

Trails and Connections Project



CITY OF BALLARAT
**Community Engagement
Report July 2025**

Background

On 23 March 2023, the City of Ballarat issued a letter to local residents and property owners outlining the scope and benefits of the Trails and Connections Project, focused on new off-road shared path connections through Redan and Delacombe.

The project aims to improve walking, cycling and jogging connections between Victoria Park, Morshead Park, and Doug Dean Reserve. It was promoted as an opportunity to deliver safer, more accessible and better-connected infrastructure as part of Ballarat's growing trail network.

The benefits of the Trails and Connections Project include:

- Safer and more accessible shared path connections for walking, cycling and running.
- Increasing the connectivity of the off-road shared path network in Ballarat.
- Providing opportunities for active and passive recreation to further achieve positive health outcomes for our city.
- Easy to navigate linkages between key open spaces.
- Improving tree canopy cover and increasing biodiversity between open space areas.

The scope of the Trails and Connections project includes:

- Stage One: A trail from Victoria Park to Morshead Park, along Sutton Street.
- Stage Two: A connection to Doug Dean Reserve via Whitelaw Avenue.
- Stage Three: A loop trail around Morshead Park along Rubicon Street, Pleasant Street and Bell Street.

Construction of Stage One was scheduled to commence mid-2023, including approximately one kilometre of off-road path, improved access to bus stops, nine seating areas, and extensive new planting (150+ trees, 200+ shrubs, and groundcovers).

Residents were invited to provide feedback via Council's MySay Ballarat platform or email.

Community Response

Community feedback was collected through the MySay Ballarat platform from 21 March 2023 to 7 July 2025. The Trails and Connections project page received:

- 179 total page views
- 164 visits from 121 unique users
- 23 written contributions from 15 contributors
- 24 followers
- Peak engagement day: 12 August 2024

Most visitors (80%) accessed the page via search engines, with the remaining from direct and external website links. All engagement contributions were submitted through the "Gather" activity tool.

Stage 1.

--- Proposed trails

- - - Existing trails

— Proposed concrete footpaths



Key Themes and Feedback Quotes

1. Safety and Accessibility

There was strong support for wide, clearly signed paths that reduce conflict between cyclists and pedestrians.

"We have an opportunity to build separated walking and cycling paths... forcing bikes and pedestrians to share the same path is no better than forcing bikes and cars to share the same road."

"Raised crossings... identify the importance of keeping more vulnerable road users safe."

2. Improved Connectivity

Residents highlighted the importance of linking paths to key destinations.

"The trail will make Victoria Park more accessible... trying to cross busy Latrobe Street with a pram is a safety concern."

"Could the new trails be extended along Rubicon Street to the Wallaby Track/Yarrowee River?"

3. Infrastructure Design and Amenities

Community feedback encouraged including features that support comfort and use for all abilities.

"Water fountains, seating, shaded areas, and bins will ensure the trail meets the needs of all users."

"Paths need to be wide enough for safe passing—ideally two handlebar widths."

4. Planning for Future Growth

Residents emphasised the need for long-term thinking in network design.

"Ensure these paths can be extended... without needing to be re-routed."

"There is a great opportunity to put more emphasis on safe commuting routes, rather than just recreational benefits."

5. Strong Community Support

"Such a fantastic initiative... please consider amenities along these trails."

"Looks like a great idea – we live near Doug Dean Reserve and regularly walk with our dogs in Victoria Park."

"Would like to pass on his compliments to the team for putting in a bike lane in Sutton Street, Redan."



Insights Summary

- 20.73% of visits included active participation (at least 1 minute)
- 2.44% of visits included multiple actions
- 38.4% of users returned to the project page more than once
- Engagement was highest during early April 2023 and August 2024

Conclusion

The engagement findings reflect strong community support for the Trails and Connections project and confirm the importance of safe, connected, and accessible shared paths. Feedback has directly informed the development and refinement of project stages, including path widths, crossing treatments, planting, and user comfort features.

The project aligns with key strategic plans, including:

- Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030
- Ballarat Trails and Connections Strategic Plan
- Ballarat Cycling Action Plan
- Ballarat Integrated Transport Plan

The community's constructive feedback and shared enthusiasm will help ensure the success of this initiative and contribute to a safer, healthier, and more walkable Ballarat.



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