

BANDICOOTtimes

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A PROGRAM OF



City of **HOBART**

Bushcare Roundup



Sjaan Field
Program Officer Bushcare

As we begin 2020 with our regular working bees, Trackcare dig days and Walking Book Club, we are also busy planning for a number of special community events.

Our annual Clean Up Australia Day event will be held on Sunday 1 March at the summit of kunanyi/ Mount Wellington from noon to 3 pm.

Everyone is welcome and if you have your own bags and gloves please bring them along as well as warm clothing, it's important to be well prepared when on the mountain!

The Friends of Wellington Park and Friends of McAulay Reserve are thrilled to have received grants from the Australian Government's Communities Environment Program. Their projects will make a significant difference to the health of local wildlife habitat.

The Friends of Wellington Park grant includes managing an area infested by blackberry on the New Town Rivulet in Lenah Valley, followed by revegetation.

Weedy Radiata and Macrocarpa pine trees will be removed from McAulay Reserve and the land replanted with a mix of native



Sjaan Field helps celebrate Bushcare's 25th birthday with volunteers at the Queens Domain in 2018.

white gums, blue gums and blackwoods as well as a diverse understory.

Au revoir

After nine years in Hobart and seven and a half years working for the City of Hobart I am embarking on a new adventure to New Zealand's South Island.

My husband Ken, dog PJ and I are looking forward to the indefinite relocation and in particular tramping, kayaking and learning more about the unique

flora and fauna and kiwi way of life.

I will miss Hobart, Tassie and Bushcare, but will take with me so many moments, memories and experiences shared with special people in peaceful places.

It has been an absolute pleasure meeting you all. I am reassured and happy to know that thanks to our dedicated and skilful community, Hobart's bushlands are in caring and capable hands. Haere ra (Goodbye)!



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COVER PHOTO: Tom Guiver works on The Drops Track as part of a Trackcare dig day event.



Elise Jeffery inspects native grasslands for weed infestations at the Queens Domain.

Hawkweed search turns up another costly invader

The City of Hobart's search for the environmentally damaging orange hawkweed in Fern Tree has turned up an unexpected and potentially even more costly weed, serrated tussock.

Large plants produce up to 100,000 seeds a year and the seeds can remain dormant in soil for up to 15 years. Once serrated tussock gets a foothold this hardy environmental and agricultural weed can be almost impossible to eradicate.

City of Hobart fire and biodiversity program leader Elise Jeffery discovered the large patch of serrated tussock hiding in a Fern Tree garden.

Immediate action was taken to clear out the infestation, but years of ongoing monitoring will now be

needed to ensure the weed does not return through dormant seed beds in the ground.

"Serrated tussock was the last thing we expected to find in Fern Tree during our hunt for orange hawkweed," Ms Jeffery said.

"In NSW alone serrated tussock is estimated to cost \$40 million a year in control and lost production. We can't afford to let this weed get a foothold in Hobart."

It's suspected serrated tussock seed was carried into the area on contaminated machinery during the building of a house. Serrated tussock is a declared weed in Tasmania, and its sale and distribution is prohibited.

In Hobart the weed could pose a serious threat to our native

grasslands, especially at the Queens Domain, which is a sanctuary for critically endangered lowland temperate grasslands. Across Australia, less than 1 per cent of these grasslands remain.

"This find carries a clear message for anyone building a new house or having major earthworks done on their property," Ms Jeffery said.

"Serrated tussock seeds can hitch a ride in soil or gravel stuck to cars, trucks or other machinery.

"Make sure that any machinery coming on to your property is free of soil and organic matter that could be carrying harmful weed seeds. You're not just protecting your own property from this harmful weed but our beautiful bushlands too."



Fire trails and walking tracks across Hobart's bushland reserves were hit hard by the torrential rain in May 2018.

Healing scars from the night that shook Hobart

Almost two years ago on an autumn night in May a line of lightning storms marched into Hobart and dropped a rain bomb on Tasmania's capital city.

Over 24 hours kunanyi / Mount Wellington received 236.2 millimetres of rain. Down in Hobart roads turned into rivers and cars floated down city streets. Swollen rivulets burst with debris, throwing rubbish, rocks, branches and logs up on to their banks.

Hobart and its surrounding suburbs weren't the only places copping a belting from the ferocious weather. Twelve hundred metres above the city, kunanyi / Mount Wellington was also in turmoil as rain pelted the mountain top and rolled down its sides, carving deep channels into fire trails, walking and mountain bike tracks.

Huge boulders that a decade earlier had been carefully levered into place to form the iconic Clapper Bridge on the North-



Hobart Rivulet was hit particularly hard by the deluge of water.

South mountain bike track were knocked around like skittles. Newly resurfaced fire trails were stripped bare.

The damage to Hobart's bushland infrastructure was immense and the task of repair huge.

Healing the wounds

Since that night a massive repair and restoration operation has

taken place across the City's bushland reserves.

More than \$1.67 million is being spent repairing approximately 40 kilometres of fire trails, walking tracks and other bushland infrastructure damaged during the storm.

Most of the work has been completed and included rerouting the North-South Track river



The huge rock boulders that formed the Clapper Bridge on the North-South Track were washed away by the floods.

crossing by replacing the old stone clapper bridge with an equally beautiful rivulet crossing. The magical boulder field tracks in Lost World on kunanyi/Mount Wellington suffered heavy damage and had to be repaired, the stone steps that link Wellesley Park in South Hobart needed rebuilding and repairs were carried out on parts of the Glover Track in Knocklofty Reserve.

One of the last major repair works is taking place high up on kunanyi / Mount Wellington's eastern flank, with a team of track workers rebuilding parts of the Zig Zag Track that were seriously eroded and washed away in the storm. Down in Sandy Bay a new steel bridge has been lowered into place by helicopter in Lambert Park, restoring a link across the rivulet that runs through the leafy

bushland reserve. City wide the total cost of restoring community infrastructure, facilities and recreational assets is \$3.2 million, which is being funded through the Australian Government's Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements and includes major contributions from the Tasmanian Government and the City of Hobart.

Final pieces of Missing Link falling into place

The final pieces of the Missing Link mountain bike track project are falling into place, with two brand new tracks completed and an upgraded Drops Track ready to take on new riders.

The City of Hobart has worked closely with the mountain bike community and its own Trackcare volunteer crew for almost two years to turn this project into a reality.

These new tracks plug a clear gap in the mountain bike track network on kunanyi/Mount Wellington, letting riders spend more time riding single track and less time criss-crossing roads and fire trails to get to their next destination.

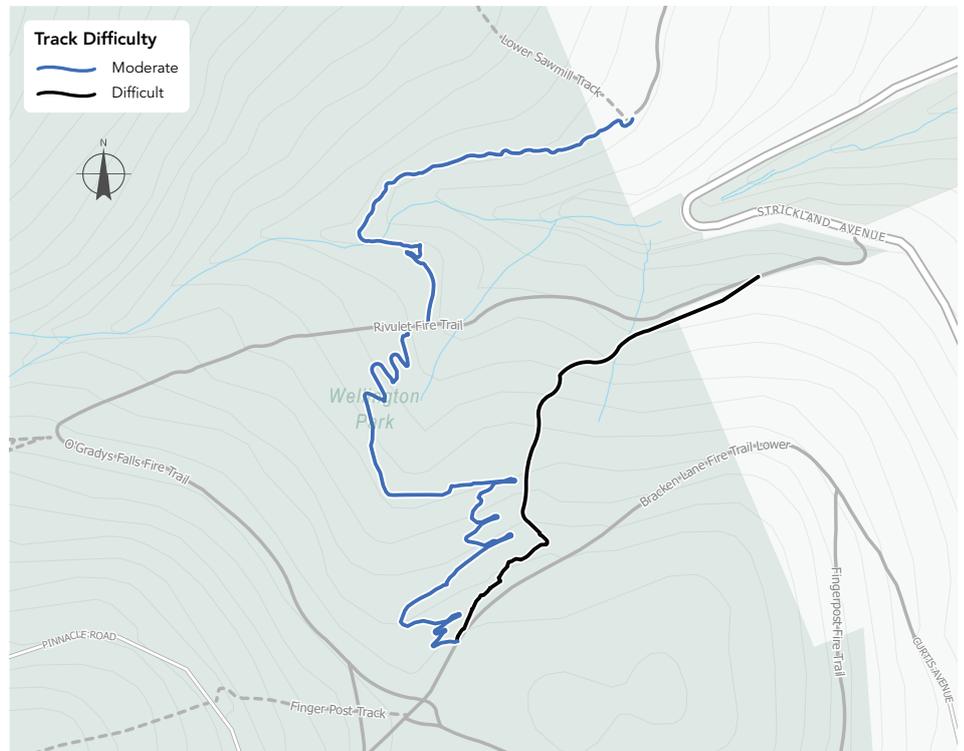
They help take a big step toward creating a connected mountain bike track network that is safer and more enjoyable to ride.

One of the most interesting new tracks can be used by mountain bike riders, walkers and runners. The track runs between Rivulet and Middle Island fire trails, working its way through a beautiful forest gully and crossing Hobart Rivulet.

The track has long sight lines, and is just as much fun to walk or run as it is to ride. Rock-armoured short-cuts have been added to help walkers and runners bypass some of the switchbacks.

A boulder ford across the rivulet sits in a beautiful little nook and will catch your breath the first time you see it.

City of Hobart track builders have worked hand-in-hand with Trackcare volunteers on this new track, which was home to



The two new mountain bike tracks will greatly improve the track network.

last year's most popular working bee and set the record for the most volunteers to attend a day's working bee, with 50 attendees.

Trackcare volunteers have come from all walks of life. We had whole families turn up, kids got their hands dirty and retirees and international students joined die-hard mountain bikers picking up tools for the job. Bushcarers also got involved, learning track building skills and helping to create single tracks.

The second new track built as part of the Missing Link project is designed for intermediate riders and is bike only, dual-direction use. It drops off the Bracken Lane Fire Trail and descends down to the Rivulet Fire Trail, linking up with the new track across the rivulet.

A mix of flowing turns and technical features including a rock garden, this intermediate ride is just as much fun going up as it is riding down. Optional "B-lines" let riders hone their skills on drops and jumps, while berms and rollers keep the main line flowing smoothly. This is a track riders will love and means riding fewer fire trails to reach other mountain bike tracks in the lower foothills.

Names for both new tracks have been shortlisted and will be voted on by the Trackcare community.

The Drops

The final piece in the Missing Link puzzle was bringing the existing Drops Track into line with international mountain bike track standards and adding a fast,



Bronwyn and her son Ewan help build one of the new mountain bike tracks.

flowing section through a fire break.

This unofficial track has been much-loved by the mountain bike community for more than 20 years. However, time has taken a heavy toll on it, with lack of drainage and armoring leading to significant ruts and a slowly widening track corridor.

A special Trackcare team reinforced the surface while retaining the rough and rowdy character of the track. Volunteers had to be physically fit to work on the steep slopes, and included a good number of experienced mountain bike riders who understood the needs of a technically challenging track like Drops.

As its name suggests, Drops Track has numerous large drop-offs from natural features. Rated

Draft plan

The City of Hobart is developing a draft Mountain Bike Network Plan that will further improve mountain bike riding within the lower foothills of the mountain. Key stakeholders and land managers have helped develop the draft plan, which will be released to the public for comment once approved by Hobart City Council.

as difficult (black diamond), this downhill-only bike track is not for the faint hearted. Rock armoring was used to fortify high impact areas where riders take off and land, and the sides of tight corners – called berms – were built up to give riders better traction.

Drops Track is now open for experienced riders looking for an old-school technical descent on the mountain.

All of this work was made possible through a Tasmanian Government Cycle Tourism Grant awarded to the City in 2018.

Get involved

Trackcare is gearing up for yet another exciting year so why not get involved? If you love mountain biking and want to help build and maintain Hobart's track network, come along to one of Trackcare's volunteer dig days.

Trackcarers of all ages meet each month, on the third Sunday, 10 AM – 3 PM, to learn new track building techniques and create some amazing tracks. Sites can change each month, so check the Bushcare Facebook page for the latest details.

To get involved phone 03 6238 2884 or visit hobartcity.com.au/trackcare.



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