

# VICTORY HEIGHTS RECREATIONAL TRAILS GYMPIE QLD

## USAGE MANAGEMENT POLICY (Version 1.7)

Victory Heights Recreational Trails is situated on Bath Terrace, Gympie Queensland on approximately 60ha of Freehold land owned by Gympie Regional Council and leased to Cooloola Trail Care Alliance Incorporated (CTCA). The lease is bounded by Bath Terrace in the south, Sandy Creek Road on the eastern side, Gympie North Railway line on the northern side with neighbouring sporting shooters club leases on the western side including a number of private residential properties. The lease provides CTCA with exclusive tenure for a fixed term of 10 years (2013-2023) enabling development of a passive recreational trail facility. Though the lease provides CTCA with exclusive rights to the land, CTCA aims to develop and manage the forest, trails and other recreational assets to deliver community benefit through opportunities for nature study, wildlife conservation and passive forms of outdoor recreation including walking, jogging and off-road cycling.

This Policy has been prepared for purpose of managing public usage of the facility in a way that:

- promotes safe and responsible use of the facility;
- promotes shared use of the facility by a range of user groups and reduces potential for conflict between different users and their interests;
- promotes respect for the trail assets, infrastructure and natural environment that characterises the facility;
- ensures that organised activities and events are appropriately coordinated and accountably managed; and
- aligns with and supports state and local laws.

CTCA requires that visitors acquaint themselves with the conditions and requirements set out within this Policy, to observe them at all times during use of the facility and also when planning to undertake any activity within the facility.

**For the purposes of this document particular words have the following meaning:**

CTCA - for the Cooloola Trail Care Alliance, its officers and members.

Council – for the Gympie Regional Council.

Facility, Complex or Venue - for the Victory Heights Recreational Trails facility which encompasses the land, vegetation, waterways, buildings, structures, trails, features and improvements contained within the portions of Lots 17 and 18 on RP221336 that are held by the CTCA under leasehold title.

Organised activity or event – for any activity that comes about as a result of prior soliciting, invitation, advertisement or promotion by a group, club, association or legal entity including but not limited to telecommunication, print media, social media or word of mouth.

## **Conditions of usage**

### **Dogs**

- 1) Dogs are prohibited within the facility except when securely restrained on a lead and in the company of their owner. Owners are responsible for collecting and disposing of their dog's faeces by bin disposal or burial in a location where it will not come into contact with trail users. Dogs that are not well socialised or that have the potential to act aggressively towards other animals or people must not be brought onto the facility. Under no circumstances are dogs to be allowed onto any mountain bike specific trail within the facility (refer also to Condition 13).

### **Smoking**

- 2) To avoid the risk of bushfires and to provide a healthy and pleasant smoke-free environment for all visitors, smoking is prohibited within the facility.

### **Fires and cooking**

- 3) Unless otherwise authorised by CTCA, the public are prohibited from lighting fires, cooking or using barbeques within the facility. Council provides a range of public parks and reserves throughout the township where barbeques, social gatherings and parties are well catered for. These well-serviced public parks provide rubbish bins, toilets, drinking water, accessible parking, lighting, concrete pathways and disability access as required for public parks and reserves. It is not CTCA's intention to duplicate and cater for these social and recreational needs within the facility. Members of the public who wish to hold outdoor social gatherings, parties or BBQs are encouraged to make use of the appropriate Council facilities where these activities are provided for.

### **Alcohol**

- 4) Consumption of alcohol by members of the public is prohibited within the facility.

### **Rubbish and littering**

- 5) There is no provision within the facility for disposing of rubbish or its collection. Consequently visitors are required to take out whatever they bring in. There is a Council serviced "wheelie bin" permanently installed on the Bath Terrace Road Reserve adjacent to entrance car park. Limited usage of this bin for convenience when entering and leaving the trail facility is encouraged. To prevent overfilling of this bin and inadvertent littering of the road reserve and car park, it is recommended that larger volumes of rubbish (shopping bag size or larger) is disposed of at an alternate appropriate site that can accommodate those volumes of rubbish more adequately.

### **Prohibited vehicles, machinery and structures**

- 6) The use of any machinery, implements, motorised toys, motorbikes, motor vehicles or erected structures within the facility without prior written consent from the CTCA is prohibited.

### **Wildlife and native vegetation**

- 7) The complex is home to an abundance of native wildlife and local flora. Patrons are requested to not frighten or chase wildlife encountered within the facility and to always stay on designated trails and fire roads. If wildlife is encountered either on or close to a trail, please stop and observe and wait for it to move on without chasing it off the trail.
- 8) Damage to or removal of any vegetation within the complex by any member of the public is strictly prohibited. Visitors who become aware of overhanging vegetation or fallen timber that is impeding trail access or considered a risk to public safety are requested to make contact with the CTCA as soon as possible via email to [contact@cooloolatrailcarealliance.org.au](mailto:contact@cooloolatrailcarealliance.org.au) or messaging the Victory Heights Recreational Trails Facebook page, to report the incident.

### **Shooting club leases**

- 9) An area of land adjacent to the central western portion of the CTCA lease is occupied by the Gympie Clay Target and Gympie Small Bore Rifle club ranges. Signage has been installed around the perimeter of these shooting ranges to warn trail users of the dangers of trespassing outside of the trail complex. Additional signage has been installed on fire roads that eventually lead onto these shooting ranges to alert fire road users to take an alternate route that stays within the trail complex. Members of the public are not permitted to trespass beyond the boundary of the trail complex in these locations because of the obvious risks to public safety.

### **Heritage values**

- 10) Several relic sites and structures (buildings, concrete footings, telegraph poles and old firing range targets) within the trail facility hold some historical heritage values. Any interference with or modification to these sites or structures by members of the public is prohibited.

### **Assumption of risk**

- 11) Any person, group or organisation using the facility chooses to do so entirely at their own risk and must assume all responsibility and liability for their usage of the facility. Individuals must take personal responsibility for assessing all risks presented in the course of their chosen activities and assume all risks and responsibility for any damage, injury, death, loss, or other costs incurred during the course of those activities. Furthermore, any person, group or organisation choosing to enter the facility must agree to waive and release, hold harmless, indemnify and agree not to take any legal action against the Cooloola Trail Care Alliance, its members or volunteers for any injury, accident or loss including death, property damage or other expense arising from or incurred during the course of any activities undertaken within the facility. It is recommended that users of the facility carry appropriate insurance and liability cover for their activities prior to entry.

### **Multi-use Trails and Mountain Bike-specific Trails**

- 12) At the time of publication of this policy the trail facility supports approximately 17km of multi-use (shared use) trails. These trails consist of wide fire roads and vehicle access tracks and more narrow-width single tracks. These trails are provided for walkers, runners and off-road cyclists. All users of these trails must regulate and control their speed, be prepared to encounter other trail users at any point and to be in a position to pass safely. Courtesy and respect between all trail users is paramount to the safety and enjoyment of shared use trails.
- 13) At the time of publication of this policy the trail complex supports approximately 12km of mountain bike specific trails. Each of the entrances to these trails is signposted with a 100mm x 100mm 'blue bike' symbol along with other directional symbols and advice for cyclists. Under no circumstances are pedestrians permitted entry to these trails. Members of the public who do so are not only endangering themselves but also other unsuspecting trail users. Members of the public who ignore these directions can expect to be excluded from the facility.

### **Mountain bike trails and off-road cycling**

- 14) Mountain biking trails within the complex have been constructed and graded in accordance with international standards for mountain bike trail construction and management. Their provision is part of an ongoing trail development program carried out by community volunteers and contractors working under CTCA's authority. Trail modification or construction by any person acting without CTCA authorisation is strictly prohibited.
- 15) Signage within the facility is provided primarily to assist trail users to "self-guide" their way throughout the facility and select trails that are suited to their abilities and preferences. The purpose of such signage is not to alleviate the responsibility of trail user's to make sensible choices toward self-preservation; it is to assist people in having enjoyable and safe trail experiences. Signage does not exist as an absolute guarantee of trail conditions or trail difficulty. In an outdoor

and relatively uncontrolled environment, trail conditions will change every day. Skill and confidence levels vary greatly between individuals and also for an individual on any given day. While trail signage has been provided to assist trail users in their decision making, it is always the personal responsibility of every trail user to take time to inspect and assess each trail and trail feature at a safe speed, before making a decision to ride it in earnest. No amount of signage or safety measures can prevent injuries or property damage resulting from a lack of planning, personal care and attention to the surrounds. Outdoor pursuits are intrinsically enjoyable for the levels of unpredictability and freedoms of choice involved. With this freedom of choice comes personal responsibility for the choices which are made.

- 16) All persons intending on riding a bicycle anywhere within the facility should first make themselves aware of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) 'rules of the trail' reproduced in Appendix I of this policy. Cyclists are required to abide by these guidelines at all times when using the facility. It is recommended that these guidelines be observed and practised whenever engaging in the sport of mountain biking anywhere, as within the sport they are universally recognised as good trail etiquette and common practice.

### **Watercourses and wet areas**

- 17) The trail facility contains a number of watercourses and damp lands that are prone to flooding and prolonged inundation following high rainfall events. Members of the public are advised to not approach or attempt to cross any watercourse or wetland that has standing or flowing water in it, unless a secure bridge or culvert is in place that provides a dry crossing point. Entry is prohibited at all times into any area of soft ground, mud or standing water, as traversing such areas leads to widening of the trail footprint, soil erosion and trail damage that places further burdens on the community of volunteers who give up their time to build and maintain the trails.

### **Closure of the facility or specific areas within the facility**

- 18) From time to time, CTCA will close the entire trail complex or specific trails during periods of extreme or prolonged wet weather. These trail closures are to protect the trail assets from damage and erosion associated with traffic when the ground is wet and muddy. Closures are also in the interests of public safety as heavy rainfall, high wind and wet ground routinely results in trees and heavy debris falling onto trails and also alteration to trail features which can pose a safety risk.
- 19) Closures of all or parts of the facility due to weather or poor trail conditions may occur at short notice and require the cancelling or postponing of organised activities and events that were scheduled. While every effort is made to maximise public access to the trails throughout the year, organisers of events and activities, including the general public, should be prepared for unexpected closures of the trail facility due to unforeseen circumstances such as weather, fire conditions or the urgent need for repairs to be carried out. Following closure, the facility will be inspected and re-opened once favourable conditions have been restored.
- 20) CTCA may also from time to time find it necessary - in the interests of public safety and safe work practices - to close the entire trail facility or parts of the facility to the public whenever works are being carried out that are not compatible with public recreational use. Such instances include fuel reduction burns, trail repairs and maintenance, construction activities, weed controls, revegetation projects and tree felling.

### **Signage and directions**

- 21) Members of the public and groups using the facility are required to observe and follow all directions provided by signage and any other CTCA directions in relation to any matter applying to use of the facility by way of media or in person.
- 22) Persons are not permitted to install, modify or erect any signage or structures within the facility without prior written consent from the CTCA.

### **Organised activities and events**

- 23) CTCA routinely accepts bookings from sporting clubs and community groups, schools, organisations and businesses for scheduled organised activities and events to be staged within the facility.
- 24) Any group or organisation wishing to stage an event or host an organised activity within the facility is required beforehand to seek permission in writing from the CTCA. Interested groups should allow sufficient time in their activity planning for CTCA to consider the proposal and to provide additional information about the activity or event, if requested. For every activity, it is a requirement that the organiser completes and signs the Waiver of Liability Form that is available for download from [www.cooloolatrailcarealliance.org.au](http://www.cooloolatrailcarealliance.org.au) or by emailing a specific request for the form to [contact@cooloolatrailcarealliance.org.au](mailto:contact@cooloolatrailcarealliance.org.au).
- 25) Prior to granting permission for any organised activity or event, CTCA will consider its potential impact on other users and the facility and may impose event-specific conditions and levy a charge to assist in the annual administration, maintenance and repair costs associated with providing the venue.
- 26) Granting of permission for an activity or event within the facility does not confer on any group or entity the right to claim association of any kind with the Victory Heights Trail Recreational Trails or the CTCA.
- 27) Granting of permission for an activity or event within the facility does not confer on the applicant any authority regarding use or alteration of the facility beyond that required to stage the event, while operating in accordance with this policy and any event-specific conditions imposed by CTCA.
- 28) Immediately following the approved activity or event, any material alteration or addition that was made within the facility as a result of the staging of the event, must be returned to the original state and condition of the venue prior to staging the activity or event. This includes but is not limited to the removal of any installed bunting, signage, course marking, food and drink, litter, temporary structures, furniture or lost property.

### **END OF CONDITIONS**

The CTCA Committee may from time to time choose to alter these conditions of use and refine the policy intent as circumstances require. Therefore please always be sure that you refer to the most current version of this policy, available from [www.cooloolatrailcarealliance.org.au](http://www.cooloolatrailcarealliance.org.au).

## Appendix I

### IMBA Australia Rules of the Trail

IMBA Australia developed the "Rules of the Trail" to promote responsible and courteous conduct on shared-use trails and purpose built trail networks. Keep in mind that the guidelines related to sharing trails, direction of travel and passing may vary in different locations, or with different traffic conditions. If in doubt, give way to other trail users and say hello.

1. **Ride Open Trails:** Respect trail and road closures — ask a land manager for clarification if you are uncertain about the status of a trail. Do not trespass on private land. Obtain permits or other authorisation as required. Be aware that bicycles are not permitted in some areas protected as state or federal Wilderness and Nature Reserves.
2. **Leave No Trace:** Be sensitive to the dirt beneath you. Wet and muddy trails are more vulnerable to damage than dry ones. When the trail is soft, consider other riding options. This also means staying on existing trails and not creating new ones. Don't cut switchbacks. Be sure to take out at least as much as you take in.
3. **Control Your Bicycle:** Inattention for even a moment could put yourself and others at risk. Obey all bicycle speed regulations and recommendations, and ride within your limits.
4. **Share the Trail:** Do your utmost to let your fellow trail users know you're coming — a friendly greeting or bell ring are good methods. Try to anticipate other trail users as you ride around corners. Bicyclists should give way to other non-motorized trail users, unless the trail is clearly signed for bike-only travel. Bicyclists traveling downhill should yield to ones headed uphill, unless the trail is clearly signed for one-way or downhill-only traffic. In general, strive to make each pass a safe and courteous one.
5. **Respect Wildlife and Livestock:** Animals are easily startled by an unannounced approach, a sudden movement or a loud noise. Give animals enough room and time to adjust to you. When passing horses, use special care and follow directions from the horseback riders (ask if uncertain). Running sheep or cattle and disturbing wildlife are serious offenses.
6. **Plan Ahead:** Know your equipment, your ability and the area in which you are riding and prepare accordingly. Strive to be self-sufficient: keep your equipment in good repair and carry necessary supplies for changes in weather or other conditions. Always wear a helmet and appropriate safety gear.