

## **Great Lake Adventure Trail will be a gateway to an experience of a lifetime**

People who are fortunate enough to live at or be regular visitors to the Central Highlands and Great Lake area know how special this part of Tasmania is.

It's not just the unique scenery and environment, the expansive flora and fauna, or the immense contrast between seasons; it is something ingrained in the lifestyle and recreational aura the area possesses.

Our proposal to create the Great Lake Adventure Trail is to allow the opportunity for people to experience that remarkable sensation of being at one of the most special places in the world. It is designed to primarily be a walking trail that caters for cyclists. It will not be a mountain bike trail like the tracks that have been built at Derby or St Helens – our trail will rely on the awesome but simple beauty of the Great Lake to take people's breath away, not jumps and downhill descents.

We are serious about our commitment to the community of Great Lake and the Central Highlands. We recognise the need for our rural and regional towns to develop alternative sources of income away from the reliance on agriculture and forestry. The establishment of an ecologically-sensitive attraction around the Great Lake and expand Tasmania's eco-tourism market will see towns like Bothwell, Longford, Cressy, Deloraine and Derwent Bridge benefit from an increase in visitation enabling businesses to become more financially stable and employ more local people.

Our initial work with the community commenced in 2020 with an independent feasibility study engaging local residents across the whole of the Central Highlands Council area. The results of this survey supported development within the region provided it was ecologically sensitive and supported community growth. The results of this survey were presented to the Central Highlands Council who provided in-principal support for the project. Further, community consultation was dependent on Hydro Tasmania approving the draft route of the trail; confirmation of which was received in February.

In preparation for this approval we distributed invitations for people to participate in public consultations. These invitations went to a number of people and groups, some of who we were aware had concerns, as well as published consultation details in the Central Highlands Digest. Subsequent surveys have been emailed to the respondents and face-to-face consultation will take place in April.

The technical development of the trail has been a collaboration of work between Hydro Tasmania, Parks and Wildlife and trail builder World Trail. Hydro and Parks have been part of the process from the beginning and have provided valuable input into the direction and location of the trail. The agreed route is on or around the 1040m contour line, above the high-water mark and entirely on Hydro and Parks land. No part of the trail is in the World Heritage Area.

As the proponents we have ensured that all aspects of development will meet the requirements of first nations peoples, as well as flora and fauna and financial feasibility. We have been in contact with Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania since the beginning of the project and now have submitted the trail route for their review. We are aware of endangered species such as the jewel beetle, Liawenee orchid, red-necked wallaby and cider gum. The preservation and growth of these natural assets are in everyone's interest and we will be undertaking flora and fauna reviews to not only protect but promote these and other unique natural assets. Preliminary discussions with our incredible wildlife rescue volunteers are helping us map out proactive steps to reduce the already high roadkill around

the Central Highlands. Virtual fencing and reduced speed limits are just two areas we are investigating.

A full financial feasibility study has been done using BDA Marketing Analysis. The results from this review provided some very compelling information. A trail at the Great Lake would increase visitation to the area from Tasmanians by 26 per cent and interstate tourists by 11 per cent, providing an economic boost to the greater Central Highlands within the first year of construction. This supports our vision to provide financial stability to all the regional towns surrounding the Highlands Plateau. Communication with the Northern Midlands Business Association and the Great Western Tiers Tourism Association has resulted in positive reactions from both these organisations.

For those concerned about the impact to traditional activities we have also opened communication with Anglers Alliance and Sports Shooters Association of Australia (Tasmanian Branch) to brief them and keep them informed of the project and to date have not received any negative feedback from either organisation.

Once we receive the report from Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania we can open dialogue with Hydro on the best locations for support services such as toilets, pick-up and drop-off points and transit camping areas. These will all be established outside and away from the existing shack settlements to minimize the impact on what for many has been a lifestyle spanning over many decades.

Funding submissions have been prepared for State and Federal Governments and Oppositions and logistic management plans are being developed. Track Maintenance planning and responsibility will fall to us as proponents.

The next formal process will most likely be a Recreational Activity Assessment submitted to Hydro Tasmania and a Development Application to the Central Highlands Council, however I would urge anyone who wants to provide input or to be a part of the consultation process to get in touch with Timmins Ray by emailing [info@timminsray.com.au](mailto:info@timminsray.com.au). Timmins Ray have been engaged to conduct independent third-party community consultation in order to provide clear and unbiased opinion on the project.

I hope this has answered your concerns or questions about the Great Lake Adventure Trail and shown that this is a project that we can all get behind to the benefit of all of us that live in and around the Central Highlands.

**James Johns is the owner of the Great Lake Hotel and the proponent of the Great Lake Adventure Trail. For more information go to [www.greatlakeadventuretrail.com.au](http://www.greatlakeadventuretrail.com.au)**