



The Riesling Trail

Every season, another reason

Chairman's report

Riesling Trail Management Committee AGM, 10th October, 2019

I am pleased to present this Chairman's report for the past twelve months. Use of the trail by locals and visitors is increasing, which is a good sign, and we are continuing to add more features and amenities to improve the trail.

Our Trakers are recording over 77,000 users per year which is increasing at a rate of 5% per year. We estimate that nearly half of these are visitors, judging by the large increase in numbers during school holidays. Major events, such as the half marathon and Cycling Classis bring return visitors back to the region to soak up the atmosphere in a more leisurely way than would be the case during their events.

Riesling Trail developments

Completion of the final section of the Riesling Trail into Auburn is nearly there. Planning for this started more than four years ago and, although progress has been slow and frustrating at times, it has been very worthwhile. This completion will provide a much safer and more convenient location for people to access the trail in Auburn and a seamless link with the Rattler Trail. It also adds several impressive features to the trail – a bridge, archway and Auburn stop facilities.

Funding for this \$320,000 project was from the Federal Government (Building Better Regions Fund) the SA Government and from local contributors (Grosset Gaia Fund, Clare Valley Wine and Grape Association and the Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council). Our committee has also contributed \$28,000. We are especially grateful to Geoff Brock, Independent Member for Frome, for his support with this project. We are also very grateful to Jeffrey Grosset and Stephanie Toole for their vision and support.

To really set this off we will install an archway across the trail just north of the Manoora Road. This depicts the changing landscape over generations and is the creation by local artist, Paul Leditschke. We are grateful to the Waterloo Wind Farm and the Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council for their financial contributions.

To improve the facilities next to the car park in front of Mount Horrocks Wines we have built a picnic table and shelter. We are also building a shelter over the sign boards there to protect them from the sun. An extra sign about the history of the Auburn railway station will also be installed.

Other projects along the trail in the past twelve months include the pathway to Pinks Reserve, improving the vegetation along Station Road in Clare and improving the station yard at Watervale by clearing out olives and Aleppo pines and replanting with native species with support of the Upper Wakefield Landcare Group.

Our plans for the coming twelve months include renewing at least eight of the interpretive signs along the trail. Sue Wurst has done a great job with the painstaking task of locating photos and checking the texts with local groups. Funding for the first eight of these is from the Clare Rotary Club.

Trail head maps (at Clare, Sevenhill, Watervale and Auburn) will also be renewed. The detail on these maps needs to be updated and several are in a poor condition due to exposure to the sun over many years. We also plan to include town maps. The two without a shelter (at Watervale and Auburn) will have shelters fitted.

There has also been a major revision of our Riesling Trail brochure this year to update wineries and other businesses as well as add maps of Clare and Auburn townships. As well as being a must for Riesling Trail users this brochure is very popular as a general tourist map of the Clare Valley.

Maintaining the trail

A critical part of the maintenance of the trail is to ensure that the surface is in good condition. The new trail surface, completed in June last year, has made this job much easier. This is in excellent condition and, so far, we have not had any erosion and rutting issues that we had with the older flatter surface.

The trail infrastructure report by Mace Engineering is being used to plan repairs and preventative maintenance for the next 10 years. Some of the safety issues addressed recently are the bituminised strips with line markings at Maynard and Wendouree road crossings.

We are grateful to the Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council who have been very cooperative with assisting with improving the trail, especially where roads cross the trail. This is especially the case with completion of the trail into Auburn.

We are also grateful to the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing for on-going financial support. This includes shelters, installation of drainage pipes and guard rails as well as weed control along the edges of the trail.

Supporting the Riesling Trail

There are many supporters of the Riesling Trail, both financially and in other ways. Annual donations from our Business Partners and Friends contribute significantly to improving facilities along the Riesling Trail. We are also very grateful to the volunteers who help with the many projects to maintain and develop the trail further.

I am also grateful for the many watchful eyes who report any hazards or abuse of the trail. I am amazed how quickly we are notified when there is something amiss and so we can then act quickly to rectify the situation.

Finally, I wish to thank members of the Management Committee for their great work in helping to improve the trail so it continues to be valued and enjoyed by trail users and the wider community.

Allan Mayfield, Chairman, Riesling Trail Management Committee