

# Media Release

**Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP**  
Minister for Regional Development  
Minister for Agriculture



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## WORKS BEGIN TO EXTEND ICONIC GIPPSLAND TRAIL

Construction of the 36-kilometre extension of Gippsland's iconic Great Southern Rail Trail is on track to support the region's economic recovery, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Loch Railway Station to turn the sod on the start of construction for the project, made possible with \$1.3 million from the Government.

Popular among pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, the Great Southern Rail Trail will be extended from 72 kilometres to 108 kilometres in length, creating an unbroken rail trail connecting Nyora to Welshpool.

Once complete, the trail will start at Nyora and pass through Loch, Bena, Korumburra, Kardella and Leongatha. It will then join an existing rail trail that runs through the towns of Koonwarra, Meeniyah, Fish Creek, Foster, Toora, Welshpool and finishes at the newly reconstructed Long Jetty at Port Welshpool.

The extension project includes construction of a shared gravel trail and works to eight bridges and is expected to be finished by February 2023.

The construction phase is expected to boost the economy by almost \$4 million and create around seven full-time equivalent jobs.

The Great Southern Rail Trail is built along Australia's most southern mainland rail line and is an important tourism and community attraction for the Gippsland region. The trail capitalises on the natural beauty of the towns it passes through and is estimated to attract 41,000 visitors each year.

The Labor Government is supporting the project with \$500,000 from the Regional Infrastructure Fund, while another \$800,000 has been funded through the Local Sports Infrastructure Fund.

The Regional Infrastructure Fund is part of the Government's flagship Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund which helps businesses create more jobs in regional Victoria, supports community projects, and assists councils to deliver cultural initiatives of economic significance to the region.

The Local Sports Infrastructure Fund is part of \$1.05 billion invested by the Government in community sport and active recreation infrastructure since 2014.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

*"The Great Southern Rail Trail is a source of pride for the region, with beautiful scenery that can be enjoyed by everyone."*

*"We know just how much Victorians value natural attractions like the Trail – that's why we're helping more people discover the fantastic places to explore right here at home."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Jane Garrett

*"This expansion is welcome news for all the towns on this iconic trail and visitors alike – I hope it encourages more people to discover what Gippsland has to offer."*

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