

A person wearing a helmet and cycling gear is riding a mountain bike on a dirt trail. The trail is set in a scenic area with tall grass, trees, and a view of a lake and a city in the distance. The image has a purple overlay with a leaf pattern.

URBAN MOUNTAIN BIKING

IN PERTH'S NORTH

At the northern end of Yellagonga Regional Park, overlooking Lake Joondalup, a new family-friendly urban mountain bike trail network weaves through the trees. It's the jewel in the crown of this newly developed, family-friendly area.

by **Conor Doherty and
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Yellagonga Regional Park covers 1400 hectares of lakes, wetlands and green space stretching through parts of Joondalup, Wanneroo and Kingsley in Perth’s northern suburbs (see ‘Parks for People’, *LANDSCOPE* Summer 2020–21).

In late 2024, a family-friendly urban mountain bike trail network opened in the northern end of the park on the western banks of Lake Joondalup, complemented by a new shaded picnic area and yarning circle, bike racks, water fountains, interpretive signage, toilets and a carpark with capacity for 100 vehicles.

The new gathering area is perfect for post-ride recovery or a picnic taking in the spectacular views of Lake Joondalup.

The seven-kilometre-long Yalbunullup mountain bike trails and accompanying infrastructure are part of an exciting, four-year project to preserve and improve visitor facilities and accessibility at several sites across Yellagonga Regional Park.

CULTURAL HISTORY

Yellagonga Regional Park was named in honour of Yellagonga—the regional Noongar leader during European settlement. Local Aboriginal people once used the area for shelter and food during seasonal camp movements and Pinjar Doondalup (Lake Joondalup) is considered a physical representation of the Noongar ancestral dreaming spirit known as the Charnock Woman.

The Country surrounding Yellagonga Regional Park is Mooro Country. The Mooro people moved across the land with the six Noongar seasons. Wetland areas



such as Yalbunullup were a place to camp during bunuru and kambarang seasons; when flourishing life in the wetlands provided plentiful food.

The name of the new urban mountain bike park, Yalbunullup, pronounced Yal-bun-a-lup, was chosen in consultation with Traditional Owners as it reflects the traditional name for the area, loosely translating to ‘place where black swan is hunted from large lake’.

Recognising the importance of the land, a smoking ceremony was conducted in early 2024 by Whadjuk Noongar Elder Greg Ugle before construction work commenced on site.

Mr Ugle explained the purpose of the smoking ceremony was to clear the land of bad spirits.

“The [meaning of the] smoking ceremony to me, and what I’ve learned over the years, is that when we stand in the smoke at a smoking ceremony like this for land cleansing and for land works, the person who comes here, if they’ve got bad spirits, it goes away with the smoke, and that’s our intention,” Mr Ugle said.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Yalbunullup mountain bike trails provide an important outdoor recreation opportunity for residents of the northern suburbs and several years of planning and community consultation went into their design.

Before any planning commenced on the trails themselves, a comprehensive site assessment carefully considered the natural and cultural values of the area.

Phytophthora (dieback) disease mapping was conducted, important ecological communities including banksia woodland were considered, and archaeological surveys were undertaken.


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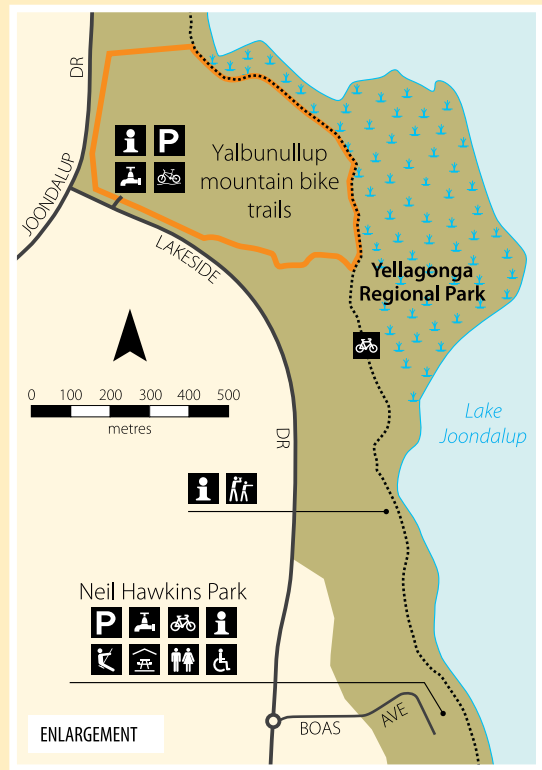
Main Yalbunullup mountain bike trails.
Inset Technical features on the Yalbunullup trails.

Top Interpretive signage guides the riders around the trails.

Above right The contours of Yalbunullup.

Above far right Improved visitor facilities.
Photos – Miles Brotherson/DBCA

- Legend**
-  Yalbunullup mountain bike trails
 -  Regional park
 -  Freeway
 -  Railway
 -  Road
 -  Lake Joondalup Circuit
 -  Wetland
 -  Information centre
 -  Parking
 -  Dual use path
 -  Mountain biking
 -  Sheltered picnic area
 -  Playground
 -  Scenic lookout
 -  Toilets
 -  Water - drinking
 -  Wheelchair access



“The family-friendly trail network is perfect for beginner and intermediate riders, offering a combination of technical and flow trails.”



Discover more about Yalbunullup mountain bike trails

Scan this QR code or visit Parks and Wildlife Service's 'LANDSCOPE' playlist on YouTube.



Left The trails are perfect for beginners. Photo – Miles Brotherson/DBCA

In more recent history, the area served a variety of purposes with landscape modification occurring to allow for agricultural and recreational use. In areas of remaining native vegetation, prominent tree species include tuart (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*) (see ‘Treasuring our tuarts’, *LANDSCOPE* Autumn 2020), jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) and slender banksia (*Banksia attenuata*).

It was extremely important that the trails were designed to cause minimal disturbance to established native vegetation, preserve significant trees, and not disturb any areas or sites of cultural significance.

Guided by an eight-stage trail development process, the trails were carefully planned and designed to minimise impact and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the surrounding landscape.

RIDING THE TRAILS

The family-friendly trail network is perfect for beginner and intermediate riders, offering a combination of technical and flow trails.

Located in the sandy soils of the Swan Coastal Plain, the trails were surfaced with naturally occurring limestone to provide a durable riding surface.

The trails on the southern side of the network are more technical in nature and provide a good introduction to cornering, rock gardens and log overs. Climbs and descents weave through the tuarts towards the lake.

The trails on the northern side of the network are longer ‘flow’ trails designed to provide a smooth, enjoyable ride. These trails feature wide open berms, rollers and tabletop jumps and are a guaranteed fun ride!

The trail names were chosen to reflect some of the important values of the site including the abundant bird life the lake supports, the geology of the area, and some other local fauna.

Yellagonga Regional Park improvement project



The Yalbunullup mountain bike trail project is the first major outcome of the wider Yellagonga Regional Park improvement project, with more projects underway and planned in other areas.

Wanneroo

A new viewing platform is planned for the eastern bank of Lake Joondalup, promising extensive lake views. It will be wheelchair accessible and connect to the existing pathways.

New signage will help visitors identify some of the area's important plants and wildlife.

Kingsley

The heritage-listed former Luisini Winery site on the eastern shore of Lake Goollelal is being redeveloped into a multi-purpose dining and recreation precinct through a partnership with the National Trust of Western Australia and Be Our Guest Holdings Pty Ltd.

A nature play area and boardwalk will complement the new eatery, and interpretive signage around Lake Goollelal will highlight the significance of the wetland.

Woodvale

A new carpark off Ocean Reef Road will make Perry's Paddock in the northern part of Woodvale easier and safer for locals and visitors to access.

New interpretive signage at Perry's Paddock will explain the historical significance of the area, which was originally used for horse racing and community events in the 1920s.

Revegetation

Three new revegetation sites, one on the western side of Lake Goollelal and two on the western side of Lake Joondalup, have been established to improve water quality and provide habitat for native birds and wildlife.

DBCA staff are working closely with local community groups including the Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park and Friends of Beenypup Channel on revegetation projects.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Yalbunullup mountain bike trails are an example of the State Government working in partnership with a local community group, key community members, and trail designers and builders.

Member for Joondalup Emily Hamilton MLA was a strong advocate for the project, as was City of Joondalup Mayor Albert Jacob.

Northern Beaches Cycling Club (NBCC) had been advocating for the project since 2015 and members were excited to see it come to fruition.

NBCC Director of Mountain Biking Mark Papadopoff said the group was heavily involved with the design of the trails, with assistance from a 2018 City of Joondalup Sports Development Grant.

"This is the first cross-country-specific trail system built in the metro area," Mr Papadopoff said. "We think it will be extremely popular and a benchmark for future mountain bike trails in urban areas.

"We can see everyone from young families and school groups up to your elite riders using this trail to stay fit and gain new skills and a passion for off road cycling.

"NBCC will be advocating for cross country mountain bike events to be held on these race-ready trails, which we hope will attract riders from all over the State."

Mr Papadopoff acknowledged Three Chillies Design, Common Ground Trails and departmental staff for their commitment to the project.

WETLAND WONDERLAND

Lake Joondalup is part of an expansive north-south link of lakes, rivers and wetland systems on the Swan Coastal Plain.

Wetlands are enormously important as they reduce flooding risk and soil erosion, provide rich and diverse ecosystems for aquatic and land-based plants and animals, and are nature's filter system.

Migratory birds visit the wetlands seasonally, and wedge-tailed eagles (*Aquila audax*) and whistling kites (*Haliastur sphenurus*) can often be seen at Yellagonga soaring high in the sky looking for a meal.

The endangered Carnaby's black cockatoo (*Zanda latirostris*), oblong or southwestern snake-necked turtle (*Chelodina oblonga*), western tiger snake (*Notechis scutatus*) and quenda (*Isodon fusciventer*) are also sometimes spotted around Lake Joondalup.

Above The wetlands surrounding the trails are ecologically important.

Below The trails can be enjoyed by visitors of all abilities.

Photos – Miles Brotherson/DBCA

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