

Delivery of Volcanic Trails Masterplan



The Problem:

The Western Victorian Volcanic Plain is the third largest volcanic plain in the world, covering approximately 22,000 square kilometres. It extends from Melbourne through to Mt Gambier and south-eastern South Australia.

Southern Grampian Shire is home to several culturally and environmentally significant volcanic sites along the plain, forming the "Volcanic Trail". The region features approximately 100 extinct volcanoes, dotted with lakes, rivers and wetlands. Some of the wetlands are RAMSAR listed and are of international importance, and many of the regions parks and reserves are listed as protected areas by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The region includes the traditional lands of four Aboriginal nations – Jardwadjali, Tjap Wurrung and Dhauwurd Wurrung (Gunditjmara). Aboriginal people have occupied the area for many thousands of years, and continue to have a close association with the land for its cultural, environmental and spiritual value.

The 'Volcanic Trail' is comprised of seven sites: Wannon Falls, Nigretta Falls, Byaduk Caves, Harman's Valley Lookout, Wallacedale Tumuli, Mt Napier and Mt Rouse.

Currently these sites are developed and maintained to varying degrees across multiple government authorities, and are not linked in any way through branding, interpretive themes or a consistent approach to infrastructure.

Priorities Addressed:



Visitor
Economy



Environment



Community
Health and
Wellbeing



First Nations



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The Solution:

To recognise cultural meaning for the local indigenous community as well as the wider public, appropriate signage, interpretation and visitor experiences are required at facilities to better respect the place, value-add to the experience and strengthen the local economy. This project intimately connects to and expands upon the world heritage experience of the nearby Budj Bim.

Council recently developed the Volcanic Trails Master plan which sets out the strategic direction for development of these assets over the next 10 years. The masterplan places high importance on preserving and promoting both the natural environment and Indigenous heritage of the region, with an approach that is sustainable, respectful and inclusive.

Proposals cover both infrastructure and heritage interpretation, with examples provided to illustrate a best-practice approach. Infrastructure proposals range from the upgrades of existing walking trails, through to the development of entirely new campsites and picnic grounds. An interpretive framework is also provided for each site, covering major themes and supporting content for heritage interpretation. If implemented, the masterplan has the potential to achieve the dual benefits of attracting increased tourism to the region, as well as improving the recreational opportunities available to local residents, through the creation of high quality and meaningful visitor experiences. Implemented, the masterplan will also celebrate cultural heritage and be a platform for truth telling.

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The Ask:



Council is seeking financial support to undertake a staged approach. Stage 1 of this investment would be \$5.5m to undertake a business case, detailed designs and construction of the Nigretta Falls and Wannon Falls sites.