

Resurfacing the trail

By **KEIRA JAMES**

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Gary Sims and Mark Hill inspect a section of the Riesling Trail that has worn down to the base rock. A grant from the Office of Recreation and Sport will fund the resurfacing of the trail, which has gradually eroded over its 20 years by rain, wind and thousands of feet and bicycle tyres.

The ever-popular Riesling Trail will soon receive a \$189,000 ‘face lift’, funded by a state government Community Recreation and Sport Facilities Program grant.

The money will be used to resurface the trail from Clare to Auburn, which has slowly deteriorated over the 20 years since it was first constructed.

“... (it) should give the Trail at least another 20 years with a high quality surface,” Riesling Trail Chairman Allan Mayfield, wrote in an email passing on the good news to committee members.

Vice-chairman Mark Hill said the trail would not look any different, but the resurfacing would make it a more durable and pleasant path to walk and ride on for the next 20 years.

“Without the surface being to a good standard, the Riesling Trail is nothing, it wouldn’t have its reputation as one of the best rail trails in Australia,” Mr Hill said.

“Wind, rain and general use slowly wears down the surface; water drainage is a big thing, and we need the trail to be slightly elevated to get water to run off.

“Apart from repairs and patching in spots, the trail has not had any major work done to its surface since it was originally constructed 20 years ago, and in some places it was almost down to its base material,” he said.

Gary Sims from Clare Quarry originally constructed the trail, and will oversee the resurfacing work, which will take place over the next year or two.

“It will take 8,500 tonnes of crusher sand to resurface the three metre width of the trail for about 24 kilometres in length.

“It is going to be a big job to spread, grade and shape the path and water the sand in, as it is difficult to access some parts of the trail.

“We can get graders across the bridges, but can’t get the trucks through.

“There will be some minor disruption to trail users, but we will only work on one section at a time and users will be redirected around the works.

“Winter is the better time to do it, as the rain keeps the crusher dust wet and there are fewer cyclists and walkers using the trail,” Mr Sims said.

Riesling Trail volunteers will take the opportunity to clean leaf litter, branches and bark out of the trail gutters and trim trees along the path while the work is being done.

Mr Hill said the grant application was looked upon more favourably by the Office of Recreation and Sport because the committee was able to demonstrate it received strong support from local businesses and the community.