

Media Release

25 October 2016 | Media contact: Amy Dynes 0400 906 507

Cup weekend looking good for our tracks and recreation sites

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Parks Victoria Authorised Officers will be on patrol making sure everyone is safe as most tracks and roads across Gippsland re-open in time for the Melbourne Cup weekend.

DELWP Regional Manager Forest and Fire Operations Richard Teychenne said: "It's good to see increasing numbers of visitors in Gippsland experiencing our beautiful natural environment."

"With Melbourne Cup long weekend traditionally being the start of the recreation season, we will be out and about making sure everyone has an enjoyable weekend."

"We have re-opened many roads and tracks that are closed during the wetter months to protect track surfaces, water quality and the forest environment."

"Patrolling officers will be focussed particularly on educating trail bike riders about riding safely and being aware of others in the forest."

"We'll also be making sure people are lighting, maintaining, and putting out their campfires safely to minimise the risk of a bushfire starting as we get closer to the summer fire danger period."

"It's important to note that whilst most tracks will open, some in Gippsland's high country remain closed for safety reasons - including Mount Hope Road north east of Benambra; Mount Steve Track; Haunted Stream Track between Moomba Spur and Dawson City; and Scorpion Creek Track between Kirby Cross and Raccoon Track (north west of Buchan)."

Parks Victoria's Acting Regional Director Roger Fenwick said: "We have had a very wet year, so while we have made every effort to make sure tracks are re-opened for this weekend, some will remain closed, and drivers should be prepared to come across fallen trees and debris in some places."

"Where we have had to extend closures for safety and environmental reasons, we will progressively open these as they dry out and conditions become suitable."

"Four wheel drivers should also beware if they are heading to north east Victoria recent flooding and sustained wet weather has meant that some seasonal road closures will be extended until they are safe."

For more information about road closures and changes of conditions go to <http://www.parks.vic.gov.au> or check the Public Access Map at <http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/forestry-and-land-use/visiting-parks-and-forests/visiting-state-forests/public-access-map> for any prolonged closures.

To find out how to light and maintain your campfire safely go to <http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies/public-land-fire-restrictions/campfires-and-barbeques>

We can't be everywhere at once – you can help be our eyes and ears by letting us know if you see anyone behaving suspiciously - call Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000, or the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186.