

For Public Notice via Internet**REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978*****Title of Proposal:** Warburton Mountain Bike Destination**Proponent:** Yarra Ranges Council**Description of Project:**

The Warburton Mountain Bike Destination project is centred around the township of Warburton and would include construction of 44 new mountain bike trails totalling approximately 186 km. The trails would occur in groups located in slightly separate areas extending across the forested slopes of Mt. Donna Buang, Mt. Little Joe and Mt. Tugwell, within the Yarra Ranges National Park and two State forests.

As part of the project, a new Visitor's Hub (main trail head) is proposed at the Warburton Golf Course, with the existing carpark to be upgraded to accommodate a nominal 177 cars, a new shelter, and four or five wash bays to be used by mountain bike riders. Three other trail heads are proposed: a new area located on top of Mt. Tugwell, off Mt. Bride Road which will include a carpark, a bus turnaround bay, toilet and picnic area; another at Mt. Donna Buang trail head which will include upgrades to the existing carpark, toilet and picnic area, and lastly the establishment of parking and connecting trails at Wesburn Park.

Additionally, two bridges are proposed to be constructed for the project trails, with the preferred design including a bridge across the Warburton Hwy and Yarra River adjacent to the Mayer Bridge as well as a bridge to allow mountain bikers to safely cross over Old Warburton Road.

Decision:

The Minister for Planning has decided that an environment effects statement (EES) is required for the proposed Warburton Mountain Bike Destination, as described in the referral accepted on 20 December 2019.

Reasons for Decision:

- The project has the potential for significant environmental effects, in particular on native vegetation, flora and fauna species and communities listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, as well as environmentally sensitive waterways.
- An environment effects statement (EES) is warranted to provide an integrated, robust and transparent process to assess the proposal's effects and associated uncertainties, and to evaluate effectiveness of the proposed avoidance, mitigation, management and offsetting measures, prior to any statutory approval decisions.

Date of Decision: 21 / 05 / 2020