

UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA

**MENZIES** 

Institute for Medical Research

## Communities for Walkability

A citizen science project to  
connect local spaces and places

# Railton Report

[walkrural.com.au](http://walkrural.com.au)

# Acknowledgment of Country

The University of Tasmania pays its respects to elders past and present and to the many Aboriginal people that did not make elder status and to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community that continues to care for Country.

We acknowledge the profound effect of climate change on this Country and seek to work alongside Tasmanian Aboriginal communities, with their deep wisdom and knowledge, to address climate change and its impacts.

The Palawa people belong to one of the world's oldest living cultures, continually resident on this Country for over 65,000 years. They have survived and adapted to significant climate changes over this time, such as sea-level rise and extreme rainfall variability, and as such embody thousands of generations of intimate place-based knowledge.

We acknowledge with deep respect that this knowledge represents a range of cultural

practices, wisdom, traditions, and ways of knowing the world that provide accurate and useful climate change information, observations, and solutions.

The University of Tasmania likewise recognises a history of truth that acknowledges the impacts of invasion and colonisation upon Aboriginal people, resulting in forcible removal from their lands.

Our island is deeply unique, with cities and towns surrounded by spectacular landscapes of bushland, waterways, mountain ranges, and beaches.

The University of Tasmania stands for a future that profoundly respects and acknowledges Aboriginal perspectives, culture, language, and history, and a continued effort to fight for Aboriginal justice and rights paving the way for a strong future.

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- Public Health Services, Tasmanian Government Department of Health
- Local Government Association Tasmania
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- Centre for Urban Research, RMIT
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### Railton Community Members:

We would like to thank the Railton community members involved in collecting data and information for the audits and those who attended the workshops to discuss the findings and provided feedback on the report. Your input has been invaluable and critical to the development of this report.

~~HEROVS~~

Roads

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Speed

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# Executive Summary

The Communities for Walkability project aimed to identify features of Railton that make it easier or harder for community members to be active and walk around their town ('walkability'). Railton has a range of community facilities including a primary school, sportsground and other services including a pharmacy and Neighbourhood Centre. Other facilities such as supermarket and medical services are in nearby towns. Railton is known as the 'Town of Topiary' and is an increasingly popular mountain biking destination.

This report summarises the information collected through spatial walkability assessments, audits (town wide, program/policy and street segments) and discussions at the community workshop. This report brings together the findings from the three project phases to provide a summary of the key issues impacting walkability in the area.



## Key Findings

In the spatial walkability assessment, Railton's walkability was rated medium in comparison to the 92 towns in the study. The spatial maps showed that the Railton town centre is slightly more walkable in comparison to the town boundaries. The audits and workshop discussion suggest that Railton has a range of assets that support walking and active recreation in the area. In the town wide audit, natural assets including Goliath Park and the nearby natural reserves (including Sykes Sanctuary, the Henry Somerset Orchid Reserve and the Caroline Creek Forest Reserve) were reported as important spaces for recreation. Key facilities, such as the primary school and pharmacy are in walking distance for most residents, though community members need to travel for other services including supermarkets and medical services. Most of the main facilities in Railton are located on the T-junction of Kimberley Road and Foster Street. The program and policy audit suggests that while there are some programs and policies addressing walking and active recreation, there are opportunities for improvement.

## Priorities

Community members felt there was a good range of infrastructure throughout Railton that supports walkability. Three priorities were identified as having potential to improve the walkability throughout Railton. These priorities include:



1

### **Connectivity**

Connectivity between footpaths, infrastructure and amenities was considered a high priority by the community members. In many locations, there are footpaths on one side of the road but at times these paths do not link up. The lack of connection between infrastructure to support pedestrians to move around the community was highlighted as an issue. As a result, pedestrians are required to walk on a road or road verge or cross to an alternate footpath. In addition, some community amenities (such as a picnic table) are not linked to footpaths.



2

### **Safety**

Poorly maintained or poor-quality footpaths was identified as an issue in some locations. For example, the quality of footpaths varies across the town with some footpaths in need of upgrades, particularly those with safety hazards such as roots or broken utility covers.



3

### **General infrastructure**

Provision of general infrastructure could support walking around Railton. While some areas had some provision seating, adding a bus shelter for school students was considered important. Adding signage for historical walks through town was also discussed.

## Potential Solutions

Whilst community members were generally happy with the infrastructure in Railton, the audit segments and workshop discussion suggest some ways of addressing these priority areas. This included options such as improving the quality and condition of footpaths, creating better connected footpaths (and connecting paths to general infrastructure) and exploring opportunities for a historical interpretive walk.





Beautiful

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# What is the Communities for Walkability Project ?

Communities for Walkability is a citizen science project to identify environmental characteristics that influence walkability and physical activity in rural Tasmania. This is important because the environments where people live, learn, work, play and age influence health and physical activity. The project involved three key phases:

1. A spatial assessment of walkability
2. Audits of the town's walkability using a townwide assessment tool, policy and program assessment tool and street segment walkability audits
3. A community workshop



## Phase 1 — Spatial Walkability Assessments

To inform the selection of the 10 towns involved in the Communities for Walkability project, phase 1 involved conducting a spatial analysis of walkability for transport in 92 small rural towns across Tasmania with populations less than 6,000 people. This work was completed by project team members at RMIT University in Melbourne who are world-leaders in spatial assessments of walkability. They have developed the Australian Urban Observatory ([auo.org.au](http://auo.org.au)), which includes liveability and walkability assessments across the 21 largest cities in Australia, including Hobart and Launceston in Tasmania. Spatial walkability assessments use Geographic Information Systems to understand the walkability of an area based on three key components: daily destinations (something to walk to), street connectivity (a way to get there) and dwelling density (people to service the destinations and shops). These three factors were summed to produce a final walkability score for towns resulting in an overall walkability rating of high (top third of walkability scores), medium (middle third of walkability scores) or low walkability (bottom third of walkability scores).

It is also important to note that factors like footpaths, roundabouts or signalled pedestrian lights are not included in these spatial walkability assessments. Previous research suggests that these urban design factors have a big influence on the willingness of residents to walk for transport which has a direct effect on physical activity levels and overall health. However, most of this previous research has been conducted in big cities and less is known about how valuable spatial walkability assessments are for understanding walkability in smaller rural towns. Thus, while spatial map scores are suggestive of walkability, this study aims to better understand how applicable they are within a rural context.

## Phase 2 — Town Audits

Building on the spatial walkability assessments, the second phase involved a Citizen Science approach in 10 towns across Tasmania. Citizen science is valuable within health-related research projects for many reasons, including:

1. Gaining new perspectives on problems and solutions
2. Monitoring policy and program implementation
3. Obtaining difficult to access data
4. Mobilising support for action to improve health
5. Gathering locally relevant data to inform policy and practice

In each town, local leaders ('Community Champions') contributed to the project by identifying which parts ('segments') of the town to audit, recruiting 'Citizen Scientists' and completing town audits (including the town wide assessment and policy and programs assessment). Next, the Citizen Scientists completed street segment audits of the physical environment using the online walkability audit tool with the purpose of providing greater understanding of specific features within the town.

As part of the segment audits, community members took photos of town features that supported or hindered walkability. These images have been used throughout this report. It is important to note that the findings are general in nature as not all sections of the town have been audited. Instead, the findings highlight the broader features supporting and hindering walkability throughout the town.

## Phase 3 — Community Workshops

Once each town had completed the audits and taken photos, a summary of the audit data was shared with community members at a community workshop. The workshop discussion enabled a greater understanding about the features impacting on walkability in the towns, identified priority areas for action and potential solutions. In each town, researchers facilitated a community workshop which was attended by Community Champion/s, Citizen Scientists and other interested community members.



### *Images.*

- ▲ Documents to aid discussion at the workshop
- ◀ (opposite page) Citizen Scientist completing an audit segment using the online audit tool

# Introduction

Being active is good for our health – it can prevent us from getting diseases like heart disease, diabetes, breast and colon cancers, and osteoporosis. It is also great for managing our weight, blood pressure and cholesterol, and for keeping us mentally healthy and well. Research has shown that people living in rural parts of Australia are less active than those who live in urban areas. It is also known that rates of preventable health conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure tend to be higher in rural Australia than in urban Australia.

It is well known that walkable neighbourhoods provide health, environmental, social and economic benefits. A neighbourhood's walkability is the degree to which it has safe, designated areas for people to walk or bike to work, school, dining, shopping, medical services, recreation and entertainment. Walkable communities are easier to get around, they support everyday connections and foster a greater sense of community through increased informal and spontaneous social interactions. In cities, research shows that the physical environment where people live, work, study and play can affect physical activity levels.

However, there is minimal research showing what 'walkability' looks like in rural areas. Small towns and some rural council areas may have access to fewer resources to develop the infrastructure to support walkability and active lifestyles. This project was designed to help find out more about walkability in rural areas and what might be needed to support this.

Most of the research studies looking at walkability focus on cities and large towns and not much is known about how our environment helps or stops communities from being active in rural and regional areas.

The report includes quotes from people who attended the workshop or from comments they made using the online audit tool. Photos have been included to provide local examples of features that hindered or supported walkability. It is hoped the findings included here will support further discussions in the town as well as support local action to encourage walking in the area.

*Image.*

► (opposite page) Footpaths through the parkland at Goliath Park



# Overview of Railton

This project explored walkability in Railton, a small town in the north-west of Tasmania in the Kentish Council region. Railton is located 25km south of Devonport and 81km west of Launceston and is home to approximately 1,079 people<sup>1</sup>. The area has a population density of 1.9 residents per square kilometre (compared to Inner Hobart which covers an area of 62.2 square kilometres and has a density of 1,356 residents per square kilometre).

Railton has a range of community facilities, shops and services including a primary school, petrol station, post office, pharmacy, neighbourhood centre, pub, café, church, football oval, parks and RV park. The town is centred around the T-junction of Kimberley Road and Foster Street. The town is surrounded by farmland and natural bushland, including Sykes Sanctuary, the Henry Somerset Orchid Reserve and the Caroline Creek Forest Reserve, which are important spaces for walking and other recreation. Many Railton locals will travel to nearby Sheffield (approximately 11km away) or to larger towns like Devonport or Launceston for other services such as supermarkets and medical services.

In recent years, community members suggest the culture of the town has changed.

When I was growing up Railton was just a bit of a no-go zone for teenagers. My mum used to say, 'Don't you go to Railton'.

“

It's really changed, and it's got a lovely feel to it. It is a great place to live.

Railton is known for its art sculptures made from trees and shrubs ('topiary') and as an increasingly popular mountain bike destination.

P1: Railton is known as the 'Town of Topiary'.

P2: Well, it still is, but I think it's becoming more of a mountain bike [destination].

P3: Because on weekends it's full of people with bikes.



*Image.*

▲ The Esplanade has wide road buffers for pedestrians to walk along

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021

While some community members feel that Railton’s topiary displays have been somewhat neglected, there are plans for a local community group to revive them throughout the town. There has also been a \$4,000,000 investment in the Wild Mersey Mountain Bike Trails which is funded by the Australian Government, Tasmanian Government and the local Kentish and Latrobe Councils. The Wild Mersey Mountain Bike Trails includes trails in Railton (Warrawee trails to the north with the ‘Railton Express’ connection trail and to the east from Goliath Park) as well as other surrounding towns. In addition, the 480km multi-use Tasmanian Trail (which goes from Devonport to Dover) passes through Railton.

*Images.*

- ▶ Railton is known as ‘the town of topiary’
- ▼ Goliath Park has a range of facilities including skate park, parkland, playground and barbeque area

P1: [We call it] the Railton Rattler, and it’s not named that for no reason...It’s part of the Tasmanian Trail, and it goes to Sheffield.

P2: It’s a beautiful route.



# Findings From the Project

## Spatial walkability assessment findings

The spatial analysis completed in the first phase of the project examined the local neighbourhood attributes of street connectivity, dwelling density and an index of access to services of daily living. These three attributes were used to indicate overall walkability and then given a rank to represent its position in relation to the other 91 small towns in Tasmania. Each attribute, as well as the overall walkability score, is classified as low, medium or high walkability.

The spatial analysis resulted in the creation of a Spatial Map (Figure 1) that helps to show the walkability around Railton. Overall, the spatial walkability assessment ranked Railton as having medium walkability compared with the 91 other towns analysed in phase 1. The maps indicate that Railton is least walkable (dark pink) throughout the town, particularly on the northern and southern edges. The town centre (located on the T-junction of Sheffield Road and Kimberley Road) is more walkable; however, this is still recorded as having low walkability (light pink). Railton scored low in the services

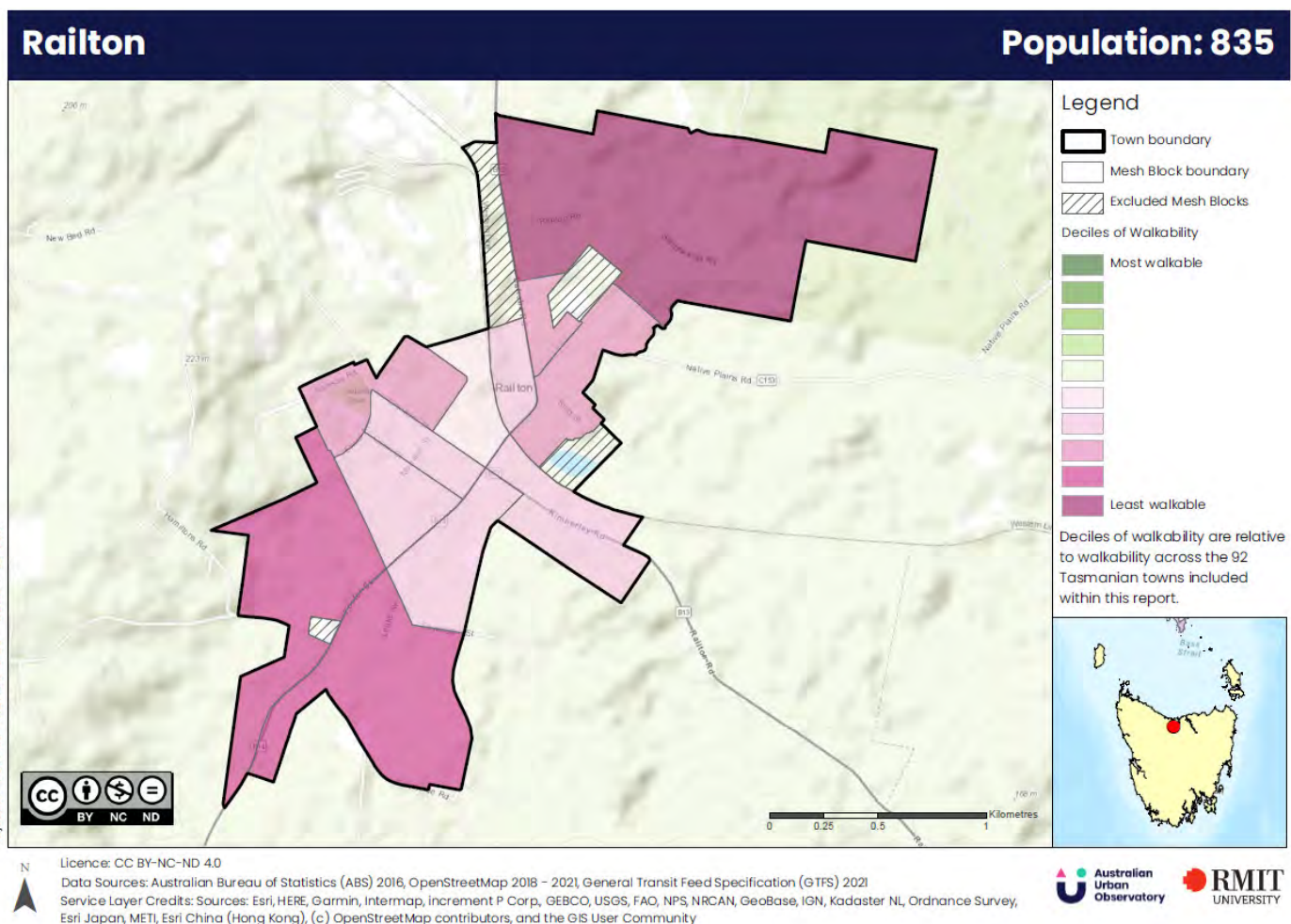


Figure 1. Spatial Map for Railton

(Spatial map data sources: ABS 2016, OpenStreetMap 2018-2021 and General Transit Feed Specification 2021)



of daily living index as while the main facilities in Railton are geographically contained (which is reflected in the spatial map), many important facilities (such as supermarket, hospital or council offices) are not available and require residents to travel to other towns.

## Audit and workshop findings

In Railton, two Community Champions completed the town wide facilities and programs/policies audits that examined the features in the area that supported walking and physical activity. The Community Champions then selected the segments of the area to be audited by the Citizen Scientists between May and July 2022. Four Citizen Scientists conducted detailed walkability audits to examine specific segments of the area. While they walked a segment, Citizen Scientists used the audit tool to respond to questions about

the segment including the presence of features such as paved footpaths, unpaved footpaths, crossing, signage, roads, and other safety features. Citizen Scientists also took photos of key features that impacted on walkability in the segment. In Railton, all participants in the study were reported to be of a similar age and gender. Thus, it is important to note that future community consultation may need to include a greater diversity of participants to get a more nuanced view of walkability in Railton. Initial findings from the audits were presented to the community at the community workshop. The community workshop was held in Railton on 20 July 2022 with five community members present to discuss the findings. Following the workshop, this report was produced for the Railton community. Community Champions and Citizen Scientists provided feedback on this report and can use the report to bring about change in their community.



*Image.*

▲ The Railton cenotaph with seating and topiary

## Town wide and policy/ Program audit findings

The range of community facilities in Railton was reflected in the town wide audit. The assessment captured the availability of amenities and physical features including a primary school (the Railton campus of the Sheffield School), walking tracks and trails, park/playground, skate park, mountain bike trails, oval, community facilities (Kings Hall and Railton Neighbourhood Centre) as well as the nearby lakes and rivers (Mersey River and Lake Barrington) and surrounding nature reserves. In the audit, most facilities and features in Railton were rated as in good/excellent condition, with the oval rated as fair/poor.

The town programs/policies audit examined the availability of health and physical activity related programs and/or policies in the area, including those run at the local school. The

Program and Policy assessment did not capture many programs or policies in the area, which may reflect a lack of knowledge and awareness about these programs and policies amongst the general community. Findings may have differed if the audit were completed by, for example, an employee of local council. Community members are aware of the weekly Railton Parkrun which occurs every Saturday from Lions Park on Railton/Kimberley Road.

## Street segment audits: Overview of facilities

Eight segments of Railton were audited by the four Citizen Scientists (Figure 2). This includes two Citizen Scientist who completed three audits, one who completed two audits, and one audit completed by two separate Citizen Scientists. The street segment audits revealed the following:

Facilities rated Good/Excellent	Facilities rated Fair/Poor	Facilities not present
<p>Hiking/walking trails (Railton-Sheffield Walking Trail, Sykes Sanctuary)</p> <hr/> <p>Biking Trails (Wild Mersey Mountain Bike Park, Railton Rail Trail which is part of the Tasmania Trail)</p> <hr/> <p>Public Parks (Goliath Park, Lions Park and Esplanade Rest Area)</p> <hr/> <p>Public Toilets</p> <hr/> <p>Skate Park (Goliath Park)</p> <hr/> <p>Town Recreational Centre</p> <hr/> <p>Private Gym</p> <hr/> <p>Playground</p> <hr/> <p>Indoor or outdoor courts</p> <hr/> <p>Swimming Pool (at Sheffield School Railton Campus)</p> <hr/> <p>Other: Bowling Club, Pump Track, squash courts, tennis courts and basketball courts.</p>	<p>Oval</p>	<p>Lake (Lake Barrington is approximately 50km away)</p>

Table 1. Facilities in Railton as captured in the Town Wide Audit

- Six segments were reported to only have footpaths on one side of the street and two did not have a footpath. Of the six segments with paved footpaths, the quality was reported as good/excellent in four segments and fair/poor in two segments.
  - Five of the eight segments were reported to have buffers/shoulders on the footpath or a defined shoulder alongside the road.
  - Traffic volume was rated low in three segments, medium in four segments and high in one segment.
  - All segments were reported to have footpaths or trails linking the segment to other locations in the town.
  - All segments were considered easily walkable; however, two segments were not considered appropriate for an older person, someone with limited mobility or with a pram. Only three of the segments were reported to be walkable for a child (aged 10 or below) to walk on their own.
  - All segments were rated as aesthetically pleasing.
- In general, Railton had a range of different sporting and recreational facilities that were well maintained by the council and used by the local community.



Figure 2. Audited segments in Railton

## Features that support walking and being active (facilitators)

Community members described the topography, layout and sense of community in Railton as highly conducive to walking.



P1: It's central, isn't it? You can sort of just walk anywhere...

P2: You can.

P1: And it's really flat.

P3: And it's a very friendly place nowadays.

The natural environment around Railton was a key factor in supporting community members to engage in walking and other recreational physical activities. The nature reserves surrounding the town have tracks and trails for walking and bike riding.

[Sykes Sanctuary has] become one of my favourite walks. And my grandchildren love it too, they really love it.

P1: [Sykes Sanctuary is] part of the Tasmanian Trail, and it goes to Sheffield.

P2: It is a beautiful route.



Most of the town's key facilities are located along Foster Street between the Esplanade and Giblin Street. Although there are no crossings in the town, community members felt this was not a problem as there are generally "no issues with traffic".



Even when it's peak hour and there's traffic, [its] not like you have to wait too long to cross.

The Sheffield School Railton campus is a primary school located approximately 1km southwest of the T-junction and is relatively easy for students to walk to. In addition, important spaces such as Goliath Park, Sykes Sanctuary and the Mountain Bike Park were all within a 1-2km walking distance from the town centre.

In summer on nice days, [Goliath Park is] a madhouse. And there's playgrounds and everything. It's just great, there's kids and people everywhere.

The Railton Parkrun group is also a valuable community asset with an average of 33 participants per week in the 5km run/walk. The group runs from Lions Park with the route following the Tasmanian Trail through Sykes Sanctuary.

Community members feel there is a good range of infrastructure to support walking as well as some upcoming projects.

There's a picnic shelter near Lions Park and there's very well-maintained toilets.



The Men's Shed in Sheffield are making a seat... for [Parkrun] volunteers.

*Image.*

◀ Sykes Sanctuary is a popular walk and bike trail



The growth of the town as a mountain biking destination has led to the development of infrastructure around Railton. This includes signage, a bike wash station, the 'Railton Express' (a path linking the Railton and Warawee tracks) and upgrades to mountable kerbs to allow easier access for bikes. During the workshop, community members felt the users of the mountain bike park were primarily "outside people coming in" rather than Railton locals. While community members were supportive of the mountain bike developments, the workshop discussion felt that "it is too early to say" if there have been economic or other benefits to the Railton community.

Community members acknowledge the work the council has done in planting trees around the community and improving pathways.

The Council has done street beautification and planted a whole lot of trees through Railton, and they're about to plant some up Crockers Street aren't they? It's happening very soon apparently.



The sealed pathways in the centre of town are relatively new - good condition. Easy access.

*Images.*

- ▲ The wide main street of Railton includes topiary and infrastructure such as seating, drink fountain and bins

## Features that make it difficult to walk and be active (barriers)

### Footpaths and trails

The segment audit data suggests that footpaths are generally of good quality, however the discussion at the community workshop highlighted that some paths could be improved.

“ The old paths need some attention... The new paths are brilliant.

Giblin Street to Newbed Road the pathway is much older, and the surface is wearing away and in need of upgrading.

Telecom and other utility service pits [have] covers...falling in and create a serious hazard.

Community members said that some paths were covered in moss, had cracked and broken pavement or tripping hazards (such as tree roots or damaged utility service covers). There were also many locations where branches or trees overhang onto footpaths making it difficult to walk.

“ There are a number of hedges, tree branches etc which intrude over footpaths.

Some places that you're walking there's so many trees and branches over the footpath that you've got to get off [the path] because you can't navigate through.

#### Images.

- ▼ A broken utility cover creates a safety hazard on the footpath
- ▶ (opposite page) Some footpaths have utility covers that are falling in







## Connectivity

The segment audits identified that most segments were well-connected to other trails or locations in the town. However, the community workshop discussion revealed that there were areas throughout Railton where connectivity was limited which resulted in physical disconnection in the town. The footpath between Lions Park and Sykes Sanctuary (approximately 300m) stops halfway so people must continue by walking on the road or on the grass. This was discussed as an issue for the Parkrun participants as the run starts from Sykes Sanctuary, but the group meets at Lion's Park where there is more space.



P1: We always say, 'Don't walk on the road' but they still do...The trees are low hanging down, and its grass.

P2: And it just doesn't get the sun and the grass is often slippery.

There are other locations around town where footpaths do not connect or where footpaths abruptly end. In general, the data suggested that many areas (apart from Foster Street) had footpaths only on one side of the road.



P1: It seems to be the norm...so it is common.

P2: It's almost everywhere really.

This can be an issue in locations where the footpaths do not connect or do not connect into key community infrastructure. This requires



community members to backtrack or take a longer route which could be a challenge for some population groups.

Because often you come to a corner, and it runs out of path.



P1: There...is seating further out...on the left-hand side going to Sheffield.

P2: Where the old church is, there's a picnic table and... seating but there's no footpath and you think, 'why is that?'

For example, on some of the corners surrounding Goliath Park

There's a path that side of the road, so to get across the corner we've got to navigate down a driveway onto the road, get around the corner which is all grass... and then walk down there.

## Safety

Safety also emerged as an issue impacting walkability, including in areas with slippery or icy footpath surfaces or in locations with aggressive dogs.

The weather was discussed by community members as having an impact on walking as the cold winter conditions often result in icy or wet paths around Railton. This was common at certain times of year and was acknowledged as creating unsafe conditions for walking.

My feet have come from under me a couple of times since winter has set in, and I have to be careful of the time of day because it actually doesn't thaw.

### Images.

- ◀ (opposite page) Footpaths with cracks creates a safety hazard
- ▼ The rotunda at Lions Park





We always have that trouble there because [it is] very icy. We have to tell the [Parkrun] participants not to walk on the road, because...they don't want to go through the grassy wet patch. But we have to get them off the road because that's a busy road.

For some community members, the routes they chose to walk (or not walk) were determined by the presence of aggressive dogs. The presence of loud, barking and territorial dogs made walking less enjoyable in these locations with some individuals feeling unsafe.

A couple of residences have very angry dogs which may be a deterrent.

“

There's a couple of places that the dogs are really quite vicious.

The dogs backing at fences are the only unpleasant aspect.

In some areas, a lack of infrastructure including bus shelters was also considered an issue for students who do not have a safe space to wait for the bus. High school students who catch the bus to nearby towns for education do not have access to an undercover space to wait.

“

There's no shelter. There's a bus stop but not shelter.

*Image.*

- ◀ The footpath between Lions Park and Sykes Sanctuary abruptly ends causing people to walk along the road or on the road buffer

## Rubbish/litter

At the workshop, community members mentioned rubbish as an issue, particularly along the roads further out from the town centre.

“

One of the things I find interesting too is of all the photographs that you've got there's not a skerrick of litter anywhere...but the main roads are just appalling.

People will shove rubbish in the hedge, and there's a bin just down the road here. What is that about?

Despite the availability of bins in key areas in the town and 'Keep Kentish Beautiful' signs, community members said they are often picking up rubbish that others have incorrectly disposed of.

“

Somebody said on the community page... 'Why don't they put up 'Do not throw rubbish' [sign]?' And I thought, no one's going to take any notice of [that].

# Priorities

During the community workshops, participants were asked which of the identified barriers they considered a priority for action. The key priorities were to improve connectivity and general walking infrastructure throughout Railton.

## **Priority 1: Improving connectivity**

Improving connectivity was identified by participants to enable community members to easily walk around Railton. There are some locations where a footpath will end, or paths do not link up resulting in pedestrian needing to walk on a road or road verge or cross to an alternate footpath.

## **Priority 2: Improving safety**

Discussion suggested that hazards were caused by unsafe footpath surfaces. This included paths covered in moss, the presence of tripping hazards (such as tree roots or damaged utility service covers) or paths subject to ice in winter.



## **Priority 3: Improving general infrastructure**

Discussion also highlighted the priority of improving and erecting general infrastructure to support walking around Railton. Improving and better maintaining general infrastructure was identified as a key priority to support walking around Railton.

*Image.*

► (opposite page) Park along the Esplanade with tables and bins



# Possible Solutions

During the workshop participants were asked to consider possible ways to address the identified priorities. The following presents the solutions discussed by community members to address the key challenges in Railton.

## Footpaths

Community members felt improvements to footpaths around Railton would help to address connectivity and safety concerns. This includes upgrading the surface of some paved footpaths, extending sections of footpaths and connecting footpaths with key infrastructure (e.g. walking trails) and amenities (e.g., picnic tables or seating).

It was recognised that the council was currently completing maintenance and making improvements to some footpaths around the town. However, community members felt there were unsafe footpaths in many locations due to the surface condition (sometimes exacerbated by icy conditions). Increased maintenance at key locations or signage at dangerous locations could help to address this.

In addition, some residential properties were reported to have overhanging trees and branches impacting upon public footpaths. While community members felt that other residents would not complete the required maintenance, council could help to ensure community members are aware of the expectations and responsibilities of landowners.

Discussion also suggested that some areas could further benefit from the development of paths, such as



From Giblin Street to edge of town - easy access but part of the pathway requires upgrading.

This also includes the picnic table and seating towards the Primary School on Foster Street and along the Esplanade.

Esplanade is a lovely walk, but footpaths would make it safer.

Improving connectivity in walking paths and trails will increase accessibility and support better connections throughout Railton.

## Other solutions

Suggestions included the addition of shelter and improvements to the surface of the current tracks and paths. While some areas had some provision seating, adding a bus shelter for school students was considered important. Adding signage for historical walks through town was also discussed.

Aggressive dogs, rubbish and overhanging branches were also discussed during the workshop as an issue in Railton. In general, community members felt it was up to the individual or community groups to address these issues themselves.

[The dogs are] in the last property so you just don't walk to the last property.

*Image.*

- (opposite page) Tactile paving near Goliath Park at the intersection of Ennis Avenue and Crockers Street



# RAILTON'S WIDE STREET



## A TALE OF BULLOCKS

Wondering why the main street  
of Railton is so wide?

In the early days of settlement, the produce from surrounding districts was brought to Railton Railway Station, on the main street, by bullock teams hauling wagons. There, it was loaded onto the train to continue its journey far and wide.

These teams consisted of between two and four pairs of bullocks that were yoked together. Turning the huge teams and the wagons on an average width street was out of the question. Of necessity, the extra wide main street you see here was built to make life easier for the bullock teams to unload side on at the station and turn around – ever contemplated doing a three point turn with a bullock team?

*...ing bullocks were brought to the Railway Station...  
... were loaded into the train to continue its journey far and wide...  
... of bullocks that were yoked together... turning the huge teams and the...  
... of necessity, the extra wide main street you see here was built to...  
... at the station and turn around... ever contemplated doing a three point...*



Railton Council acknowledges the Railton  
Heritage Centre and Railton Museum  
for the historical images.





P1: I go the other way.  
I've addressed it.

P2: That's what I do too.

Individuals felt these issues can be solved by avoiding particular routes (as is the case with aggressive dogs) or picking up rubbish or walking around overhanging items. One community group is considering starting a regular rubbish pick up in various locations of the community. While community members were aware of council mechanisms to report branches or aggressive dogs, there was the perception that community members

[Do not] want to get offside with my neighbours.



There is potential for the community as well as the local council to work together to determine if additional solutions (such as community beautification programs or education programs) could be considered in the future.

Community members also discussed adding walking trail signage to celebrate the history of the town (such as information boards). This could include a historical walk around the town or a topiary walk to the key topiary locations.



[Railton could] have interpretive signs at different points around the town.

It was felt that interpretive signage could encourage community members and visitors to walk around the town.

*Image.*

- ◀ (opposite page) Signage celebrating the history of Railton at the Lions Park
- ▲ Railton has some popular mountain biking trails starting from Goliath Park
- ▶ Signage for the 'Railton Rattler' bike trail at Sykes Sanctuary



# Conclusion



Railton is a town in the north-west of Tasmania with a range of community facilities that support walking and physical activity including parks, footpaths, walking and mounting biking trails. The audits completed by the Community Champions and Citizen Scientists highlight the valuable assets in Railton as well as areas that could be improved.

The audit process and workshop identified features in Railton considered a priority to increase walkability and physical activity participation in the area. Community members felt that the key priorities were:

- Improve connectivity focusing on better connecting paths and other community amenities throughout Railton.
- Upgrade footpaths, particularly areas with unsafe surfaces.
- Improve the general infrastructure around the town including a suitable bus shelter and exploring opportunities for interpretive signage.

*Image.*

- ◀ The playground at Goliath Park
- ▶ Many community members like the rural aesthetic when walking around Railton



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boards

beach

walkrural.com.au

lines

NATURE 