

Massive numbers take to Queenstown Trail

supplied

Cyclists on the Edgar Bridge, on the Gibbston to Frankton leg of the Queenstown Trail.

Almost 700,000 individual journeys have been made on the Queenstown Trail since its opening in 2012.

New data released from the [Queenstown Trail Trust](#) shows 214,100 journeys were made in 2015 alone - an increase of about three per cent on the previous year.

Trust chief executive Mandy Kennedy said it was great to see so many in the community and visitors enjoying the trail network.

Queenstown Trails Trust chief executive Mandy Kennedy

Debbie Jamieson

The trail is a 120km network of cycling and walking trails connecting Queenstown, Arrowtown, Gibbston and Jacks Point.

The information also showed Sunday was the busiest day of the week but Saturday, November 21 last year was the busiest single day with 5578 trail journeys - due to the Air New Zealand International

Queenstown Marathon.

The most popular trail is the Frankton Trail with almost 38 per cent of all trail journeys followed by Old Shotover Bridge (15 per cent) and Kelvin Peninsula (12 per cent).

Kennedy said a massive number of new trails through the Wakatipu Basin was proposed as the trails 10 year strategy.

The new trails had a focus on "connectivity".

"Given increasing traffic congestion and a potential doubling of the local population within the next 20 years, there is really no choice but to invest in alternative forms of transport," the strategy says.

Kennedy said that meant developing the kind of trails commuters can use in the Wakatipu to get to where they need to be.

New trails include a direct Jacks Point - Frankton track, and Arthurs Point-Queenstown track and a new link connecting Arrowtown to Queenstown.

There are also proposals for a track from Arthurs Point to Tucker Beach, a possible new bridge across the Kawarau River, linking Chard Farm and Lake Hayes Estate and even a Walter Peak to Kinloch trail connecting with the Around the Mountains trail.

The overarching 10 year goals detailed in the strategy are to create a trail within 10 minutes of all Queenstown communities, a 5 per cent to 8 per cent annual increase in use of trails by the local population and a 6 per cent to 10 per cent annual increase in use of trails by visitors.

The goals are ambitious, not least because the trust must also work to fund ongoing maintenance costs and with at least 42 different stakeholder groups to achieve its goals.

would not be what they are now.

In 10 years over 190km of quality trails for walking, hiking and biking including the 120kms of the Queenstown Trail have been created in the Wakatipu.

Also, the Queenstown Trails Trust (formerly the Wakatipu Trails Trust) is now on a much more secure financial footing with investments including ownership of the Motatapu event and charity status with the Queenstown Marathon.

New trail businesses have emerged including shuttles, bike hire, bike retail, guided tours, cafes and events and existing businesses have seen an increase in new cycle customers.

Maps, signs, and online content about the trail network have expanded to service demand while recreational and mountain bikers from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the US, UK and Europe are now visiting Queenstown specifically for its trails.

"It seemed prudent and positive to move forward with another 10 year plan," says Kennedy.

Other objectives of the ten year plan include: a new recreational trail through Cone Peak Station, continue to maintain all existing trails to a world class standard and conduct annual WOF audit, support community education and awareness programs, look at new funding initiatives, advocate for a major international event such as Enduro World Cup .

The Queenstown Trail is a finalist in the bikewise.co.nz campaign to find New Zealand's favourite place to cycle. You can [vote for the trail here](#) and as a bonus go in the draw to win a \$500 bike store voucher.

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