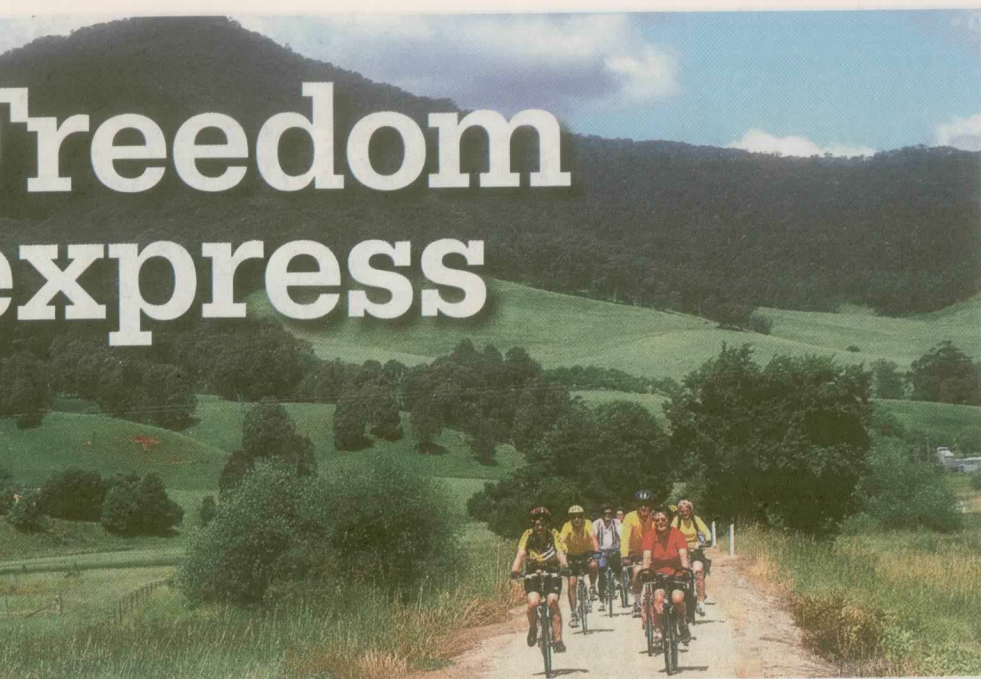


Freedom Express



er train routes have become the cyclist's glorious way to regional beauty, writes **Shaun Phillips**

ct railways are helping drive two-wheel tourism boom across Victoria.

han 20 years after the last to Beechworth and Bright, pushing themselves up Ovens Valley tracks in their s.

urray to the Mountains Rail arguably the best rail trail in It certainly has the most g name.

tly it stretches a picturesque m Wangaratta to Bright, with r running up to Beechworth.

Smooth bitumen has replaced steel, but all 98km are a long way from the mighty Murray.

Trail project manager Darren Murphy explains that the misnomer could be corrected as early as next year.

"We've got a funding application in at the moment that would allow us to create a 40km link from Wahgunyah [across the Murray from Corowa] to Rutherglen and Springhurst, joining up with the trail at Bowser," he says.

Masterplans envisage a 240km network connecting the Ovens Valley to King Valley and Milawa.

Riding high: cyclists at Eurobin, on the Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail.

Already more than 40,000 people ride the trail each year. An estimated 40 per cent are from outside the region.

A rider of average fitness would take six hours to get from Wangaratta to Bright, with another two hours to take in historic Beechworth.

About half the riders are tourists, taking a weekend or longer to go the distance with due time dedicated to the many wineries, cafes and other attractions along the way.

While the trains stopped running after a century of service, canny riders now harness their successor, the bus, to enhance the trail experience.

V/Line buses from Wangaratta call at Beechworth, Myrtleford, Porepunkah and Bright. Bikes travel for free.

"One way to do it is get the bus from Wangaratta to Beechworth, then ride to Myrtleford and stay overnight," says Murphy.

"The next day you ride on to Bright and then get the bus back to Beechworth for the downhill ride back to Wangaratta to get your car or get on the train. You can even arrange to get picked up by the bus along the route."

One business runs a trail pick-up service for those who don't do buses.

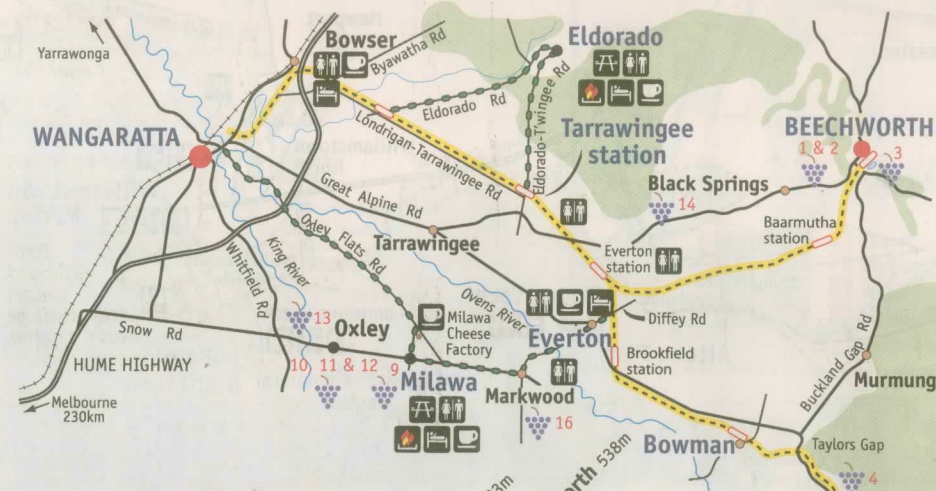
Bikes are available for hire. Olympic champion Dean Woods will hire out a hybrid bike with all the accessories for \$29 a day from his Wangaratta shop.

Last year Jason den Hollander rode from Bright to Everton — almost 60km — with his then seven-year-old daughter, Matilda.

"It took three-and-a-half hours — it was great," den Hollander says.

"The facilities were good, the gradients were very kid-friendly, the path was wide and open and the scenery was just beautiful."

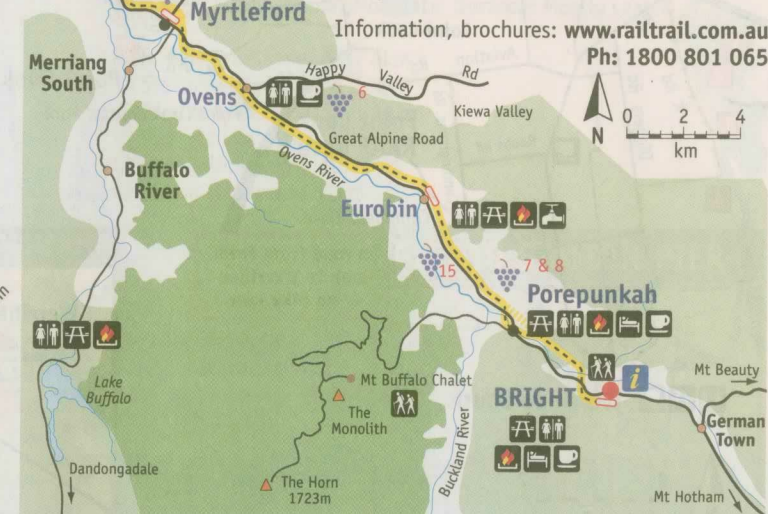
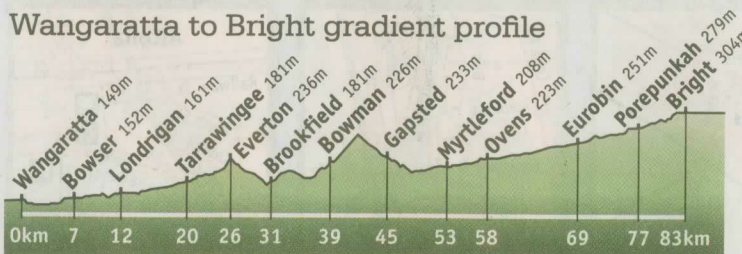
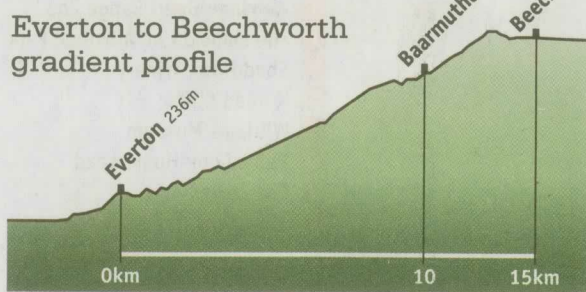
Wangaratta-Bright Trail



Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail
Distance: 98km Grade: Moderate Surface: Sealed

- Wangaratta-Bowser 7km
- Bowser-Tarrawingee station 13km
- Tarrawingee-Everton station 6km
- Beechworth spur 15km (one way)
- Everton station-Myrtleford 27km
- Myrtleford-Eurobin 16km
- Eurobin-Bright 14km

- Wineries**
- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Pennyweight Winery | 9 Brown Brothers |
| 2 Smiths Vineyard | 10 Reads Winery |
| 3 Sorrenberg Vineyard | 11 Ciavarella Wines |
| 4 Gapsted Wines | 12 John Gehrig Wines |
| 5 Michelini Wines | 13 Miranda Wines |
| 6 Eaglerange Vineyards | 14 Amulet Wines |
| 7 Boyntons Vineyards | 15 Mt Buffalo Winery |
| 8 Ringer Reef Winery | 16 Markwood Estate |



an your great escape

urray to the Mountains is one of seven major cycling maps red in the following pages.

e rail trail from Lilydale, which km from the CBD, to Warburton opular rural alternative much r to Melbourne. It is the second f-town trail featured here.

ere are many more rail trails, ding the Outer Circle trail from eld to East Camberwell in urname's east, and the Bellarine usula trail from Geelong to

Queenscliff. Plans are afoot to open up a number of new trails.

Visit railtrails.org.au for the latest information and updates on accessibility and conditions.

Five urban rides are featured — Port Phillip Bay west and south, a 30km circuit around the inner suburbs, and paths that follow the Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers.

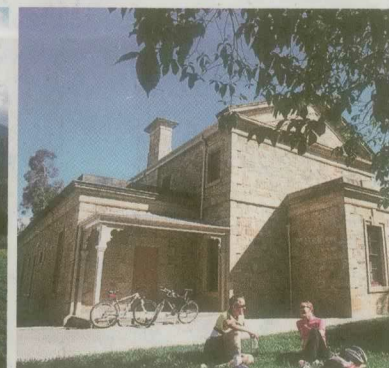
For information on the Melbourne network, visit Bicycle Victoria's website — www.bv.com.au

Legend for maps

- featured bike route
- other bike path
- information
- toilets
- picnic tables
- refreshments
- fireplace/bbq
- accommodation
- walking trail
- vineyard
- railway line, station
- disused railway station
- town: major, minor, locality
- recommended side ride



Myrtleford
Spectacular views abound. The trail will eventually link to the Murray with a loop to Wahgunyah.



Beechworth
Attractions include the court house where Ned Kelly stood trial. Modern delights include restaurants and wineries.

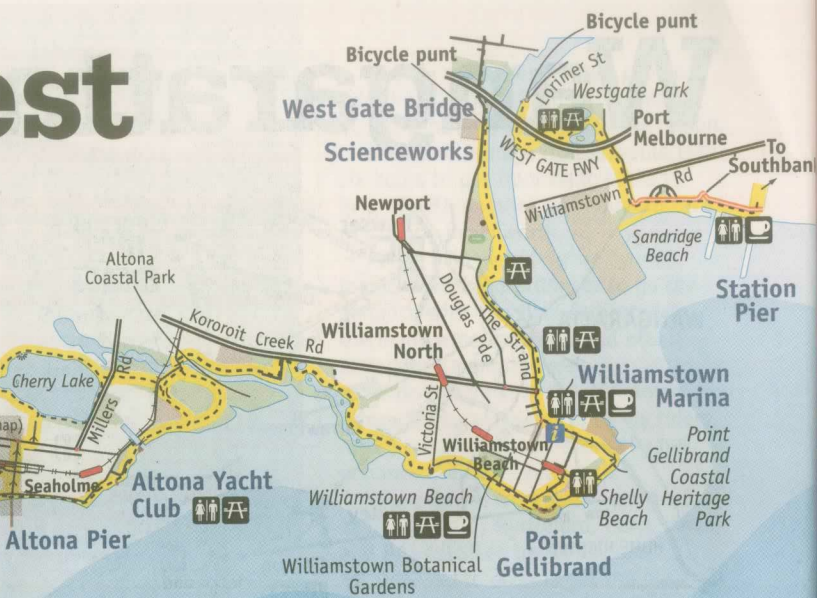
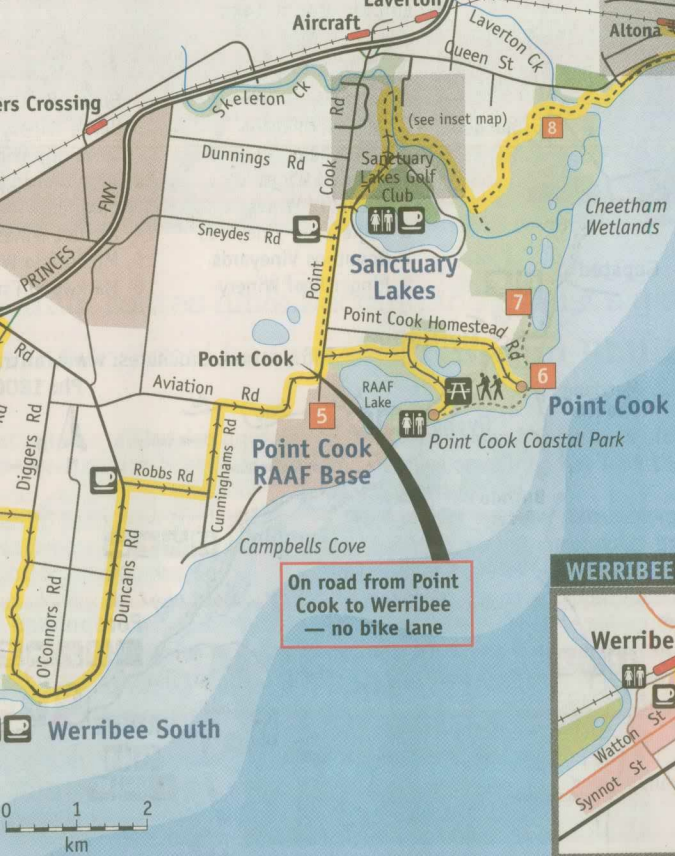


Porepunkah
Boyntons is one of the many vineyards either on the rail trail or just a short ride away. The detour to Milawa to take in Brown Brothers winery and the town's gourmet offerings is well travelled.

ay Trail West

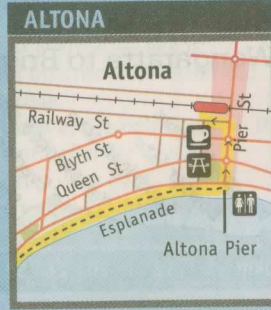
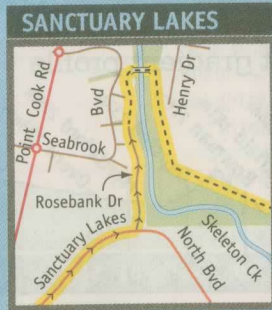
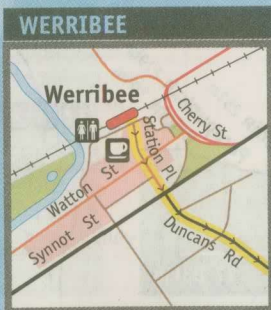
ank to Werribee station
72km Grade: Moderate to easy Surface: Mostly sealed

ank-West Gate bicycle punt 10.5km
te bicycle punt-Altona station 16.5km
ation-Point Cook Coastal Park 17km
ook Coastal Park-Werribee River mouth 17km
e River mouth-Werribee Park 6km
e Park-Werribee station 5km



Along the way

- 1 Werribee Open Range Zoo
- 2 The Mansion at Werribee Park
- 3 Shadowfax Winery
- 4 K Road Cliffs
- 5 Williams Museum
- 6 Point Cook Homestead
- 7 The Tower
- 8 100 steps of Federation



On road from Point Cook to Werribee — no bike lane



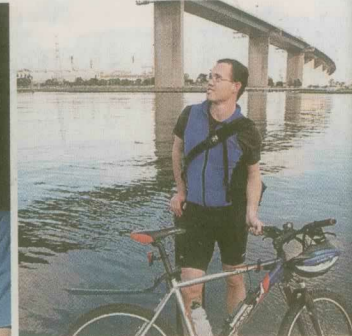
Open Range Zoo
y from 9am-5pm. Safari
ing 40 minutes run from
Family tickets available.



Altona Beach
One of the west's best-kept secrets.
A popular stopping spot for cyclists
with plenty of food and drink options.



Scienceworks
Melbourne's famous hands-on museum,
including digital planetarium, is open
from 10am-4.30pm.

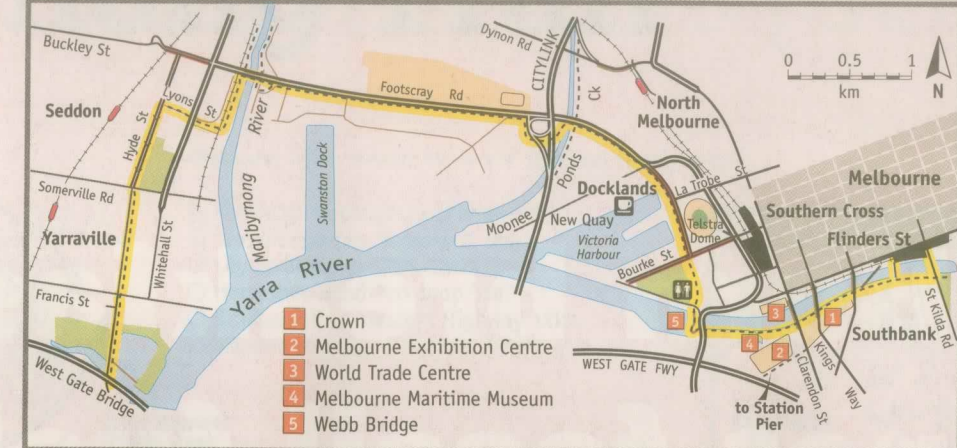


Westgate bicycle punt
Operates 10am-5pm on
weekends and public
holidays. Cost \$3 one way.



St Kilda Pier
A Melbourne landmark since the 1850s, the kiosk
was rebuilt to 1903 plans after being destroyed by
fire in 2003.

ROUTE TO THE WEST IF WEST GATE PUNT NOT OPERATING

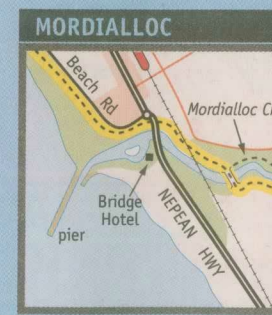


- 1 Crown
- 2 Melbourne Exhibition Centre
- 3 World Trade Centre
- 4 Melbourne Maritime Museum
- 5 Webb Bridge

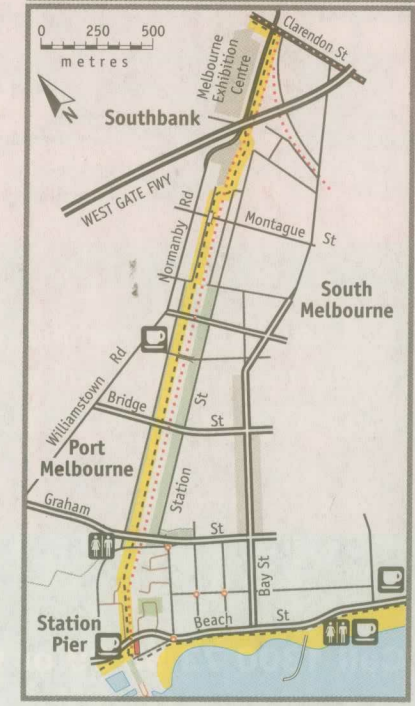
Bay Trail South

Southbank to Frankston Pier
Distance: 57km Grade: Moderate Surface: Mostly sealed

- Southbank-Station Pier 4km
- Station Pier-Brighton 10km
- Brighton-Ricketts Point 13km
- Ricketts Point-Mordialloc 8km
- Mordialloc-Carrum 10km
- Carrum-Frankston 12km



CITY TO STATION PIER

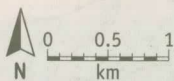
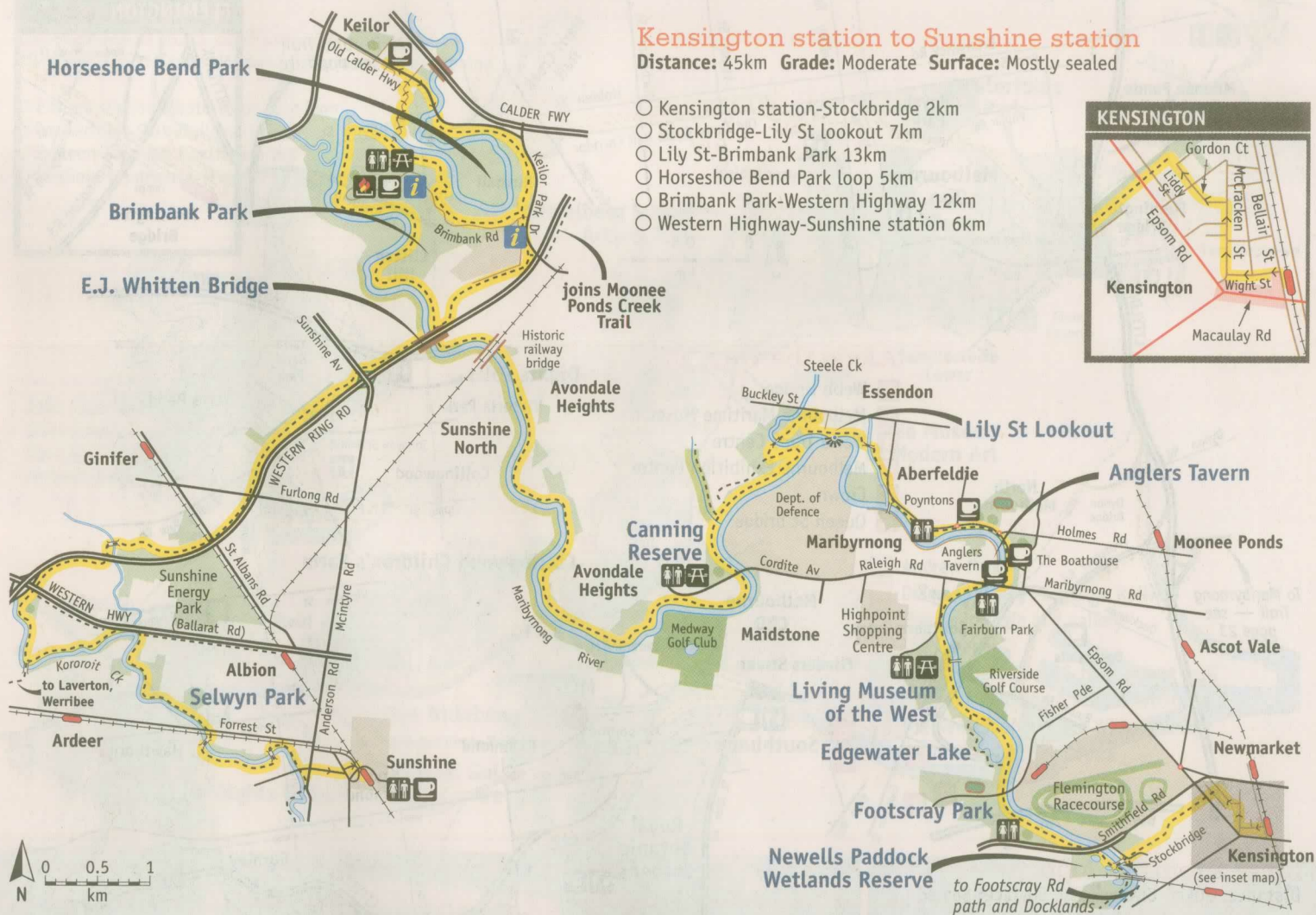


Maribyrnong Trail

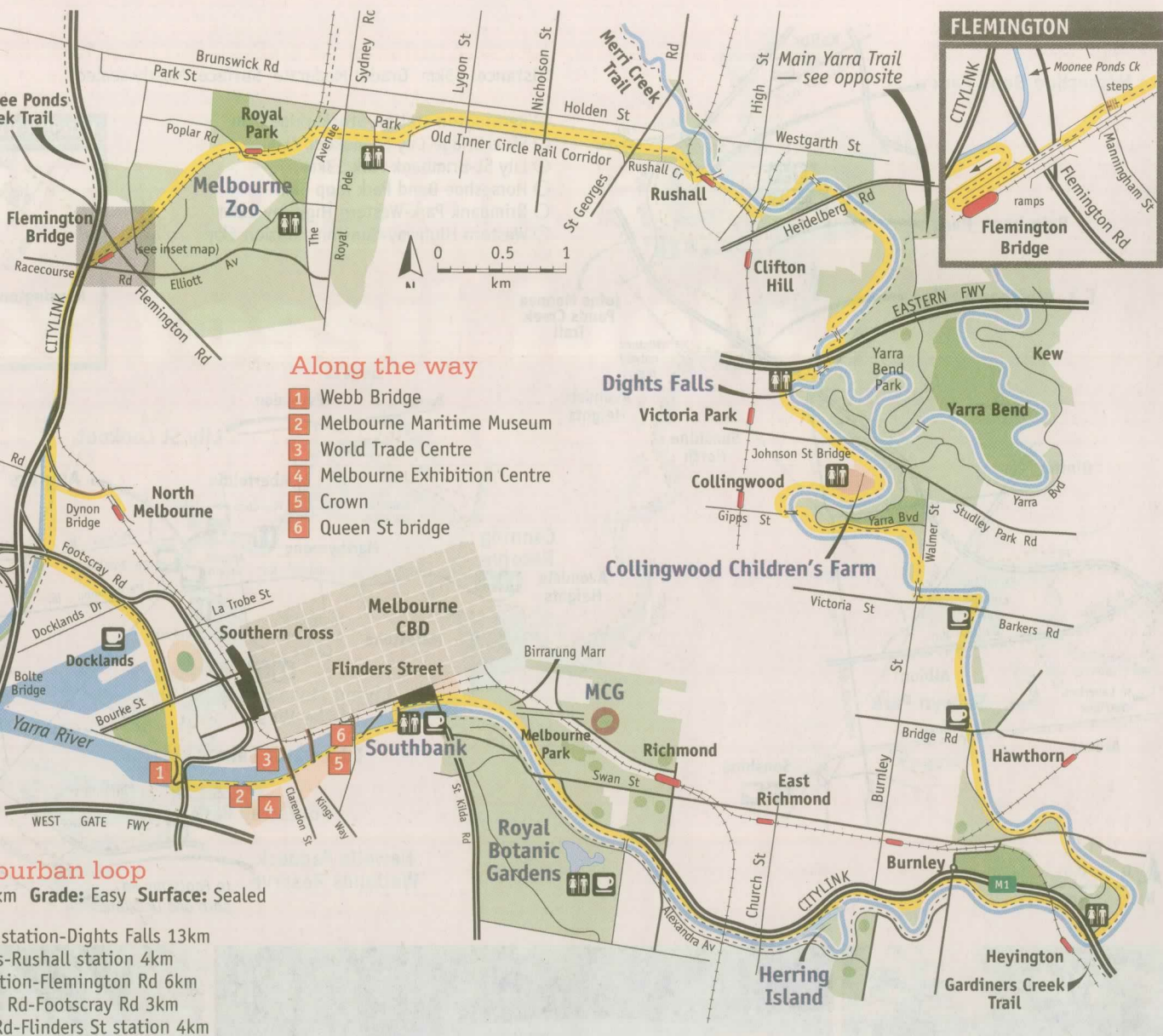
Kensington station to Sunshine station

Distance: 45km Grade: Moderate Surface: Mostly sealed

- Kensington station-Stockbridge 2km
- Stockbridge-Lily St lookout 7km
- Lily St-Brimbank Park 13km
- Horseshoe Bend Park loop 5km
- Brimbank Park-Western Highway 12km
- Western Highway-Sunshine station 6km



Capital City Trail



Collingwood Children's Farm
 Open from 9am-5pm. Wander around the farm, see the animals, even help with the farm chores.



Southbank
 Options galore for refreshments and eating. Popular start/finish point due to this fact and proximity to Flinders Street Station.



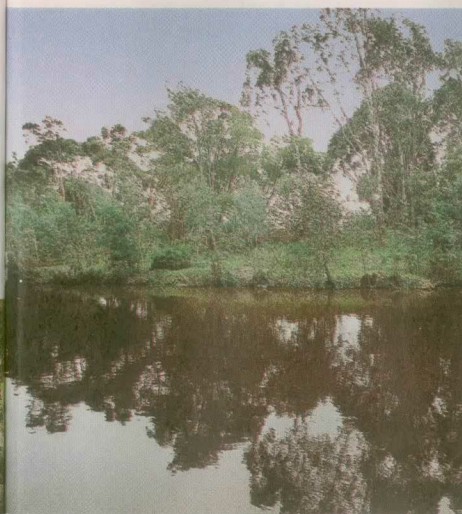
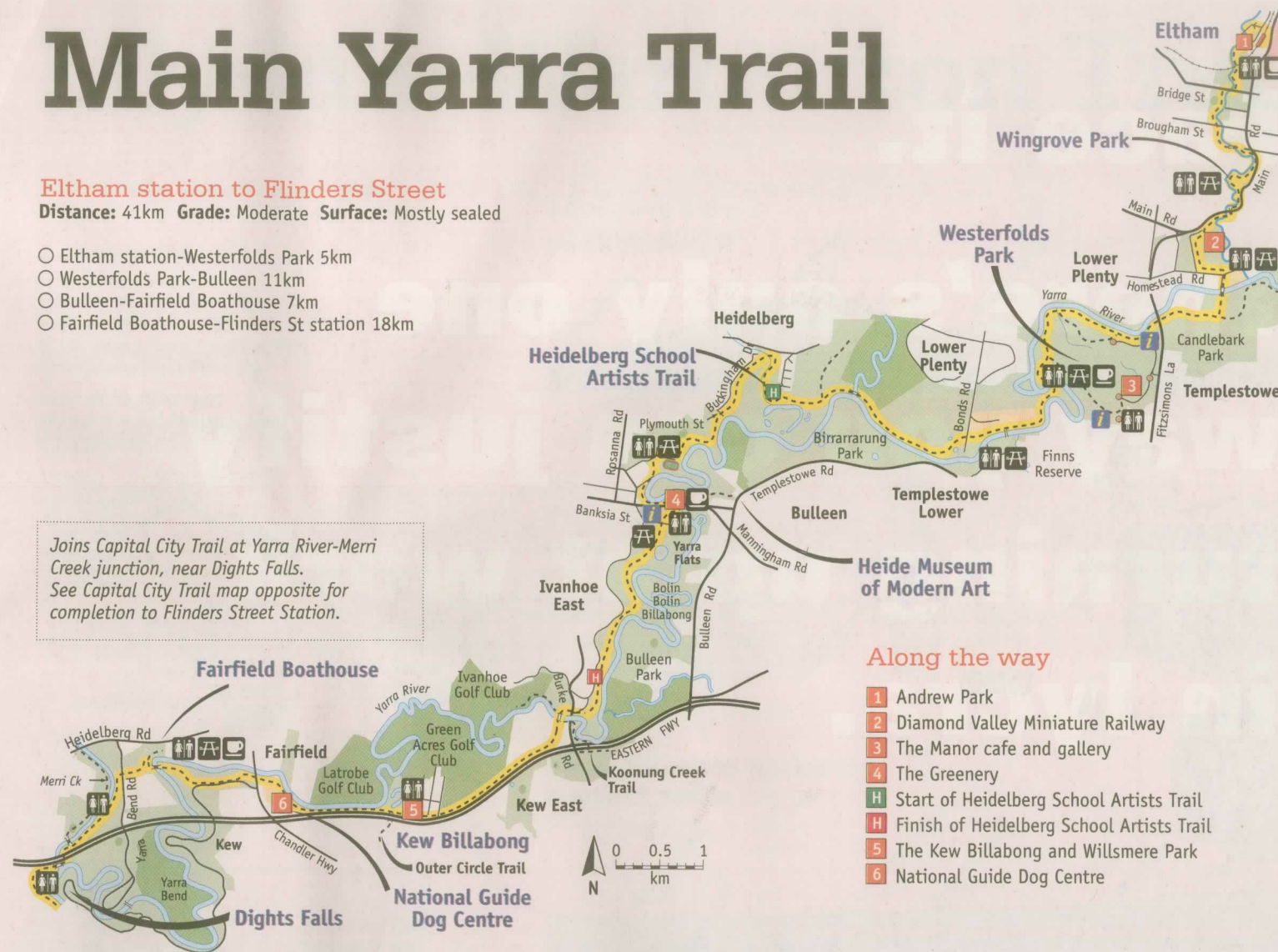
Dights Falls
 Watch the kayakers brave the rapids. Turn off near here for the Main Yarra Trail to Eltham.

Main Yarra Trail

Eltham station to Flinders Street
 Distance: 41km Grade: Moderate Surface: Mostly sealed

- Eltham station-Westerfolds Park 5km
- Westerfolds Park-Bulleen 11km
- Bulleen-Fairfield Boathouse 7km
- Fairfield Boathouse-Flinders St station 18km

Joins Capital City Trail at Yarra River-Merri Creek junction, near Dights Falls. See Capital City Trail map opposite for completion to Flinders Street Station.



Kew Billabong
 Located next to Willsmere Park, the u-shaped billabong dries out in periods of low rainfall.



Fairfield Boathouse
 Tea rooms are open from 8.30am on weekends and 9am on weekdays.



Westerfolds Park
 A 1.2km detour from the main trail to Manor house cafe and gallery.



Eltham Lower Park
 A miniature railway is open most Sundays from 11am-5pm. There are also wetlands and a viewing platform where the Diamond Creek meets the Yarra.

Lilydale-Warburton Trail

Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail

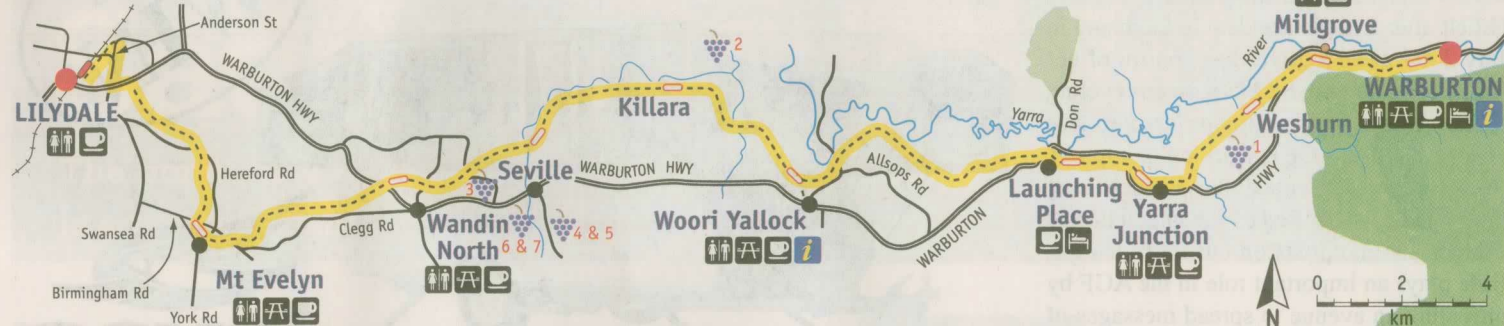
Distance: 40km **Grade:** Moderate **Surface:** Gravel
Lilydale to Millgrove, sealed Millgrove to Warburton

- Lilydale-Mt Evelyn 7km
- Mt Evelyn-Seville 9km
- Seville-Woori Yallock 7km
- Woori Yallock-Launching Place 6km
- Launching Place-Millgrove 8km
- Millgrove-Warburton 3km

Information, brochures:

www.yarravalleytrails.org.au

Ph: 1300 368 333



Lilydale to Killara gradient profile



Woori Yallock to Warburton gradient profile



Wineries

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Yarra Burn | 5 Elmswood Estate |
| 2 Killara Park Estate | 6 Whispering Hills Vineyard |
| 3 Wild Cattle Creek | 7 Seville Hill |
| 4 Ainsworth Estate | |

Gradient profiles courtesy Rail Trails of Victoria, published by Railtrails Australia, RRP \$32.95, available from www.railtrails.org.au