



Guidelines for Sustainable Geotrail Development

Working Group 3 has the goal of establishing a framework for creating high quality, sustainable geotrains.

Geotrains are journeys that offer the advantages of

- relating directly to the tourism experience linking destinations particularly of geological or geographical interest;
- having universal appeal, and do not compete with or impact on land access issues;
- being easy to establish and representing a cost-effective means of enhancing regional development.
- forming logical journeys linking accommodation destinations where available;
- melding the geological heritage features of a region with a cohesive story; and
- incorporating the biodiversity and cultural components (including mining heritage) of the region through which the geotrail traverses.

Geotrains not only link natural landscapes, wilderness, and protected areas, but also include human modified environments like quarries, road sections and urban settings. Geotourism argues that to fully understand and appreciate the environment, visitors firstly learn about the Abiotic (non-living) elements of climate, landscape, geology, and soils, as these determine the distribution of Biotic (living) elements of animals and plants. Both components influence the cultural landscape of how people inhabited the area in the past, as well as how they live there today. These become the key ABC (Abiotic, Biotic, Cultural) elements of geotourism/geotrains, which provides a cohesive approach to interpreting natural areas.

Active geotrains proposals are continuing to be being implemented or considered by various government agencies and/or university groups in Western Australia (Murchison GeoRegion <https://bit.ly/3pd6Aps> , and John Forrest National Park Railway Reserve Heritage <https://bit.ly/3LVWymo> and Meckering Geotrains), Queensland (Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, Dig the Tropics, Boulder Opal), New South Wales <https://bit.ly/3xNrQA3> particularly Port Macquarie Coastal Geotrail – now completed <https://bit.ly/3J6GbDk> , the Newcastle Coastal Geotrail <https://bit.ly/3U2jbeH>, Warrumbungle National Park Geotrains <https://bit.ly/3fc6LZs> , Central Darling River, the Mutawintji National Park Geotrail (see below) and South Australia (various projects including the Brachina Gorge

Geotrail and proposals for new geotrails in the Goyder/Burra region), Victoria (Kanawinka/Great Ocean Road area), and Norfolk Island.

In Tasmania, the West Coast 'Living Earth' GeoTrail <https://bit.ly/2OKXYat> a co-venture of Mineral Resources Tasmania, Department of State Growth Tasmania, and West Coast Council is currently undergoing continuing development with work being directed at enhancing the quality of the interpretation. This geotrail, connecting the mining centres of Zeehan, Rosebery, and Queenstown, currently provides information to enable visitors to understand and appreciate the geological processes and landscapes which are featured throughout the geotrail. Each site has a roadside sign, either a large sign with information and explanations, or a small sign showing the relevant QR Code web-link to the Living Earth website. Tasmania also hosts the 'Created from Chaos' Coastal Geotrail in NW Tasmania <https://bit.ly/2OEKc4t> and the Furneaux Geotrail on Flinders Island <https://bit.ly/3s4vjeM>

In 2021, based on a conference presentation at AESC 2021, the Geological Survey of NSW produced a 'YouTube' video clip with the title "Geotales and geotrails – a collaborative geotourism initiatives and implications for new visitor experiences in regional NSW <https://bit.ly/3xNrqa3>

The newly established Mutawintji National Park Geotrail, located some 130 km north-east of Broken Hill in far west NSW, follows existing walking tracks to explore the park's ancient geology and Aboriginal cultural significance. Exploring the park with the NSW GeoTours app, tourists will be led back through time. This project was delivered in partnership with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and with guidance from the Mutawintji Board of Management, Mutawintji Local Aboriginal Land Council, local Aboriginal elders, and members of the wider community <https://bit.ly/3V6IEop>

There is a 'YouTube' video clip on the Derwent Valley Rail Trail located approximately 30 km north-west of Hobart <https://bit.ly/48Lqpld>

Geotrails are also featured in the development of two other GeoRegion projects in NSW – Ku-ring-gai and the Glen Innes Highlands.

Further Information:

David Robson, Chair of both the Working Group 3 of the National Geotourism Strategy and the Geotourism Standing Committee of the Geological Society of Australia.

E: robodavidf@gmail.com

13 March 2024