

**Dear Members (Past and Present) of the Warrnambool Mountain Bike Club:**

The purpose of this email is to update Warrnambool Mountain Bike Club members on the difficulties that the WMTBC committee has been facing in gaining permission to maintain a safe and sustainable mountain bike facility at Thunder Point.

Since 2007 at the request of Warrnambool City Council (WCC), WMTBC was formed and has been working ever since to make Thunder Point its home. Although the club has had small wins along the way, the overall goal of long term tenure is still not achieved.

At this point in time, WMTBC does not have permission to undertake any maintenance activities at Thunder Point. This includes pruning track-side vegetation and maintenance the trail surface and drainage.

WMTBC commissioned Dirt Art in 2015 to audit the trail network to look for improvements in safety and sustainable track design. The audit recommended a number of small track realignments. At this point in time WMTBC does not have permission to undertake these works.

In May 2015, WMTBC was instructed by WCC that a planning permit is required for the club to prune native vegetation and to undertake track works. The planning permit requires the sign-off by the WCC with input from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV).

The initial planning permit application was submitted by the club to WCC in September 2015.

In brief, since the initial application, WMTBC has submitted three revised versions of the permit application over the past 18 months. The revisions were requested to address various issues raised by WCC and DELWP, in particular to refine the map of approved tracks at Thunder Point, to remove any application for track realignments, and to clarify any requirements for cultural heritage approval from AAV.

Despite various meetings WMTBC has had with officers from WCC, DELWP and AAV, the permit application remains unapproved and at an impasse.

The result of this impasse is that the club does not have permission to appropriately maintain the existing Thunder Point track network. For this reason, and especially given safety and insurance considerations, the club finds itself in a position where it cannot run mountain biking events at Thunder Point. This is especially disappointing given the extraordinary amount of goodwill the club has undertaken to improve Thunder Point in terms of weed removal (including boxthorn) and native revegetation.

WMTBC committee is extremely frustrated that the process is taking so long and disappointed in the general lack of proactive support from WCC and DELWP.

However, the club will continue to be proactive in pursuing approval for long term tenure to use Thunder Point. The club will continue to seek a planning permit with the council for the purpose of maintaining a safe trail network. Of-course we hope for this to be resolved in the near future.

As always, committee members are open to input and feedback from club members.

We welcome you to email us at [president@wmtbc.com.au](mailto:president@wmtbc.com.au) or speak with us in person.

WMTBC will keep members informed of any progress with respect to the planning permit process.

Regards

Brett Easton

WMTBC President

on Behalf of the WMTBC Committee