

## TRACK NOTES

The Port Fairy – Warrnambool Rail Trail is ideal for family groups as there is only a slight gradient either side of Koroit and a few short steep sections.

The trail can be walked and cycled in sections, with parking available at Port Fairy, Koroit station, Levys Point and Warrnambool breakwater.

## WHAT BIKE CAN I USE



The majority of the trail is made of packed limestone; short sections are sealed and there is packed quartz at the Warrnambool end.

It is suitable for walkers and mountain, hybrid and touring cycles. (Road bikes with care)

## VEHICLES ON TRAIL



Care needs to be taken on the following sections, as the trail is used by farm vehicles:

- Along the Levys Point Track
- Kellys Swamp area

## HORSES ON TRAIL



Horses are allowed in the following areas:

- Mailors Flat - Koroit Road (Commercial Road) to Lanes Lane beside the cycling/walking trail
- Along Lanes Lane, Illowa Road and Millers Lane
- There is a separate horse track across Kellys Swamp

## DOGS ON TRAIL



Much of the trail passes through dairy farming country where dogs are banned.

Dogs on leads are allowed in Port Fairy and Koroit town areas and from Lanes Lane to the Warrnambool Breakwater Precinct.



## WHILE ON THE TRAIL

The trail passes through dairy farming country, towns and environmentally sensitive grasslands and wet lands, which necessitates appropriate care.

### Please respect other trail users by:

- Warning other users when approaching from behind
- Keeping the trail clear by stopping on the verge
- Keeping to the left of the trail
- Not parking across gates or close to road crossings

### Please respect adjoining landholders by:

- Not trespassing onto adjoining land or climbing on fences
- Moving quietly near stock
- Leaving gates as you found them

### Please respect the environment by:

- Not disturbing plants and animals
- Not littering, please take all your rubbish with you
- Not lighting fires and extinguishing all cigarette butts
- Not camping
- Keep to the trail except in designated areas

**PLEASE REMEMBER** the trail is through open farming land with very little shade. Care needs to be taken in hot and stormy weather.

## FOR YOUR SAFETY

- Wear appropriate clothing for the conditions
- Wear an approved helmet when riding
- Ensure young and inexperienced riders are supervised
- Take care at road crossings; young and inexperienced riders should dismount
- Inform someone where you are going and when you will return
- Take care on Total Fire Ban days and days of high fire danger

## CARRY

- Sun screen, remember Slip-Slop-Slap
- A bicycle repair kit and pump, as there are no cycle repair shops along the trail
- A mobile phone and emergency numbers
- Adequate clothing for a change in climatic conditions
- Water and snacks for your journey are essential

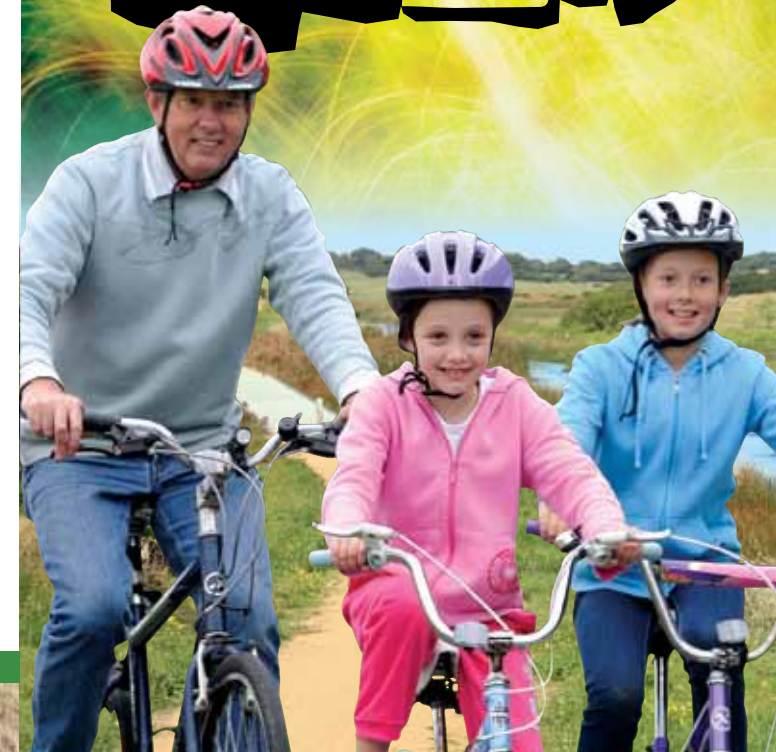
The trail is open from sunrise to sunset and is used at your own risk.

Please help us maintain and improve our trail by reporting issues, concerns by providing general feedback, to the Rail Trail Committee of Management [www.portfairytowarrnamboolrailtrail.com](http://www.portfairytowarrnamboolrailtrail.com) or through Warrnambool City Council 5559 4800.



# Rail Trail

PORT FAIRY - WARRNAMBOOL





## POPULAR RIDES

Although the full trail will not be difficult for experienced cyclists, the following times and recommendations are for average fitness and experience.

The trail is for the most part through open farming country and recommended times will need to be increased to allow for hot weather and inexperienced walkers and cyclists.

### 1 PORT FAIRY – KOROIT

**Distance** 17.7 km.  
**Time** Ride 1½ hours / Walk 3 hours  
**Track conditions** Predominantly packed limestone gravel  
**Suitable** Beginners and families  
**Start** Regent Street, Port Fairy  
**Finish** Koroit Railway Station, Bourke Rd, Koroit

Can be cycled/walked from Regent Street, Port Fairy or Koroit Railway Station, Bourke St Koroit. There are plenty of eating and drinking places at either end for some carbo loading for the return trip.

The trail is through open farming land with small areas of remnant bushland. There is a slight uphill gradient from the Moyne River to Koroit. For the adventurous and fit cyclists Tower Hill State Park is well worth a visit (1½ hours on bitumen with some steep hills). For the not so fit, a ride through the back streets of Koroit and Port Fairy is well worth while.

### 2 KOROIT – LEVYS POINT CAR PARK

**Distance** 14.3 km.  
**Time** Ride 1½ hours / Walk 2½ hours  
**Track conditions** Predominantly packed limestone gravel, with bitumen sections  
**Suitable** Beginners and families  
**Start** Koroit Railway Station, Bourke Rd, Koroit  
**Finish** Levys Point Car Park, Swinton St, W'bool

From the Koroit Railway Station the trail meanders through open farming land with views of Warrnambool and the sea in the distance. The gradient is down hill to the Princes Highway. The trail goes under the highway and along the old Illowa Road. It then crosses the extensive Kellys Swamp wet lands, where you will see many types of water birds and frogs; then to the Levys Point track. The trail splits near the car park with one branch going onto the top of the dunes with extensive views of the sea. (Care needs to be taken in this section as it is very steep)

### 3 LEVYS POINT CAR PARK – WARRNAMBOOL BREAK WATER

**Distance** 5.7 km.  
**Time** Ride ¾ hour / Walk 1¼ hour  
**Track conditions** Predominantly packed quartz gravel  
**Suitable** Beginners and families  
**Start** Levys Point Car park, Swinton Street  
**Finish** Warrnambool Breakwater precinct

From the car park the trail runs along last of the Kellys Swamp Wetlands to the Merri River and then parallels the river to the Warrnambool Breakwater Precinct. This area also has a rich variety of bird life. There are a few short steep sections where care is needed.



**RAIL TRAIL COMMITTEE –**  
 PO Box 1388,  
 Warrnambool, 3280  
 RTCOMWP@gmail.com  
 www.portfairytowarrnamboolrailtrail.com



**PORT FAIRY –**  
 Railway Place, Bank Street  
 P: (03) 5568 2682  
 www.visitportfairy-moyneshire.com.au

**WARRNAMBOOL –**  
 Flagstaff Hill, Merri Street  
 P: (03) 5559 4620  
 www.visitwarrnambool.com.au



## History of the Warrnambool to Port Fairy Railway

The Railway line from Warrnambool to Melbourne was opened in 1887. The construction of the line to Port Fairy, via Koroit, started in late 1888 and it was completed in 1890.

Between Warrnambool and Belfast (Port Fairy) there were 12 gate keepers' cottages. Stations were situated at, Warrnambool, Illowa, Koroit, Crossley Kirkstall, Moyne, Rosebrook and Port Fairy where farmers shipped their produce directly to Geelong and Melbourne.

The area grew and shipped wheat, oats, peas and beans, potatoes, turnips, hay and grasses.

Koroit became an important hub with the line to the north (Ararat line) joining the Port Fairy to Warrnambool line some 300 yards to the west of the station.

Remnants of the cattle loading yards can be seen near North Street. The goods shed, one of the largest in the area is opposite the station.

Also, remnants of the sidings and goods sheds at Port Fairy, Koroit and Illowa can be seen along the trail.

Some thought the line so beneficial that they felt the farmers should not require compensation for it passing through their property.

For a time, the soon to decline ports, handled large quantities of railway materials.

J Wilson and Company supplied 5,100 tons of equipment to the project.

The line came to provide an important recreational aspect to the area. Special pleasure trains ran to the seaside towns for Sunday school picnics, school excursions and social gatherings.

The line closed in September 1977 due to low usage.



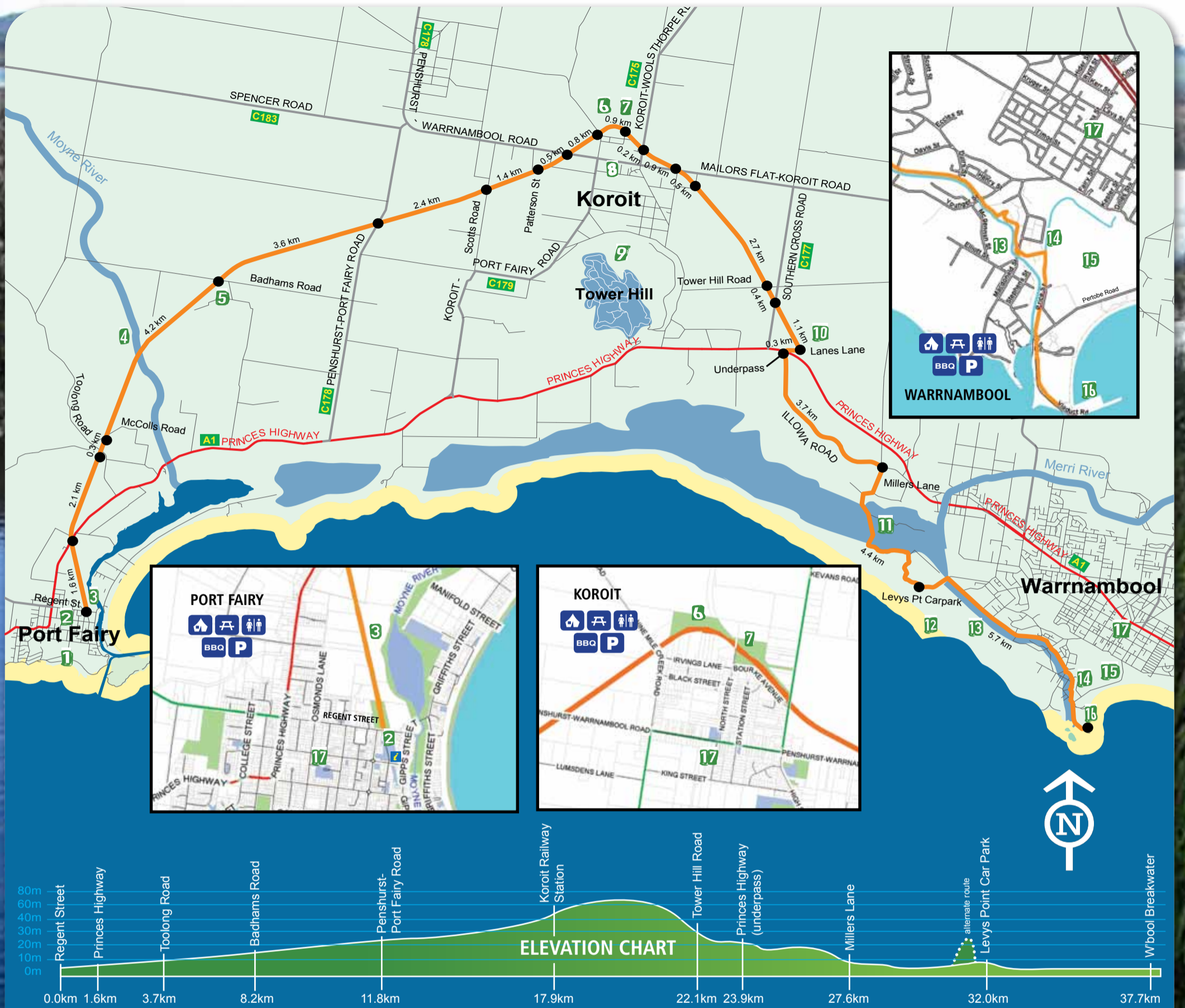
Port Fairy Historical Society



Koroit and District Historical Society







## POINTS OF INTEREST ALONG THE TRAIL

- 1** **PORT FAIRY TOWN** – Ride through the back streets of Port Fairy and absorb the old world charm of the town. Plenty of cafes and accommodation.
- 2** **PORT FAIRY GOODS SHED** – Port Fairy siding contains one of the few remaining railway goods sheds in the region.
- 3** **LAST SIGNAL** – The last remaining signal on the line.
- 4** **MOYNE RIVER** – This section of the Moyne River was cut in the early 1800's to drain the swamp lands to the north and open up farming land.
- 5** **MOYNE SIDING** – One of the few forested areas along the trail.
- 6** **NORTH LINK** – This is the junction of the old line to Ararat.
- 7** **KOROIT STATION & GOODS SHED** – The Koroit old rail station building is being restored by the local community.
- 8** **KOROIT TOWN** – Ride through the back streets of Koroit and absorb the old world charm of the town.
- 9** **TOWER HILL** – is an extinct volcano, Victoria's first State Park.
- 10** **ILLOWA SIDING & GOODS SHED** – Illova siding has one of the three remaining goods sheds on the trail.
- 11** **KELLYS SWAMP** – Kellys swamp is a wet land wonderland.
- 12** **LEVYS POINT** – Views of the sea from the "high route"
- 13** **MERRI RIVER** – This section of the Merri River was man made to provide water for the Woollen Mill and Warrnambool.
- 14** **WOOLLEN MILLS** – The Mill was established in 1874 and closed in 2000.
- 15** **LAKE PERTOBE** – Once a swamp, this area is now a significant playground and recreation area.
- 16** **BREAKWATER AND MIDDLE ISLAND** – A working port, yacht club and refreshments in the pavilion.
- 17** **TOWN CENTRE**

### WARRNAMBOOL

There are a number of interpretations of the origin of the name Warrnambool, the most common being land between two rivers. (The Merri and Hopkins Rivers)

Whalers and sealers were seasonal visitors to the natural harbour of Lady Bay in the early 1800's and permanent settlement in the area by graziers began in the 1840's. Government land sales, which began in 1847, resulted in an influx of settlers from the UK, Ireland and Germany.

Warrnambool grew quickly in the 1850's benefiting from the private ownership of Port Fairy. The first jetty was built in 1850 which gave impetus to the shipping of wool, potatoes, onions, wheat and dairy products from the surrounding area.

The opening of a railway line to Melbourne in 1887, 3 years prior to the Port Fairy connection, enabled the rapid shipment of agricultural and dairy products to Melbourne.

Development of services encouraged growth in textile, clothing industries and dairy processing plants.

The main industries and services are now agricultural support, dairy farming and milk processing, meat processing, education, health and tourism.



### KOROIT

Koroit, located on the northern rim of Tower Hill state park, derives its name from the Koroitch Gundidj people, one of the original occupiers of the area. Irish immigrant farmers and pastoral lessees originally settled the area in the 1840's and 50's and the town grew to supply the needs of the local small grain and potato farmers who "took their produce down the slope to Warrnambool", until the railway arrived in 1890.

The town and district was characterized by a strong catholic Irish contingent, close settlement and intensive agricultural activity in the rich volcanic soil surrounding the town. Koroit still maintains its fascinating Irish charm as can be seen by a short cycle ride along the main street and into the side streets.

Dairying has slowly taken over much of the earlier agricultural land making it the major farming activity of the region.



### PORT FAIRY

The Port of Port Fairy was a whaling station in the early 1800's. The port was named in the 1820's by Captain Wishart after his boat "The Fairy". The town area was originally called Belfast by James Atkinson, a local squatter, who put aside some of his land in 1843 for a settlement.

Supported by the gold rush, the port and good access to pastoral land to the north, Port Fairy grew rapidly until the economic crash in 1862. Development "spurts" from 1885, aided by agricultural expansion, sea trade, the railway to Melbourne and the growth of dairying in the 1920's, helped slow the steady contraction of the town. Tourism in the 1970's associated with good beaches and the old world charm of the town, started the revival of the town as a major holiday resort, with the town quadrupling in size over holiday periods.

