

Strategic Focus Area: Live. Access. Connect.

Violet Town to Euroa Cycling Track

Problem and opportunity:

The Hume Freeway is the only direct through road between Violet Town and Euroa as one section of McDiarmids Road (between Mahers Road and Wilbrahams Road), which could be used for local traffic, is not rideable or driveable.

The main issue is a lack of culverts across creek lines or drains meaning that there are ponds of water or mud in the road and deep gouges made by vehicles. There are times when there is a closed gate across the road at the Mahers Road end. There is no identifiable entrance off Wilbrahams Road as there is no signage and McDiarmids road does not continue straight on into Balmattum North Road. This contradicts Google Maps which says the road is usable by vehicles and bicycles.

How does it affect or impact the community?

As well as preventing driving, it limits safe tourism cycling and recreational cycling between the two towns as cyclists either have to go out west via the Murchison Road highway where there is almost no shoulder to ride on and lots of truck traffic, or travel east via the longer and more hilly Balmattum Road route where one has to deal with trucks from the Quarry and cross the freeway twice.

This also limits any form of exercise or riding for economic purposes. It also limits use of the road for cycling events or even the potential for increased Highway M31 tourism see <https://www.expressway.online/gallery/roads/vic/numbered/alphanumeric/m31/index.html> or <https://www.racv.com.au/royalauto/travel/victoria/old-hume-highway-travel.html>)

What is your idea and what difference would it make?

The request is for the Shire to undertake a feasibility study and design concept for making the section of McDiarmids Road – from Mahers Road to Wilbraham Rd - rideable by bicycles and later useable by vehicles. It is mostly a flat route with a few minor hills, easily rideable by the majority. At present, cyclists have to pop out on to the Hume Freeway to complete the ride and most are not prepared to do so unless compelled to finish a loop.

If later funding allows the works to be done, this would allow greater connectivity between Euroa and Violet Town and pave the way for incorporating McDiarmids Road into Euroa's cycling event programs (see <https://ridetherangeseuroa.org.au>).

It would allow both towns to be able to include that road in cycling tracks around the district (see <https://www.violettown.org.au/directory/cycling-around-violet-town>) thus increasing both tourism and economic benefits for both towns. It would allow the possibility of senior school children riding their bikes to school and adults riding to work which would enhance fitness of our population.

It creates the opportunity for our communities to think of other opportunities for its use, eg. a community bicycle activity.

Further information:

This idea addresses two sections of the Shire Strategy:

2. Live. Access. Connect.

In the future...our people are places are connected. This means:

- We are moving through our townships on connected walking and cycling tracks
- We are focussed on activities that build economic, financial and social security.

5. Strong. Healthy. Safe

In the future... our communities are filled with happy, healthy people. This means:

- We are encouraging health and wellbeing activities in sport and recreation.

The Planning group at Shire has indicated that an allocation of \$30,000 would cover the study.