

Wambenger Trails

Collie to Darkan Rail Trail



This multi-use trail is a pleasant one to two day journey suitable for horse and bike riders or longer if you choose to walk.



Photo: Shire of West Arthur

Where it all began

The Collie to Darkan Rail Trail is on an old railway line that once connected Narrogin and Collie and passed through West Arthur in the southern Wheatbelt. The line was used to transport timber, farm produce, livestock and grain, and also provided a passenger service before cars made the service redundant. The line operated through to 1979, with the railway sleepers removed in the early 1990s.

The Friends of Collie to Darkan Rail Trail Group was formed in 1999 to promote the creation of a multi-use walk/bike/horse trail. Construction of the trail between Buckingham and Darkan began in 2002 and opened in October 2005. It was extended from Darkan to Dardadine in 2017.

Along the trail

The Collie to Darkan Rail Trail passes through bush and picturesque farmlands from Buckingham to Darkan, a distance of 46.5km, then another 15km to Dardadine. Along the way, the trail's relatively gentle gradients feature a series of renovated rail bridges over creeks, rivers and flood plains, as well as the well-preserved historic railway stations at Bowelling and Darkan.

From Buckingham the trail runs mostly parallel to Coalfields Road, diverging south when you reach Cowcher. Just east of Cowcher you'll cross the magnificent Cowcher bridge before continuing across a large floodplain. The trail then returns to the main road, crossing it twice before reaching Bowelling Station which has a display inside of the railway's history.

After Bowelling, the trail continues alongside Coalfields Road to Darkan and features a higher percentage of forested scenery, as well as a series of smaller rail bridges. From Darkan, the trail crosses Coalfields Road and heads north towards Dardadine, stopping just short of Dardadine siding.

Spring and autumn are good times to ride the trail, with moderate temperatures and a good track surface.

In springtime, the area is carpeted in wildflowers including the striking blue leschenaultia, bright red kangaroo paws, many orchid varieties, and shrubs such as hakeas and grevilleas. The Collie Visitor Centre provides information on wildflowers in the area.



Photo: Shire of West Arthur

Choose the right trail for you and your horse

Being an old railway line, the Rail Trail is a relatively flat walk, cycle or horse ride.

Please consider and plan for the long distances.



Walking: Class 2

Recommended for most walkers. Gentle gradients and firm surfaces.



Cycling: Easy

Recommended for beginner riders with basic mountain bike skills.



Adaptive Cycling: 3.5

These trails have been rated under the Australian Adaptive Mountain Biking Guidelines.



Horse Riding: Easy

Recommended for riders and horses with basic skills and fitness.

Distances and approximate times

		Walk	Cycle	Horse
Buckingham to Bowelling	18km	6hrs	1.5hrs	3hrs
Bowelling to Darkan	28.5km	9.5hrs	2.4hrs	5hrs
Darkan to Dardadine	15km	5hrs	1.3hrs	2.5hrs

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Wambenger Trails

@wambengertrails



Photo: Ian Payne

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- #wambengertrails
- #collie
- #collietrails
- #seriousfun



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Be prepared

- Take enough supplies, equipment and first aid. Check your gear.
- Supplies and treated water are only available at Collie and Darkan.
- Carry plenty of water with you and remember to drink regularly.
- Avoid walking or riding in hot weather.
- Wear sturdy footwear, weatherproof clothing and sun protection.
- Travel with a buddy and tell someone your plans.
- Do not rely on your mobile phone. Coverage in the area is limited.

Trail code

- This is a shared-use path. Please be considerate of other trail-users.
- Cyclists must give way to walkers and horses. If there is not enough room to pass safely, pull over and wait.
- Take extra care when crossing roads.
- Leave no trace. Stay on the trail and take all rubbish with you.
- Please close gates when passing through private property.

Horse riders

- Rainwater may be available for horses at Bowelling Station but must be treated before use. During winter horses can drink safely from creeks and streams.
- Horse riders must set up their own yards at Bowelling Station stopover.
- Please clean up after your horse at overnight stops. Use chaff bags and non-weed feed.
- Horse manure can be left on the trail.



Baiting occurs on a regular basis within areas of State Forest. Part of the Rail Trail passes through this area. 1080 Baits are poisonous and will kill cats and dogs. Do not take your pets into areas baited with 1080.

Where to start

The trail starts at **Buckingham**, 18km east of Collie. The trailhead is located on the corner of Coalfields Road and Shotts River Road. For cyclists and walkers starting the trail from Collie, contact the Collie Visitor Centre for information on parking and local businesses that provide transfers from Collie.

You can also start your journey from the eastern end of the trail at either Darkan or Dardadine. The **Darkan** trailhead is located at the public toilets opposite the Darkan Hotel on Coalfields Road. Parking is available at the toilets and next to this is a gravel area suitable for horse floats.

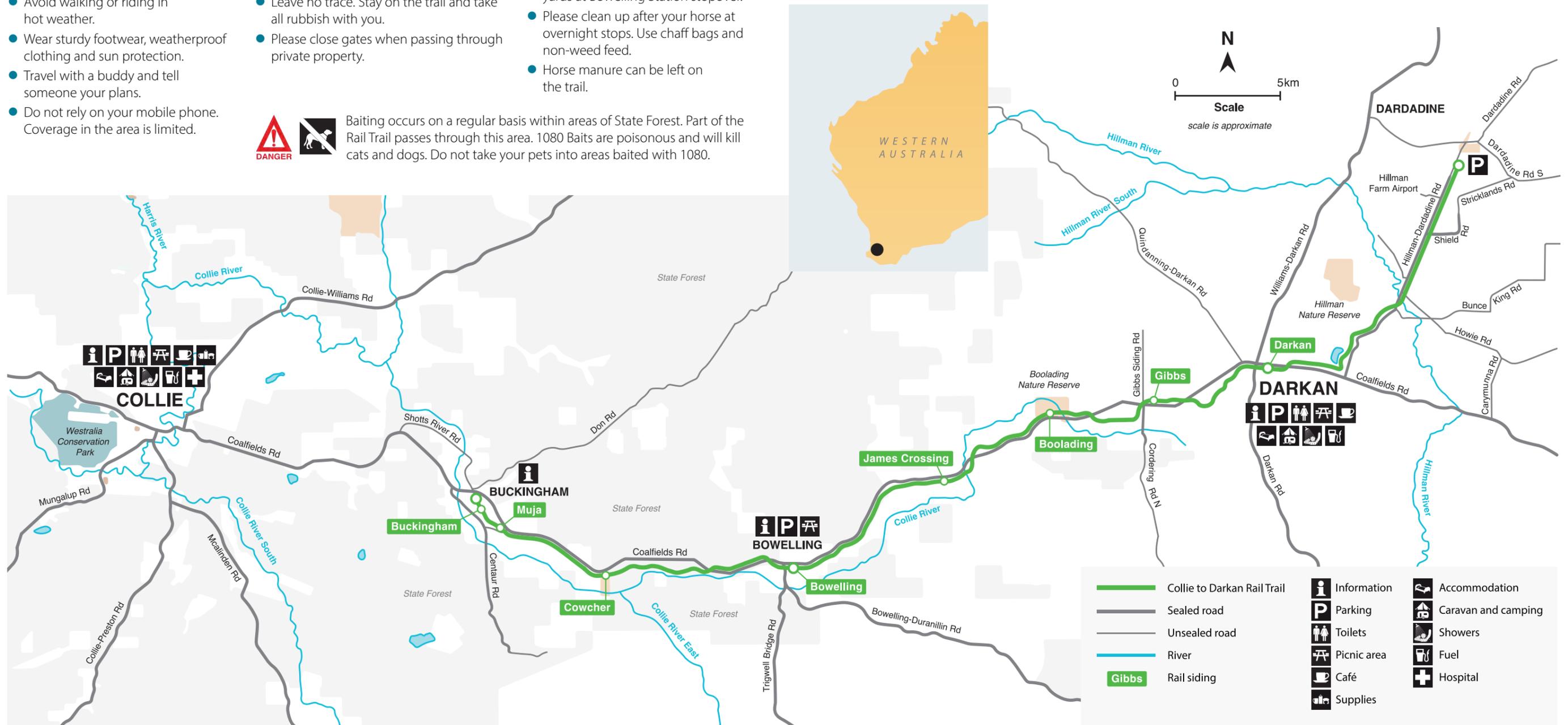
To start at **Dardadine**, travel north from Coalfields Road along Hillman-Dardadine Road for 11.4km where you will find a gravel turn-off to the east and a sign on the rail trail titled 'End of the Rail Trail'.

Overnight stops

Bowelling Station is the main overnight stop on the trail but rail siding sites may be used if required. Rainwater is seasonally available but not guaranteed, and must be treated before use. Water can be treated by vigorous boiling for at least one minute, mechanical filtration or chemical treatment.

Trail-users can also camp overnight at the disused Pony Club Grounds in **Darkan**. For a small fee you can use the shower and toilets in the caravan park located next door. You must contact the Shire of West Arthur prior to camping or using the caravan park facilities.

It is recommended that you do not leave your vehicle unattended overnight in any public parking areas.



Save the app that could save your life



Download the free Emergency+ app to call for emergency assistance if ever required (emergencyplus.com.au). If there is no mobile phone coverage you **WILL NOT** be able to call 000 but the app will provide you with GPS location details.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, phone **Triple Zero (000)**. The nearest hospital is located in Collie.

Further information

Collie Visitor Centre 156 Throssell Street, Collie Phone: (08) 9734 2051
Shire of West Arthur 31 Burrowes Street, Darkan Phone: (08) 9736 2222