

### Accessing the trail

The Old Beechy Rail Trail runs on or near the route of the railway, using the original rail formation in many places.

The 45km trail can be completed in shorter sections (see track notes) and in either direction. Stay overnight in historic hotels or quality cabins, cottages and B&B's in the Colac, Barongarook, Gellibrand, Dinmont or Beech Forest areas.

The Old Beechy Rail Trail makes an ideal alternate access route to the Great Ocean Road.

A car shuffle is required, unless you choose to return along the trail. Be aware of the changing gradient of the various trail sections when making this decision.

### How to get there

Colac lies 150 km west of Melbourne on the Princes Highway. VLine services operate daily from Melbourne and Warrnambool to Colac railway station where you can start or finish your Old Beechy Rail Trail adventure.



### The Old Beechy Rail Trail's Friends

After 8 years of planning by local progress associations, volunteers and the Colac Otway Shire, the rail trail concept became a reality in 2005.

Formed in 2000, the Old Beechy Rail Trail Friends' Group assists with the maintenance of the trail. To join the Friends' Group, contact the Colac Otway Shire on 03 5232 9400.

Thanks to private landowners who permit public access, including Midway Pty Ltd.



www.railtrails.org.au

www.visitcolac.com

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### ① WOORILLA HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

Level 2, 126 Murray Street, Colac 3250. Ph 0409 523 540  
Central Colac, new 3 bedroom self contained apartment (sleeps 6 people).

### ② OTWAYS ESTATE ★★★★★

20 Hoveys Road  
Barongarook 3249  
Ph 03 5233 8400  
E otwayestate@iprimus.com.au  
www.otwayestate.com.au



Premium wines and luxury adult accommodation. Open 7 days, 10am-5pm. Brewery, café, function facility and gallery opening Nov 2006.

### ③ WANAWONG BED & BREAKFAST ★★★★★

950 Colac-Lavers Hill Road, Barongarook 3249  
Ph 03 5233 8215. www.wanawong.com.au.  
Spacious family guest suite. 5 minutes to Old Beechy Rail Trail.

### ④ ISHSHOES

1055 Colac-Lavers Hill Road, Barongarook 3249.  
Ph 03 5233 8305. www.ishshoes.com.au. Gallery of Australian-made handcrafted leather footwear and local crafts. Open 10am-4.30pm Thu-Sun & public hols.

### ⑤ GELLIBRAND RIVER HOTEL

20 Colac-Lavers Hill Road  
Gellibrand 3239  
Ph 03 5235 8499  
E gellibrandhotel@bemail.com.au



Historic hotel set on 3 acres. Beautiful valley views from bar and beer garden. Open fire in lounge/bistro. Comfortable country hospitality, great beer, meals and no pokies or TAB. Stylish, affordable accommodation year round.

### COLAC VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

Corner Murray and Queen Streets, Colac,  
Ph 03 5231 3730  
E colacvic@colacotway.vic.gov.au  
Open daily 9am-5pm (closed Christmas Day).



### ⑥ OTWAYS TOURIST PARK ★★★★★

25 Main Road  
Gellibrand River 3239  
Ph 03 5235 8357  
E koorn@bigpond.com  
www.otwaystouristpark.com

Fully self-contained cabins, powered and non-powered camping. Solar-heated swimming pool. On the site of the old Gellibrand Railway Station. Close to Otway Fly Tree Top Walk, waterfalls and rainforests.

### ⑦ DINMONT HOUSE

225 Old Colac Road  
Beech Forest 3237  
Ph 03 5237 3181  
E saltytowers@bigpond.com  
www.dinmonthouse.com



Cosy haven for two. Self-contained, spa, wood fire, mountain bikes and helmets.

### OTWAY EXPEDITIONS

PO Box 172  
Apollo Bay 3233  
Ph 03 5237 6341  
E otwayexpeditions@hotmail.com  
http://kookaburracottages.tripod.com  
Mountain bike and Argo buggy adventure tours. Experience something different that's fun for the whole family.



### ⑧ THE BIKE SHOP

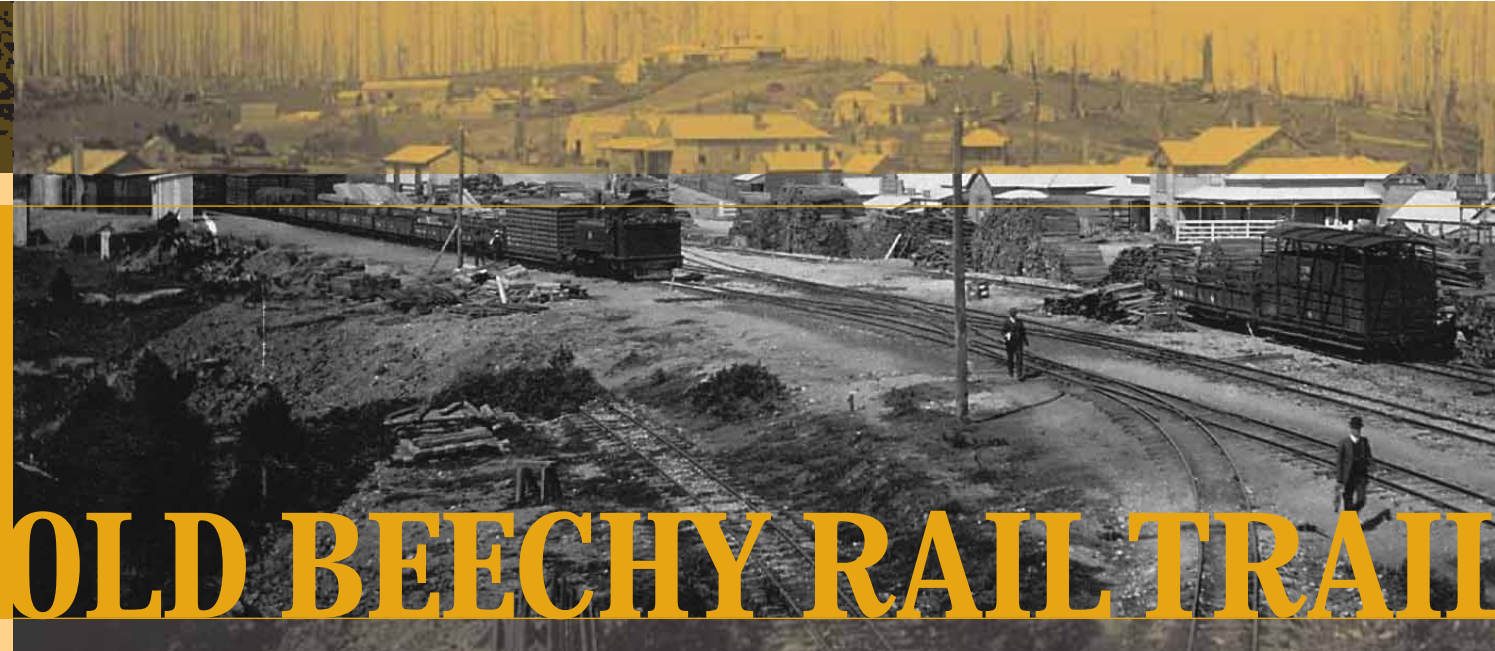
227 Murray Street, Colac 3250. Ph 03 5231 1334  
E bikes227@bigpond.com  
For all your bike sales, accessories, hire and repairs.  
Open 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-12noon Sat.  
Closed Sun & public hols.



# OLD BEECHY RAIL TRAIL

## COLAC - BEECH FOREST





# OLD BEECHY RAIL TRAIL

## A SCENIC ROUTE

The Old Beechy Rail Trail follows one of the state's former narrow gauge railway lines through an area of scenic forest, rich farmland and rolling hills with the coast not too far away.

Along the trail you pass through pockets of lush forest with magnificent eucalypts and blackwoods shading the lush understorey. See and hear busy woodland and forest birds while listening for the echoes of the Old Beechy's whistle!



## THE BEECHY

The narrow gauge railway from Colac to Beech Forest opened in 1902, providing a modern, all-weather transport link within forested ranges where road building was impossibly expensive.

The mountainous nature of the terrain meant that a narrow gauge railway was the most economical transport solution. A two feet and six inches wide (762 mm) track was laid for nearly 48 km south through Barongarook, Kawarren, Gellibrand, Banool and Dinmont to Beech Forest. The railway became known as The Beechy.

In 1911 the railway was extended 22 kms west of Beech Forest to Lavers Hill and Crowes, Australia's most southerly mainland railway station.

The locomotives and rolling stock were scaled-down versions of the broad gauge Victorian Railways stock. Examples currently survive at Belgrave's Puffing Billy railway.

Above: Beech Forest Station. C 1912. (John Thompson Collection).  
Left: Construction Train (NA Class) Beech Forest 1901. (PROV VR PR 4755 © State of Victoria. Reproduced with permission of the Keeper of Public Records. Public Record Office Victoria, Australia).  
Right: Remnants of timber pile railway bridge south of Gellibrand. (Alexander McCooke).

## AGENT OF CHANGE

"The Beechy" was the first reliable transport service into an area with dense timber and high rainfall. It encouraged closer settlement and timber getting on a systematic scale. The railway became the major agent of development for the region to the south of Colac up to the 1940s.

The 28 stations and sidings were closely spaced because the roads were unmade and difficult to use for most of the year, and haulage distance for farmers and sawmillers to the rail had to be minimised. Special trains ran for social events and cultural activities along the line, and at Colac.



## CODE OF CONDUCT

### Trail Etiquette

This rail trail passes through public land with high environmental value and extensive areas of private property. People earning their livelihoods use many of these properties on a daily basis. Please respect their rights and those of other trail users by observing the following.

- Keep to the rail trail
- Do not disturb livestock or machinery
- No fires
- No camping
- No motorbikes or unauthorised vehicles
- Dogs must be on a lead at all times
- Take your rubbish home

Your respect for this natural and cultural environment will greatly assist the many local communities who care for this trail.

## REMEMBER TO...

### Equipment

Check your bicycle's tyre pressure and condition, brakes, chain tightness and lubrication.

Carry a bicycle repair kit and pump, and remember to wear your helmet!

### Clothing

Wear a hat, sunglasses and comfortable clothing. Carry a waterproof jacket in your day pack.

### Food and water

Take lunch and high-energy snacks and, on a hot day, up to 2 litres of water per person.

### Safety

Apply sunscreen frequently.

Sudden and extreme weather changes are common in the Otway ranges. Carry practical all-weather clothing.

There is no mobile phone service on most of the trail.

Tell a family member or accommodation provider where you are going and your estimated time of return.

Surface conditions of the trail vary. Please take care and ride to suit the conditions.

Take a basic first aid kit with you.