

## Rail Trails & Country Lanes 2019

### Spring is in the air

**Sunday 08 September, 2019 to Saturday 14 September, 2019**

**A typical day on the ride:** You wake up to the morning bird calls and are feeling good after yesterday's invigorating ride. Step out onto the balcony to greet the day before heading to meet the rest of the group for a wholesome bike rider's breakfast.

You push off along the rail trail and come across a small town or a clearing in the trees for some morning tea. After a chat and refilling your water bottles you head out again for a good ride, stopping in eventually at one of the small villages dotted along the trail for a cafe lunch with some great choices of local produce, and enough sustenance and energy to take you through into the afternoon. The last leg of the day takes you through more lovely scenery and spectacular cycling while the AllTrails support vehicle is not far away with water refills, bananas, home-baked goodies and advice on the best places to go and the best places to stop.

You will arrive at your overnight accommodation with plenty of time to explore another interesting town, enjoy the afternoon with a cuppa & biscuit, a wine in the garden or a craft beer at the local brewery. Later on we share a few stories at the evening briefing followed by a delicious dinner, then it's off to bed for a well-deserved slumber so that we can do it all again tomorrow.

Location	Distance	Date	B	L	D	A
Shelley to Tallangatta	43km	Sun 8 Sep 2019	--	Y	Y	Y
Tallangatta to Albury	48km	Mon 9 Sep 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Albury to Rutherglen	55km	Tue 10 Sep 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Rutherglen to Milawa	56km	Wed 11 Sep 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Milawa to Beechworth	42km	Thu 12 Sep 2019	Y	--	--	Y
Beechworth to Bright	76 or 59km	Fri 13 Sep 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Bright (bus to Melbourne)	NA	Sat 14 Sep 2019	Y	--	--	--
Total distance cycled	320km		6	1	5	6
Average daily distance	53km					

Meal and accom inclusions noted as B, L, D, A (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Accommodation)

### **Shelley to Tallangatta — 43km — Sun 8 Sep 2019 — - L D A**

Our ride begins at the site of what was once the highest Railway Station in Victoria – Shelley Station. We will arrive at lunchtime after a bus transfer from Southern Cross Station Melbourne (depart 6:30am), including a stop and optional pick-up point at Wangaratta (9:45am). After lunch, orientation, safety briefing and bike set-up, we are on our way! As you can imagine, when starting high, the only way is down. That being the case, you'll find that today's 43km ride will fly past, despite the late departure. Freewheel downhill for 20km through Pine Plantations, State Forest and over recently restored trestle bridges as you carve your way down through Koetong to Darbyshire. You'll see three more spectacular double-storied trestle bridges as you enjoy the last section of downhill through some of the best grazing country in North East Victoria.

It's here that we hit the foreshore of Lake Hume - our companion for the rest of today and again tomorrow. The lookout at Old Tallangatta takes you on a trip back in time, to a town relocated in the 1950s when Lake Hume was flooded. A beautiful off-road shelter at the lookout provides the perfect place to stop and enjoy a drink and a snack and interpretive signage provides further insights into the story of the town that moved. Enjoy a fast 8km finish on a beautiful asphalt path to our overnight accom in Tallangatta - a simple, friendly and welcoming motel with true country hospitality. Tonight, we meet for our evening brief, recap the day's activities and a run-down on tomorrow, followed by dinner and bed.

### **Tallangatta to Albury — 48km — Mon 9 Sep 2019 — B - D A**

After yesterday's big downhills, today's 48km may seem longer but we have all day to make our way to Albury so there's no rush. The High Country Rail Trail skirts the foreshore of Lake Hume for 30 picturesque kilometres so take it all in as you wind your way in and out of little inlets, past remote, rural properties and plenty of viewing areas and rest stops. Make sure you take a break at the 600-metre long Sandy Creek Bridge or the nearby picnic tables and viewing platform. The small village of Ebdon is our cue to leave the lakeside and head inland towards Wodonga and finally finding our way via bike paths through to Albury.

What a beautiful day's ride. Tonight, we have something very different for our overnight accommodation – an urban, industrial and art-inspired modern hotel with dynamic open-plan spaces. It is a funky escape from the predictable and something quite contrasting to the country vibe of the last couple of days.

### **Albury to Rutherglen — 55km — Tue 10 Sep 2019 — B - D A**

It's back on the bike paths this morning heading south through Wodonga, on to country lanes west to Rutherglen where we have picked out a lovely route through the farmlands and wide-open spaces of this region. You might see a few vineyards and wineries as we get closer to Rutherglen – a town that prides itself on its gourmet food and wine reputation.

Tonight, we have another treat as we stay at the best location in Rutherglen known for its fine wining and dining. Visit the onsite cellar door, check out the art gallery, enjoy a spa in your room or a swim in the pool – it's all right here. Rutherglen is a pretty little town and as hard as it will be to leave our enclave, try to make some time to explore before a special group dinner back at the vineyard restaurant tonight.

### **Rutherglen to Milawa — 56km — Wed 11 Sep 2019 — B - D A**

We are back on the country lanes this morning for the first part of the ride, heading towards Wangaratta and the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail. Today's trail section is an un-sealed off-shoot to Milawa which has a small scattering of homes and businesses that come together to make a up a strong and vibrant community.

This community includes a luxury accommodation property and a world-class winery for you to explore if you wish. There is plenty to enjoy again as we are spoilt with class and quality out here in the country.

### **Milawa to Beechworth — 42km — Thu 12 Sep 2019 — B - - A**

This morning we begin with beautiful country lanes through the fertile land around and over the Ovens River before we meet the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail, considered to be one of the best in the country. Its smooth bitumen surface is a dream to cycle on as it winds its way through stunning scenic vistas and picturesque towns. Following the flow of the beautiful Ovens River, we soon arrive at Everton for morning tea where you may be tempted by the “Home of the World-Famous Everton Milkshake” at the general store. The humourous bus shelter will also have you reaching for your camera.

After refuelling and recharging it's time to head back to the trail for the steady climb to Beechworth (of course this is optional – feel free to jump in the bus if you like!). The reward for effort is certainly worth it as Beechworth is a pretty town with an interesting history, a legendary bakery, a great brewery and a lovely motel where AllTrails cyclists have been staying for over a decade. Said to be Australia's best-preserved gold mining town, sunset in the town centre illuminates the timeless architecture like the set of a Hollywood Western. Tonight is a ‘get-your-own’ dinner night allowing you to fly solo or head out with fellow AllTrails cyclists to explore the main street and variety of eateries from fish and chips to pub meals to fine dining.

### **Beechworth to Bright — 76 or 59km — Fri 13 Sep 2019 — B - D A**

You're a winner today! Time to reap what you sow with a sweet 17km downhill return to Everton. While today's distance is a little more than previous, your bonus 17km downhill means you'll hardly need to pedal as you glide down the trail on this smooth, straight descent with hardly any sharp turns or corners. Back near the Great Alpine Road and Ovens River, we follow the valley all the way to Bright – possibly the most beautiful section of the trail. You'll pass by Gapstead Winery on the way to Myrtleford which has plenty of nice cafes, bakeries and restaurants and we will give cyclists recommendations for places to stop or picnic lunch. Feathertop Winery is a popular stop for cyclists on the trail – a cycle friendly business with bike racks, free water refills and bike pumps available. It may be too early for a wine (or not) but try the coffee and afternoon tea which is best enjoyed in the magical setting out on the lawn overlooking the vineyards.

You will notice the iconic silhouettes of the region's tobacco kilns along this section of the trail which are an interesting piece of High Country history and provide great photo opportunities. Passing by the retired saw mill town of Porepunkah, it's easy riding with Mt Buffalo National Park on the right and the trail meandering alongside the river past vineyards, hop producers and orchards. In Bright we have a great motel in a great location - close to the rail trail and town centre. Bright is a cyclist mecca for mountain, road and trail riding – it won't be long before you notice and feel the cyclist-friendly vibe in the people and businesses all over town. Tonight, we have our final briefing and celebratory dinner to share the great memories of the ride.

### **Bright (bus to Melbourne) — NA — Sat 14 Sep 2019 — B - - -**

This morning we have a relaxed breakfast and perhaps a coffee in town before our 8:15am departure from Bright travelling back to Melbourne via Wangaratta and Tullamarine Airport (see ‘Getting There’ tab for times).

Or stay around for another night or two if you wish – it's still only Saturday morning!

