

## **Redesdale and District Association Inc.**

# Stone Reserve Heritage Walk

## STAGE 1

## **Strategic Plan**

## Sept 1st 2020 – August 31st 2023



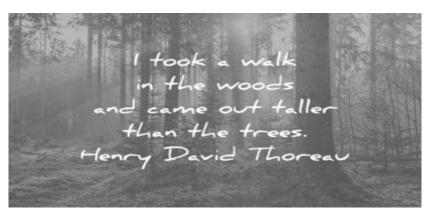
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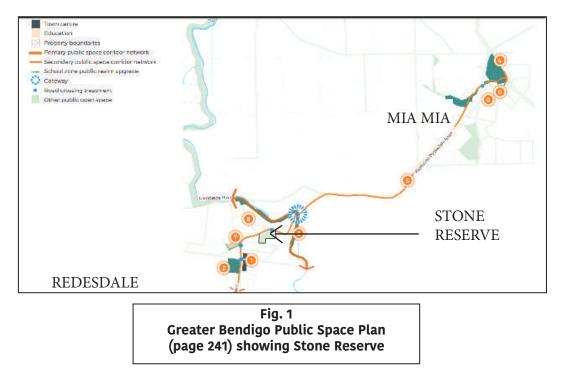


## STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

In January 2018, Redesdale, Mia Mia and surrounding districts celebrated the 150th anniversary of the naming of the Redesdale Bridge. It was a large event held in the Redesdale Hall and included a re-enactment video of the naming of the bridge, a video of local residents sharing their memories of the bridge, and displays of the bridge's history and engineering. A large triptych commemorative quilt, sewn by Mia Mia and Redesdale residents and children from the school over three years, was unveiled by the mayor of the City of Greater Bendigo (COGB), Marg O'Rourke.

The organising committee was keen for visitors to be able to see the bridge close up, and for the opening re-enactment to be held at the bridge. It became clear, after discussion with the COGB and with Vic Roads that it was going to be impossible for any part of the event to be held at the bridge. There was nowhere for safe parking of vehicles or for crowds to gather at any point near or overlooking the bridge. This is why the event was held at the Redesdale Hall. In fact there is no safe place for interested tourists or locals to view the bridge and quite often people stop to view the bridge in very dangerous places.

It was therefore with great interest that residents had the opportunity to view the Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan when Mark Stubbs (Senior Strategic Planner for Regional Sustainable Development, CoGB) visited a meeting held by the Redesdale and District Association (RADA) in March 2018. The Public Space Plan was developed as a long-term strategy for the municipality's public spaces – the parks, garden, creek corridors, green corridors, bush land, sports reserves, streets and road reserves, urban spaces, rail corridors and easements. What sparked the interest of attendees particularly was a small parcel of land south of the Redesdale Bridge which appeared to be Crown Land. (See Figure 1)



A deputation from RADA set off during April 2018 to inspect the land and it was discovered that not only was it picturesque, but it also gave an ideal view of the bridge nestling among the hills. Following clarification of the ownership of the land and a visit to Mark Stubbs at the COGB, it was decided to pursue the possibility of developing this area for use by the public; both local residents and tourists. The reserve land is close to the Redesdale township where there is excellent parking.

The piece of land in question is called "Stone Reserve", and so a Stone Reserve subcommittee of RADA was formed to follow up possibilities for the project's progression. Mark Stubbs encouraged this endeavour as it was a good example of a potential positive outcome from the Public Space Plan. Andrew Plant, Strong Communities Officer at COGB was appointed the liaison person for this project.

It was learnt that the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (DELWP) had ownership of the reserve and that Parks Victoria were the managers. Some community members had been under the impression that the Redesdale and Mia Mia Primary School owned the reserve. The school principle discovered that in the 1950s cypress trees were planted as part of the "School Forestry Program". In the 1990s the trees were felled and the school replanted native vegetation. There was no evidence that the school had ever owned the land.

It was felt that the improvement of the reserve for the benefit of visitors and local residents would fulfil a number community aims set out in the 2013 and 2018 local community plans. Also, the 2019 Healthy Heart of Victoria Active Living Census was conducted and 13,000 people from Greater Bendigo responded. By far the most popular activity for adults was walking.

A key component of the community plans for both Mia Mia and Redesdale in 2018 was the development of a walking and/or biking trail linking the two townships, preferably with a walk reaching and crossing the Campaspe River. Whilst the Stone Reserve project cannot, at this stage, go as far as linking the townships, it can potentially form the groundwork for further development in the future.

The Redesdale and District Association, under whose auspices the Stone Reserve subcommittee works, was started in late 2012 at the suggestion of the City of Greater Bendigo in order to drive the development and review of community plans. It has a committee representing all community groups and has recently published its own strategic plan (RADA Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024 – "One Community"). One of the Stone Reserve subcommittee attended a 'Strategic Plan Masterclass' organised by the COGB in June 2019 in order to prepare for the progress of this heriatge walk project.

The history of Redesdale and Mia Mia has been the subject of much investigation of late. This is partly due to the huge success of the sesquicentenary of the bridge celebrations. Two books have recently been published, greatly adding to local knowledge (See Fig 2). A number of residents have gathered information which would be of great interest if displayed at the end of a scenic walk culminating in a viewing area with boards depicting historical events. In fact there was considerable disappointment that this could not be achieved for the sesquicentenary owing to a lack of appropriate real estate or safe viewing areas. There were also offers from established local artists to donate their time and skills to create a unique commemorative depiction of the bridge's history set into local granite. The recurring problem with all this enthusiasm was a lack of an appropriate site for such an endeavour.

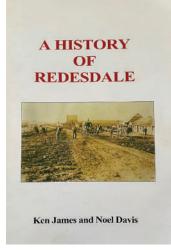
Stone Reserve offers a completely appropriate site for a heritage monument. It could become a safe place to view walk, rest, view and learn.

Following encouragement from COGB, in July 2018 RADA wrote a formal letter to the council outlining the communities active and formal interest in progressing community use of this hitherto neglected reserve land. (See Appendix 1)

During the rest of 2018 and 2019, the Redesdale community focussed on the improvement of the community hall and its kitchen, a large and expensive project and thus the Stone Reserve project was set aside for most of 2019. The Redesdale Hall redevelopment started in 2020 and thus the subcommittee was able to concentrate on the reserve.

Because of the large scope of this project, the subcommittee was advised to divide their planning into two phases; Stage one to concentrate on a walk overlooking the bridge and stage two to consider a walk down to the river. This strategic plan concentrates on stage 1.

Initial investigations have discovered unused roadways that could potentially be used to access the river (see Fig 7 page 10) and this potential project will be the subject of a future stage 2 plan.



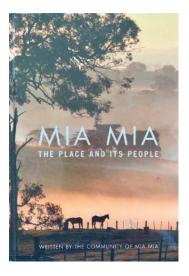


Fig. 2 2016 History of Redesdale and 2014 History of Mia Mia

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Stone Reserve is a publicly owned parcel of land managed by Parks Victoria. Apart from occasional visits by the primary school children for supervised activity, it is very rarely visited. It is currently strewn with debris (see Appendix 2. Photo Gallery) and only accessible with great difficulty through grazed neighbouring land or via rock-strewn steep roadside banks.

The reserve offers an opportunity for local residents and visitors to walk through shaded woodland to a high point overlooking the historical Redesdale Bridge. Currently there is no safe way to view the bridge. There are no pathways beside the road approaching the bridge. There is no safe parking or pedestrian area at the bridge. Visitors wishing to view the bridge are exposed to the dangers of passing traffic which regularly includes large trucks.

The recent COGB Public Space Plan revealed an opportunity for the local community to develop a plan to utilise this under-used public asset.

The Redesdale Bridge is unique and its colourful history and interesting engineering was recently celebrated on the occasion of its 150th birthday. During the planning for this event, the community expressed a desire to have a permanent display of the history of the bridge but there was no appropriate or safe place for people to view historical information. Stone Reserve offers a suitable area to view the bridge within its surrounding landscape. It also provides a scenic walkway through established woodland and would provide opportunities for exercise and recreation.

With the development of the heritage walkway, it will be possible for people to park their cars safely in the Redesdale township and then walk from St Laurence Church through currently grazed land and into woodland to reach the hill overlooking the bridge. Here they will be able to read about the history of the area and sit in a shaded place before walking back to the township.

Both Redesdale and Mia Mia communities have expressed an interest in extending a walkway from Redesdale through to the Mia Mia township. Public unused roadways extend from Stone Reserve to the Campaspe River and so theoretically this could be achieved. The Stone Reserve subcommittee of the Redesdale and District Association decided to divide this project into two stages; Stage 1, Stone Reserve Heritage Walk, and Stage 2 Walkway to the river. This strategic plan covers Stage 1 only. There is much community support for this project. Groups such as Campaspe River Landcare, the Redesdale Mia Mia Primary School and the Redesdale Recreation Reserve Committee have all pledged their enthusiastic backing for the project as have a number of local individuals such as farmers,

tradespeople, historians and artists. The project will provide welcome work opportunities for local businesses.

This local area has suffered many setbacks since the disaster of the Black Saturday fires in 2009. The local hotel and café were closed for over 3 years and have only opened again in the last 4 years. Gradually Redesdale has been working to improve the conditions and amenities of the area and has achieved a great deal in the last 7 years. The development of a heritage walk will be another positive reason for residents to have pride in their community. It will also enhance Redesdale and Mia Mia's reputation as a destination for tourists, walkers, historians and anyone else wanting to have a picnic in a beautiful landscape.

Fig. 3 Redesdale Bridge, Stone Reserve top right.



## PURPOSE

#### Vision

To develop a walking track to a point of great historical interest by:

- 1. Creating a walking track from the township of Redesdale to the summit of Stone Reserve.
- 2. Constructing a shaded lookout at the summit of Stone Reserve where the Redesdale Bridge can be observed.
- 3. Constructing history boards and a granite monument at the lookout depicting the history of the bridge and local area.
- 4. Providing a picnic area within the reserve.

#### Mission

To work with the Redesdale and Mia Mia community, The City of Greater Bendigo, and other stakeholders to achieve a visually pleasing, safe and interesting short walk to a point of great local interest and to promote Redesdale and Mia Mia as an historic destination.

This is in keeping with the mission statement of the Redesdale and District Association which is:

Redesdale residents aim to achieve a town which is safe, invitingly landscaped, welcoming to tourists, clean and tidy, and where people of all ages work and socialise well together. They require good, functional facilities for activities and meetings and easy access to necessary services" (Community Plan review 2013).

The recent strategic plan of the Redesdale and District Association stated that its purpose was: *"To promote an environment where community connections and advocacy are encouraged and facilitated."* 

#### We value:

- Community safety
- Community involvement
- Access to points of interest
- Preservation of local history
- Health enhancing exercise facilities
- Access to visually pleasing areas
- Interaction with local ecology
- Tourist activity

**"There is no path; the path is made by walking."** Spanish poet Antonio Machado

## **RISK MATRIX**

LIKELIHOOD —	RISK	UNLIKELY	MAYBE	LIKELY
	SMALL	Indigenous community objections	Local objections Difficulty recruiting management committee	Failure to meet deadlines
	MEDIUM	Major environmental event (e.g.fire)	Overuse Refuse dumping Vandalism	Fencing adjustments for local graziers
	LARGE	Sabotage	Financial constraints	Vic Roads difficulties with path

IMPACT



Fig. 4 North east corner of Stone Reserve from above. X marks most likely position of viewing point and history boards.

## **SWOT SNAPSHOT**

#### Strengths

- 1. Council support (including survey requirement in priciple provision)
- 2. Multi-skilled residents and willing artists.
- 3. Community groups willing to participate in work required.
- 4. Good existing parking in Redesdale.
- 5. Callenge funding \$25 K from Heathcote and District Financial Services

#### Weaknesses

- 1. Timing pandemic and therefore no opportunity to have large meetings.
- 2. Lack of funding.

#### **Opportunities**

- 1. Enhance community health and well-being.
- 2. Enhance tourism.
- 3. Promote knowledge of history.
- 4. Improve safety.

#### Threats

- 1. Withdrawal of funding.
- 2. Maintenance difficulties.
- 3. Ongoing pandemic.

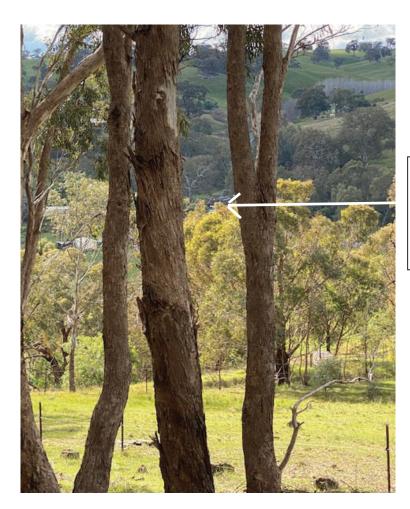


Fig. 5 The bridge as seen from the proposed viewing point.

## **COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Community Needs**

- 1. Walking tracks for exercise and enjoyment.
- 2. Permanent display of important local history.
- 3. Approval from local indigenous community.

#### **Community Aspirations**

- 1. Attraction of tourism to the area.
- 2. Community socialising and cohesion through collaboration on important projects.

#### **Environmental Influences**

- 1. Government policy on improvement of health and wellbeing.
- 2. Increasing community interest in rural history and green environments in the post Covid era.
- 3. Opportunity to improve and maintain a neglected site

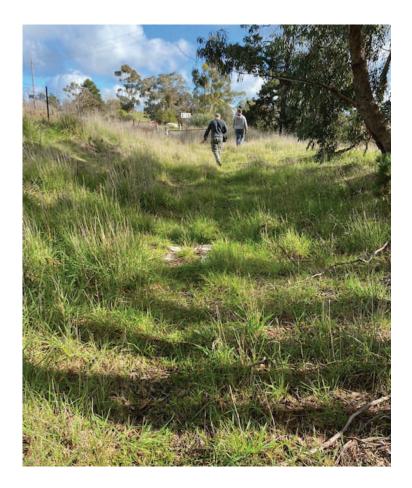


Fig. 6 Walking south towards the gate to the grazed area of Stone Reserve

## **STRATEGIC GOALS BY 2023**

#### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 1. Information sharing with community.
- 2. Enrolment of volunteer workforce.
- 3. Seek approval and engagement of local Dja Dja Warrung community.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

- 1. Survey of land and proposed walkway.
- 2. Development of site plan.
- 3. Building of walkway and viewing platform.
- 4. Develop history boards and monument.

#### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

- 1. Funding process developed.
- 2. Adequate funding for project obtained.

#### GOVERNANCE

- 1. Management Committee appointed for ongoing care of completed project.
- 2. Regular reporting to relevant bodies.
- 3. Obtain licence from Parks Victoria for a pathway through DELWP land.
- 4. Obtain a Cultural Heritage Management Plan

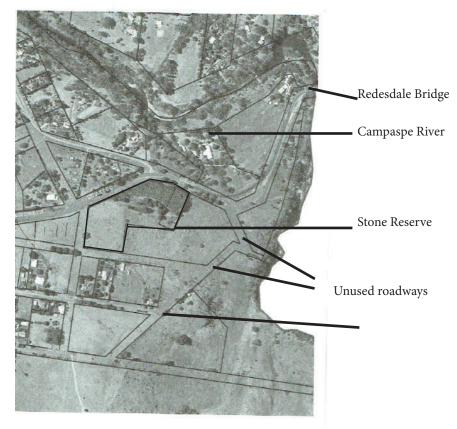


Fig. 7 Overhead view showing unused roadways.

## 12 to 36 MONTH ACTION PLANS

#### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

OUTCOME/ MILESTONES	PRIORITY	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	MEASUREMENT/ TIMELINE
Strategic plan accepted by RADA and council	1	Submit strategic plan	Stone reserve subcommittee	4 months Oct 31st 2020
Approval of local indigenous community obtained	1	Contact local first nations body	Stone reserve subcommittee	6 months Dec 31st 2020
Strategic plan shared at community meeting and community newspaper	1	Await approval from council and RADA	Stone reserve subcommittee	4 months Oct 31 2020
A register of volunteers compiled	2	Distribute forms	Stone reserve subcommittee	5 months Oct 31 <sup>st</sup> 2021
Regular updates in community newspaper	3	Submit updates to Bridge Connection	Stone reserve subcommittee	Quarterly



Fig. 8 Roadside leading to bridge. Stone Reserve to the right.

## 12 to 36 MONTH ACTION PLANS

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

OUTCOME/ MILESTONES	PRIORITY	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	MEASUREMENT/ TIMELINE
Professional survey produced	1	Contact COGB and request	Stone reserve subcommittee	5 months Nov 30 2020
Professional site plan produced	1	Contact COGB and request	Stone reserve subcommittee	9 months March 31 2021
Builders appointed	2	Tenders requested	СОСВ	16 months Nov 2021
Building commences	3	Site preparation	Builder COGB Vic Roads DELWP	21 months April 30 2022
Walkway and viewing platform built	3	Employment of builders	Redesdale community COGB DELWP Parks Victoria	3 years July 31 <sup>st</sup> 2023
History boards designed and produced	3	Engagement of local historians	Stone reserve subcommittee	24 months July 31 <sup>st</sup> 2022



Fig. 9 Possible viewing platform site.

## 12 to 36 MONTH ACTION PLANS

#### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

OUTCOME/ MILESTONES	PRIORITY	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	MEASUREMENT/ TIMELINE
Fundraising process developed	1	Identify costs Identify funding bodies	Stone reserve subcommittee	12 months July 31 <sup>st</sup> 2021
Adequate funding for project obtained	2	Contact COGB and request	Stone reserve subcommittee	18 months January 31 <sup>st</sup> 2022

#### GOVERNANCE

OUTCOME/ MILESTONES	PRIORITY	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	MEASUREMENT/ TIMELINE
Management committee appointed	3	Appoint interested volunteers to maintain history walk once completed	Stone Reserve subcommittee DELWP COGB	30 months Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> 2022
Regular reporting to relevant bodies	1	updates produced	Stone Reserve subcommittee	quarterly
Licence from Parks Victoria for pathway	1	Meetings to be set up	Stone Reserve subcommittee DELWP COGB Parks Victoria	6 months March 1 <sup>st</sup> 2021
Cultural Heritage management plan		If required	See community engagement section	6 months March 1 <sup>st</sup> 2021

### TIMETABLE

2020	Sep	START
	Oct	
	Nov	
	Dec	Quarterly report
2021	Jan	Strategic plan accepted
	Feb	Strategic plan shared with the community
	Mar	Survey completed Quarterly report Licence from Parks Victoria Cultural Heritage management Plan
	Apr	Register of volunteers obtained
	May	
	Jun	Quarterly report Site plan produced
	Jul	F
	Aug	
	Sep	Quarterly report Fundraising process developed
	Oct	
	Nov	
	Dec	Quarterly report
2022	Jan	
	Feb	
	Mar Apr	Quarterly report Builders appointed Management Committee Appointed Funding obtained
		obtained
	Мау	
	Jun	Quarterly report
	Jul	Building commences
	Aug	-
	Sep	History Boards and monument completed Quarterly report
	Oct	
	Nov	Management Committee appointed
	Dec	Quarterly report
2023	Jan	
	Feb	
	Mar	Quarterly report
	Apr	
	May	
	Jun	Quarterly report
	Jul Aug	Walkway completed

**APPENDIX 1** 

Redesdale and District Association Inc. Registration number: A00590447 P.O.Box 7 Redesdale, Victoria, 3444 web:www.redesdale.net email: info@redesdale.net 0407116899

Andrew Plant Acting Coordinator Strong Communities Community Partnerships Team City of Greater Bendigo a.plant@bendigo.vic.gov.au

25.7.18

Dear Andrew Re: Redesdale Pedestrian Pathway Stone Reserve

Recently we welcomed Mark Stubbs to a Redesdale and District Association (RADA) meeting where he outlined the recent Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan (GBPSP) as it pertained to Redesdale and district. We noticed on one of the maps, a public space area to the east of the road approaching the Redesdale Bridge. Local hearsay had always placed this piece of land as belonging to the school. It seemed that this was possibly misinformation and so we asked Mark if he could clarify the ownership. We now learn that the area, known to locals as "Stone Reserve" is in fact owned by DELWP and administered by Parks Victoria.

A small delegation of locals visited Stone Reserve one Saturday morning and all were very impressed by its potential for recreational and tourism purposes. The northern high point of the block has a potential lookout spot where the bridge can be seen once a few trees have been pruned. It would also be possible to access the river using unused "rights of way". Please see accompanying sketch. It is possibly the most picturesque spot in central Redesdale.

Clearly we are all at the very early stages of considering this potential project, but we think it would be useful to outline the possible scope of the project from the community perspective.

We have recently been involved in the production of the Community Plan for Redesdale 2018 – 2023. During this process we have been in close communication with Mia Mia and both communities have voiced a strong desire to have pedestrian/bike pathways which could potentially link our townships. In the Redesdale community Plan – Action Plan section, Theme 1, point 1, sub para (d) states "promote stronger ties with Mia Mia through sharing information and collaboration". Theme 3, point 2, sub para (a) states, "Investigate the potential and feasibility for a pedestrian link between Redesdale and Mia Mia". "Theme 3, point 2, sub para (b) states, "Partner with Mia Mia to investigate the feasibility of increased off-road activities such as; cycling, walking, orienteering and horse-riding in Mount Lofty and other areas of public land".

The GBPSP notes that the public realm of the Redesdale township centre "has a distinctive rural character however lacks footpaths and other amenities." The central Agnes Mudford reserve is large and well cared for and brings together a number of public amenities. The plan goes on to point out that "The northern edge of the township is defined by the Campaspe River and is a prominent landscape feature. It is also a significant and special public space although pedestrian access along the river is limited. The Redesdale Bridge is an important local and regional landmark on the river."

The lack of pedestrian access to the river and the inability to park a car to view the bridge safely was highlighted significantly when the 150 year celebrations of the bridge were held in January 2018. The community wanted to erect a history board for the event and for later tourism purposes, but after lengthy discussions with VicRoads it became clear that there was no safe way to provide an area for such a board and no safe area for parking to view the bridge.

Page 150 of the GBPSP has a number of recommendations. The third recommendation states, "Improve amenities to support passive recreational use of the river environs and continue landscape works and management to preserve local biodiversity. Create a suitable public space setting to showcase the Redesdale Bridge as a local landmark and allow access to enable it to be seen and explored by visitors."

The RADA committee believes that Stone Reserve could provide such amenities. It is a large block which could support car parking while visitors walk to the outlook point or down to the river. Picnic facilities could be provided.

Continued on next page

#### Appendix 1 (continued)

We are suggesting a roadway from and to the town centre to the centre of the reserve for parking and gravel walkways to the outlook point and to the river. A water tank fed from a shaded picnic area roof would provide for picnickers and for appropriate toilet facilities. We are suggesting that a history board be erected at the lookout point. Once walkers have reached the river, there are likely to be locations by which access to the other side can be obtained, especially in the dryer months. It may even be possible to provide a "stepping stone" facility to the Mia Mia side of the river. The Campaspe is rarely in flood.

We suggest that the project might progress in three stages. Stage 1 could include a roadway into the reserve with adequate parking accompanied by a walking track to the lookout point and history board with some seating provided at lookout points. Stage 2 could include a shelter and water tank with BBQ facility. This may include a simple toilet facility (in keeping with the COGB toilet strategy). Stage three could include further development of walking track down to the river and a possible crossing point in the dry season.

Currently the town organisations are unable to provide financial input to such a project in light of their obligations to the Precinct Project. However voluntary input into clearing and preparing the reserve for the development of the project would be easily found. Recent projects (including the 150 year bridge celebration and the formation of the "Detailed Design Working Group" for the Redesdale Precinct) has brought to light considerable professional talent and energy in the community. The group who put the sesquicentenary celebrations together has significant knowledge and resources to assist with the production of a 'history board' or boards. Already local artists and sculptors have put forward possible designs for such a project. Some have architectural expertise and considerable experience in public works projects. There is no doubt that local community members would be keen to donate their time and expertise in collaboration with the Council. We have a number of local residents who have practical knowledge with building and designing. The Reserve Committee, for example, has developed a relationship with a local quarry who supply suitable crushed stone products at a fraction of the cost and in some cases have donated products.

We hope that we can work closely with the City of Greater Bendigo to progress this initiative which would enhance the amenities of the township and encourage visitors. Having read many of the City of Greater Bendigo's planning documents, and having worked closely with council in producing two community plans, we think that this project ticks a number of boxes!

Yours sincerely,

Dr Kathryn Hall

Secretary

Redesdale and District Association

0407 116 899

Please see attached sketch.

### **APPENDIX 2**

### **PHOTO GALLERY**



1. This photo shows the complete Stone Heritage Walk. Approximately 550 meters.



2. This photo shows the walk from the Redesdale car park to the start of the heritage walk. Approximately 333 meters.



3. Pathway through wooded area looking west.



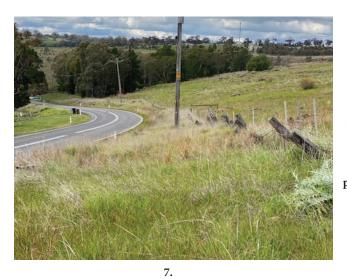
Roadside just north of church.



5. Old gate at entrance to wooded area.



Large boulders at roadside.



Roadside looking east showing grazed and wooded area of reserve.

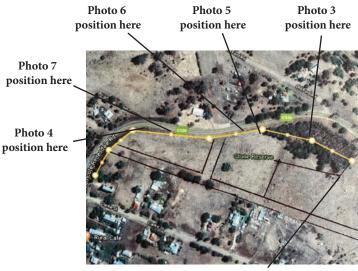


Photo 7 position here

 $18 \ \ {\rm Stone \ Reserve \ Heritage \ Walk}$ 



7. Possible picnic spot.



Metal rubbish



9. Old tanks



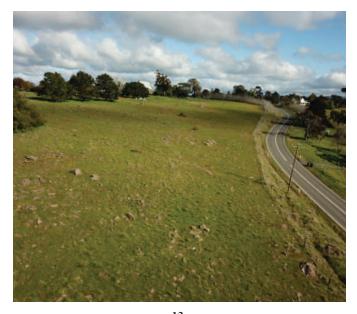
10. Strewn rocks and rubble



11. Jagged pieces of old iron



12. Old mattress. Stone Reserve Heritage Walk **19** 



13. Looking southwest to church over grazed area of reserve.



14. Closer view ooking southwest to church over grazed area of reserve showing housing.



15. Looking east over reserve towards bridge.



17. Overhead view of where grazed area meets wooded area.

16. Looking south to the rear of residential properties abutting reserve.



18. Looking into wooded area from grazed area.

20 Stone Reserve Heritage Walk





19. Examples of community heritage boards.



20. Example of shade area.





21. Examples of boardwalks.



Stone Reserve Heritage Walk 21









22. Examples of gravel pathways.



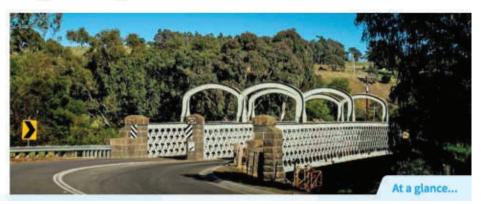


23. January 1968 centenary celebration of the opening of the Redesdale Bridge.

### **Redesdale Bridge 150-year celebrations**

Join the 150-year celebrations of this unique, heritage-listed bridge with a fascinating history.

Come along to the Redesdale Hall on Saturday January 27, 2018. Celebrations start at 11am with an official ceremony, including a reenactment of the naming of the bridge, interviews, unique footage of the bridge renovation and unveiling of the 150th anniversary commemorative quilt that has been created in collaboration between the Redesdale and Mia Mia communities.



24. Invitation to January 2018 sequicentenary celebration of the opening of the Redesdale Bridge.