



An open letter to the mountain biking community

Recently there has been a deal of social media comment about the effectiveness (or lack of) of WAMBA and of WestCycle. Much of this comment appears to be born from ignorance and we hope that this open letter will help the community understand WAMBA's role and focus:

WAMBA is recognised by the State Government as being the state sporting association for mountain biking and our constitution says that our mission is "to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to identify, develop and sustain mountain bike experiences in Western Australia".

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries currently provides funding to WAMBA to help us realise our objectives and to implement the State Mountain Biking Strategy. That funding supports WestCycle's Mountain Bike Development Manager – Peta Demidenko - whose sole purpose is support mountain-biking in WA. It also allows WestCycle to:

- lobby government on behalf of the riding community;
- support a junior high-performance development program for mountain biking;
- to support clubs; and
- promote mountain biking

The achievements of WAMBA since this arrangement was implemented have been, frankly, outstanding and a credit to the tireless efforts of the volunteers who make up the committee and to the people within WestCycle who put in a massive effort on our behalf.

We are not going to try and list everything that has been achieved by the current and past committee members of WAMBA or by WestCycle on behalf of you. What we will say is that their combined efforts make WA the envy of other states in Australia. We acknowledge that there is still a very, very long way to go but the gulf between WA and the other states is closing.

Our challenge as a community is to build on these excellent foundations and to use the tools that have been created on your behalf to see new trails delivered, existing trails maintained and the popularity of mountain biking increase. And to be direct, petty sniping behind the relative safety of a social media platform, particularly by members of the community who should know better, does nothing to further our cause.

Until now we have been silent simply because it is a waste of the committee's meagre resources and an abuse of the funding provided by the state government to defend ourselves against every petty attack and correct every misconception. That being said, the recent posts about Turner Hill need to be addressed so that we can move forward and see something positive come out of a bad situation.

To be clear, WAMBA **was not** consulted in relation to the works taken to remove the table top or modify the trails at Turner Hill. This work was undertaken at the direction of the Perth Hills District of the Parks and Wildlife Service. The first WAMBA new of them was when the social media comments

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started. We immediately sought an explanation and when it was provided, we communicated via our Facebook page. They are the facts and that is the past. Let's look to the future.

The Perth Hills District have indicated that they are happy to work with the mountain biking community to have the table top reinstated and other works completed on the trails at Turner Hill, provided those works comply with the draft Western Australian Mountain Bike Management Guidelines. These guidelines govern mountain bike trails in all land managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. We are going to pause for a moment to note that it was through the tenacity of WAMBA committee members that the guidelines recognise a range of trail types for all disciplines.

Back to Turner Hill. We believe that the best way of harnessing the opportunity that we now have is via the Southern Hills Mountain Bikers. So, to those of you who are passionate about seeing Turner Hill restored and improved WE say simply this – get behind the Southern Hills Mountain Bikers. If we come together quickly and constructively two things will happen. The trails will be restored and we will demonstrate to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions that the passion they have all seen on social media can be harnessed and something positive delivered.

The only way that WAMBA as your representative body and you as trail users can ensure that issues like Turner Hill don't re-occur is for every trail in WA to have a custodian or a champion. A club that is as committed to the trails as KMBC is to the Kalamunda Circuit, MRORCA is to the trails around Margaret River, the Cape Riders are to the trails around Dunsborough, the Albany Mountain Bike Club is to their expanding trail network. We are sure you get the picture and we do not seek to disrespect any club by not mentioning them here....

This means picking up a shovel or putting fingers on a keyboard, doing it the right way and being part of the solution not perpetuating the problem.

And to those of you who believe WAMBA aren't delivering for you we have one thing to say. Join the committee. We desperately need someone to help the Southern Hills Mountain Bikers and someone to help us with our communications via social media. It's a thankless, taxing job and if you've got the stones for it, we would love to hear from you. If that's not for you, may we make a suggestion? Bring your concerns, suggestions and comments to us directly. Post on our Facebook page or email us at info@wamba.org.au.

WAMBA Committee comprising:

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