

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

In December 2010 a draft version of the Canberra Centenary Trail Feasibility Report was provided to stakeholder groups for feedback. The following is a summary of main issues arising from this review

We thank stakeholders for their comments.

Funding arrangements

The Trail is likely to compete with other ACT recreation projects for Government funding.

The Centenary Trail is a unique undertaking and is intended to complement other recreational facilities and proposals and is considered a worthwhile venture.

Accessibility and users

The main user groups are incompatible.

The Centenary Trail has been designed for low intensity users. As agreed in the Aspiration Workshop, intensity relates to the vigour and skill level of participants. The ACT already offers opportunities for high intensity activities such as self supported, long distance walking in Namadgi National Park or mountain biking at Stromlo Forest Park and other locations, supporting the development of alternative, complementary low intensity walking and bike riding opportunities.

In designing trails which can be safely shared by walkers and bike riders it is important to consider and minimise the speed differential between different users. A speed differential may be evident between users of the same mode of transport with differing fitness levels or abilities, or between users of different modes of transport, such as walkers and bike riders.

The users which will be attracted to the Centenary Trail are expected to be inherently similar, independent of their individual transport mode. Both users travel at a slower pace and seek experiences where they may interact with their surroundings and other trail users in a positive way.

The trail has the potential to impact on sensitive areas.

Signage and a comprehensive code of conduct to encourage appropriate behaviours will minimise adverse impacts on sensitive areas including farming operations and nature reserves.

Proposed expenditure

Allocation for maintenance is too low.

The trail maintenance budget has been revised based on additional advice, with an allowance of \$1,000/km allocated to the maintenance of new sections of trail.

Too much money has been allocated to marketing and promotion.

The ACT is not currently regarded as a place which offers locals or visitors exciting opportunities for nature based pursuits. The creation of the Centenary Trail has been identified as a catalyst for changing this perception, however it will require adequate promotion in order to achieve this. The budget for marketing and promotion was developed in consultation with industry experts and includes the materials necessary for the Centenary Trail to gain a profile both within and outside the ACT. As noted by stakeholders, marketing and promotion need to be supported by the creation of a quality product in order for the Trail to be successful and encourage repeat visitation.

Can the \$4.5 million price tag be justified to the ACT taxpayer?

The Centenary Trail would be a new, unique facility in the ACT which would provide a recreational resource for a broad range of users. Canberrans are already active participants in a broad range of activities and it is likely that they would value the Centenary Trail as a recreational resource.

The expected income as a result of increased tourism visitation as well as other less tangible benefits justify the expenditure.

Trail and facilities

The trail is too wide and is likely to be unsatisfying for users.

To deliver the Centenary Trail in time for Centenary celebrations in 2013 it is necessary to largely utilise existing trails as the approval, design and construction of substantial sections of new trail, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas, is expected to be very time consuming. Options for improving the experience of the Trail for all users have been discussed with industry experts and include:

- › Narrowing sections of new and upgraded trail from 2 m (as originally proposed) to 1.2 m.
- › Incorporating features and vistas along the trail to encourage users, particularly bike riders, to slow down.

Is the southern campsite necessary?

The Centenary Trail is intended to encourage locals and visitors to experience the nature based activities which Canberra can offer. To complement a user's journey around the Trail it was identified that accommodation options should be available at a range of different prices, from budget to high end. In plotting the proposed route it was identified that there was a lack of budget accommodation in southern Canberra and as such, the southern campsite has been proposed to remedy this. Whilst it is difficult to predict how users will typically utilise the Trail, it is important that it maintains a level of flexibility to accommodate different user needs.

Depending upon the chosen trail alignment the southern campsite may or may not be necessary.

The Trail incorporates too much signage.

The signage allocation is intended to demonstrate the upper limit of signage. In reality signage may only be required at trail intersections, or in sections where the correct route is unclear, however prior to ground truthing and detailed design stages it is difficult to know exactly where these points may be.

Design Principles

We don't need another mountain biking facility.

The Centenary Trail is not intended to be a mountain bike facility.

The Centenary Trail aims to provide a recreational resource not currently available in the ACT, a multi-use trail which seamlessly links the built and natural environments which can be shared by both walkers and bike riders to the benefit of all users. Rather than a mountain biking facility, the Centenary Trail aims to offer users a low intensity, exploration of Canberra which transports them to the destinations which typify all that makes Canberra great and allows them to interact with their surroundings and other users along the way.

Why has a multi-use shared trail been adopted as the preferred model?

As noted in the minutes from Aspirations Workshop, one of the traits of a good trail is the ability to provide for a number of different users with different modes of transport and different fitness levels. This idea was further developed in the Workshop discussion of the criteria for the selection of key locations along the Trail which included the recommendation that locations should allow for multiple disciplines using the Trail simultaneously with a trail structure (such as a braided trail) which provides for the needs of different groups.

Following from the Workshop, the idea that the Trail should be multi use was incorporated into the Design Principles used to guide the development of the Trail.

The Centenary Trail aims to achieve a different type of experience than those already offered by the existing multi-use walking and cycling networks in the ACT. The development of numerous Australian multi-use trails which cater for shared use by walkers, bike riders and equestrians, including the Kidman and Tom Roberts Trails in South Australia, The Brisbane Valley Rail Trail in Queensland, the Denmark to Nornalup Heritage and Collie-Darkan Rail Trails in Western Australia and the Great Southern and High Country Rail Trails in Victoria demonstrate that a trail which is designed for and shared by different user groups can be successful.

Local success stories such as Stromlo Forest Park and ACT sections of the Bicentennial National Trail, as well as national examples including the numerous multi-use rail trails, illustrate that with an appropriate code of conduct, developed in consultation with all user groups, and trail features which manage the speed differential between users, that trails can be successfully shared by a broad range of users.

Distances between accommodation nodes are inappropriate.

Stakeholders have provided a range of comments on the proposed daily distances, with some stating the distances are too long and some stating the distances are too short. The distances proposed are based on user experiences and examples of other trails. The intention is to provide flexibility to users.

Examples of other trails are not comparable with the Centenary Trail.

No two trails are the same and as such, the examples provided are intended to provide a combined background to the feasibility study and identify those features which are inherent in all trails and those features which are unique. One of the most important considerations to the feasibility study has been estimating visitation levels and the examples provided, whilst not identical, provide a good indication of the likely visitation of the Centenary Trail.

Routes and attractions

The proposed route is disproportionate, with the majority located in central to northern ACT.

Unfortunately due to the significant distance and duration an entire circumnavigation of the ACT would represent, the project team focused on those locations and the alignment which was the best fit for the design principles and the needs and ability of the target audience. The disproportionate focus on northern ACT has been readdressed through the inclusion of additional trail options. This additional section adds distance to the original trail proposal, but incorporates areas of southern ACT, provides access to the Murrumbidgee River and avoids some areas currently used by equestrians.

The ranking of destinations as must-have, desirable or non-essential needs further justification.

The ranking of destinations has been amended to better reflect those which are important to telling the story of Canberra and those which are supplementary to this story. Examples of supplementary locations are those which would offer a similar experience to destinations already on the proposed route, or those destinations which are enjoyable but not essential to the story of Canberra. Given the inherent flexibility of the Trail, accommodation options have been removed from the list of destinations.

Alternative alignments and destinations should be shown.

Canberra is a multi-faceted, continually evolving city and as such there are many alternatives to those destinations which have been included as part of the Trail. Those destinations along the proposed route were identified by participants at the Aspirations Workshop and the alignment was designed to link those destinations important to telling the story of Canberra in terms of culture, politics, Indigenous and European heritage, nature, recreation, dining and entertainment.

Stakeholders and the community, as users of the ACT's recreational facilities will be well voiced in the numerous alternative alignments and destinations for the Centenary Trail. Including all of these alternatives on the main map would be cumbersome and limit the usefulness of the map in communicating the alignment of the Trail and the destinations it includes. As recommended, the expertise of the community will be called on during subsequent stages of the project to refine the Trail alignment.

The Trail should allow bike riders to the top of Mount Ainslie.

In order to meet the 2013 deadline, the initial route and design of the Centenary Trail limits the construction of new trail or facilities where suitable existing infrastructure is unavailable, however there remains the potential for these to be delivered as part of future iterations of the Trail. Mount Ainslie is an environmentally sensitive area and although providing access to the peak for walkers, existing trails are too steep to allow for achievable ascents and safe descents by bike riders.

A desirable route to the top of Mount Ainslie has been identified, however an alternative option is also shown which will allow the delivery of the Trail in time for the 2013 Centenary.

The Trail needs to consider equestrian trails within Canberra Nature Parks, as well as the Bicentennial National Trail.

Noted. Investigations have indicated that there is a degree of overlap between the trails adopted for the Centenary Trail and the shared trails within Canberra Nature Parks which are currently utilised by equestrians. As recommended stakeholders, including equestrians will be involved in the detailed design and refinement of Trail alignment.

A more detailed map is needed.

Since circulation to stakeholders the map has been further refined with key features such as the existing trail network more clearly identified.

More detailed mapping will be undertaken as part of subsequent stages of the project.