

Yarra Bicycle Users Group - Gipps Street Steps Campaign 2005

There are three major cycling/accessibly issues in Gipps Street area requiring major infrastructure funding (Melways 44 F6):

- a). Poor condition of Collins Bridge, (Note: completed July 2005)
- b). Re-development of three flights of steep concrete steps on the Yarra Trail, (refer to Oct 05 Media Release from Richard Wynne MHR)
- c). The proposed Gipps St-Flockhart bike path extension.

YarraBUG are taking a pragmatic approach to these issues by basing our local campaign on the removal of the steps, and insisting upon plans/funding for ramps similar to those built at Walmer Street (Melways 44 J7).

YarraBUG's long-term goal is that this campaign acts as a positive incentive for the State Government, Parks Victoria and City of Yarra to take action on funding work on Collins Bridge and the proposed trail extension.

As Sunday March 20th was Bicycle Victoria's Bike Path Discovery Day. As the Main Yarra Trail is one of the six bike paths to be ridden, Yarra Bicycle Users Group decided as part of our ongoing Gipps Street Steps Campaign, to organise an information stall at these troublesome steps. YarraBUG provided information concerning the steps, Collins Bridge, letter writing materials, and a display of the proposed Capital City Trail extension between Gipps Street and Flockhart Street.

Some YarraBUG members even volunteered to assist cyclists who find the steps too difficult to carry their bike. Not only did we assist in raising the profile of this local issue, but after helping to carry dozens of bikes up the steps, and reuniting a lost cat with his family, we're thinking of renaming ourselves as the YarraBUG Bike Lifting & Cat Retrieval Service. Seriously though, the BUG stall, volunteers and information leaflets received a fantastic response from the bike-riding public, a very high percentage were incredulous that these steps still existed.

Many cyclists told us they were enthused to either write letters or contact Richard Wynne, MHR and Yarra Council in order to get action happening.

Literally hundreds of cyclists gave us feedback detailing how the three flights of steep concrete steps were unsafe, badly designed, inconvenient, extremely annoying, a hindrance to riding or walking in the area again, and possibly a serious occupational health and safety issue. Our campaign has now reaped a positive result for Yarra cyclists – refer below for Media Release from Richard Wynne



Media Release

\$50,000 funding for pivotal link on Yarra bike trail

Richard Wynne, local member for Richmond, today announced funding for detailed design work and documentation for filling a key gap in the Capital City Trail between Walmer Street and Gipps Street, Abbotsford.

“I am delighted that in my electorate we have received a substantial allocation (\$50,000) to take the next step towards completing this vital link in the trail network,” Mr Wynne said.

“The design brief will include working out how to eliminate the steep steps at Gipps Street. They are currently a major blockage to use of the trail, particularly by children or people with a disability.

“I am also pleased that Local Government will match this dollar for dollar. A great example of two levels of government working in harmony to achieve a terrific outcome for the local area and indirectly for the whole of metropolitan Melbourne,” he said.

This grant is part of a significantly increased commitment to metropolitan bicycle trails, which will be announced in detail, on Wednesday, by the Minister for Environment, John Thwaites.

“Expanding Melbourne’s trail network and therefore recreational opportunities in the metropolitan area, addresses the Brack’s Government’s commitment to building sustainable communities and improving the physical and mental health of Victorians,” Mr Wynne said.