur in Queensland National Parks<sup>5</sup> Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services manage 320 National Parks.

It is encouraging to see mountain bike projects implementing these strategies. These are just few currently under development: Mackay Regional Council<sup>6</sup>, Somerset Regional Council<sup>7</sup>, Brisbane City Council<sup>8</sup>, Western Downs Regional Council<sup>9</sup>, Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley Escarpment<sup>10</sup> and Cassowary Coast<sup>11</sup>.

At a state level the Wangetti Trail will be Queensland's first purpose-built walking and mountain bike track in a National Park and is being positioned as one of Australia's leading adventure-based tourism experiences<sup>12</sup>.

Bicycle Queensland acknowledge that with increasing demand comes challenges for all stakeholders<sup>13</sup> to provide for not only the needs and demands of mountain biking but for all recreational users. Balancing conservation, cultural values and recreational demand, funding, and resourcing maintenance of new and existing trail networks is a crucial but achievable.

## MOVING FORWARD

There are projects already taking proactive and collective approach as shown in the Wangetti Trail project<sup>14</sup>. In Victoria, The Warburton Mountain Bike Destination - Environment Effects Statement (EES) is one of the first projects in Australia to implement a comprehensive assessment<sup>15</sup>. Warburton's EES goes a long way to demonstrate, in a scientifically-backed manner, the impact – or lack thereof – of mountain biking trails. This confirms evidence from a range of global studies, including research conducted by Griffith University<sup>16</sup>. In Western Australia, WestCycle<sup>17</sup> are using an 8 step approach to managing environmental impacts for new mountain bike trail networks.

Bicycle Queensland's position is that the key to unlocking the benefits of mountain biking is the access to land on which to build sustainable trail networks. This will need the collaboration of the mountain bike community, First Nations, State and Local Government agencies. Coupled with the development of a robust environmental framework which would guide the planning and construction of sustainable trail networks in National Parks and many other land management tenures.

Together we can embrace the growing demand for exploring and appreciating the nature in our National Parks.

<sup>4</sup> Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019 - 2030

<sup>5</sup> Operational Policy- Mountain biking in QPWS managed areas 2014

<sup>6</sup> Pioneer Valley Mountain Bike Trail 2021

<sup>7</sup> Mount Glen Rock Adventure Park 2022

<sup>8</sup> Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy 2021

<sup>9</sup> Russell Park Mountain Bike Trails 2022

<sup>10</sup> Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley Escarpment Mountain Bike Master Plan 2019

<sup>11</sup> Cardwell Mountain Bike Project 2019

<sup>12</sup> Wangetti Trail 2022

<sup>13</sup> "A Master Plan for Queensland's parks and forests to 2025"

<sup>14</sup> Wangetti Trail 2022

<sup>15</sup> Warburton Mountain Bike Destination – Environment Effects Statement (EES) October 2021

<sup>16</sup> Assessing the impacts of mountain biking and hiking on subalpine grassland in Australia using an experimental protocol Dec 2011

<sup>17</sup> <https://pws.dbca.wa.gov.au/management/trails>

**MORE PEOPLE RIDING, MORE OFTEN.**

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