



District Council of
Mount Remarkable

A REMARKABLE PLACE TO VISIT

**BRIDLE TRACK STRATEGIC PLAN
2022-2027**

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A Remarkable Experience...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The District Council of Mount Remarkable acknowledges the traditional landowners of the district, the Nukunu People. The ongoing contribution of First Nations people to the area plays a fundamental role in shaping the region into the future.

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THE BRIDLE TRACK

Situated in the Southern Flinders Ranges, in the District Council of Mount Remarkable, the Bridle Track and adjacent land, is of cultural significance to the Nukunu people and has a rich history in agriculture, primarily grazing.



Bridle Track
Bangor SA, 5495
Australia
Latitude: -32.949447
Longitude: 138.087652
Altitude: 356 metres

SCOPE OF WORK

As a result of a motion on notice from Deputy Mayor Cr Don Norton, the July 2021 Ordinary Meeting of Council approved the development of a strategic plan for the Bridle Track.

The original scope of this piece of work provided for designing and implementing stakeholder-led solutions to manage this important tourism and pastoralists' thoroughfare in the Southern Flinders Ranges in partnership with Council.

Improved directional and information signage, engagement with landowners adjacent to the Track and potential mechanisms for financial support from relevant stakeholders were considered key issues prompting the call for the development of a strategy.

“ The Bridle Track is seen as a major drawcard for the Council District and Southern Flinders Ranges tourism experience and given sections of the roadway are in poor condition and complaints have been received from landowners experiencing vehicle access issues, more resources are required to maintain this track to a standard that is deemed acceptable. ”
~ Mayor Phillip Heaslip

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THE VISION

To deliver a safe 4WD tourism experience, in parallel to ensuring security and accessibility to landowners adjacent the public road, known as The Bridle Track. To forge partnerships which enable conservation and protection of biodiversity, preserve local history and indigenous culture through investing in education and building environmental awareness.

THE MISSION

To improve and maintain the standard of the Bridle Track to provide a reliable thoroughfare for traditional owners, tourists, and pastoralists alike, within Council's remit and financial constraints.

FIRST NATION'S VOICE

The inclusion of the *Nukunu Voice* via the Nukunu Wapma Thura (Aboriginal Corporation) will be sought once the initial plan is agreed, in principle, by Council.

It is recognised that there are several gullies and waterways through the Bridle Track area that are the home of endangered species, including animals central to Nukunu religious life.

As a consequence of attainment of Native Title, Nukunu wish to increase land-care efforts and look to find ways to mitigate damage to environment, particularly that caused by 4WD access through particular sections of the Bridle Track. Council is supportive of and welcomes collaboration with Nukunu Wapma Thura.

SAFETY FIRST

Anecdotally, the Bridle Track has seen an increase in visitation over the past decade. In recent times however, this may be attributed to intra-state travel and self-drive holidays as a result of the COVID19 Global Pandemic.

The popular Southern Flinders tourism destination is also featured on Tourism related websites, social media channels and in printed publications adding to its exposure and popularity. Safety of locals and visitors alike is of utmost importance.

***Council has a road network of some 2068 km
– with 1,955 km being unsealed – of which
the Bridle Track is 13.2 kilometres.***

Within its available resources Council aims to:

- » Provide safe roads for use by road users.
- » Identify areas that require maintenance (including local knowledge and reports from road-users)
- » Establish a priority system for carrying out maintenance on Council roads.
- » Allocate resources where they are required and to schedule maintenance as required.

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RISK

The appeal and uniqueness of the Bridle Track, although a public throughfare, is the terrain and the elevation. This provides for splendid scenery and vantage points along its path, and some would say, a test of driver capability.

The Bridle Track is considered a 4-wheel drive accessible road only

Council has a duty of care to mitigate risk to road-users. Management of risk exposure requires control measures to be implemented. Its original use as an access track for adjacent landowners to tend stock and grazing land has seen infrequent traffic use grown to numbers estimated, anecdotally*, of up to 100 vehicles over a long weekend. *Note: Council is seeking to place traffic measuring devices ahead of the busy Winter tourism season.

The road has no standard formation, is mostly undrained, with exception of higher ground and consists of naturally occurring material. It is probable that water will cross the road in minor rain events and significant rain events and may cause temporary closure. Conversely during extreme heat events, the road may be closed to all non-essential (energy) vehicles.

Some control measures that Council will employ to lessen exposure to risk along the Bridle Track include, but are not limited to:

- » Use of warning signs to alert road users of the potential hazard that exists ahead.
- » Erection of temporary barriers or barricades around the area until it can be repaired.
- » Effecting repair of the damaged area, or
- » Planning and allocating resources for the long-term maintenance of the road surface.

BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS

Council's recently developed Asset Management Plan has identified an infrastructure back-log of required works.

The Asset Management Plan primarily aimed at asset renewal and focuses on sealed and unsealed roads, kerbing, and footpaths. The works sought to be undertaken are designed for community safety and regional economic stimulus. There will be an element of in-kind support from landowners and other stakeholders for the ongoing upkeep of the amenity of track.

EXTERNAL FUNDING OPTIONS TO BE INVESTIGATED

Recognising that Council's total operating income is \$8.052M (2020/2021) and as yet, no internal funding allocation has been set-aside for potential capital works for the Bridle Track, Council will use this plan as the basis for soliciting complementary/matching funding from State and Federal sources.

STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

An initial round of Stakeholder engagement was undertaken on November 30, 2021. From this meeting the feedback provided was collated and used to inform this document. A list of contributors and the collated feedback is at the back of this document.

WORKING PARTY ESTABLISHED

A small working party has been established to guide and support the short-medium term development and implementation of this plan.

Council recognises the invaluable local knowledge and experience the membership of the working party and wider stakeholders bring.

A PRIORITISED APPROACH

Given the need to garner funding external to Council's resources and budget, a number of activities, predominately capital works, will be planned with aspirational goals for implementation.

Council will work to ensure that elements of this plan are 'shovel ready' for when grant and other funding mechanisms become available.

Activities which may be funded in the short term, via Council's budget and will deliver an immediate return on investment across safety, practicality and expediency include signage.

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BRIDLE TRACK – STEPS TO REVITALISATION - 2022-2027

Council recognises the opportunities and benefits of designing and delivering a range of projects to enhance and maintain the Bridle Track as an important environmental, economic and tourism asset in the Southern Flinders Ranges. This schedule outlines proposed initiatives to deliver its vision by 2027.

INITIATIVE	OPPORTUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS	DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	ALIGNMENT TO DCMR COMMUNITY PLAN 2021-2031	ESTIMATED DELIVERY COST
Update/install tourism, interpretive, cultural & road safety signage at track entrances and along the designated route.	<p>A public road, albeit 4WD access only, the Bridle Track is a small but popular element to Council's Road network.</p> <p>Around 95% of roads Council has a responsibility for are unsealed and there is significant burden on council to ensure roads are maintained to a standard which mitigates vehicle accidents and also damage to vehicles</p> <p>There is an opportunity to entice tourists with 4WD capability off main and arterial roads to traverse the Bridle Track as a unique Southern Flinders self-drive experience. This may lead to an increase in visitation to other attractions and businesses in the region potentially delivering an added economic dividend.</p> <p>At present the Bridle Track is poorly sign-posted and concerns have been raised by traditional owners and pastoralists around trespass, vandalism, and encroachment onto culturally significant Nukunu sites.</p> <p>Visitors who leave the designated public road, intentionally or unintentionally, not only put themselves at risk but can also damage the environment, cause distress to stock and potentially harm culturally significant indigenous sites.</p> <p>Partnerships to deliver the initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Dept for Infrastructure & Transport (sign design & placement) » Landowners (placement & on-going monitoring) Nukunu Wapma Thura (NWT) Aboriginal Corporation * <p>*Note provision for stand-alone initiative "Collaboration with Nukunu Wapma Thura (Aboriginal Corporation)" as part of this plan.</p>	Q1 22/23	<p>A Remarkable Place to Visit.</p> <p>Make improvements to directional signage for visitors to the district.</p> <p>What we do, we do strive to do Remarkably well.</p> <p>Maintain & develop roads, storm water, footpaths & associated infrastructure.</p> <p>Work with stakeholders in supporting measures to protect and preserve the natural environment while ensuring we provide reasonable and appropriate access to natural resources.</p>	<p>Up to \$15K.</p> <p>This includes an in-kind support element from landowners and govt agencies (DIT).</p> <p>Formal quotes being sought.</p>

INITIATIVE	OPPORTUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS	DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	ALIGNMENT TO DCMR COMMUNITY PLAN 2021-2031	ESTIMATED DELIVERY COST
<p>Develop shovel-ready project plan for capital improvements & ongoing maintenance to the track.</p>	<p>Any proposed activity as part of this plan, at present, aspirational and unfunded.</p> <p>In order for Council to take advantage of external funding opportunities a detailed project plan will be developed for the capital works identified.</p> <p>The project plan & broader strategy document would be used in support of seeking external funding contributions/grants etc.</p> <p>Scope of work to include, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Planning – detailed design, legal, and environmental issues, contractor, or Council needs with plant/equipment » Communication strategy – include the voice of the landowners » Earthworks – structure, composition, road-base needs (local quarry material) » Drainage requirements on low laying sections of track » Gate/grid options » Risk matrix <p>Partnerships to deliver the initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Landowners » Neighbouring LGAs (PPRC, TiCSA) & tourism bodies (letters of support) 	<p>Q3 22/23</p>	<p>A Remarkable Place to Visit.</p> <p>Advocating for increased funding to maintain and enhance the District road network and improved Infrastructure.</p> <p>What we do we do Remarkably well.</p> <p>Maintain and improve the standard of Council owned roads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Plan for the effectiveness and inclusiveness of infrastructure and services to cater to the needs of community, visitors and local business and industry » Pursue partnerships and opportunities to support infrastructure development » Develop service level standards for assets and infrastructure 	<p>By using internal resources to write scope / grant applications it will keep costs to a minimum.</p> <p>If external services are sought, then allow up to \$5k for plan development.</p> <p>Note: early calculations predict the implementation of such a plan in the first 2 years would be in the vicinity of \$250K.</p> <p>On-going maintenance costs would be determined in the scoping of the project.</p>

INITIATIVE	OPPORTUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS	DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	ALIGNMENT TO DCMR COMMUNITY PLAN 2021-2031	ESTIMATED DELIVERY COST
Actively seek external funding opportunities.	<p>It is acknowledged that elements of this plan are not currently funded, and that any proposed activities will require a partnership approach and external funding to deliver.</p> <p>Utilising internal and external grant writing capability to minimise costs. Once shovel-ready project plans are developed (for instance capital improvements & ongoing maintenance to the track), the application process should be relatively cost-effective.</p>	Ongoing for the life of the plan.	<p>What we do, we do strive to do Remarkably well.</p> <p>Advocating (to State & Federal Govts) for increased funding to maintain and enhance road network and improved infrastructure.</p> <p>Maintain and improve the standard of Council owned roads.</p>	Up to \$15K over 5 years if external resources engaged.

INITIATIVE	OPPORTUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS	DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	ALIGNMENT TO DCMR COMMUNITY PLAN 2021-2031	ESTIMATED DELIVERY COST
Community Engagement.	<p>Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ongoing consultation with the Working Group » Updates via Council's Website » Involvement of Nukunu Wapma Thura - NWT (Aboriginal Corporation) » Community meetings » Social media engagement » Interpretive signage » Print & other digital media streams <p>Partnerships to deliver the initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Tourism Operators » Govt Agencies (DEW, CFS, SES, SAPOL, DEM, Landscape SA) » Port Pirie Regional Council » Northern Areas Council » RDA YMN » ElectraNet » 4WD Clubs 	Q1 22/23 – Ongoing for the life of the plan.	<p>A Remarkable Place to Visit.</p> <p>Work with a range of tourism stakeholders in developing and executing effective and efficient tourism strategies, including eco-tourism.</p> <p>Provide support for promotion of local heritage and history.</p> <p>A “Can-do” Council.</p> <p>Adopt effective community engagement processes to inform Council decisions, pursue opportunities and deliver better community outcomes.</p> <p>On-going use of mechanisms to obtain community feedback.</p> <p>What we do, we do strive to do Remarkably well.</p> <p>Work with stakeholders in supporting measures to protect and preserve the natural environment while ensuring we provide reasonable and appropriate access to natural resources.</p>	To be determined – much of the costs of Social Media messaging can be incorporated in current activities.

INITIATIVE	OPPORTUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS	DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	ALIGNMENT TO DCMR COMMUNITY PLAN 2021-2031	ESTIMATED DELIVERY COST
Collaboration with Nukunu Wapma Thura (Aboriginal Corporation).	<p>Council recognises the significance of Country to the Nukunu people and the very real need to provide protection around identified Nukunu cultural sites, especially those which hold sacred, spiritual, and ceremonial significance.</p> <p>Council would endeavour to work with Nukunu Elders and other members of Nukunu Wapma Thura to identify, understand and make provision for restricted access to areas adjacent to the track.</p> <p>Currently there is no signage, or other resources e.g. information on a website, to describe the significance of the area adjacent to the track to the Nukunu. There is an opportunity to interpretive signage to be placed at agreed locations.</p>	Q2 22/23 – Q4 22/23	<p>What we do, we do strive to do Remarkably well.</p> <p>Work with stakeholders in supporting measures to protect and preserve the natural environment while ensuring we provide reasonable and appropriate access to natural resources.</p> <p>A Remarkable place to visit.</p> <p>Enact measures to support heritage and history.</p> <p>Advocating for protection of environment along with retained access.</p> <p>Develop our Tourism Infrastructure.</p> <p>Make improvements to directional signage for visitors to the District.</p>	<p>In-kind contribution for knowledge sharing.</p> <p>Interpretive signage & installation up to \$15K.</p>

INITIATIVE	OPPORTUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS	DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	ALIGNMENT TO DCMR COMMUNITY PLAN 2021-2031	ESTIMATED DELIVERY COST
Curtailing Trespass.	<p>Safety of road-users is a priority. Trespass onto adjacent land (vehicles and individuals leaving the public road) is currently a risk to the natural and cultural environment, grazing stock and to persons committing trespass.</p> <p>Council may consider monitoring systems and devices (warning signage – citing SA Summary Offences Act 1953) to deter trespass.</p>	Q2 22/23 –	<p>A Remarkable place to visit.</p> <p>Enact measures to support heritage and history</p> <p>Advocating for protection of environment along with retained access.</p> <p>Develop our Tourism Infrastructure.</p> <p>Make improvements to directional signage for visitors to the District.</p> <p>What we do, we do strive to do Remarkably well.</p> <p>Work with stakeholders in supporting measures to protect and preserve the natural environment while ensuring we provide reasonable and appropriate access to natural resources.</p>	<p>Monitoring devices</p> <p>Signage \$5K.</p> <p>Installation \$5K.</p>

INITIATIVE	OPPORTUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS	DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	ALIGNMENT TO DCMR COMMUNITY PLAN 2021-2031	ESTIMATED DELIVERY COST
Designated picnic/viewing area with shelter structure.	<p>There are few locations along the track with ample, flat area for a number of vehicles to safely park and take in the view (to the West) of Spencer Gulf, Port Bonython, Port Germein, Whyalla, Port Pirie, and Port Augusta.</p> <p>If suitable easements can be brokered or existing extended, provision can be made for a designated stop off place for tourists to enjoy.</p> <p>A shelter structure could include interpretive signage relating to the vista, cultural heritage, flora and fauna and bushfire safety advice.</p>	Q 24/25	<p>A Remarkable place to visit.</p> <p>Enact measures to support heritage and history</p> <p>Advocating for protection of environment along with retained access.</p> <p>Develop our Tourism Infrastructure.</p> <p>Make improvements to directional signage for visitors to the District/develop tourism infrastructure.</p>	\$30K.

INITIATIVE	OPPORTUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS	DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	ALIGNMENT TO DCMR COMMUNITY PLAN 2021-2031	ESTIMATED DELIVERY COST
Landcare Projects Tree planting, Nature conservation and biodiversity, Invasive species management (fox, deer, feral cats & rabbits).	<p>Landscape SA has identified seven priorities across the state requiring shared effort to address over the next ten years.</p> <p>Statewide Landscape Strategy to 2030. Council will explore potential projects in partnership with stakeholders to improve and protect the natural environment.</p> <p>Potential Funding Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Future Drought Fund » National Landcare Program 	Q1 22/23 – Ongoing for the life of the plan.	<p>A remarkable place to visit.</p> <p>Work with stakeholders in supporting measures to protect and preserve the natural environment while ensuring we provide reasonable and appropriate access to natural resources.</p>	<p>To be determined in consultation with Landscape SA.</p> <p>Aim for up to 3 jointly funded projects over the life of the plan. Value up to \$300K.</p>

INITIATIVE	OPPORTUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS	DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	ALIGNMENT TO DCMR COMMUNITY PLAN 2021-2031	ESTIMATED DELIVERY COST
Scope, design & promote a new Mountain Bike Tourism Experience.	Synonymous as a 4WD Track, the Bridle Track also lends itself to being a track suitable for mountain-bike riders. This may complement the existing opportunities in the district <i>Mountain biking Melrose.</i>	Q1- Q4 2024	<p>A remarkable place to visit.</p> <p>Work with a range of tourism stakeholders in developing and executing effective and efficient tourism strategies, including eco-tourism.</p> <p>Provide support for promotion of local heritage and history.</p>	Scoping study - up to \$5K. Promotion - up to \$2K.

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A STAGED APPROACH

STAGE 1

UPDATED AND IMPROVED

TOURISM/DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

As a relatively cost-effective and time efficient exercise, Council and stakeholders agree that there is a need to review existing signage and make recommendations about where it may be improved and/or employed to provide guidance for road-users.

Road safety, whilst not the primary remit of Local Government, partnerships with other tiers of Government enable Councils to deliver sound road and other transport infrastructure for their communities.

Driving to conditions

Given that almost 95% of roads Council has a responsibility for are unsealed, there is significant burden on council to ensure roads are maintained to a standard which mitigates vehicle accidents and also damage to vehicles. Advice has been sought from the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) as there are access points to the Bridle Track off of DIT roads (Port Germein Gorge via Little Hell Road).

A separate task has been undertaken to ensure that Google Maps™ are correctly marked. One error was detected with both the name and route of "Little Hell Road". A report has been logged with Google Maps™ for their approvals.

A number of early recommendations have been made awaiting a determination for implementation, subject to full costings being established.

SIGNAGE	LOCATION	COMMENTS
Update existing brown fingerboard sign	Junction Horrocks Highway & Searle Street, Melrose.	DIT road This sign could be supplemented with Tourist Intersection Direction Sign (TRID) would need to include symbol for 4WD ONLY.
Tourist Attraction Sign	Melrose.	DIT Road Are the current attractions the most relevant?
Tourist Advance Direction Signs	To be installed at both approaches to the junction of Port Germein Gorge and Little Hell Road.	DIT Road – selection of location would need to be carefully determined given the winding nature of the road.
Tourist Intersection Direction Sign	Junction of Port Germein and Little Hell Road.	Placement so as not to impeded vision and to have clear indication that it's 4WD only & now towing.
Tourist Attraction Sign	Augusta Highway – (Gribble Road or most appropriate Council Road) Junction.	DIT road unless placed on Reservoir Road off of Port Germein Gorge Road.

STAGE 2 EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council sees community engagement and education, (road safety, environmental, cultural) an essential element of the success of revitalising the Bridle Track.

PARTNERSHIPS

ORGANISATION	SUPPORT/COLLABORATION	COMMENTS
Nukunu Wapma Thura (Aboriginal Corporation)	Partnership for Aboriginal heritage & cultural advice.	Need to maintain the security and privacy of Nukunu cultural sites – prevent people leaving the main track.
Tourism SA	Positive and consistent messaging on collateral .	Use social media platforms to share information .
RDA Yorke & Mid North	Positive and consistent messaging on collateral .	Use social media platforms to share information.
SATiC	Positive and consistent messaging on collateral .	Use social media platforms to share information.
SAPOL	Community relations support re: trespassing.	To inform targeted, clear messaging.
Port Pirie Regional Council	Positive and consistent messaging on collateral .	Use social media platforms to share information.
Northern Areas Council	Positive and consistent messaging on collateral .	Use social media platforms to share information.
Landscape South Australia – Southern Flinders	Partnership for conservation and protection of biodiversity.	Use social media platforms to share information.
Dept of Energy & Mining	Stromatolites – recently discovered 700M year old fossils.	Need professional guidance around potential tourism opportunities and how to market – if at all.
ElectraNet	Possible cost sharing of some maintenance activities .	Protection of power infrastructure & access to asset on western access to track.
4WD Clubs	Working bees/tree planting/ information sharing.	To promote 'caring for country'.
Tourism Operators	Encourage liaison with Council before scheduled tours & to use Positive and consistent messaging on collateral .	Report road conditions, issues. Encourage positive promotion of the region by guests and encourage visitation to other experiences/businesses in the region.

Where resources limit practical, capital solutions to road challenges, other methods may be utilised to provide guidance to road users and other helpful hints/tips. Incorporating hints and tips in Council's social media posts are a simple cost-effective way to communicate. "Boosted" or paid ads may be used as needed.

Using existing resources such as those found on authorised Websites such as:

[My Licence - Country Driving Tips](#)

[Think Road Safety](#)

[Flinders Ranges & Outback - Southern Flinders Ranges](#)

[CFS Fire Danger Season Dates](#)

STAGE 3

CAPITAL WORKS PROJECTS & ONGOING MAINTENANCE

Council sees community engagement and education, (road safety, Through initial stakeholder feedback and Council's assessment of the track, the initiatives described require scoping.

More detailed scoping of proposed projects (shovel ready) will put Council in good stead to access external funding as opportunities present.

SUMMARY

This draft plan aligns with Council's Community Plan 2021 – 2031 and its wider vision and values. In particular, the work proposed for the Bridle Track will support **Goal 4 of the Community Plan - A Remarkable Place to Visit**.

Understanding that this plan is not currently funded, and that any proposed activities will require a partnership approach and external funding to deliver, Council will seek in principle support for its adoption.

The environmental, social, economic, and cultural dividends of investing in road infrastructure along this tract of iconic Southern Flinders land are not easily quantifiable. However, there is a strong appetite from Council and stakeholders to position themselves to take advantage of any funding support that may become available.

Remarkable things happen when remarkable people come together with a shared purpose.

SAM JOHNSON
CEO

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A Remarkable Experience...



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