



\$27 Million for Kosciuszko

April 17, 2018



By Steve Cuff

Kosciuszko National Park will see a huge \$27 million investment over the next five years after an announcement today from Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional NSW and Member for Monaro John Barilaro.

In what is sensational news for the Snowy Mountains region, \$10 million will be allocated to completing the Thredbo Valley Track (TVT) in 2019 from Lake Crackenback Resort to Jindabyne, and the final touches of an uphill extension of the track from Thredbo to Dead Horse Gap in 2020.

The main investment of \$17 million will be directed to a brand-new Kosciuszko Snowies Iconic Walk from Charlotte Pass, via



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Guthega and Perisher and finishing at Lake Crackenback Resort. This new 25 kilometre section of track will traverse across the Main Range with works starting at Mt Lee in 2019 and take four years to finish. As each section is finished it will be open to hikers.

Mr Barilaro said the project will completely transform summer tourism in the region and the new Iconic Walk will be a signature walk of NSW and the development of these hiking and biking trails will ensure the region is vibrant and busy all year-round.

“The economic benefits, let alone the social, environmental and health benefits of a project like this, can’t be overstated,” said Mr Barilaro.

“The work on the trails is expected to create a combined 139 full-time jobs in the region over the course of their construction. Once delivered, the upgraded National Park is expected to support an additional 190 full-time positions.”



Deputy Premier John Barilaro and Tourism Snowy Mountains' Wayne Kirkpatrick at the announcement. All photos Steve Cuff

The new Iconic Walk will be a combination of rock paved paths and elevated platforms and will ideally complement the existing Main Range Track and the highly popular walk from Thredbo to Mt Kosciuszko.

When completed it will create a multi-day walk from Thredbo via Australia's highest mountain, Mt Kosciuszko, to Charlotte Pass, Guthega, Perisher and Lake Crackenback Resort, a world-class 44 kilometre multi-day walk.

At a launch at Bullocks Hut on the Thredbo River near Lake Crackenback Resort, a strong gathering of local identities and

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interested parties welcomed the exciting news.

Tourism Snowy Mountains' Wayne Kirkpatrick introduced the speakers, Mr Barilaro, Mick Pettitt, Director of the Southern Ranges Branch of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and Snowy Monaro Regional Council General Manager Joe Vescio.

"The actual works on the Main Range, the "Iconic Walk" will kick off again next year, basically our construction period is fairly short because of snow and moisture so we kick off when snow conditions allow and that will be at Mt Lee," said Mr Pettitt.

"Walking has always been an important component within the National Parks reserve system, so it is trying to look at value adding to walkers. Mountain bike riding has certainly increased in the last few years, so it is a combination of different ideas, different demands and different sort of requests from community about access to parks and use for parks."

At present NPWS have a design which shows the rough corridor of where the track will be built, and there will be finer delineation of the actual finished track as more plans are finalised.

The big beneficiaries will be tourists to the region who have predominately visited in summer months for either a walking experience or a mountain biking adventure. Both these activities have seen very strong growth in recent years and with this announcement, will only add to the strength of our region's outdoor activities appeal.



Mick Pettitt, Director of the Southern Ranges Branch of the NSW National Parks addresses the gathering for the announcement.

Tourism Snowy Mountains' Wayne Kirkpatrick thanked all the people involved and their support so far for the Thredbo Valley Track in particular, and for NPWS who have embraced the concept of parks are for people.

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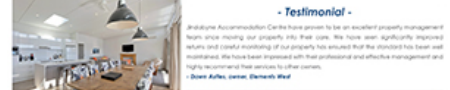
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As the new Iconic Walk is developed, its route will include Guthega, a small alpine village with spectacular views of the Main Range and a popular part of Perisher Resort during the snow season.

Guthega Alpine Inn owner Nick Kennedy said, “We’ve been very excited about this whole project and the wonderful thing is that Guthega has reinvigorated in the last decade and it’s a place that’s had an enclave of well run and well managed and highly active clubs (lodges) in the summer, so Guthega will be a really interested place to visit.”

While the Iconic Walk is being built, the Thredbo Valley Track when fully completed will also have the strength to be added to the International Mountain Biking Association’s Epic status of trails. There are three levels of Epic status from bronze, silver and gold and really stamps to the world of mountain bikers as one of a significance ride. This alone will be a massive boost to our mt bike reputation that is growing by the year.



Lake Crackenback Resort staff supply lunch to the crowd.



It was a perfect day for a mountain bike ride along the Thredbo River, especially after a \$10 million announcement to

complete the Thredbo Valley Track.



John Barilaro addresses the crowd.



Mick Pettitt, Director of the Southern Ranges Branch of the NSW National Parks, Deputy Premier John Barilaro and Tourism Snowy Mountains Wayne Kirkpatrick after the announcement of \$27 million for Kosciuszko National Park.



NPWS staff were all excited by the news of a new Iconic Walk.

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