

Media Release

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



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MT CLEAR BENEFITS FOR ALL: NATURE TRAIL OPENS IN BALLARAT

Ballarat's keen walkers, runners, cyclists and horse riders have access to a new nature trail in Woowookarung Regional Park, made possible through key funding from the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today joined Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle and representatives of local community groups to officially open the nature trail, which connects Ballarat to Mt Clear's best lookouts.

The Labor Government invested \$78,000 towards the development of the trail, with equivalent support coming from Parks Victoria for land management, surveys and project management.

The trail supports both physical and mental wellbeing for more than 30,000 residents who live adjacent to the Woowookarung Regional Park, and residents of the greater Ballarat region. It promotes cycling, walking, running and horse riding.

The path starts at the lookout and follows the natural hills and valleys through forest, grass trees and wildflowers, as well as historic water races, mines and prospecting sites. It features creek and road crossings to help residents and visitors better access Woowookarung's trails and enjoy a natural forest experience.

Support was provided through *Pick My Project*, a \$30 million Labor Government initiative that put decision-making in the hands of Victorians.

More than 230 projects across Melbourne and regional Victoria received support through *Pick My Project*. The funding was divided equally between Melbourne and regional Victoria based on the population of each of the six metropolitan and nine Regional Partnership areas.

The Woowookarung Regional Park trail is one of 14 successful projects from the *Pick My Project* initiative in the Central Highlands region and was nominated by the Friends of Canadian Corridor. The region received more than \$1.8 million in funding through *Pick My Project* after more than 14,000 votes were cast for local projects.

Other successful projects in the Central Highlands include homelessness support in Ballarat, an all-seasons multipurpose sports facility featuring upgraded tennis courts in Ararat and resurfacing of the Ballarat-Sebastopol BMX Track.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"The Pick My Project initiative is delivering projects locals need and making a real difference in towns and cities across the state, making them even better places to live, work and visit."

"The new trail will allow locals and visitors to experience the beautiful wilderness and history of this area – and we're proud to support it."

Quote attributable to Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle

"Woowookarung is a tremendous community asset and this trail adds another dimension to its appeal. It's a win for the people of Ballarat and the growing number of visitors who have discovered its beauty."

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