

Omeo Mountain Bike Trails

Project update – November 2023



Double the fun for Christmas

The Omeo Mountain Bike Trails project is set to double in size by December, giving riders the chance to tackle the tough climbs and fun descents of Mt Mesley.

An existing 10 kilometres of beginner-level mountain bike trail (which opened Easter 2023) will be extended by approximately 13 kilometres in time for the start of the school holidays in December. All the new trails will start and finish at Livingstone Park, in Omeo's town centre.

Mayor Cr Tom Crook said having 13 kilometres of new trail available for the summer school holidays would prove popular with locals and visitors alike.

"With more than 20 kilometres of trail open this summer, it's a great taster for riders and will support the local business community as we move towards opening more trails next year," Cr Crook said.

"When completed, the Omeo Mountain Bike Trails project will deliver over 100 kilometres of connected tracks that will meet Mountain Bike Australia criteria for national events and include cross-country and downhill tracks for beginners through to experienced cyclists."



Recent adverse weather, creating low soil moisture levels, has impacted work on recent trail construction.

Common Ground Trails (CGT) director Dave Willcox, whose company is constructing the trails network, said he had planned to have more trails available by December.

"We're not prepared to compromise on the quality and integrity of the trails we are building," Mr Willcox said.

"We want riders to have an unbeatable experience on the Omeo Mountain Bike Trails. The progressive opening of trails that are ride-ready, and that will stand the test of time, will support the Omeo community for the long-term.



"Our commitment remains unwavering in ensuring a truly world-class mountain biking experience that will keep riders coming back for more.

"We appreciate the support of the local community in helping deliver this transformational project for East Gippsland," he said.

Many other trails in the planned network remain under construction and as such are not open to the public. Riders are asked not to access trails that are in a construction area.

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Meet Ben, Omeo MTB Trails coordinator

Omeo is being transformed into a world-class mountain biking destination, and to aid the process we have welcomed Ben Reeves.

The role of Omeo Mountain Bike Trails Coordinator will see Ben lead the operations and development of over 100 kilometres of trails as they are created. Ben has a wealth of mountain bike industry knowledge and enthusiasm that will be essential to the successful growth and development of the trails and related mountain biking facilities.

So, Ben, what is a Mountain Bike Trails Coordinator? What do you do?

As the trail coordinator based in Omeo, I'll look after the day-to-day operations of Omeo Mountain Bike Trails, managing the trail-maintenance team which will ensure the trails are kept in the best condition possible all year round.

I also ensure regular trail audits are conducted along with associated maintenance duties, from clearing out drains to clearing trees that are blocking the trails.

And I will be working with Council's team on marketing of the trails, events and emergency management.



Ben Reeves on his most recent trip to Derby in Tasmania

Have you worked on something similar before? Tell us about your experience with mountain biking and trail towns.

I've volunteered for my local mountain bike club at Lysterfield since 2010. There, I ran trail-maintenance days and events.

My previous career saw me traveling to most states around Australia. Whenever possible, I'd bring my mountain bike along for some after-work exercise or an extended holiday.

Some of the memorable locations include Fox Creek in South Australia, Atherton Forest in Cairns, Mt Stromlo in the ACT, and Derby, Wild Mersey, St Helens and Maydena in Tasmania.

I've ridden almost every main trail network in Victoria and currently live next to an 8km network owned by a local scout group where I help with basic maintenance.

I guess you could say it's in my blood!

What's your initial takeaway from your first few weeks of walking and riding Omeo's trails?

I'm very impressed and excited to see this ground-up community project come to life. The support Council and local land managers have thrown behind the project should also be applauded.

When finished, Omeo should be proud of the fact that they'll have one of the biggest and most diverse trail networks in Australia.

What makes a great trail town?

Good accommodation, both short term for visitors and long term for staff is essential. Great places to eat and drink - mountain bikers love a cold beer after a ride!

And facilities like toilets, signage, bike wash, carparking shuttles and great events. Also having locals who live and breathe the sport helps make visitors feel more welcome and more inclined to return. Plus, of course, many kilometres of epic riding, which Omeo will have in spades.

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Saddle up for adventure at the Omeo & District Show

Omeo Mountain Bike Trails has a stand at the Omeo & District Show this weekend. Join us at the East Gippsland Shire Council marquee.

Whether you are a seasoned rider or just curious about the thrill of the trails, the Omeo Mountain Bike Trails stand is the place to be this weekend.

See you there for a day of adventure, community, and all things mountain biking!

Here's what's in store:

Chat with our new trail co-ordinator, Ben: Ben knows the trails firsthand and can give you the lowdown on what to expect.

Trail maps galore: Explore the Omeo Mountain Bike Project with our detailed trail maps. This includes a preview of the trails set to open in December, as well as how the entire network will look on completion.

Ride it: Take a ride on the first 10km section of trails to get a feel for the two-wheeled adventure that awaits.

Project update newsletters: Stay in the loop with our informative newsletters, offering the latest updates on the Omeo Mountain Bike Project.

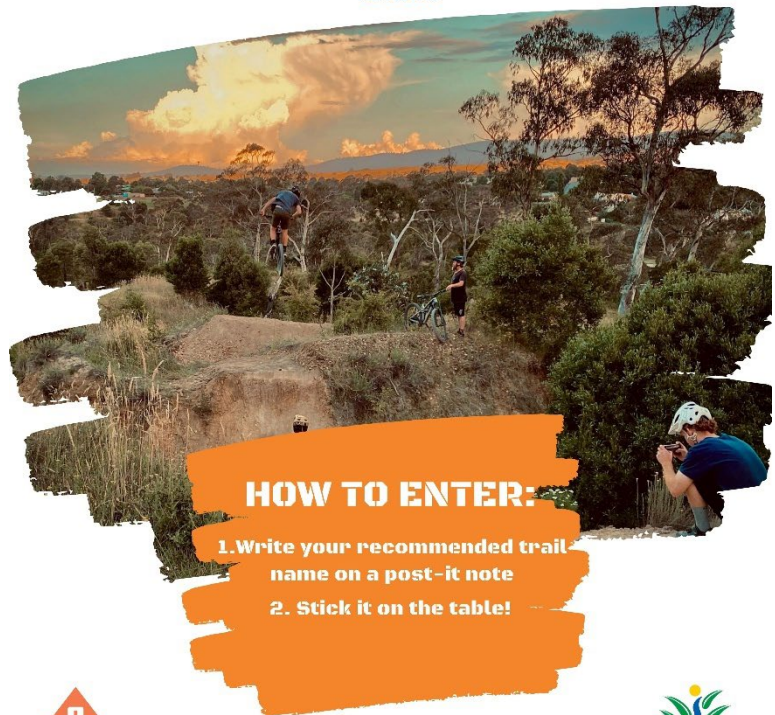
Be the first to know about exciting developments shaping the trail landscape.

Mountain bike display: Check out a high-performance machine and learn more about the technology behind the bikes that are built to perform when the going gets tough.

Trail-naming suggestion box: Unleash your creativity! We invite you to contribute to the legacy of the Omeo Mountain Bike Trails by suggesting unique and memorable names for our future trails.

Write your ideas on our Post-It notes and stick it on the table to be a part of the excitement surrounding our upcoming projects.

**HELP US NAME
THE OMEO MTB
TRAILS!**
**\$150 VOUCHER FROM
BAIRNSDALE BIKES TO BE
WON!**



HOW TO ENTER:

1. Write your recommended trail name on a post-it note
2. Stick it on the table!



Council will also be bringing its Mobile Library & Customer Service Centre on November 18-19.

Explore the Mobile Library van, make a selection from the Book Nook and grab a picnic blanket, try the craft activities and play giant chess.

There's a Freeza Youth colouring challenge for kids and youth street games.

Talk to us about: waste and recycling, Omeo's streetscape revitalisation, business and agribusiness support and our consultation on smoking and vaping.

Join us Saturday 18 November, 9am to 4pm.

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Project snapshot

The Common Ground Trails crew recently finished a technical black diamond trail (advanced) off the back of Mt Mesley into Dry Gully.

Common Ground Trails director Dave Willcox recently rode and inspected this trail as well as



trails that are either finished or under construction (see page 1 for more on the inspection) and the newly constructed trails will

undergo further checks before being opened to the public.

New leaseholders for Omeo Holiday Park

East Gippsland Shire Council has appointed leaseholders for the operation and maintenance of Omeo Holiday Park.

Hotham Operations, a division of Saltwater Properties Group, will lease the park.



It has a wealth of experience in the tourism and accommodation industry, positioning Omeo Holiday Park for an exciting future.

The five-year lease, with provisions for extensions of up to 20 years, officially commenced on Wednesday 1 November.

Chris Banson, from Saltwater Properties Group, shared his excitement around the project.

“We are very excited to add the Omeo Holiday Park to the Saltwater Hotels and Resorts portfolio. Starting in 2024, we plan to improve the park with new accommodation options including glamping tents and tiny homes.

“We will also add new playground equipment and improve the existing facilities with a focus on the family group market and the adjoining Mountain Bike Trails,” Mr Banson said.

To discuss an existing booking, or to make a new booking, email info@omeoholidaypark.com.au or call (03) 5152 5646.

Am I Sam? Sam I am!

In a quirky twist of fate, it has been discovered that Omeo’s Mt. Sam – which will boast a fantastic downhill trail when completed – is actually called Sam Hill. While a hill will never trump a mountain, the new name is raising eyebrows due to sharing a moniker with an Australian mountain biking legend.

You see, Sam Hill is also the name of an eight-time world mountain biking champion in downhill and enduro racing.



So Sam Hill (the hill) couldn’t be more appropriate.

The mountain biking maestro, Sam Hill, will of course, be welcome to try out his namesake any time he chooses (once the downhill trail is built and ready to ride!).