

Mountain Biking at Lysterfield Park

Lysterfield Park

Located within a large bushland environment within greater Melbourne, Lysterfield Park offers over 30km of purpose built mountain bike trail designed for all skill levels. Over 150km of gravel riding is available within the connected landscape of Lysterfield Park and Churchill National Park. These elements have made Lysterfield Park the most ridden mountain bike park in Australia. The park caters for a number of uses and activities including hiking, running, cycling, swimming, sailing, horse riding, nature appreciation, research and picnicking.

How many riders use the park each year

Lysterfield Park is one of the most visited mountain bike parks in Australia with 150,000 mountain bikes counted each year on the trails. The park receives approximately 1,000,000 visitors with mountain biking, running and walking comprising the majority of visitors.

The Hallam North carpark (Casey City Council managed) is regularly full on weekends. Whereas the park entrances at Horswood Road and Churchill National Park provide greater capacity and only reach capacity 1-5 times a year.

Managing the trails

With such high visitation to the park, Parks Victoria (PV) receives strong support to maintain the trails by volunteers including the Lysterfield District Trail Riders (LDTR) and the Friends of Lysterfield Park.

Parks Victoria's focus is to ensure adequate maintenance and improvement of the existing 30km+ of mountain bike trail and ensuring carparking and facilities meet current and predicted visitor needs.

Given the frequent use of the trails as well as regular storms and erosion events at the park, Parks Victoria, volunteers and stakeholders are regularly rebuilding or redesigning sections of trails. This constant process allows regular opportunities to improve the trail experience including the construction of different levels of technical challenge including trail width and surface, jumps, berms and other technical trail features.

The trail experience

Lysterfield Park's mountain bike trails provide a free and publicly accessible facility where people of all experience levels can ride on purpose built trails in a natural environment. The trails are primarily designed to cater for cross-country riding.

Raised rock trails and boardwalks are in many sections of trail to minimise the impact of riding through wet low laying areas of land protecting native vegetation, soil degradation and the informal widening of trails.

The two most ridden trails in the park are Hug trail and Snipe trail whereas the least ridden trail is the double black diamond Granite Link trail.

Given its proximity to urban populations, and the prevalence of B lines around most trail features, Lysterfield Park's trails are generally considered to be an easier riding experience than more remote mountain bike destinations.

Does mountain biking belong at Lysterfield Park?

Supporting people to spend time in nature is a key foundation of Parks Victoria's Healthy Parks Healthy People management approach. Parks Victoria considers mountain biking (MTB) to be a healthy activity that supports thousands of people to exercise and in turn help support healthy communities.

Lysterfield Park has several characteristics that make it a great location for mountain biking. The park provides publicly accessible riding near Melbourne, the trails are also in a relatively intact natural environment and provide good elevation and terrain in an otherwise flat greater Melbourne.

Where is Mountain Biking permitted?

Churchill National Park and Lysterfield Park have over 150km of gravel trails which are suitable for cycling. This includes over 30km of trails purpose built for mountain biking. Please see the Lysterfield Park Mountain Bike Riding Visitor Guide in the Key documents section.

Cycling is not permitted on three walking only trails in the park. There are no purpose built mountain bike trails in the northern area of Lysterfield Park (north of Wellington Road) or in Churchill National Park.

The evolution of Lysterfield Park

Over the past 15 years, Lysterfield Park has seen a boom in recreational activities, in particular running and mountain biking. Lysterfield Park has become the most popular destination for mountain bikers in Melbourne and one of the most ridden in Australia.

In 2004, Lysterfield Park was identified as the preferred site to develop the competition and recreational trails for the 2006 Commonwealth Games Mountain Bike Competition. In conjunction with the construction of the 6.3km State Mountain Bike Course for the competition, a range of other mountain bike trails were also developed in Lysterfield Park at this time. These trails still exist and are remain popular.

Managing environmental and cultural impacts associated with mountain biking

Regardless of their type, all trails have an impact on the natural and cultural values in protected areas. The aim of Lysterfield's trail network is to provide a balance between recreational trail opportunities while minimising ecological and cultural disturbance.

Churchill National Park and Lysterfield Park are managed under the National Parks Act 1975 which direct the preservation and protection of natural and other features, and where appropriate to provide for the use of the parks by the public.

Managing the safety of visitors

Trails and technical trail features are built to Parks Victoria and Mountain Bike Australia (MTBA) standards.

Parks Victoria applies many processes including regular trail audits and monthly visual inspections, extensive signage, choke points and line of sight works.

Management vehicle trails provide good access into most areas of the mountain bike network for rescue crews.

To ensure visitor safety, and compliance with the National Parks Act and Cultural Heritage Act, illegal structures or construction are immediately removed by Parks Victoria.