



ST HELENS MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

Boardwalk Update

The St Helens Mountain Bike Trails town link boardwalk is now complete! You will notice as you drive into St Helens, almost opposite the St Helens Point Road turn-off, that the 150m boardwalk in Boggy Creek is now visible. There are several other smaller bridges to be installed along the trail before it is complete.

This boardwalk is the lower section of the town link trail which is around 3.4km long and will take both riders and pedestrians all the way to the trail head at Flagstaff.

This trail will be multi-directional and multi-use. This means that trail users will have to practice good trail etiquette while using the trail. Those using the trail should use common sense and respect and share this space equally however we will be encouraging IMBA's (International Mountain Bike Association) general trail etiquette which is: **Mountain bikers yield to foot traffic and Descending riders yield to climbing riders.**

MTB Giant comes to St Helens

It is all really starting to happen in the once, sleepy town of St Helens with Mountain bike gurus, Giant announcing that they will be opening a store in St Helens.

The St Helens shop will be a GS store which is a concept store with an e-bike focus; it will be the only one of its kind in Australia.

The St Helens Store will offer a range of Mountain bikes and e-bikes both for sale and for hire, another major difference between the St Helens store and others.

A focus on e-bikes is a great fit for the St Helens with the St Helens Mountain Bike Trails featuring a number of trails that will require some up-hill pedalling. For example the 44km Bay of Fires Trails as well as a couple of the larger loops, one of which that winds and wends its way to the top of the Loila Tier where three descents will start.

The new store will be located next door to the East Coast Providore and opposite the post office on Cecilia St. The store will be run by St Helens locals including the local St Helens bike Mechanic, Matt Grundy.

The boardwalk section finishes in a wide platform area so users can gather safely before crossing the Tasman Hwy where they can continue their ride around George's Bay right in to the heart of ST Helens township.

A pedestrian refuge (road crossing) will be constructed closer to the opening date in November which will provide a safe crossing.



MTB Success Stories

Once associated with MTB enthusiasts, mountain bike trails all over the world are starting to attract all kinds of riders from all walks of life, from families to retirees.

Helping this growth is the growing popularity of e-bikes which still require pedalling but do make it easier, especially on those longer or steeper trails.

As an example, New Zealand reported 23,326 electric bikes were imported in 2017, an increase of approximately 10,000 than the previous year.

A great example of this is the story of Baby Boomers Chris and Kathy, the owners of a cafe in Taupo.

The couple were finding it increasingly difficult to get out on the trails, something that they really enjoyed doing together.

Taupo's Top Gear Cycles owner, Mark Gibson suggested they look at getting in to e-bikes and according to Chris and Kathy it changed their lives!

"We giggled and couldn't believe how cool it was," says Kathy. "I was absolutely hooked on it, so we decided to just do it, to seize the day. Life's too short to wait."

You can read more about their story [here](#):

Event horizon - Dragon Trail

The trails haven't even opened yet and already they are attracting large events!

Dragon MTB will take place in March 2020 and will be a three day mountain biking event featuring Blue Derby Trails as well as the Poimena to Bay of Fires Trail and some of the stacked loops from the St Helens Mountain Bike Trails network.

The event has been organised by Geo-Centric Outdoors who are responsible for running a number of Adventure Racing (AR) World Series and XPD (Expedition races) that usually attract a strong international contingency. St Helens actually hosted the XPD in March 2018 with the Bendigo Bank Community Stadium used as a headquarters. Event organiser Louise Foulkes thought St Helens was such a great place in terms of the natural environment as well as for infrastructure, she decided to specifically create this event.

Break O'Day Council recognised the value of this event and has decided to support the event through a cash sponsorship of \$6500 which will go towards funding FLOW MTB to cover the event and to waive facility hire fees for the first three years of the event.

In its first year, the event has exceeded the organiser's expectations already attracting a field of 112 competitors from all over Australia and some from overseas, with entries still rolling in. There will also be a large female field with more than 44% of competitors registered, 30yrs + ladies.

Safety on the trails

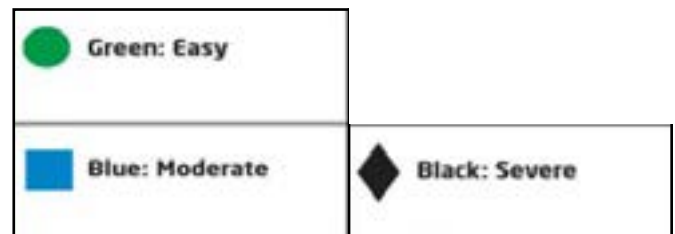
Similar to when you go for a bushwalk, it is the responsibility of the trail user to make sure they are equipped to do the walk. This is no different when mountain biking. BODC is responsible for maintaining the trails and ensuring that they are safe to ride other than that, it's the rider's responsibility to make sure they have all the information and gear they need.

All the St Helens Mountain Bike Trails will have an IMBA rating, (as shown) and there will also be information on the website and at the trailhead about the trails and gear required.

This will be of particular importance for riders who tackle the 40+km trail from the top of the Blue Tier to Swimcart beach in the Bay of Fires. Due to the length and at times, isolation of this trail, we will be encouraging shuttle operators and riders to make sure they are well prepared. BODC is also working on a comprehensive Trail Safety Plan that includes; heat mapping the trails to find mobile black spots, location signage, half-way check point as well as information on relevant emergency apps in case a rider does require help.



Find more information on the Dragon Tail event at www.dragontrail.com.au



The St Helens Mountain Bike Trail Project was made possible with funding support from our partners:

