

Maroondah Leader

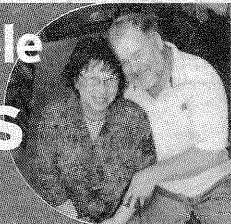
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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2007

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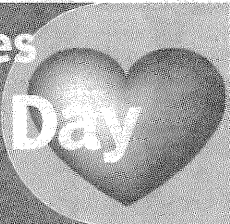
Maroondah people
Top citizens

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Tell us your stories
Valentine's Day

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Education guide
DUX magazine

FREE INSIDE



Bush sacrificed for path

WHAT'S THERE NOW



A walking track through the Mullum Mullum Valley. N32MM211/N24MM112

Jan Harkin

THE State Government is slapping a 3m-wide concrete bike path through the Mullum Mullum Valley, which it has spent millions protecting.

EastLink authorities last week released plans for a 2.75km concrete path, including five creek crossings, from Deep Creek Rd in Mitcham to Park Rd in Donvale.

Environmentalists succeeded in having the path kept to the boundary of remnant bushland above the EastLink tunnels, but failed in their bid to keep the concreters out.

Yarran Dheran Advisory Committee chairman Brian Pell said the path's route was "generally better than we expected".

"It's out of the Hillcrest bushland but it goes through the Chaim Court bushland," Mr Pell said. "Generally we are fairly positive about it but we would have preferred no bike path."

The land is rich with wildlife. Southern and Eastern Integrated Transport Authority spokesman Matt Phelan said the path "skirted around the main areas of sensitive bushland" and narrowed in sections to skirt trees.

"The section through the Mullum Mullum Valley provides the missing link in the path network," Mr Phelan said.

He said a \$4 million pedestrian overpass at Maroondah Highway in Ringwood would link with the path near Heatherdale Rd.

Bicycle Victoria facilities development manager Mark Dixon said concrete would be low maintenance, particularly on steep sections where gravel would erode, but the route was not the preferred option.

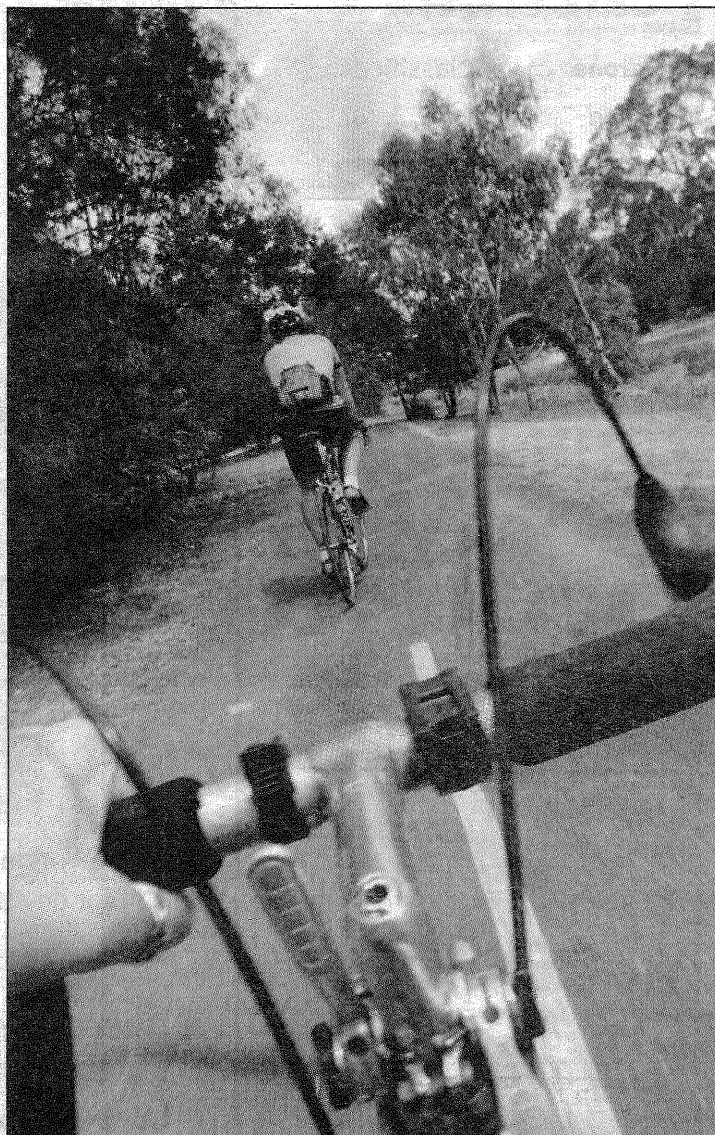
"It's still a good outcome for riders but there will be some steep sections that will deter some riders," Mr Dixon said. "There's a concern about people going too quickly down them."

Bicycle Victoria is meeting with the path's designers "to see how we can lessen that risk".

Former transport minister Peter Batchelor said in October last year that tunnels were dug under the valley - at an estimated cost of \$100 million or more - because "this area is very unusual and worth protecting".

■ Tell us what you think. Write to us at maroondah@leadernewspapers.com.au or 1 Chapel St, Blackburn, 3130.

WHAT'S TO COME



What the new bike path could look like.

Pictures: ANDY DREWITT

the dorset
presents

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