



Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre (BSSOEC)

East Gippsland Ride MANUAL

Monday 14th September 2026

to

Thursday 17th September 2026

School staff: it is vital that all staff attending and School Principals are thoroughly conversant with this material. Within the Manual is the pertinent planning information relating to the event. The remaining forms can be found on the East Gippsland Ride event page on our website.

Parents: This program is a challenge and the students gain enormous confidence and pride in their accomplishments. They MUST be FIT, HEALTHY & GOOD RIDERS. If you have any doubts or concerns about the program please contact the East Gippsland Ride Co-ordinator at your school.

CHECKLIST OF FORMS TO RETURN

Please send a copy of all forms below to will.morgan@education.vic.gov.au by Friday August 14th	
	BSSOEC Photo/Transport Consent Form (for each student)
	Parent excursion consent form (for each student) Example on DET PAL
	Medical consent form for all students and staff Example on DET PAL (examples of forms shown on coordinators checklist)
	Any Action plans (e.g., asthma/anaphylaxis, epilepsy etc)
	Signed Staff & Principal Form (Group form)
	Signed Staff & Student preparation form (Group form)
	Dietary requirements form (Group form)



Contents

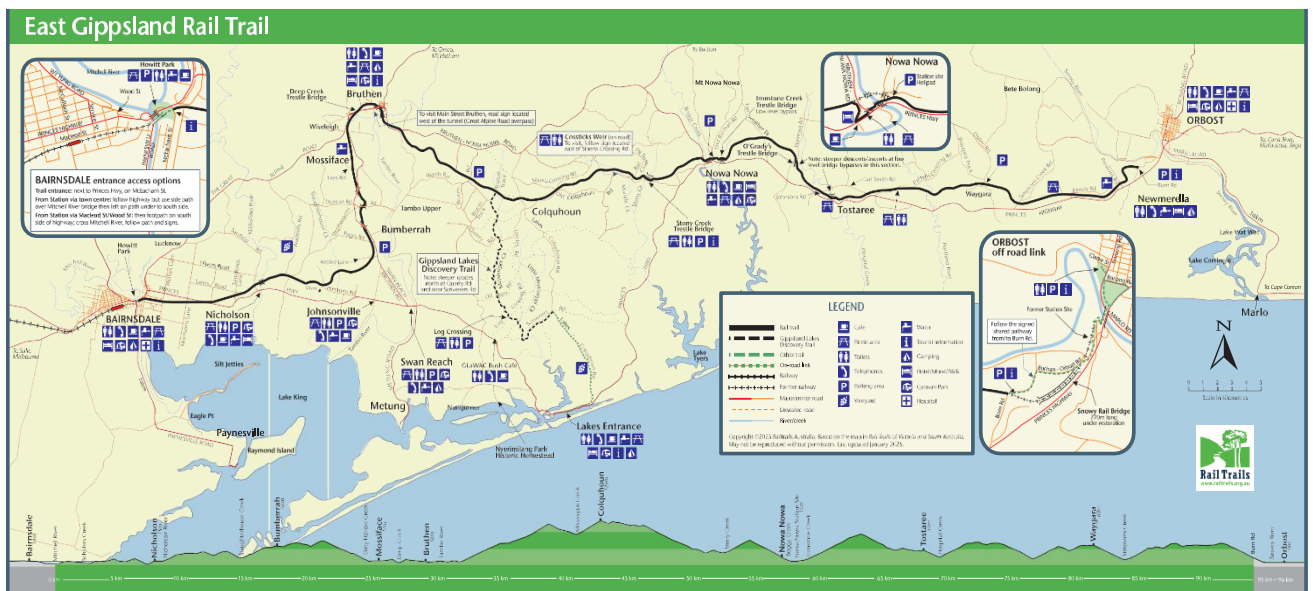
CHECKLIST OF FORMS TO RETURN	1
.....	1
THE BLACKWOOD EAST GIPPSLAND RIDE RAIL TRAIL BIKE TOUR	2
EAST GIPPSLAND TRAIL DAY 1 RIDING	3
NICHOLSON TO NOWA NOWA (48.5KM).....	3
EAST GIPPSLAND TRAIL DAY 2 RIDING	3
ORBOST TO NOWA NOWA (38KM).....	3
ACCOMMODATION	4
MEALS	5
RESPONSIBILITIES.....	7
DET INFORMATION.....	7
CAMPER SUPERVISION	8
ROAD CROSSING SUPPORT.....	8
TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS	9
BUSHFIRE RISK - GENERERAL INFORMATION	10
WET WEATHER.....	12
CLOTHING.....	12
BIKES & RIDING EQUIPMENT.....	12
GENERAL RIDING SAFETY	12
COMMUNICATION	13
TRAINING & PREPARATION	13
MORE INFORMATION	14
EAST GIPPSLAND RIDE: SUGGESTED PACKING LIST	15
GOOGLE MAP ROUTES.....	17

THE BLACKWOOD EAST GIPPSLAND RIDE RAIL TRAIL BIKE TOUR

The Blackwood East Gippsland Ride invites students & staff from a variety of Victorian Special Schools to unite together and enjoy a cycling experience along one of Australia's longest continuous Rail Trails:-



<http://www.eastgippslandrailtrail.com.au/>



EAST GIPPSLAND TRAIL DAY 1 RIDING

NICHOLSON TO NOWA NOWA (48.5KM)

The trail heads east from Nicholson through undulating terrain, crossing Harding Creek and Slaughterhouse Creek, gradually climbing to a remnant grassy woodland reserve at the old Bumberrah station site. Heading north, riders can take in the picturesque views of hilly countryside and green pastures, with views of the Tambo River flats and the remnant timber rail bridge at Deep Creek, Wiseleigh. The trail then edges down into the township of Bruthen which will be our designated lunch stop. The trail then leaves Bruthen and crosses the broad and sandy Tambo River with great views of another historic railway bridge. The trail then enters the Colquhoun State Forest. The trail then passes the Stony Creek trestle bridge, this sight to behold is 276 metres long and 19 metres high. From Stony Creek it's a relatively short distance to Nowa Nowa.

EAST GIPPSLAND TRAIL DAY 2 RIDING

ORBOST TO NOWA NOWA (38KM)

The trail begins in Forest Park, just outside of the Orbost township, alongside the trestle bridge that passes over the mighty Snowy River and river flats before reaching Newmerella. The trail then traverses through cleared grazing land and woodland areas with some steady uphill climbs. After lunch the trail then meanders towards Hospital Creek, which this trestle bridge was destroyed by fire in 2011. From there the trail will then pass Wairewa, where riders can view the remains of a magnificent, curved timber rail bridge. The trail then gently makes its way towards Nowa Nowa, where riders will cross Ironstone Creek, passing alongside another trestle bridge. From there it is a short distance into Nowa Nowa, the conclusion of our ride.



The Blackwood East Gippsland Ride Program is not designed as an easy ride and requires all participants to:-

- Have a good level of fitness
- Good bike riding skill
- Good understanding of how to use gears

This camp is a challenge and the students gain enormous confidence and pride in their accomplishments. They MUST be FIT, HEALTHY & GOOD RIDERS. If you have any doubts or concerns about the program, please contact the East Gippsland Ride Co-ordinator at your school.

The trail follows an undulating route along a smooth gravel surface with a variety of gradients highlighting the East Gippsland region.

The East Gippsland ride involves students drawn from Special Schools throughout Victoria. Students and Staff will be cycling along part of the "East Gippsland Rail Trail" which follows the route of the disused railway line through:-

- Day 1
 - Nicholson
 - Bumberrah
 - Tambo Upper
 - Mossiface
 - Wiseleigh
 - Colquhoun
 - Bruthen
 - Nowa Nowa
- Day 2
 - Orbost
 - Newmerella
 - Simpsons Creek
 - Waygara
 - Tostaree
 - Nowa Nowa

Please note that the itinerary may be altered if weather conditions are unsuitable.

ACCOMMODATION

- For the entire duration of the East Gippsland Ride we will be based in the township of Nowa Nowa staying at:-

Mingling Waters. 2050 PRINCES HWY, NOWA NOWA VIC 3887

PH: 03 5155 7600

<https://minglingwaters.com.au/>

- **We have exclusively booked out Mingling Waters as our base and accommodation for the ride. There is a mixture of available accommodations and camping sites:-**

- BSSOEC will preference and issue accommodations in order of applications received, noting some schools may share an accommodation building.
- If schools have a preference to camp, please indicate this in your application, BSSOEC will also take into consideration particular needs of students/groups when choosing accommodations suitable for those needs.
- Schools will be given ample notice of their accommodation, and if sharing with others. In order of helping them prepare and what gear they will need.
- Apart from tents, sleeping bags/mats, etc. you will need:-
 - Folding Table/s
 - Kitchen & Eating Utensils
 - Basic kitchen cleaning supplies
 - Water Containers
 - Fold up chairs

MEALS

Schools are fully responsible for the purchase & supply of the following meals:-

- ✓ Breakfast
- ✓ Lunch
- ✓ Snacks throughout each day

It is important that schools understand that they need to be well prepared and organised with their own food supplies. There are no shops in Nowa Nowa, the closest shops are in Lakes Entrance or Bruthen (30 minutes drive)

Blackwood SSOEC will organise and pay for all evening meals. All evening meals will be catered for on-site by a local catering company.

Schools are responsible to supply crockery and cutlery for their groups; no disposable materials will be used! There is a communal camp kitchen for groups to wash up their own gear.

Evening Meal Menu

	Main Meal	Dessert
Monday	Spaghetti Bolognese	Frog in a pond
Tuesday	BBQ and Salads	Cupcake cheesecakes
Wednesday	Chicken Parma & chips	Ice-cream & toppings

- Please ensure that you give BSSOEC accurate dietary/allergy information so that we can cater for all needs during evening meals



2026 EAST GIPPSLAND RIDE ITINERARY

MONDAY 14th September – Drive to Yea

- Drive to Nowa Nowa (Accommodation at Mingling Waters)
- 2:00 – 3.30 pm Buchan Caves session (Optional)
- 5:00pm Staff Meeting - 1 staff member from each school required
- 6:00pm Event Welcome
- 6:30pm Dinner at Mingling Waters, (schools will be advised on meal collection times)
Wear your favourite footy team gear!

TUESDAY 15th September – Ride Nicholson to Nowa Nowa

- Breakfast (Visiting schools BYO)
- 8:45am Depart Mingling Waters Retreat
- 9:30am Arrive in Nicholson. Unpack & rider briefing
- 10:00am Begin ride (walking bikes from the car park to the trail)
- 12:30pm Lunch at Bruthen Sports Reserve (Visiting schools BYO)
- 1:30pm Depart Bruthen
- 3:30pm Finish ride, arriving in Nowa Nowa
- 4:00pm Shuttle to Nicholson for bus pickup
- 5:30pm Shuttle drivers back from bus pickup
- 5:45pm Staff meeting at Caravan Park
- 6:30pm BBQ at Mingling Waters (schools advised on collection times)
Wear a Onesie/Oodie night

WEDNESDAY 16th SEPTEMBER – Ride Orbost to Nowa Nowa

- Breakfast (Visiting schools BYO)
- 8:45am Depart Mingling Waters Retreat
- 9:30am Arrive in Orbost. Unpack & rider briefing
- 10:00am Depart Orbost on Bikes
- 12:30pm Lunch at Partellis Crossing Rd (Visiting schools BYO)
- 1:30pm Depart Partellis Crossing Rd
-
- 4:00pm Arrive in Nowa Nowa
- 4:30pm Shuttle to Orbost to pick up buses
- 6:00pm Shuttle drivers back from bus pickup
- 6:30pm Dinner at Mingling Waters Retreat (schools advised on collection times)
- 7:30pm Medal Presentation and Disco

THURSDAY 17th SEPTEMBER - Return to School

- Own time Schools depart at their Leisure (leaving campsites and accommodations clean and tidy)

RESPONSIBILITIES

RIDE ORGANISATIONAL TASK	BLACKWOOD STAFF	SCHOOL RIDE CO-ORDINATOR	PRINCIPAL
Issue Manual	P		
Publish Risk Management documents	P		
Relevant Planning Permits	P		
Read Manuals		P	P
Read Risk Management documents		P	P
Distribute Manual to participating staff		P	
Distribute Parent Manual		P	
Complete DET Camp Forms		P	
Notification of School Activity Locator Forms		P	
Approve school's participation			P
Approve the suitability of Staff			P
Select participating Students & Staff		P	P
Adequately train Students & Staff		P	
Sign & Return Staff & Principal Form		P	P
Sign & Return Staff & Student preparation form		P	P
Ensure the Roadworthiness of participants bike		P	
Ensure participants have an appropriate helmet		P	
Ensure participants have suitable clothing		P	
Ensure suitability of camping equipment		P	
Full Student Supervision at ALL TIMES		P	

DET INFORMATION

It is essential that all staff participating in the Blackwood, East Gippsland Ride are familiar with The Victorian Government Excursions (including camps and adventure activities) Policies

& Guidelines. **For the program coordinator, this includes the online learning module for Camps & Excursions.**

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/approvals>

Please note... You will need to submit daily [Student Activity Locator Forms](#) for the duration of the East Gippsland Ride. If there is an emergency in an area you are visiting DET are then able to contact you & your school to inform you of any actions you need to implement. Blackwood staff will also submit general Student Activity Locator forms.

- It is the full responsibility of each individual school participating in the ride to ensure that the appropriate Department of Education (DE) camp/excursion forms are approved by your principal
- It is very important that parents/carers have complete details of this program including the skill and fitness levels required, road conditions, etc
- Information – re: the route, itinerary, etc. – included in this booklet should form the basis of details presented to parents/carers
- It is also recommended that schools keep a detailed training log so that you can prove that the students were adequately prepared for the ride
- **Schools must carry copies of student medical forms and all medical action plans.**

CAMPER SUPERVISION

- Teachers are reminded that their duty of care extends for the entire duration of the camp.
- All Department of Education regulations regarding supervision must be adhered to and staff are reminded that the consumption of alcohol is strictly forbidden.
- Please also be alert to the possibility of staff/students attempting to smoke/vape in tents – a recipe for disaster!!!!

ROAD CROSSING SUPPORT

- Minor street and road crossings throughout the ride will need to be monitored by individual staff as their schools proceed along the Rail Trail.
 - We will endeavour to place Bike Ride Volunteers along the trail to assist with all major road crossings throughout the duration of the East Gippsland Ride. This may include the following crossings:-

Tuesday	Wednesday
Stephensons Rd	Nicholson St / Lochiel St crossing from Forest Park assembly point
Swan Reach Rd#1(Tambo Upper)	Junction of bike path and Snowy River Bridge
Swan Reach Rd#2(just before Great Alpine Rd)	Buchan-Orbost Rd (2 crossings within 200m)
Great Alpine Rd (Deep Ck Trestle Bridge)	Burn Rd
Directing riders to Bruthen Recreational Reserve turn off prior to Bruthen- Nowa Nowa Rd for lunch break	Joiners Rd
Bruthen- Nowa Nowa Rd#1	Partellis Crossing Rd
Bruthen- Nowa Nowa Rd#2 & Dukes Rd combined	Hospital Creek (Steep descent/ascent points)
Stony Creek Trestle Bridge	Wairewa Rd, O'Grady's Trestle Bridge (Very steep descent and ascent. Dismounting recommended. Plenty of vehicular room)
Ramsdell Ct (top and bottom of street leading to crossing of Princess Hwy to entrance of Mingling Waters)	Nowa Nowa-Old Buchan Rd
	Hall Rd
	Nowa Nowa General store (trail follows footpath alongside Princess Hwy)
	Princess Hwy Crossing at entrance to Mingling Waters

TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

- Where necessary bus shuttles will be arranged:-
 - 4:00pm Tuesday afternoon (staff only) to pick up buses in Nicholson
 - 4:30pm Wednesday afternoon (staff only) to pick up buses in Alexandra
- As well as the Blackwood vehicle, there will be **'sag wagon/s'** following the entire group throughout each riding day
- Its highly recommended that every student that rides on a sag wagon is accompanied by a staff member from their school.
- It is the full responsibility of principals & school councils to endorse staff support officers (sso's) & parents/volunteers from your school assisting with your schools East Gippsland Ride group, as eligible to travel on sag wagons or continue riding with the group without direct teacher supervision prior to departing for the East Gippsland Ride. This endorsement must be documented within your school council minutes and included as part of your Department of Education camp/excursion forms
- The schools providing 'sag wagon' support must be aware that to cater for rising fuel prices & a need for sag wagon support the Blackwood staff has arranged to refuel sag wagon buses only at the expense of BSSOEC.

- Your school principal, council & parents need to be aware of and give consent and approval for the following:-
 - Both students and staff from your school may be required to travel in another school's bus for safety reasons, i.e.
 - Accident / injury
 - Bicycle malfunction
 - Tiredness or
 - Group transportation needs
- Any bus selected as a 'sag wagon' will be an accredited special school bus only.
- Drivers of these buses will be licenced and experienced in driving that type bus.
- If your bus is selected as a sag wagon bus, it may be required to tow a trailer from another special school.
- Communication between all school groups and all 'sag wagons' will be available by radio communications and mobile phone.
- If a decision is made to split the group into smaller riding clusters, each cluster will be supported by their own 'sag wagon' supplied from an individual school within that cluster.
- Drivers of the 'sag wagons' will be provided with appropriate directions and instructions.

BUSHFIRE RISK - GENERERAL INFORMATION

- The Fire Danger period will be current in the East Gippsland Shire (within the Southeast Fire Region) at the time of the East Gippsland Ride.
- BSSOEC staff will follow their protocols for Fire Danger ratings and direct visiting school staff in the event of an emergency
- Alternative daily programs may include a shortened route with earlier start times, to avoid heat exposure. This will be discussed with school ride coordinators before a decision is made.
- *If there is a serious Fire Threat during the week of the East Gippsland Ride an appropriate action plan for the safety and wellbeing of all participating students and staff will be put into place by Blackwood Staff under the direction and full co-ordination of local Emergency Services:-*
- In the unlikely event of a serious Fire Threat ALL PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS MUST follow the direction of Blackwood Staff who will be following Emergency Service Directives.

LOCAL ABC RADIO BUSHFIRE UPDATE INFORMATION

TOWN	RADIO STATION
Bairnsdale	828 ABC

CFA Fire Danger Rating page for South East Fire District:

<https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/home/local-information>

Vic Emergency page for incidents & warnings (or download the Vic Emergency app)

<https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/>

FIRE DANGER RATING PROTOCOL

The East Gippsland Ride is located within the South East Fire District

Management protocol for the event in line with CFA Fire Danger Ratings:

FIRE DANGER RATING

TOTAL

FIRE BAN

CATASTROPHIC

East Gippsland Ride is ...

CLOSED - ALL GROUPS
MUST DEPART NOWA NOWA
THE NIGHT BEFORE

TOTAL

FIRE BAN

EXTREME

Ride event not to take place during 'Extreme' Fire Danger rating conditions. All staff and students to remain in townships and away from bushfire prone areas. Schools may also make the decision to leave town and drive back to their Schools.

HIGH

Meeting to discuss event continuation options with Schools event coordinators. If decision is made that the ride continues, it will be with extra caution and monitoring of conditions. Be ready to act. Actively monitor the Vic Emergency app for fires in local area. Reconsider event start times and distances to avoid risks associated with extreme heat.

MODERATE

Ride continues as usual with no modifications required for Bushfire. Continue implementing regular risk management protocols for all aspects of event.

WET WEATHER

- As it could be wet, each rider **MUST have appropriate wet weather gear** suitable for use on a ride. While there will be *NO* Blackwood led alternative program due to wet weather, please understand that the main ride may take place in consideration of the wet weather conditions.
- NO ALTERNATIVE BLACKWOOD PROGRAM WILL BE PROVIDED FOR WET WEATHER.

CLOTHING

- Brightly coloured bike tops or T-shirts should be worn on the ride, preferably with a visibility vest.
- Bike shorts reduce chaffing and saddle soreness. Other shorts with fairly long legs are preferable to footy shorts which may rub the top of the thigh.
- *Jeans **SHOULD NOT** be worn as they restrict movement and increase muscle strain.*

BIKES & RIDING EQUIPMENT

- Most schools are now providing bikes for riders, we highly discourage the use of personal bikes to ensure all bikes are at a safe standard.
- **If Schools allow students to bring their own bikes – the teachers from that school will have full responsibility of maintenance & suitability of those bikes for the duration of the Ride.**
- Whilst some minor repairs may be carried out – if faults develop during the ride, it is the responsibility of the parents and each school to ensure that the bikes are mechanically reliable and roadworthy.
- Mountain bikes are the preferred bike for this event.
- ALL BIKES MUST HAVE 2 BRAKES.
- It is essential that at least one water bottle is fitted to each bike – preferably two.
- Lack of water leads to loss of energy and dehydration.
- Water will be available for refills along the route.
- Approved bicycle helmet (ensure appropriate fit for students)
- Appropriate bright clothing

GENERAL RIDING SAFETY

- At least one teacher from each school will have:-
 - **A Current Bicycle Education Instructor Training Qualification.**
- One staff member from each school will have:-
 - A CURRENT minimum Level 2 First Aid Qualification

- *A minimum of 2 STAFF will accompany each group during all ride activities. **RIDING GROUPS MUST STAY TOGETHER AND STUDENTS ALWAYS BE WITHIN CLEAR SIGHT OF THEIR STAFF***
- **EACH SCHOOL GROUP WILL** carry an appropriate First Aid Kit
 - Larger kits will be carried in support vehicles
- A sag wagon will accompany the ride to pick up students and/or staff who run out of puff.

COMMUNICATION

- To aid with communication throughout the East Gippsland Ride it is a requirement that ride coordinators carry mobile phones and all schools bring a minimum of ONE, 2 Way Radio that operates on a frequency of **CHANNEL 12** – allowing all groups to have communication with:-
 - ✓ The BSSOEC Vehicle;
 - ✓ The Sag Wagon/s; and
 - ✓ Each individual school group

TRAINING & PREPARATION

- With the Rail Trail being a gravel surface the quality of the surface can vary according to recent & current weather conditions.



Dry conditions

Wet conditions (can be challenging to ride)

- Training is an essential component for all participants to prepare themselves for any bike ride. However, for the East Gippsland Ride it is highly recommended you include:-
 - Training on softer surfaces to prepare all participants for riding the East Gippsland Rail Trail in wet conditions, where wheels may sink into the surface
 - Grass sports ovals are highly recommended
 - Regularly training on a grass sports oval for an extended period of time will help build endurance within all participants & help them all cope with the challenge of a wet gravel Rail Trail

Rail Trail Hazards & Why you MUST KEEP your Group TOGETHER

- It is essential to keep your group together to prepare & warn all riders of potential hazards along the rail trail



MORE INFORMATION

Comprehensive information on the rail trail can be found on the following websites:

<http://www.eastgippslandrailtrail.com.au/>

See the BSSOEC website for event documentation as well as photos of some sights and trestle bridges riders will see and experience up close.

[East Gippsland Ride - Blackwood Outdoor Specialist School](#)

EAST GIPPSLAND RIDE: SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

- ✓ Riding can be smelly business & nights can be cold, so come prepared!
- ✓ If you don't have these items; beg, borrow or buy from an op-shop

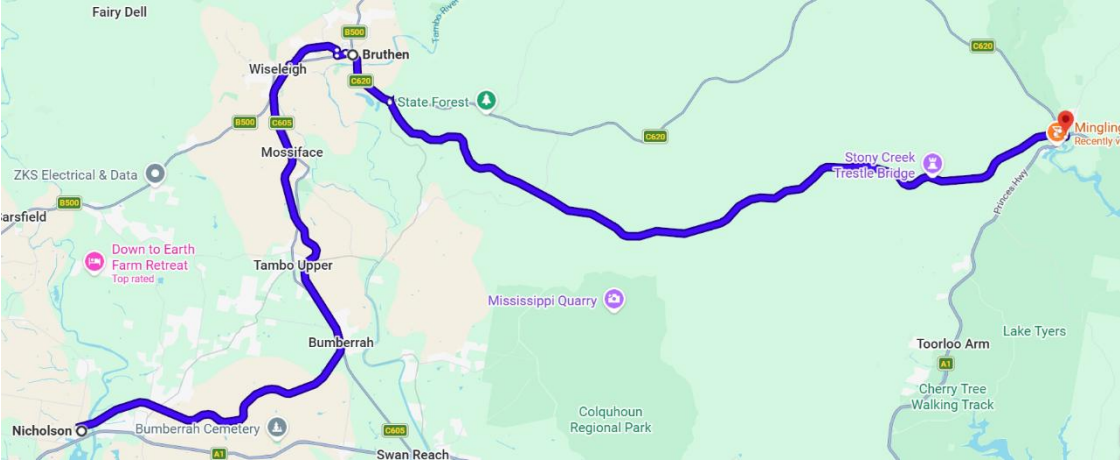
Students need to bring...			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping Bag		<input type="checkbox"/> Pillow <input type="checkbox"/> Pillow Case
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 X Shorts (suitable for riding long distance)		<input type="checkbox"/> Towel
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 T-shirt per day		<input type="checkbox"/> 2 X Jumpers
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 X Long Pants (for outside)		<input type="checkbox"/> Wet weather gear (suitable for riding)
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Pair of Socks per day		<input type="checkbox"/> 2 X Pairs of Shoes
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Pair Underwear per day		<input type="checkbox"/> 2 x Water Bottles
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bedtime Toy (if required)		<input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun Hat <input type="checkbox"/> Beanie		<input type="checkbox"/> Torch <input type="checkbox"/> Insect Repellent
	<input type="checkbox"/> Footy colours: jumper/uniform/scarf For footy night		<input type="checkbox"/> Bike helmet (may be provided by your school)

	<p style="text-align: center;">Toiletries</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Soap & Face Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Toothpaste & Brush <input type="checkbox"/> Deodorant & Brush		<p style="text-align: center;">Personal Medication</p> <input type="checkbox"/> In original packaging and clearly labelled, with your family name & given to your School Staff
	<input type="checkbox"/> Onesie or Oodie (for second night)		<input type="checkbox"/> Warm jacket

Please remember to clearly name items with your CHILD'S NAME and SCHOOL NAME

GOOGLE MAP ROUTES

TUESDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER BIKE RIDE NICHOLSON – NOWA NOWA



WEDNESDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER BIKE RIDE ORBOST – NOWA NOWA

