5th Biennial Tracks and Trails Conference March 11-14 2008
Sunshine Coast Australia

CREATING TRAILS THAT WALKERS WILL WANT TO WALK

David Reid, Barbara Guerin and Tony Walker, Bushwalking Victoria

Abstract:
Bushwalking Victoria (formerly Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs (VicWalk)) is the peak body representing recreational bushwalkers in the state of Victoria Australia. Bushwalking Victoria has been developing relationships with track decision makers so as to influence design to ensure walkers can enjoy using tracks for environmental education and personal health and wellbeing.

Recreational walkers (as distinct from power walkers who walk for exercise alone) want to walk on trails that provide pleasant memorable experiences in addition to physical challenge.

When designing walking trails there is a need to look beyond the construction standard AS2156.1 and consider the qualitative factors that make trails enjoyable to walk and encourage return visits.

This paper looks at overseas experience, preliminary consultation with users in Victoria Australia and also encompasses the experience and observations of the authors. It identifies the factors that make walkers avoid a trail and those that encourage them to return again.

Before making a decision to create a trail there are three fundamental questions that should be asked.

- Why are we building this walking trail?
- Who do we want to use it? (Which categories of walker)
- What will attract walkers to it? (What are the features, experiences and trail narrative that will help to make it walkable)?

In conclusion we discuss the processes needed to ensure we create trails walkers will want to walk based around a collaborative and consultative approach between users and designers.

CREATING TRAILS THAT WALKERS WILL WANT TO WALK

Introduction

Bushwalking Victoria (formerly Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs (VicWalk)) is the peak body representing recreational bushwalkers in the State of Victoria Australia. All states have similar peak organisations for bushwalking that are affiliated with the national body Bushwalking Australia. Bushwalking Victoria (BWV) currently represents some 80 clubs consisting of around 10,000 people. It aims to proactively represent the interests of all recreational walkers in Victoria as well as visiting walkers from interstate and overseas. We have recently created an individual member category to complement our traditional club membership model.

BWV has been developing relationships with trail decision makers so as to influence trail design to ensure walkers will enjoy using the tracks that are created. At the same time, BWV has been promoting the environmental, educational and personal health and wellbeing benefits of recreational walking to the community. This has included a project to promote recreational walking ("bushwalking") to walking groups that walk for exercise only; and to investigate the barriers to recreational walking experienced by some disadvantaged groups within the community.

In this paper we identify and discuss the issues that are relevant to the creation of trails that walkers will want to walk. We focus on the needs of recreational walkers as distinct from the needs of other terrestrial trail users such as cyclists; walkers where exercise is the prime motive; and horse riders.

We believe there is a tendency to assume that recreational walkers' requirements can accommodate other user groups' needs perhaps because walking is such a universal activity (most people can walk). In reality recreational walking is as much a specific activity with specific requirements as is cycling or horse riding.

Our focus is on **walker only trails**, why they are needed and what makes them walkable. The authors recognise that participants in other activities may also have a need for trails dedicated to their activity. This paper does not address the creation of and issues around shared trails. Shared trails, which can be an appropriate and practical amenity, should only be considered after the specific requirements of the different user groups have been identified and understood.

In this paper we adopt the description of a trail given in the Victorian Trails Strategy 2005 – 2010 as "a defined path, route or track which often traverses natural areas and is used by people for non-motorised recreation such as walking, cycling, mountain biking and horse riding". We have used track and trail interchangeably.

Why do we need "walking" trails?

The need for trails **specifically for walkers** is driven by the promotion of recreational walking as a means of

- enabling people to recharge their vitality and enhance their health and wellbeing through quiet, leisurely and contemplative enjoyment of the natural environment with others of like mind or in a solitary way
- getting more people to understand and value the natural environment
- increasing social interaction and strengthening communities
- meeting the needs and expectations of recreational walkers in terms of the best amenity for their activity

Other benefits are:

- links – increasing the usage of existing trails through links
- local tourism
- helping protect and/or manage our natural estate.

Who is the typical walking trail user?

In this paper we use the term “recreational walker” to describe the people most likely to be using walking trails and to distinguish them from those who walk solely for transport or exercise.

The Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) 2006 published by the Australian Sports Commission, uses categories of “walking - other” and “bushwalking”. A BWV project to promote recreational walking to walking groups that walk for exercise only, found from focus group discussions that “bushwalking” implies something serious involving special gear and remote places, as distinct from “walking in the bush” which people felt they could do.

We suspect that a considerable number of recreational walkers would have described their activity in the ERASS survey as “walking-other” rather than bushwalking. This would particularly be the case if they used metropolitan trails or local council trails. We also know, from evidence from our member bushwalking clubs, that the activity of “bushwalking” is increasingly relying on tracks and trails and increasingly tending towards day walks rather than remote or untracked or multi-day “pack carries”.

ERASS 2006 found that walking was the most common activity participated in at least once in the year prior to the survey by persons aged 15 years and over (participation rate of 36.2% of the population) and bushwalking was the eighth most common activity (participation 4.7%).

The number of recreational walkers in Australia then is therefore likely to be somewhere between the number of people who answered that they went walking and those that said they went bushwalking. That is, between about three quarters of a million and six million.

Detailed information on walking from ERASS 2006 is given in Appendix 1.

Who are these recreational walkers? The typical trail walker is a mix of the ERASS bushwalking category and some portion of the “other walking” category. The “typical” trail walker is between 45 to 64 years of age and is rather more likely to be female than male, especially for metropolitan or local council trails where the walking might be described as “walking (other)” rather than bushwalking. Further ERASS statistics also tell us that this typical walker does not walk as part of an organised club or association activity, although 15% of bushwalkers do walk with some sort of club or association and almost half of these belong to a bushwalking club.

For good walking trail design the recreational walkers’ profile must be considered because it may imply characteristics such as:

- non-competitive, not looking for extreme physical or technical challenge
- interested in knowledge – environment, history, flora & fauna information associated with the trail
- values the ambience of the trail rather than the trail’s physical or engineering characteristics
- may be walking with a club or association

What do walkers want? - Understanding user needs

BWV conducted a small pilot survey with regular walkers in Victoria, asking them:

- *What* makes *a track one you want to walk?*
- *What deters you from walking a track?*
- *Examples where you stopped walking because no longer walker-friendly, and reason*

The replies are given in full in Appendix 2.

The replies can be categorised under:

- physical conditions of the track; and
- quality of the surrounding environment.

Answers to “What makes a track one you want to walk?” were related more to the quality of the surrounding environment than the physical track conditions. However, answers to “What deters you from walking a track?” and the examples of where “no longer walker-friendly” were more likely to describe physical track conditions.

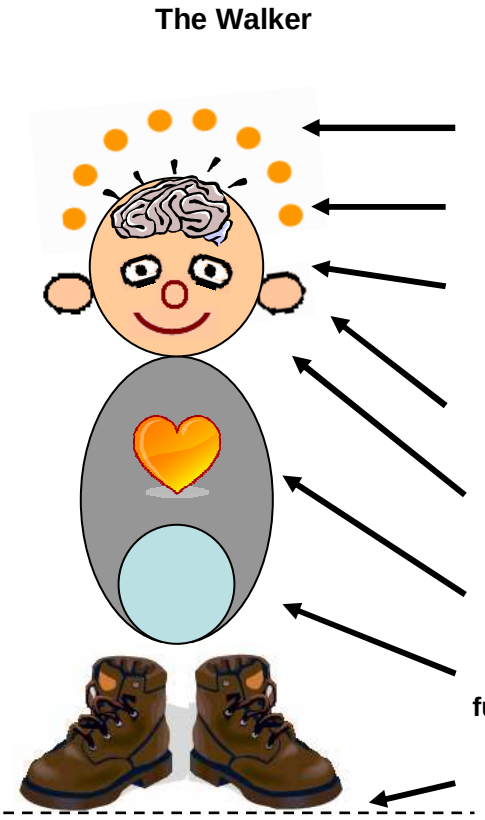
We believe this indicates the prime importance of the quality of the surrounding environment to the trail walker. Physical track conditions are important- but good physical track conditions alone may not be enough to encourage walkers. Bad physical track conditions, however, definitely deter walkers. Hence the necessity to apply a construction standard such as AS2156.1; **but it is the qualitative factors that make trails enjoyable to walk.**

We have attempted to express the essence of the recreational walker's ethos as follows*:*

> We as walkers are not there to conquer the natural environment. We are there to understand it and appreciate it for what it is, to accept it on its terms.
>
> We cannot control the weather. Neither should we expect to conquer or control the environment through which we walk. We should accept it as it is and draw inspiration from its natural forms, challenging terrain, seasonal changes and the beauty of its natural order.

Figure 1 summarises the relationship between the walker and the trail. Almost all the trail criteria, to which the walker relates, are to do with the trail’s surrounding environment. We assert that many of these trail criteria are a function of the pace of walking and cannot be met by a faster activity such as cycling. BWV recently proposed this motto to capture the special relationship of walking with the environment: ***At a Natural Pace, In a Natural Place*.**

Figure 1*: The Walker and Trail Assessment Criteria*



Trail Assessment Criteria

Ambience	“Remote” from urban environment Closeness to nature
Information	Flora Fauna Geology History Trail facts
Scenery Visual detail	Natural views Natural flora & fauna No introduced species Not logged
Natural sounds	Bird calls, not vehicles or trail-bikes or industry
Natural scents	Fresh air, vegetation Not vehicles or industry
Challenge	Terrain Navigation Weather exposure
Appropriate facilities	Toilets Water Shelter
Track surface	Varied, interesting “Soft” not concrete

Creating the walking track

The creation of a walking trail needs to follow a process and should be considered as a project, with all the disciplines that implies. Successful development requires the cooperation of land managers, community, and funding and resource bodies. We need to ensure that all have been consulted, and that all the relevant groups support the concept. **Collaboration and consultation are essential for a successful outcome.**

Stage 1 - Justification (Why are we proposing this track?).

What will be the benefits?

- social
- environmental
- economic

This project stage should include research, market surveys, and quantification and qualification of local and bushwalking community support.

During this phase, we create a conceptual overview of the trail, and build a high level proposal for its development. We need to consider what facilities exist, and in general terms, what would be needed.

Stage 2 - Describe the track

We commend the following key principles put forward by Trapp Gross and Zimmerman (1992)

'Trail design is the process of exposing the mystery, variety and beauty that a site has to offer. Nearly everything that engages a visitor along a trail can be classified into these three categories:

- *Mystery – any feature that arouses curiosity and provokes the visitor to explore*
- *Variety – any features of a trail that provide contrast, diversity and change*
- *Beauty – may be described as grace, elegance or harmony*

Trails should be planned to be a unique and refreshing adventure. They have many moods, depending on the time of day, weather or season. Their planning is a holistic endeavour that includes an understanding of the needs of people and the potential of the site.'

Based on our research to date a good walking trail:

- Is a footpad that has minimum impact on the natural environment
- does not cut straight through the landscape but twists and turns around the natural features in a sympathetic manner.
- Lures us with the promise of adventure and quiet enjoyment of our natural bush and scenic areas. It beckons us on to fully explore it and find out what is around the next corner or over the next knoll.
- Encourages us to contemplate the joy and wonder of nature rather than the need to conquer it and enables us to take in our surroundings with all our senses
- Identifies itself clearly as a walking only trail that is free of conflict and diminished ambience caused by incompatible users e.g. motorised or human propelled vehicles.
- Provides information about features such as views, waterfalls, history, special habitat and a narrative that will encourage both the novice and the experienced to try it.
- Makes us want to return to take in a new perspective, a different season or to enjoy the same experiences again and again.
- Will have its design informed by good research into the needs of different categories of walkers. e.g. "Amblers, Ramblers and Scramblers" Walker (2006)
- Is easy to access and use. e.g. good transport access to trail heads, vehicle security arrangements. Some trails close to population centres. Booking systems that are easy to use but only where they are absolutely necessary. No fees or very low fees so use is not discouraged.

This stage involves walking the proposed route of the track, and creating a trail narrative describing the geography, features and attractions in response to walkers' requirements above. We need to identify the places, views and features that the trail must access, and how to best link them. This requires consideration of the natural slopes and drainage of the ground, so that the trail does not cause unnecessary environmental impact and is pleasant and easy to walk. The best trails tend to have a theme, an interesting journey and a rewarding destination, ecological/geographic significance, and/or scenery theme that will dominate the narrative (e.g. Great Ocean Walk, Milford Track).

The trail narrative is important, and it needs to be consistent with the answers to the questions considered in Stage 1 – justification.

At this stage, the trail may still have unresolved route issues or alternatives. These need to be documented and evaluated in rough – they will be resolved in the next stage.

Note: for shorter or simpler tracks, or tracks which are planned to be developed in a single project, stages 1 and 2 can be combined. For longer, more complex trails, stages 1 and 2 are best kept separate.

Once the trail narrative is completed, there needs to be a further round of consultation to ensure that all the stakeholders support the proposed track. Once agreement has been reached, the more resource demanding (and hence expensive) stages can be started, including the detailed survey and plan for the track.

Stage3 - Define and design the track

Some practical suggestions for track design[1]:

- *Create loop trails, where visitors never see the same portion of trail twice. A sense of solitude can be achieved because there are fewer encounters with others* [this can include 'detour loops from a main trail]
- *Routing trails past the largest trees*
- *Planning vistas that allow for directed views of lakes, cliffs, peaks and valleys*
- *Use curves to draw people down trails*
- *Use structures* [natural or constructed]*, to create unique views and vistas*
- *Position views on trails so the sun is on the visitor's back Managing vegetation for diversity in texture, patterns and density*
- *Introducing and maintaining colourful trees, shrubs and ground cover*
- *Create views into forests by selectively cutting understorey, thinning stands and making openings*
- *Screen objectionable views, sounds or artificial structures*
  (Trapp, Gross and Zimmerman, 1992)

Naturally, the above suggestions must be used in context – some would be inappropriate where we are designing trails focussed on natural vegetation and environment. In some cases, factors such as prevailing winds or exposure to adverse weather conditions may also be a significant design factor.

Defining the track involves, surveying the route in detail and resolving any options or alternatives raised in Stage 2. It includes defining the facilities and infrastructure required – these include car parking, drinking water, signage and interpretation, toilets, rubbish facilities, campsites, seating, picnic/barbecue areas etc.

It is very important in track design to consider maintenance. The track may need access points and depots specifically for maintenance workers. Lack of consideration of maintenance issues can add greatly to running costs and compromise the success of the track in the long term.

An important part of the definition involves the track surface and verges. These will depend on the identified user groups, the context and location of the track, and environmental

[1] Note: the authors' comments appear in [ ] without italics.

considerations (such as fragile ecosystems, erosion considerations etc). A good track has a varied surface, appropriate to the locality it passes through.

Final decisions on aspects such as sections where shared usage is necessary need to be made at this point (in practice, these will also strongly influence track surface and verge design).

As a general rule, concrete and asphalt are not walker-friendly surfaces for any but fairly short walking tracks or for disabled access.

An essential part of this stage, involves discussing with Land Managers the detailed route ways, facilities and associated infrastructure, and securing their agreement. Consultation with the community is also essential throughout this work.

Defining the track includes rough costing the proposed work in terms of dollars and work-days, and resources required.

Stage 4 - Project Planning

This involves three main tasks:

(i) Costing the track
(ii) Creating a schedule for its completion
(iii) Securing formal agreement of all relevant authorities (particularly all Land Managers)

A formal project plan, supported by the community and signed off by all relevant parties is the key outcome of this stage. This document can then be used as the basis for issuing Tender Requests, selecting the constructors and managing the project.

Note: A major resource for trail planners is the experience and knowledge of bushwalkers. Bushwalking clubs and their associates cover a wide range of walking experiences and understand the needs of all categories of walkers.

Stage 5 - Construction

Construction of walking tracks in Australia is covered by two related standards:

(i) AS2156.1 Walking Tracks - Classification and Signage
(ii) AS2156.2 Walking Tracks – Infrastructure Design

These standards address the characteristics of designated classes of walking tracks, and the construction standards which should be followed

This paper does not discuss walking track construction methods and processes. However we do focus on the need for Quality Management during track construction.

Supervision and control of the track construction process is essential. Quality expectations need to be laid down based on the information gathered in Stages 1 through 3. They should be clearly set out and enforced by scheduled inspections as work progresses.

At the completion of construction, the track should be formally evaluated and accepted.

Stage 6 - Management and Evaluation

How will we assess if the track is successful?

Well prior to completion of Stage 5, and based on work carried out in Stages 2 through 4, a track management plan needs to be created. This should include evaluation of the success of the track measured against the expectations established in Stage 1.

The evaluation process is the logical source for amendments, extensions etc to the track and for the track auditing process described in Appendix 3.

Conclusions

- Recreational walking is a popular recreational activity in which walkers seek to interact with nature and draw inspiration from it.
- To the recreational walker, the quality of the walking experience depends much more on the quality of the surrounding environment than the physical conditions underfoot, although poor physical track conditions can deter walkers.
- The recreational walker is non-competitive and not primarily motivated by challenges of speed, technique or levels of difficulty.
- The design of a good walking track acknowledges the pace of walking and enables a fulfilling interaction between the walker and his/her surrounds.
- A well designed walking track:
    - follows a route which complements the terrain, the environment and the scenery
    - uses construction materials and methods sensitively
    - provides informative and helpful signage and interpretive materials
    - is easy to manage and maintain.
- In order to create trails that walkers will want to walk we need to:
    - continue research to identify and validate the special needs of walkers as distinct from other trail users
    - have those needs recognised and understood through collaboration, consultation and partnerships between trail decision makers, designers, builders and the walkers
    - follow a proper process for describing, defining and constructing the trail
    - audit the trail to ensure it continues to meet the objectives that were agreed at the time of its creation.

There is no better way to observe the natural world than on foot, where your sensibilities have time to readjust so that subtleties become obvious, colours and patterns more beautiful. What at speed can seem amorphous, at walking pace becomes diverse, intricate and fascinating.

Tim Macartney-Snape, Great Walks magazine. October/November 2007

References

Australian Sports Commission (2006). *Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) 2006*

Standards Australia (2001) *AS 2156.1 Walking tracks – Classification and signage*

Standards Australia (2001) *AS2156.2 Walking Tracks – Infrastructure Design*

Trapp, S.,Gross, M., and Zimmerman, R., 1992. *Signs, Trails and Wayside Exhibits: Connecting People and Places* UW-SP Foundation Press, Wisconsin

Victorian Trails Co-ordinating Committee (2004). *Victorian Trails Strategy 2005 - 2010*

Walker, J (2006). *Walking for recreation* Walk21 Melbourne 2006.

Author details

David Reid is President of Bushwalking Victoria He was President of Waverley Bushwalking Club for 8 years and held other committee roles. He is a retired manager with experience in strategic planning and has many years experience in planning and leading on and off-trail hiking in Australia and overseas.

Barbara Guerin is vice President of Bushwalking Victoria. She is a member of the Locksley Bushwalking Club with whom she has shared many day and extended walks in Victoria and adjoining states for the last 25 years. She has science and computing qualifications and recently retired from the Victorian public service.

Tony Walker is Strategy Consultant to Bushwalking Victoria. He is Vice President of the Waverley Bushwalking Club, and President of a local environmental care group in the City of Monash. He has been a keen bushwalker for many years. Tony has an IT consulting background, particularly associated with IT and business strategy planning.

Contact

All mail PO Box 1007 Templestowe Victoria Australia 3106

David Reid, 61 3 8846 4131 president@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Barbara Guerin, 61 3 8846 4131 vp@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Tony Walker Strategy Consultant 61 3 8846 4131 strategy@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Appendix 1: Analysis of 2006 ERASS statistics.

The ERASS statistics use categories of “Walking-(other)” and “Walking-(bush)”. Cycling is not differentiated. We would prefer statistical categories of “walking (for exercise or transport)” and “recreational walking”. Cycling could similarly be categorised as “cycling (for exercise or transport)” and “recreational cycling”. In this paper recreational walkers are taken to be a combination of the two current ERASS walking categories.

Who are these recreational walkers? Information from the ERASS survey is given below. We include the cycling statistics to give some context for comparison, as walking and cycling are obviously the two main possible activities on a terrestrial trail.

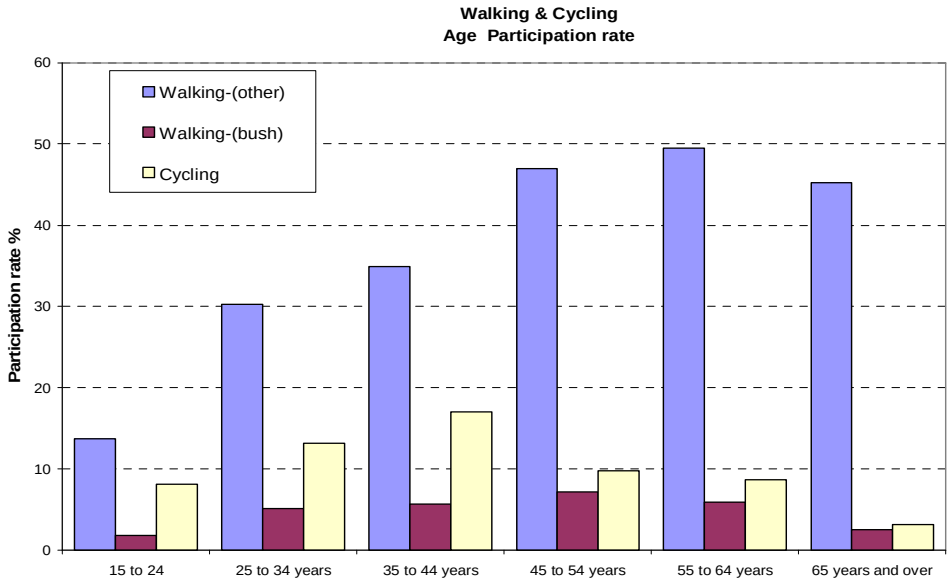
Excerpt from ERASS 2006 Table 16: Selected activities by sex, 2006

	MALES		FEMALES		PERSONS	
	Number ('000)	Participation rate (%)	Number ('000)	Participation rate (%)	Number ('000)	Participation rate (%)
Walking-(other)	2,141.10	26.2	3,860.60	45.9	6,001.70	36.2
Walking-(bush)	358.4	4.4	415.7	4.9	774	4.7
Cycling	1,079.90	13.2	602.8	7.2	1,682.80	10.1

Male and female participation rates were roughly equal for bushwalking. However females participated in walking (other) at almost double the rate of males. Assuming that some portion of these were recreational walkers, this is consistent with a generally observed pattern in bushwalking clubs of a higher female participation rate.

In contrast to walking, males participated in cycling at almost double the rate of females.

In terms of age, participation in bushwalking was highest among those aged 45 to 54 years. Participation in walking (other) was highest in the 55 to 64 age group. For cycling the 35 to 44 age group had the highest participation rate.



ERASS also provide figures on participation predominantly through activities organised by a club or association.

Excerpt from ERASS 2006 Table 23: Selected activities — type of participation, 2006 (a)

	Number ('000)			Participation rate (%)		
	Total organised (a)	Total non-organised (a)	Total (b)	Total organised (a)	Total non-organised (a)	Total (b)
Walking-(other)	169.4	5,910.10	6,001.70	1	35.6	36.2
Walking-(bush)	112.2	711.5	774	0.7	4.3	4.7
Cycling	143	1,609.90	1,682.80	0.9	9.7	10.1

(a) Includes persons who reported participating in both organised and non-organised activity

(b) Components may not add to totals as persons may report both organised and non-organised activity

Participation rates for organised activities are low for walking and cycling, as would be expected for predominantly non-competitive activities. The highest organised participation rates were for triathlons (96.9%), outdoor hockey (94.7%) and lawn bowls (93.3%). However the ratio of organised participation to total participation for a particular activity is 2.8% for walking, 14.5% for bushwalking and 8.5% for cycling.

Applying these figures to our home state of Victoria where ERASS found that 183,300 people had participated in bushwalking at least once in the year prior to the survey, shows that 26,500 people participated in bushwalking as part of a club activity. As BWV represents some 10,000 people in bushwalking clubs, this is 38% of the total number of people who went bushwalking in Victoria as some sort of club or organised activity. Clubs, groups and associations not affiliated with BWV but which conduct bushwalks during the year include schools, Scouts and Guides university clubs, U3A, social clubs, environment / landcare groups, various outdoor education organisations,(e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Scheme) and family groups and commercial operations.

We suggest that the recreational walking constituency is a mix of the ERASS bushwalking category and some portion of the “other’ walking category and covers a wide age range.

The “typical” trail user “is a bit more likely to be female than male, especially for metropolitan or local council trails where the walking might be described as recreational walking rather than bushwalking, and is between 45 to 64 years of age. This typical walker does not walk as part of an organised club or association activity, although 15% of walkers do walk with some sort of club or association and almost half of these belong to a bushwalking club. These conclusions are supported by anecdotal reports and the field observations of the authors

In Victoria, ERASS found that 183,300 people (4.4%) went bushwalking in the year prior to the survey, and that Australian-wide, the bushwalking frequency median was 0.2 times per week or 10 times per year. This represents 1.8 million “person-bushwalks” in Victoria in a year. We believe these walks would be at least day walks in length because, as we have said, lesser length walks along trails are likely to have been categorised as “walking –other”. Activity figures from the Victorian Trails Strategy, developed by the Victorian Trails Coordinating Committee, produce a similar estimate of 2.1 million long walks or day walks (more than 4 hours) on Victoria’s national and state park trails during 2002 and 2003.

A “back-of-the-envelope’ calculation based on 2 million day walks in Victoria per year, each 10 km long, spread evenly over Victoria’s 8,000 km of trails (Parks Victoria, DSE and local Government) gives an average 2,500 walkers per year on any piece of trail in Victoria.

Appendix 2 – Responses to pilot survey of regular bushwalkers

Type of walks normally participated in	*What makes a track one you want to walk*	*What deters you from walking a track*	*Stopped walking because no longer walker-friendly*	*Reason*
All types….but all day walks currently.	Unspoilt natural environment	Presence of trail bikes, mountain bikes, 4WDs	Only in cases where tape has been strung across the track by rangers indicating that it is no longer safe	Unsafe
Tracked, untracked, metropolitan, bush, beach etc.	Peace & quiet of surroundings, giving more opportunity to sight fauna	Track severely churned up by 4WDs	Egg Rock area	Too many bikes
Flat, hilly,	Well marked, firm and free of fallen logs, holes and very soft ground like sand.	Logging, motor bikes, lots of stones ie blue metal, too many other people	Otways	Areas that are now logged.
Amble, ramble & scramble	Points of interest Gold mines, waterfall, historic site, following a timber tramway etc.	Sandy tracks can be difficult and a little deterring	Mt Torbreck	Had a lot of fallen logs. I must admit it is about 10 years since I was there, but my experience was enough to put me off going back. I used to do a pack carrying weekend there, but the logs were just too difficult for most people.
All except hard walks and bush bashing.	Waterfalls and historic sites, old railway trails.	Multiple obstacles, ie large fallen over logs which are continuously difficult to cross or climb over.	The top of Mt. Wilson in the Wombat forest	Logging and loss of track, which had all been logged out. On one occasion this also caused us to become geographically embarrassed.
Distance of 12-20 kms	Beautiful surroundings, views, bush, beach, cliffs	Tracks rutted by motor/mountain bikes. Added erosion to this is not pleasant	Steep bush on the slopes of Mt. Macedon where the track disappears	Danger of getting lost
Undulating terrain, with scenic views	Views and bush cliffs with ocean views	Where it is necessary to traverse an area where logging has occurred and the area has not been cleaned up. This is impossible and wastes time & energy. (I might be off on a tangent here and off a track)	Ada Tree	Track in poor condition, vast amount of leeches
Offering unique points of interest eg unusual geology, birdlife, wildflowers, historical relics.	Variety in scenery, vegetation	Noisy, crowded tracks/areas	I cannot think of an example where I have been put off ever returning to a track because of this	Logging has an adverse effect on scenery, and there is (as already mentioned) maybe a heightened risk of someone relying on
I participate in all walks, but especially in pack walks. All walks could be either tracked or untracked on whatever the terrain offers.	Lush forests and valleys at sunset	Surrounded by horrible weeds.		
Day walks in Vic country areas	Season of the year is also relevant - exposure in summer or severe wind	Overgrown tracks are a disappointment		
Day walks being	Like walking in the cold and cool weather, don't like walking in a forest on a windy day	On a day walk it is a longer drive from home (I used to not bother, but I now want a short drive)		
	Isolation, serenity	I now don't go into certain areas where previously I have encountered what I felt were too many bikes (Egg Rock area) or now		
	Like the quiet forests to hear the birds sing			
	if it is in a new area I have not been before - Makes it more interesting			
	By recommendation			
	Enjoy to find places enjoyed by friends			

Type of walks normally participated in	*What makes a track one you want to walk*	*What deters you from walking a track*	*Stopped walking because no longer walker-friendly*	*Reason*
predominantly within 100 km of Melb and Med grade.	When time is short, closer proximity to home	are logged (Otways). I also have not been back to another area which had a lot of fallen logs (Mt Torbreck).	sort of damage, eg logging, trail bikes, etc.	memory for navigation getting lost.
Usually day walks, possibly from base camp. I prefer walks involving climbing hills, or along river/creek valleys.	We try to book walks close to home.	Overgrown tracks are also a concern.		Trailbikers make the surface harder to walk on where there has been erosion and ruts created.
Day walks and base camp walks over weekends or occasional week.	The scenery, isolation, previous track notes on the area. These days if it is a day walk, I walk close to home. Good views or interesting vegetation, preferably not shared with bikes, no road noise. If the track has some sort of inviting prospect at its start. Also if the track provides a suitable way of getting from A to B within a longer walk.	No recent maps, high volume of walkers on the track, road noise.		**safety issues too
All types of terrain	Three factors: challenge, scenery, and a destination. Challenge means that the track demands effort and fitness. Scenery can be any number of things – coastal, mountain, riverine, or ecological. Destination implies a reward at the end!	I quite like overgrown tracks and don't mind obstacles within reason – they come with isolation and lack of use.	Cemetery Track, Warburton (near Mount Tugwell)	The track has been ruined by 4WD's; it is now too slippery and uneven to walk on
From urban to 6 day overnight	Tranquil atmosphere	Shared use tracks are less attractive, particularly if bicycles are involved. Tracks with too little variation or interest – particularly if they lack attractive features such as views or vegetation / geology etc. Access is important – the track can be distant, but has to be reasonably accessible.	Talarook Park.	The tracks are dangerous because of speeding motorbikes that cannot see us on sharp bends
	Views	None springs to mind.	Great Ocean Walk cleared sections (bulldozed)	See pic below
	Fresh air	Traffic noise from Motorways.		
	Good scenery, few people, adequate marking	Tracks made dangerous by 4WD's and Motorbikes		
	Lack of access to 4wd, motorbikes and horses, preferably walking only, with access to good scenery	Concrete tracks which are hard on the feet.		
		Logging, motor bikes,		
		Too many people, walking on 4WD tracks, roads crossing track.		
		Blackberries! Vehicular tracks!		

Appendix 3: Auditing of Trails

There are a number of reasons to audit a trail:

- To assess trail condition and suitability for use
- To assess current level of use and user satisfaction
- To assess the trail for risk and/or against safety standards

Each of these has a common theme – the process of audit involves measuring the trail against some predetermined standard or expectation.

In the building of a walking track, it is very useful to set out clearly who the track is designed for, why it has been created, and to build a track narrative describing the features and attractions of the track. If this material exists, it forms a very useful basis to support the audit.

Other inputs include track construction standards, the relevant policies of land managers and other authorities associated with the trail, and the views of the bushwalking and local communities.

Step 1: Preparing for the audit

The purpose and scope of the audit should be established in advance. This seems like a self-evident statement, but in practice, audits are often carried out without a clear objective.

Information already existing about the track should be gathered and reviewed and used as the basis for the audit plan.

A successful audit needs a plan which should cover:

- The scope of the audit
- The resources required (human, equipment etc)
- The reference standards and policies to be used
- The groups to be consulted
- Any user assessments to be carried out
- Time required
- Form and scope of reporting

The audit plan should be approved by the group(s) authorising the audit.

Step 2: Carrying out the audit

The activities to be carried out will depend on the scope and focus of the audit, but the following are some typical activities

- Walk the track and assess:
  - the position and condition of signage, interpretative material and viewpoints etc. These should be assessed relative to the track narrative ie do they complement the declared purpose of the track, are they suitable, useable etc
  - any repairs or maintenance required. In particular, look for hazards or risks e.g. unsafe track surfaces etc.
  - evidence of environmental degradation or stress (for example, erosion, rutting, soil slumping, plant dieback etc).
  - any evidence of weed or exotic plant problems, or animal problems
  - any opportunities for improvements – eg additional side-loops, lookouts, interpretive material etc
- Carry out surveys of individual users and organisations to gauge user reaction to the track. In particular, issues with signage, access, infrastructure such as parking, toilets etc may best be gleaned from such feedback. Information derived may also include suggestions for improvements and extensions.

Step three: Report the Audit

The value of an audit lies in the subsequent actions it provokes. It is therefore important that the audit be reported quickly, comprehensively and in an easily understood form and above all, that it reaches the right audience!
An audit report therefore should where possible, focus on the 'actions required and recommended', and should make it clear whose responsibilities these action would be. It should include a follow up to review the status of these actions within a defined time-frame.

Two sets of sample documents used in track audits are shown below.

Form A, used by the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service (Mungo National Park), focuses on the signage and interpretive material of various walks in the National Park.

Form B focuses on track maintenance issues – it is a more general form, identifying remedial work, generally construction or track repair.

The two forms are provided to show the type of approach generally used in track audits.

Form A: Mungo National Park Drive Tour and Walking Tracks Audit (Extract)

Drive Tour

Mileage	*Stop/Sign*	*Interpretive Feature*	*Comments*
	Visitor Carpark	Visitor registration, day use facilities, interpretive displays, distribution point for drive tour information	Identification signage of Visitor Centre could be improved
0.0km	Stop No. 1	Woolshed	The woolshed has its own stand-alone interpretation to self-guide visitors who walk around the site. Drive Tour notes encourage visitors to look through the building
0.0km	Drive Tour interpretive sign 1	In the backblocks of NSW	Explanation of the spread of settlement, regional exploration; hisyory of Gol Gol, government acquisition and world heritage status registration; maps
0.0 km	Interpretive sign 2	Our road to understanding Mungo	Sponsorship of Mungo National Park. interpretation by BHP (corporate) and NPWS Foundation; historical summary of history of Lake Mungo
0.2km	Tank		No interpretation; although bus tours take groups off the main road to look at tank and Chinese ruins
0.3km	Stop No. 2	Rabbit proof fence	Construction in 1900s during rabbit plague
0.4km	Traffic meter; road diversion		Two way traffic to Walls of China on hard packed unsealed section with loose gravel
0.9km	Stop No. 3	Saltbush	Warning to motorists re wildlife crossing
5.5km	Stop No. 4	Stockyards	
	Stop No. 5	Bluebush Views of Walls of China	
6.6 km	Interpretive sign	Lunette… how it grew	Diagrammatic explanation of formation of lunettes and extent of dune systems

Woolshed Tour (Extracted notes)

Sign	*Feature*	*Message*	*Recommendation*
Directional sign located outside the front of the Woolshed	Mungo woolshed	Sign directs visitors to woolshed walking tour via the sheep years, and links site to Drive Tour	A variety of signage styles are used. A clear hierarchy and style are required
Interpretive sign 1 located outside the Woolshed	Drop log construction	Form and extent of woolshed complex	Signs 1-6 are photo-etched metal signs overlaid with Perspex cover bolted at corners; supported on upright metal plinth. This set of interpretive signs is in poor condition and needs updated presentation
Interpretive sign 2	Underground tank	Operational information, current status and condition	Present condition is explained but feature presents potential visitor safety threat. Structure requires remedial work
Interpretive sign 3	Paddock fence	Design and operational features	Introduce low key sheep sounds
Interpretive sign 4	Pens and jetting race	Operational features	Equipment requires stabilisation treatment
Interpretive sign 5	Atmosphere	Evocative	Current presentation conveys impression of isolation and abandonment. Future interpretation might consider low key sounds of shearing shed in operation
Interpretive sign 6	Shearing	Explanation of process and value of shed in original condition	Prevent over-interpretation which would detract from the experience. Movable heritage items *in-situ* are important features

Form B: Track Maintenance Action Form

Date:	**Officer:**
Site Number:	**Location:**
Priority:	
Problem:	
Repair:	
Sketch Existing Trail:	**Sketch Repair:**
Team:	**Tools:**