

The Hon Steve Bracks, MLA, Premier
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Dear Premier,

Today I have taken part in the Bike Trails Discovery Day organised by Parks Victoria and Bicycle Victoria. The trail I chose to ride is the Main Yarra Trail.

For the most part, the trail is of an excellent standard and suitable for all types of riders and bikes. However, the need to ascend to the Yarra Boulevard near the Chandler Highway (Melway 45 B1) using either several flights of steps or a steep rough gravel path comes as a nasty surprise. This is followed by a quite demanding climb along the Boulevard and a very steep descent to the Pipe Bridge (Melway 44 J1).

This section of the trail is quite taxing for all but the fittest of riders, and positively dangerous for inexperienced riders and family groups. Cyclists using non-standard bikes such as tandems and recumbents or towing trailers would find the ascent difficult if not impossible, as would frail walkers or those in wheelchairs. Commuting cyclists would find the extra time taken a major disincentive to using what could be a useful off-road route. When the long awaited Darebin Creek link is completed, this part of the trail has the potential to become an even more important commuter route.

Re-routing of the trail alongside the river between the Chandler Highway and the Pipe Bridge would solve these problems and greatly enhance the trail's appeal for both recreational and commuting cyclists as well as pedestrians. There is a diagram on the Boroondara Bicycle User Group web site illustrating the suggested change at:

http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bdarabug/other_resources/ChandlerRiverpath_diagram_2.PDF

Widening of the Pipe Bridge is also highly desirable, as it is narrow, and very slippery in wet conditions. In the meantime, treatment to make it less slippery would make it somewhat safer.

I call upon you to make funding available for these important works. The Main Yarra Trail is Melbourne's oldest and one of its most scenic, but it will fall far short of its potential to attract all sorts of users while these problems remain.

Yours faithfully,