

## Key High Country projects to receive major funding boost

Tourism North East, the High Country's regional tourism board, has secured close to \$600,000 in Victorian Government funding to support the scoping of three key projects aimed at driving positive outcomes to the local visitor economy.

The projects receiving Regional Tourism Infrastructure Funding are:

- A **\$310,000 grant** for the development of a **North East Victoria Cycling Optimisation master plan** to develop a coordinated regional approach to cycle tourism in the High Country across all three product strengths - rail trails, mountain biking and road cycling.
- **\$150,000 to research and scope the viability** of developing a connected network of significant Aboriginal cultural tourism products and experiences under the banner of a **Hume Aboriginal Cultural Trail**.
- A **\$130,000 Ned Kelly Alive** project which will explore and assess the current Ned Kelly tourism experience and develop recommendations and concepts to revitalise and reimagine new products and experiences across the region.

Tourism North East CEO, Amber Gardner, said each of the projects had the potential to act as tourism drawcards for the region.

"TNE is charged with developing strategic demand and supply driven tourism initiatives across the region that have the potential to deliver significant outcomes to the local visitor economy," she said. "Product development projects like these are seen as key to enhancing the High Country tourism offering so that it continues to appeal to a diverse market, maximising visitation and yield opportunities for the region.

"Securing this level of grant funding amongst a competitive field is a significant win for Tourism North East and the various destinations that it represents, highlighting the benefits of working collaboratively across the region."

**Amber Gardner is available for interview. Please Contact TNE PR Manager, Sue Couttie, to arrange. Phone 0419 522 064 or email [sue.couttie@tourismnortheast.com.au](mailto:sue.couttie@tourismnortheast.com.au)**

[SEE BELOW FOR MORE DETAIL ABOUT EACH PROJECT](#)

**BACKGROUNDER - NEW FUNDING FOR TOURISM NORTH EAST PROJECT**

Tourism North East is the regional tourism board for the High Country, charged with developing and driving strategic tourism initiatives that deliver positive outcomes for the local visitor economy. As part of the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund, TNE has successfully secured funding to scope the development and enhancement of regional tourism products with the potential to act as tourism draw cards for the region.

**1. North East Victoria Cycle Optimisation Project - \$310,000 grant of a \$360,000 project**

The High Country aspires to be recognised as the lead cycle tourism destination in Victoria. In order to realise this vision, TNE will work in conjunction with Regional Development Victoria to develop a master plan that will optimise cycling opportunities in North East Victoria - taking into account infrastructure investment, marketing and private sector involvement.

It will ensure a coordinated regional approach across the High Country's key cycle product strengths - rail trails (the Murray to Mountains, Great Victorian and High Country rail trails), road cycling - as exemplified by the enormously popular 7 Peaks Ride - and mountain biking, which is a huge drawcard for Falls Creek and Mt Buller during the summer period and for village hubs in Bright, Beechworth, Yackandandah and Mount Beauty.

**2. Ned Kelly Alive - \$130,000 grant of a \$150,000 project**

Visitors to the region are looking for rich and experiential cultural heritage tourism experiences - a need that TNE is looking to meet with both its Ned Kelly Alive and Hume Aboriginal Cultural Trail projects.

The Ned Kelly Alive project is looking at revitalising and reimagining the Kelly tourism experience offered across the region, breathing new life into existing products as well as creating new cohesive visitor experiences with fresh market appeal.

The project will audit and assess the current Ned Kelly tourism offering, develop recommendations and concepts for improving or diversifying the Kelly experience, and create the business case around the proposed product.

**3. Hume Aboriginal Cultural Trail - \$150,000 grant of a \$185,000 project**

This project will scope and establish a business case for the development of a connected network of significant Aboriginal cultural tourism products and experiences across the Hume region, creating a meaningful and authentic offering that engages domestic and international visitors.

This project will take a similar approach to the Ned Kelly Alive initiative, assessing current experiences/products, making recommendations for experience enhancement/development, and developing a business case for the recommended outcomes.