

Welcome to Trail Talk - A monthly newsletter all about the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail. This newsletter contains information and updates about construction and work on the trail, as well as other aspects including work being carried out with businesses and tourism interests.

July 2014

[View this email in your browser](#)



## Sharing our Southland stories



The stone chimney remains from the original Trotter's Homestead, 1859. The Trotters Historic Reserve is one of three new conservation areas near Kingston. *Photo: Jim Coawell*

Interpretation information for the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail is being developed by Venture Southland and Northern Southland communities will be asked for input from late July.

Community Development Team Leader Bobbi Brown said a document which lists

Other information centres on the area's recreational values providing 4WD access to the Eyre Mountains/Taka Ra Haka Conservation Park along with, tramping, horse-riding and mountain-biking opportunities.

Venture Southland is investigating ways to interpret the information including signs,

37 sites of interest, identified from local books and other documents associated with the areas, has been put together as a starting point for interpretation panels and the like on the trail.

"The next step is to consult with the local communities to see what they think, what we have missed and what they see as priorities or what are the important stories or things to share with cyclists," Mrs Brown said.

The information has been presented to Athol and Garston CDAs for feedback and the Lumsden, Kingston, Mossburn communities will be spoken to in next month or so, she said

panels, sheds, distance-markers and maps.

"As well as this, we continue to support SDC to develop the trail and have been helping to look at event opportunities and moving community projects along amongst lots of other things," Mrs Brown said.

The information includes historically significant sites and buildings to the region, prominent landmarks and all the stations used along the Kingston Branch line. The natural environment also features including Eyre Creek's importance as a bird-watching area with breeding colonies of the endangered Black-Billed Gull.



Construction of Stage One of the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail is continuing and work on five suspension bridges is progressing.

Council services and assets manager Ian Marshall said conditions are preventing completion of small pieces of work on the trail but the stage is still on track to be ready on time for the October 31 opening and planning for the construction of stage two is well advanced.

The trail is already creating plenty of interest.

"There's strong interest out there in the local communities around the cycle trail's opening and future operation."



## Free help for your business

Two free workshops are being offered to Southland businesses to help grow their international visitor numbers.

Presenter Marijke Dunselman from SMARTtraining will teach participants about international tourism marketing avenues and the most (cost) effective ways of targeting the lucrative international visitor. The workshops also include information about working with inbound operators and international wholesalers, commissions, free ways to attract international visitors, social media, working together, where to find useful information and more.

**Who is it for?** Southland & Fiordland tourism operators looking for ideas to grow their businesses

**Cost?** Free (fully funded by Venture Southland)

**When & Where?**

- The Lumsden workshop is on Thursday 4 September from 4-6pm, Lumsden Memorial Hall
- The Invercargill Workshop is on Friday 5 September from 10am-12pm at Venture Southland, 143 Spey Street, Invercargill

**More information?** <http://www.smartraining.co.nz/calendar.html>

**RSVP?** by Friday 29 August to [hannah@venturesouthland.co.nz](mailto:hannah@venturesouthland.co.nz)

## Call for community action

*The following is an excerpt from Southland Mayor Gary Tong's recent mayoral column in the Southland Times newspaper.*

They say good things take time. That's certainly been the case for the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail but it's only a short time now till the first stage of the trail opens and it's important our communities are ready to take advantage of the benefits it brings. When stage one, from Kingston to Mossburn, opens it will mean not just an opportunity for locals to get out and use it, it's also a drawcard for tourists from around the world.

Council staff and contractors have been putting in track, fencing, signs and bridges and stage one is now all but completed, with the section to be opened on October 31.

This will mean a tourism boost for many businesses on or near the trail but people in our towns need to be proactive and put in the hard yards now to get the best results for their areas. Our towns and businesses need to be ready for tourists' arrival but they also need to think ahead about opportunities, marketing, promotion and the future.

The cycle trail was positively received at a recent international tourism conference, with comments made that it will be great for the region. Around 260 international buyers from major and emerging markets attended TRENZ and overall feedback about Southland was positive. A good sign – the foundation is already there – we just need to do some more work.

Southland has it all; we are geographically diverse and beautiful, we're known for our warm southern hospitality, we have a relaxed way of life and a unique cultural heritage. These are all things we can be proud of and which make us different from a tourism point of view.



Tourism businesses in the region range from smaller owner-operators to large companies and cover everything for accommodation to travel. There are already thriving tourist destinations in our district – Te Anau, Milford Sound and The Catlins. I think our whole region could see growth in tourism if people seize the opportunities available.

There are several ways to do this; you may simply want to review your own business and look at how you could cater for or market to families or tourists using the cycle trail. It could be as simple as putting a bike rack outside your premises to make it cyclist friendly.

It could be an opportunity to completely reinvent your business or to start a new one.

An excellent example of businesses building on the success of a cycle trail is the Central Otago Rail Trail which has been a huge success and could be an example of potential opportunities and what could be done in the south. It could be a good starting point for people to look at and learn from.

Help and guidance is also available through council – talk to your Councillors, Community Board and Community Development Area Subcommittee members and council staff. We can help with ideas and guiding you.

Venture Southland is there to assist, with economic development, destination promotion and community development as its key roles; which make Venture Southland a great resource to use. You can get in touch individually or take up the opportunities they offer. An example of this is the upcoming free workshops being offered to Southland businesses to help grow their international visitor numbers.

I want to see a more active tourism market in Southland. Economically it makes sense – the industry spend is \$65 million a day nationally. For our district to take advantage of this we need to work together, look at future opportunities and ensure that what we pursue is sustainable.

I hope to see Southlanders get out and take advantage of our new cycle trail – both by going for a ride themselves and also by looking at what opportunities it could help bring for our towns.

*If you know someone who is interested in the cycle trail please forward them our newsletter. New subscribers can sign up by emailing [louise.pagan@southlanddc.govt.nz](mailto:louise.pagan@southlanddc.govt.nz)*



Copyright © 2014 Around the Mountains Cycle Trail, All rights reserved.

**Our mailing address is:**

Southland District Council  
15 Forth St, Invercargill, New Zealand  
Invercargill, Southland 9840  
New Zealand