



EYRE PENINSULA REGIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY

SUMMARY REPORT
AUGUST 2021



Summary Report

The Eyre Peninsula region encompasses the lands of numerous Traditional Owner group including the Nauo, Barngarla, Wirangu, Mirning, and Kokatha People.

Regional Development Australia Eyre Peninsula and Tredwell Management acknowledge and respect the region's traditional custodians and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual attachment and the relationship that Aboriginal people have to country.

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- Project Working Group
- Project Reference Group
- Community Workshop Attendees
- Community Survey Respondents

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For further information:

Tredwell Management Services

TREDWELL

T: (08) 82346387

E: admin@tredwell.com.au

W: www.tredwell.com.au

Summary Report

Project Overview

The exceptional, vast and unspoilt landscapes across the Eyre Peninsula are vital components of the region's natural environment and play important roles in nature-based tourism, as well as conservation, health and wellbeing, and the regional economy. From the remarkable clifftops and plains, to stunning beaches and wildlife habitats and the rugged outback, the Eyre Peninsula has a remarkable opportunity to embrace the benefits associated with a strategic and coordinated approach to trail development.

This Regional Trails Strategy has been developed by Tredwell for Regional Development Australia Eyre Peninsula (RDAEP) and the region's local governments. It provides an overarching framework for consistent and coordinated planning, development, management and marketing of quality trail experiences across the Eyre Peninsula.

The Strategy relates to recreational trails associated with walking, off-road cycling, horse riding, paddling and snorkelling/scuba diving across the following local government areas: District Council of Cleve; District Council of Elliston; Kimba District Council; City of Port Lincoln; District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula; District Council of Streaky Bay; Wudinna District Council; District Council of Ceduna; District Council of Tumby Bay; District Council of Franklin Harbour; Whyalla City Council.

It provides a strategic framework for the region's trail network, with a focus on actionable items for Council-managed trails which have high potential to become trails of regional, state or national significance.

The Strategy is an initiative of the Eyes on Eyre Project, which is a mechanism to support a consistent and collaborative approach to tourism throughout the Eyre Peninsula.



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Trends

The Strategy recognises the rapidly evolving recreation and tourism sectors, and the trends and benefits that will impact trail development, management and usage into the future. Key trends relate to:



Popularity of nature-based tourism



Increasing participation in individualised activities



Increasingly high standards & expectations



Ageing people are increasingly active



Need for long-term strategic planning



Recognising benefits of trails



Inactivity and Obesity



Loss of biodiversity & heritage

Trends emerging since the beginning of the COVID19 pandemic (March 2020), are also identified.

Strategic Context

The Strategy builds upon the range of strategic planning that has been undertaken for South Australia, the Eyre Peninsula and each of the eleven local government areas across the region.

Key strategic documents include:

- National-level documents:
 - *The Australian Physical Literacy Framework* (Sport Australia, 2019)
 - *Blueprint for an Active Australia* (Heart Foundation, 2019).
- State-level documents:
 - *South Australian Regional Visitor Strategy* (2021)
 - *Nature Like Nowhere Else - Activating nature-based Tourism in South Australia* (DEW, 2016)
 - *South Australian Recreational Trails 10-Year Master Plan 2015 - 2025*
 - *Regional Development South Australia's Regional Infrastructure Projects Prioritisation Report* (2018).
- Regional-level documents:
 - *Aboriginal Tourism Strategy for the Far West of South Australia* (2017)
 - *Strategic Plan for the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Region - 2017-2027*
 - *Eyes On Eyre Coastal and Inland Node Visitor Infrastructure Final Concept Design* (2019)
 - *Caretakers of this land: A strategy for Aboriginal Partnerships in the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Region* (2020)
 - *Eyre and Western Region Plan A Volume of the South Australian Planning Strategy* (2012)
 - *Port Lincoln & Southern Eyre Peninsula Tourism Strategy 2018/2028* (2018).

Planning and Management

Trail planning and management fundamentals provide guidance to trail managers across the region for best-practice trail development, management and maintenance.

8 Stage Trail Planning Process

The Trail Development Process encompasses a constant evaluation, review and improvement process as trails are being developed, maintained, extended or renewed, with the following 8 stages: 1: Proposal; 2: Framework; 3: Site Assessment; 4: Concept Planning; 5: Corridor Evaluation; 6: Detailed Design; 7: Construction; 8: Management.

Key Trail Planning Guidelines

The following publications outline best-practice in the development and management of recreational trails:

- *Guidelines for the Planning, Design, Construction and Maintenance of Recreational Trails in South Australia* (2016)
- *Australian Mountain Bike Trail Guidelines* (2019)
- *Horse Trail Infrastructure Guidelines For Periurban Precincts in Australia* (2019)
- *Guide to Road Design Part 6A Paths for Walking and Cycling Austroads* (2021)
- *Trail Development Series* (Western Australian Government, 2021)

Trail Hierarchy

The trails hierarchy provides a guide for the level of infrastructure required for trails to meet the needs of their intended users to ensure that an appropriate standard of facilities is provided. Trails are classified as National, State, Regional or Local.

Trail Naming Conventions

Trail names are to be determined by the land manager with respect to the following considerations: Consistency; Relevancy; and Representation.

Governance and Management

The roles and responsibilities to be considered for the management of a sustainable recreational trail can be categorised into the following: Planning and Coordination; Advocacy, Funding and Partnerships; Trail Development; Trail Management and Maintenance; and Information Provision and Activation.

Trail Classification Systems

The following classification systems apply to trails:

- Walking Trails: *Australian Standard (AS) 2156.1, Walking tracks, Part 1: Classification and signage*
- Mountain Bike Trails: The Australian Mountain Bike Trail Grading System
- Horse Riding Trails: The Horse Trail Difficulty Rating System
- Paddling Trails: International River Grading System (there is no universally accepted grading system for paddling in the sea, estuaries or open water).

Risk Management

AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management Guidelines is an International Standard which provides principles and generic guidelines on risk management. This International Standard should be used as the basis for risk assessments relating to recreational trails.

Signage Consideration

It is important that signage styles for trails align with signage strategies which may be relevant to the location, for example a local government area or the RDA Eyre Peninsula region more broadly. Key elements for consideration when developing signage for recreational trails include:

- Adherence to Recognised Standards
- Consistency and Uniformity
- Quality Information
- Location
- Visually Attractive and Simple
- Materials.

There are a range of different types of recreational trail signage. These can be classified into the following:

1. Trailhead
2. Waymarking
3. Directional
4. Interpretive
5. Management/Warning.

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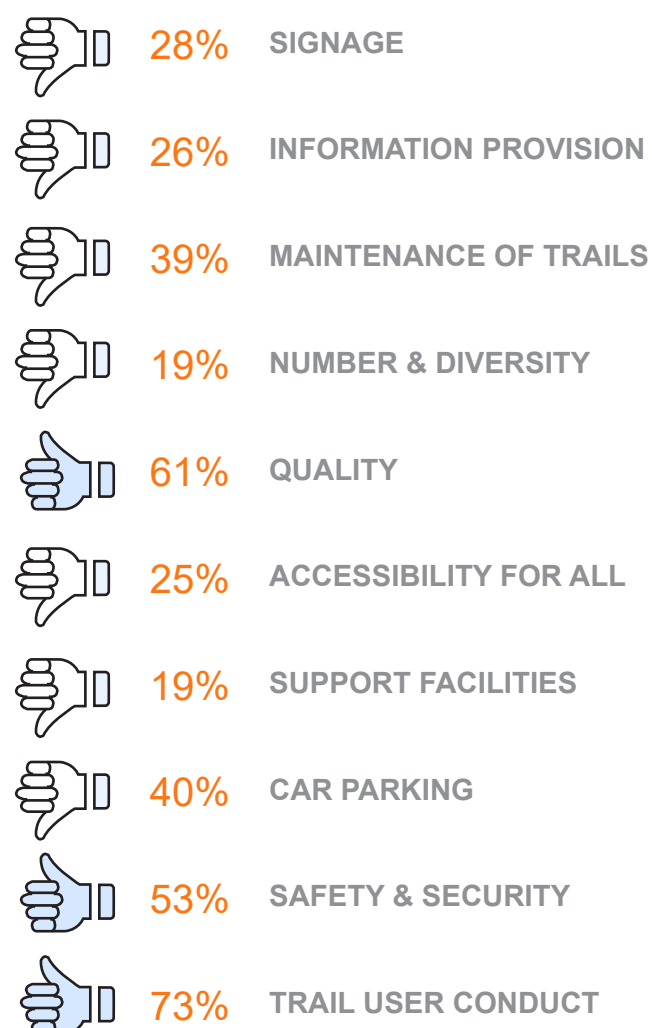
Consultation

The development of the Eyre Peninsula Regional Trails Strategy has been informed by community consultation and stakeholder engagement. This involved a Project Working Group meeting with Eyes on Eyre members, a meeting with the Reference Group (Representatives from the local government areas), an online community workshop and an online community survey. This process supported identification of existing regional-level trails, issues, opportunities for enhancement and perceptions about trails in the region.

The Project Working Group and Project Reference Group also undertook reviews of the Draft Strategy.

The community online survey provided valuable insights into the community's perceptions of trails. For example, as reflected in community member ratings of components of the existing network summarised below.

Rating of Trail Components 'Excellent', 'Very Good' or 'Good'



Existing Trails

A trails inventory was developed (desktop) to identify the existing trail experiences provided across the Eyre Peninsula, which are within care and control of Council. This list formed the basis of community and key stakeholder consultation, which supported refinement of the list to identify the 'priority trails'. This process identified 19 Council-managed 'priority trails' across the region which have high potential as regional-level trail experiences. These 'priority trails' were subject to an on-ground auditing process which was undertaken over a two week period in November 2020. This process enabled site appreciation and collection of ground-truthed, geo-referenced data. The 19 priority trails, identified to have potential as regional-level trail experiences are shown on the following map.

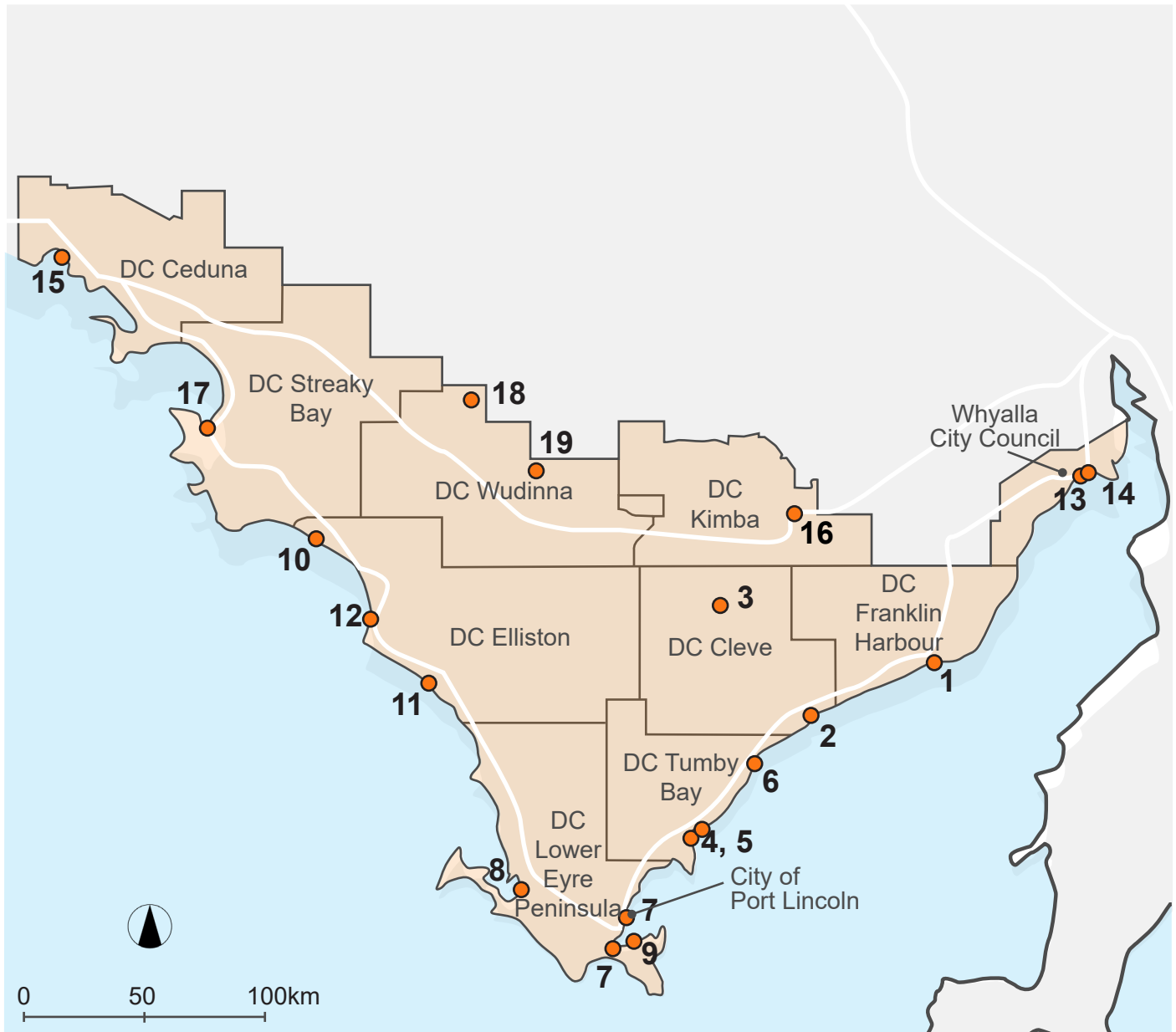
Trail assessments involved two weeks of on-ground trail audits of the priority trails, which has identified actions required to meet relevant Australian Standards, and to provide higher quality and safer trail experiences. Key issues identified through the on-ground trail audit related to:

- Lack of horse riding, off-road cycling, diving/snorkelling and paddling trails.
- Limited trail information
- Insufficient safety infrastructure
- Unclear trail alignments
- Trail support infrastructure requiring upgrade
- Limited connectivity to key facilities, local townships and other nearby trails.
- Inconsistent use of trail names
- No coordinated approach to promotion and marketing
- Very limited interpretation content relating to Indigenous context.

While the scope of the Eyre Peninsula Regional Trails Strategy is focused on trails of regional, state or national-level on the trails hierarchy, local trails across the region were also identified in the Trails Inventory process.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has a significant estate of National Parks and Conservation Reserves across the Eyre Peninsula, which make a significant contribution to the regional trails network and visitor experiences on offer.

Priority Trails



- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Cowell Mangrove Boardwalk | 11. Locks Well Walk |
| 2. Arno Bay Mangrove Trails | 12. Elliston Coastal Trail |
| 3. Carapsee Hill Hiking Trail | 13. Whyalla Wetlands |
| 4. Leafy to Sleepy Mosaic Trail | 14. Hummock Hill Lookout Walk |
| 5. Tumby Bay Mangrove Trail and Coastal Walk | 15. Encounter Coastal Trail |
| 6. Lady Kinnaird Walking Trail | 16. Roora Walking Trail |
| 7. Investigator Trail | 17. Streaky Bay Coastal Trails |
| 8. Oyster Walk | 18. Pildappa Rock Walking Trails |
| 9. Parnkalla Trail | 19. Mount Wudinna Walking Trails |
| 10. South Head Walking Trail | |

Vision and Principles

The Strategy and Action Plan outlines the key opportunities for the region toward the achievement of the following vision:



Diverse, high quality, sustainable tracks and trails of regional, state and national significance to facilitate economic, social, health and environmental benefit.

The vision is illustrated on the map on the following page.

The Eyre Peninsula Regional Trails Strategy aims to achieve the following strategic outcomes:

Strategic Outcome A: Integrated Planning & Management

Underpinning a sustainable, integrated, and accessible trails network is a strategic framework and coordinated approach with prioritised investment and appropriate allocation of resources.

Strategic Outcome B: Quality, Safe, and Sustainable Trails

Existing trails of regional, state and national significance are enhanced to provide quality, safe, and sustainable opportunities for residents and visitors to confidently explore the Eyre Peninsula's natural environment.

Strategic Outcome C: Participation, Information and Marketing

Consistent and reliable trail information highlights the best experiences offered across the Eyre Peninsula and enables users to confidently explore the region.

Strategic Outcome D: Community, Tourism & Economic Development

Trails contribute to the region's community, tourism and economic development.

The following principles have been developed to guide the planning and management of trails across the Eyre Peninsula. These principles underpin strategic outcomes, strategies and actions which are detailed in the Action Plan.

Access: Consideration is given to ease of access for all members of the community, including local residents and visitors.

Sustainability: Trail planning and development takes into account short and long term community, health, social, economic and environmental considerations.

Community Benefit: Trails offer economic, health, wellbeing and community connection outcomes for residents.

Quality Trails: Good planning, maintenance and support networks result in a diverse network of fit-for purpose, sustainable and high quality trails.

Consumer Focus: Trails are planned and developed to match current community and market needs and respond to future change.

Evidence Base: Effective monitoring and evaluation are undertaken to contribute to planning.

Visitor Economy Contribution: Opportunities are realised for trails to support growth in tourism resulting in increased visitors, spend, new business enterprises and job creation.

Aboriginal Participation: Opportunities are realised that contribute to awareness of Aboriginal culture and values through trail initiatives.

Consistency: Lead agencies and relevant stakeholders enact consistent change.

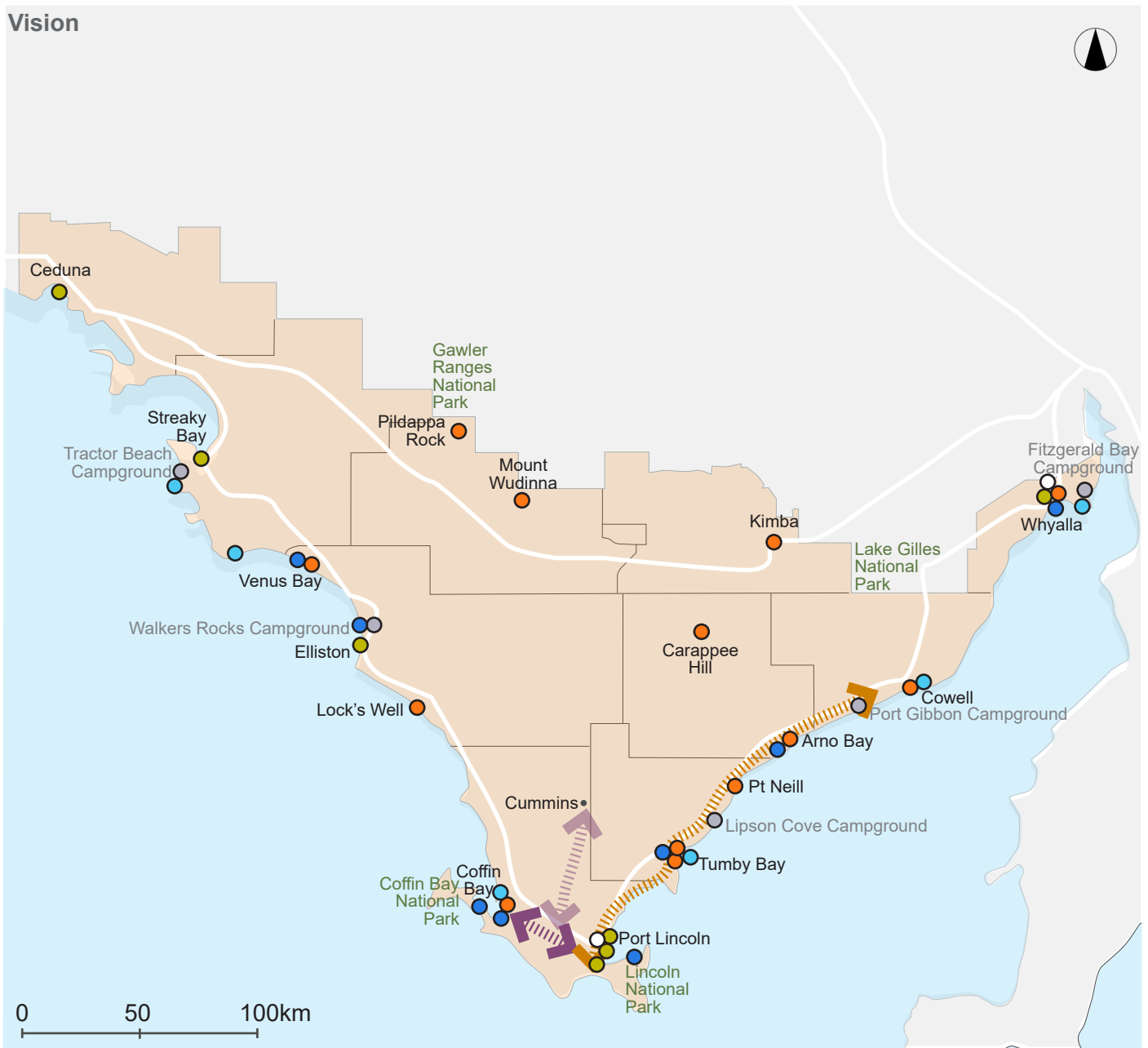
Innovation: Global advances in trail development and emerging relevant technologies (such as media, measurement, research) are reflected in trail improvements.

Engagement: The community and user groups have the opportunity to become ambassadors for the trail sector through consultation, feedback and active participation in trail use and events.

Environment and Culture: Trails help protect, interpret and conserve environmental, cultural and heritage values.

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Vision



Legend

Enhanced Regional Trails (Existing)

- Walking Trail
- Walking/Cycling Trail

New Regional Trails

- Trail from Eyes on Eyre Campground
- Formalised Paddle Trail
- Formalised Dive Trail
- Mountain Bike Precinct
- ➡ Port Lincoln to Coffin Bay Rail Trail (Walk/Cycle/Horse)
- ➡ Cummins Rail Trail Link (Walk/Cycle/Horse)
- ➡ Iconic Eyre Peninsula Coastal Trail

Priority Actions

As detailed in the Action Plan, the key priorities for the RDAEP and the local governments across the Eyre Peninsula are:

- Implementation of an integrated framework for the collaborative development and ongoing management of the region's trail network
- Upgrade of the 19 existing priority trails, particularly with a consideration of signage, safety and risk management
- Development of new regional trails which provide immersive experiences and showcase the Eyre Peninsula's varied and distinct landscapes.

The key opportunities identified for new trail experiences are:

- Establishing a multi-use rail trail between Port Lincoln (Proper Bay) and Coffin Bay.
- Linking the coastal trails along the peninsula's eastern coastline to establish an Iconic Eyre Peninsula Coastal Trail between Port Lincoln and as far north as Cowell.
- Development of trail experiences from the Eyes on Eyre Coastal and Inland Nodes.
- Formalising paddle and dive/snorkel trails.
- Formalisation of the mountain bike trail network at Mount Laura (Whyalla) and establishment of a mountain bike precinct in Port Lincoln.