

Insights Report

The Hill Mountain Bike Park in Newtown

27th August 2021



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Overall summary

312 survey submissions received

This consultation gained a lot of traction from people who ride consistently around the Greater Geelong area. In terms of rider level, 39% of respondents identified as being Expert riders and 52% of riders identified as being Intermediate level riders. The majority of respondents reported to ride their bikes frequently with 49% riding daily and 43% riding weekly.

The predominant topics centred around advanced jumps, tracks and trails.

As the majority of respondents consider themselves expert or intermediate, the need for advanced jump sizes and technical trails and tracks to meet their skill level was pertinent focus.

Overall there was a consensus that the The Hill was only servicing beginner and younger riders, and that it did not adequately meet the needs of intermediate and expert riders in the community.

There was also a component of being involved in the process of designing and creating the jumps tracks and tracks that the riders use. Many felt that the The Hill wasn't properly maintained and that jumps and tracks elsewhere were better looked after by the people who created them. There was also an element of creative and social engagement with building jumps and tracks that should be considered to keep riders engaged with The Hill. This view is reinforced with over a third respondents (116 - 37%) who registered their interest in "being involved in future opportunities to co-design tracks or jumps at the Hill ".

If new jumps and tracks are developed at The Hill, riders may drop off in frequency over time if they aren't able to continuously improve the jumps, tracks and trails.

Key insights



Increase in technical options and maintenance

Building bigger jumps, increasing technical challenges and providing greater length of trails is important for engagement with mountain bike facilities. Maintenance of tracks was also seen as an important consideration.



Engagement and creativity

Ongoing involvement in creating, building and maintaining jumps and trails from the community provides social engagement, pride and a creative outlet.



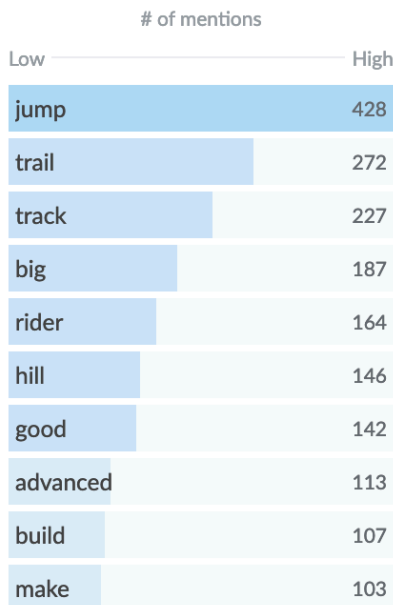
Greater variety

Increasing the variety of trails and jumps to cater for different skill levels and

Natural Language Processing (NLP)

Applying NLP to the data exposed the frequencies and groupings of words. The outputs below supports the findings that the predominant themes were related to technical considerations such as building bigger and more advanced trails and jumps, social and creative considerations such as building and maintaining trails and jumps as well as considerations for increased variety of trails to accommodate for different skill level and experiences in the riding community.

Frequent Words



Qualitative questions

What makes these tracks and jumps attractive to you as a bike rider?

Key Themes

Technical jumps, tracks and trails

A large focus for the respondents in relation to their engagement with where they ride is related to the technical component of the landscape. Jumps, trail and tracks were the main focus.

When discussing what they found attractive about jumps, the main focus was to have larger and more technical jumps as they enjoyed riding these types of jumps. They felt they could also improve their own skills if they were challenged with more advanced and bigger jumps.

The discussion around trails and tracks was very similar to jumps in that they enjoyed the trails and tracks that would challenge them and advance their skill. They also discussed enjoying having longer trails, more variety, trails that flowed well. Being outside and incorporating natural surroundings into the trails was also discussed.

Quotes:

"Flowy fast tracks with different levels of jumps."

"They are harder than the hill jumps and the hill is a lot easier"

"More skill level required, more challenging, more fun"

"The big jumps, the hill is bad and not good, it needs to have bigger jumps, and better trails"

"They provide the ability for even more experienced riders to grow and develop their skills. The Hill MTB park in Newtown lacks this variety"

"More advanced jumps so I can progress my skills and send some bigger stuff."

"They are big and fun. And really well built because people who ACTUALLY RIDE build them. This is why many bike parks aren't good"

Social and creative

A dominant reason for riders enjoying the jumps and tracks they ride on was due to the social interaction that it enables. This was achieved through tracks providing a space that people could share and engage with. Certain tracks provided opportunities for riders to also collaborate and create jumps and tracks that they designed. There was a sense of continuous improvement with these tracks and jumps, which in-turn, provided a sense of pride and personal investment in the assets they have created. This creative process offered another dimension to their riding and social experience.

Some respondents also commented on the fact that riding provides motivation to get out of their house and exercise outside.

Quotes:

"Meeting similar like minded riders and connecting with others with similar skill levels in our community"

"Passion and drive from likeminded people!"

"Also socialising with the people there."

"They're actually built by riders that know what they're doing and it creates a really good community"

"They make you able to constantly enjoy mountain biking and not lose interest."

"I like how kids can come along and make the jump their own. I also like how the jumps constantly are changing."

"Because they're challenging and creating trails is allows kids to spend days being productive and having fun, and also learning about respect"

"These are built by people who know mtb, and really enjoy it, so that shows in their building"

What, if anything, do you think is missing from The Hill?

Key Themes

Technical improvement and more variety

Closely related to the 'technical jumps tracks and trails' theme, the majority of respondents focused on the lack big jumps and technical trails at The Hill, as well as the lack of variety and options for various skill levels. Respondents discussed the need for bigger jumps and better options for downhill and flow trails. There was also a view that providing more options for different skill levels would prevent congestion and potential accidents with beginner riders.

There was consistent view that the overall space at The Hill could be designed better to account for varying needs and skill levels. Lack of maintenance was also mentioned again.

Quotes:

"Put in a few A lines and B lines eg jumps with bypasses"

"Maintenance on trails . There appears to be none done since the trails were made."

"Bigger jumps, better jumps, more suited to beginners and low level riders, there is nothing for us high level riders"

"More elevation bigger jumps smooth tracks technical tracks"

"Longer trails. It gets very congested especially with very young kids blocking the trails"

"The jumps are very basic and no where for more experienced riders to go"

"More downhill sections/flow sections"

Amenities

This was a smaller, but well defined theme that formed with this question. The primary request was to have toilet facilities at the Hill. People also requested to have water fountains, bbq and eating areas, shade and shelter and a bike repair station.

Quotes:

"Bike repair station."

"BBQs, toilets"

"Water taps. Toilets. Technical trails. Bigger shelter."

"A drinking fountain, toilet"

"Toilet facility, more shelters/benches (idea for family/children's party), possible BBQ facilities"

What would make you more likely to ride at The Hill?

Key Theme

Design and maintenance

Inline and related to the 'technical jumps tracks and trails' theme, the main feedback for this question was that people would be more likely to ride at the The Hill if the design of the facility better catered for a range of riders with a focus on intermediate to advanced needs. Again the focus was on providing bigger jumps, more technical trails, more variety for different skill levels and length of trails with greater elevation difference.

There was also a consistent view that The Hill needed to be maintained better and that the jumps and trails had been compromised because of the deterioration of surfaces from weather over time. There were also comments around the foliage being over-grown.

Quotes:

"Better maintenance, tracks are badly water damaged in places"

"If there was bigger jumps and more steep and technical trails"

"The elevation at the hill has been poorly used. Having one short downhill section with a dangerous crossing halfway along."

"Giving the mtb community the ability to create and design trails that are more advanced, given that we are the community that construct and rides these harder challenges that allow us to enjoy our hobby and sport."

"Bigger jumps, flowy to ride, proper made jumps made by actual mountain bike riders."

"Features need work as the table top jumps are poorly shaped. More regular pruning of trees overhanging the trails"

"If it were bigger or used more of it's available area for more tracks. And more of a skill progression plan in place, easy track - intermediate track and hard track all with features"

"More advanced trails. Downhill trial. Enduro trial. Gap jumps. Bigger and better jumps"

"If people were allowed to build at the hill as people have an understanding better than the council on how to build trails and features"

"Overall it's great for its location, it's a shame to see the tracks and jump deteriorate with little to no maintenance on the jumps or tracks"

Is there anything further you would like to share with us before you click Submit?

Key Themes

Opportunity for improvement

This question received similar feedback around the need or greater access to big jumps and advanced trails and tracks. In addition to this many respondents acknowledged that they appreciated the initiative from the council to provide facilities such as the Hill, but felt that more could be done to capitalise on the space. There were respondents who felt that adequate investment would not only provide better engagement amongst the riding community in Greater Geelong but that it could also be used to encourage better tourism if planned and executed correctly.

Some respondents were sad or unhappy about the river rail trails being demolished and suggested that if The Hill couldn't provide adequate facilities for more advanced riders that many other locations could be scoped out as an alternative.

Quotes:

"I think if you actually work the mountain biking community the Barwon river precinct could be an amazing resource that could attract people from all over, just like trails like the YouYangs and Forrest, happy to meet up or discuss any future plans or ideas, I ride with a lot of people of all different ages and skill, including some of the kids and adults that regularly ride the more trails around the river."

"I think that it is really sad that the jumps along deviation road and the Barwon River are getting taken down 😞 I have had so many memories and fun times down there with my friends and family. Hitting the big jumps and having loads of fun. I hope that the Hill bike park improves majorly with the jumps and flow."

"It is extremely boring and is pretty much pointless just riding tiny jumps made for beginners. When I first went to the hill bike park I was bored within 10 minutes because the jumps were too easy, and it's not just me that believes that, thousands of other riders believe that too. If you make the jumps bigger and better and make more places like the hill people will come from everywhere and there will be way more money coming in to the area. There will also be tonnes of brands wanting to sponsor the place and would be willing to even help pay for a bit of the construction cost."

"There's a lot of different styles of riders and a lot of different levels of experience, unfortunately the styles that involve slightly more risk are often ignored, there's potential for young world-class riders to come from this area if I look at the talent that's riding here. It's a missed opportunity."

"Get professional trail builders in to develop options for green, blue and black level riders. You could easily adapt the outside loop for intermediate to advanced riders. Keep the inner loop for beginners. Get rid of half the pump track to make room for a better range of jumps."

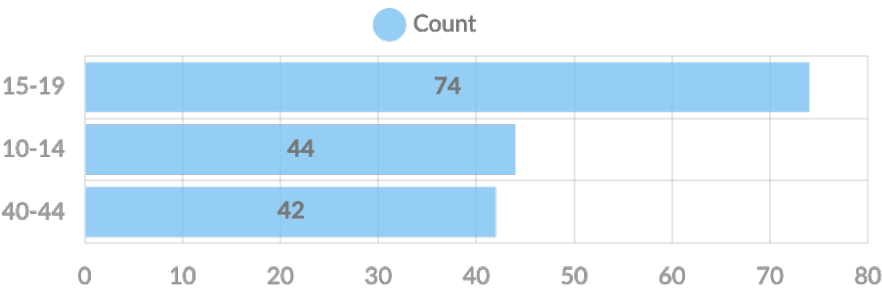
"The Hill is a great facility, it is in a nice central point that is easily accessible to ride after work or during the day light saving times when it's harder to get to places further afield. The Hill initial design concept has utilized the available space and topography of the land extremely well, but it just doesn't have a good jump section which is why people have built their own adjacent to the river. The kids just want to jump."

Demographics

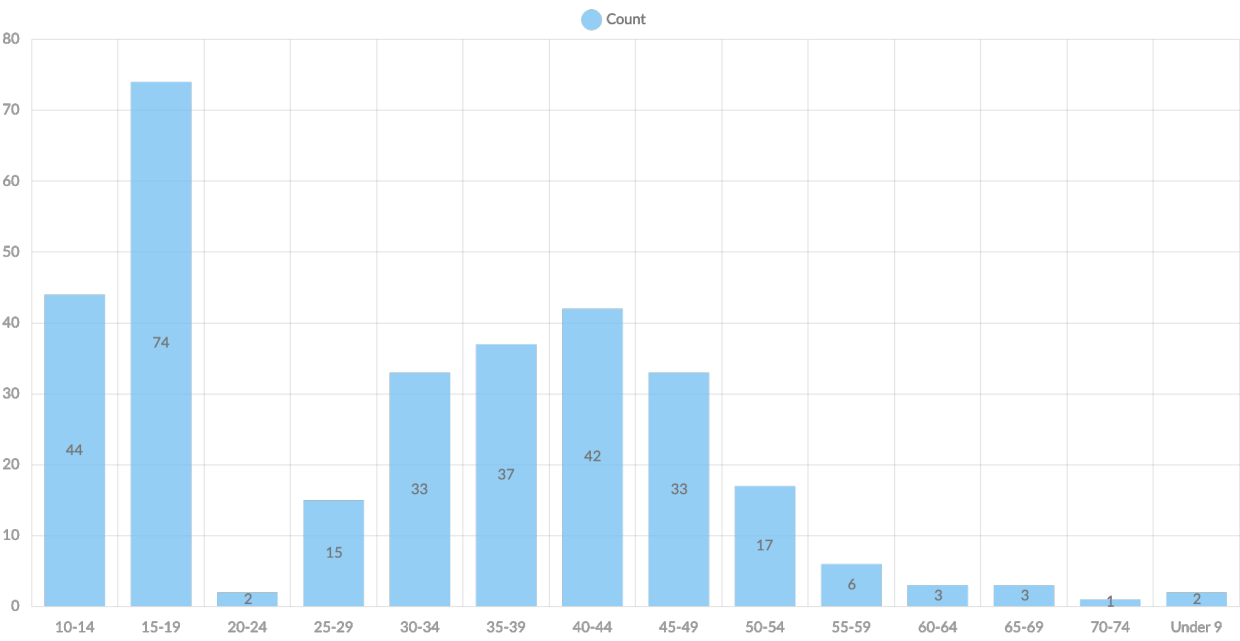
Age group

Top 50% age groups - 160 / 312 matches • (51%)

The age groups most represented in this consultation are **15-19yo**, **10-14yo** and **40-44yo** making up 51% of the total responses to the survey.



Overall distribution of age

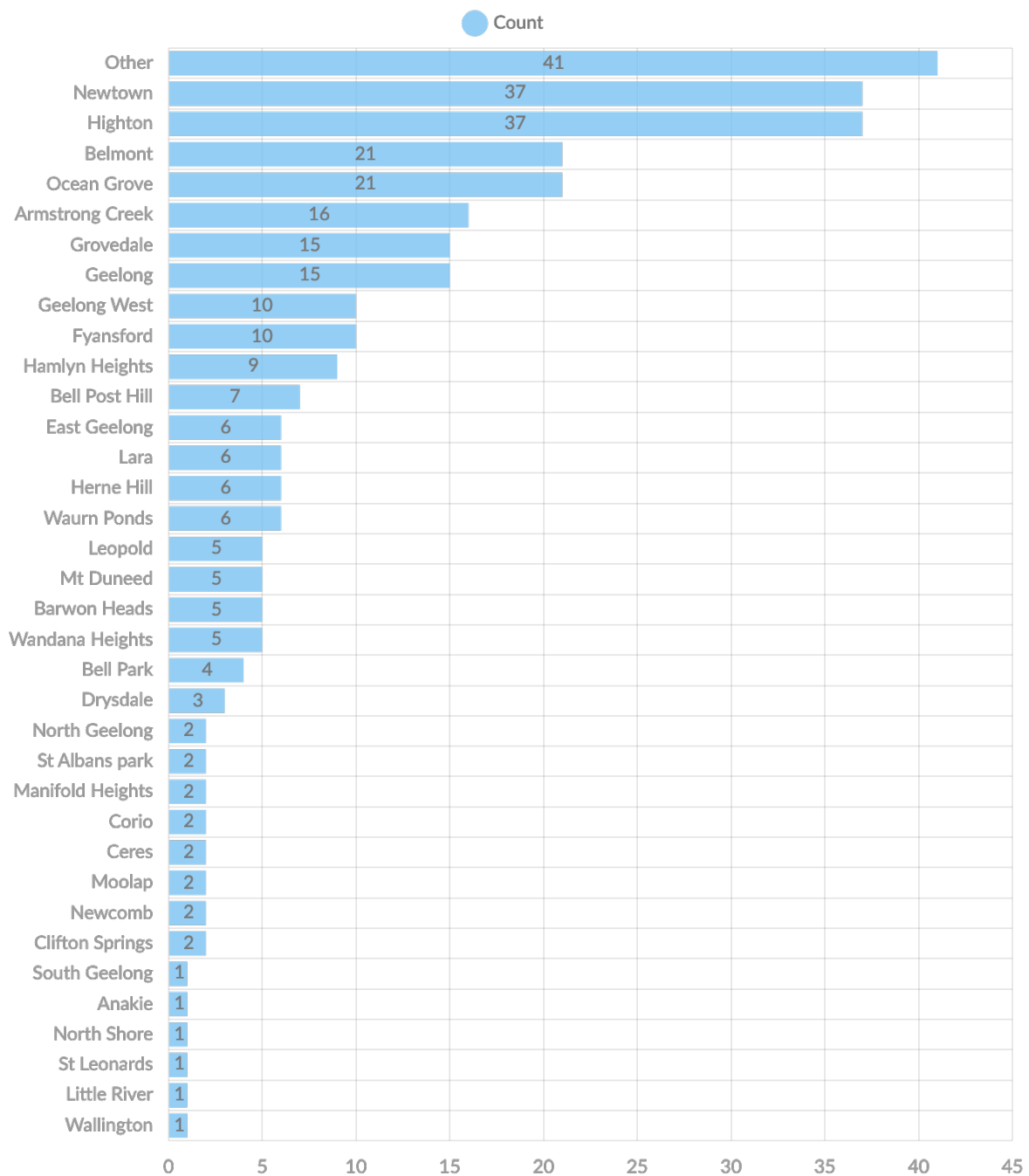


Suburb

Top 50% suburbs - 162 / 312 matches • (52%)

Newtown, Highton, Belmont, Ocean Grove, Armstrong Creek, Grovedale and Geelong were the seven suburbs represented in the top 50% for this consultation. making up 52% of the total responses to the survey. 'Other' had the most counts however it was made up of various suburbs so was no included in the most represented.

Overall distribution



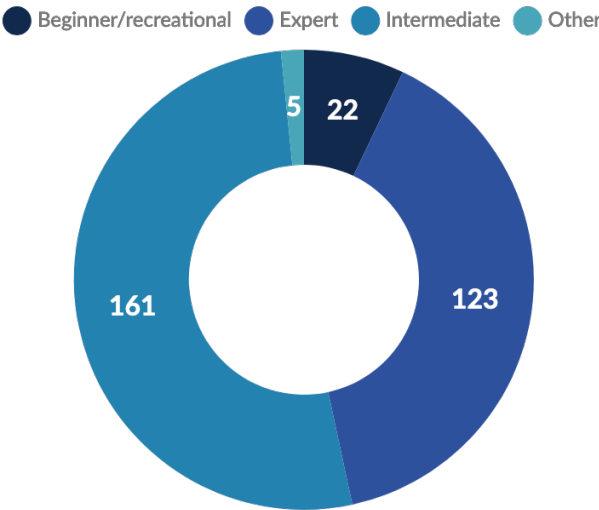
Other suburb breakdown (total of 41)

Other: "Caulfield North"
Other: "Jan juc"
Other: "3305"
Other: "Winchelsea"
Other: "Freshwater creek"
Other: "Mentone"
Other: "Ringwood, frequently visit Portarlington"
Other: "Mornington (but we go to Geelong a lot so it does affect me that the jumps aren't there))"
Other: "Pakenham"
Other: "Torquay"
Other: "Torquay"
Other: "torquay"
Other: "Wendouree"
Other: "Windsor"
Other: "Werribee"
Other: "Warrnambool"
Other: "Steiglitz"
Other: "Torquay"
Other: "3016"
Other: "Torquay"
Other: "Anglesea"
Other: "Bacchus Marsh"
Other: "Torquay"
Other: "Torquay"
Other: "Inverleigh"
Other: "Torquay"
Other: "Melbourne"
Other: "Oakleigh east"
Other: "Pahran"
Other: "Anglesea"
Other: "3032"
Other: "Torquay"
Other: "Birregurra"
Other: "Anglesea"
Other: "Melbourne"
Other: "Anglesea"
Other: "Torquay"
Other: "Teesdale"
Other: "Torquay"
Other: "Torquay"
Other: "3016"

What best describes you as a rider?

Top 50% rider types - 284 / 312 matches • (91%)

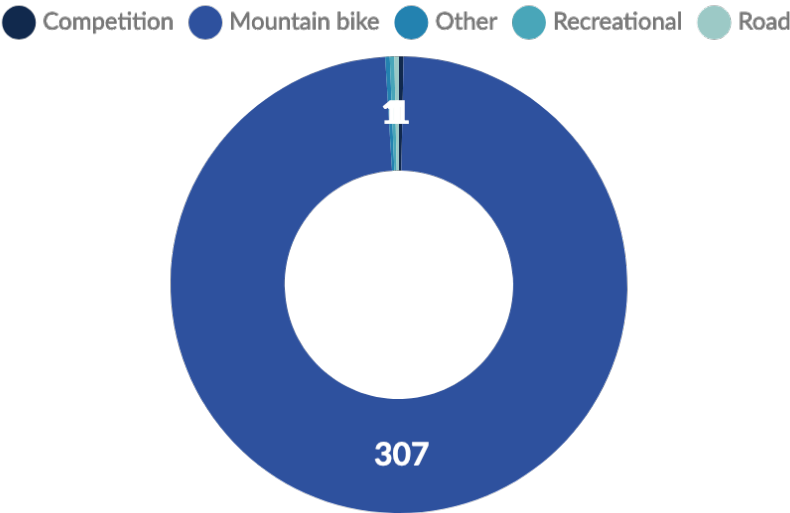
The rider types most represented in this consultation are **Intermediate** and **Expert**, making up 91% of the total responses to the survey.



What type of riding do you do?

Top 50% type of riding - 307 / 312 matches • (98%)

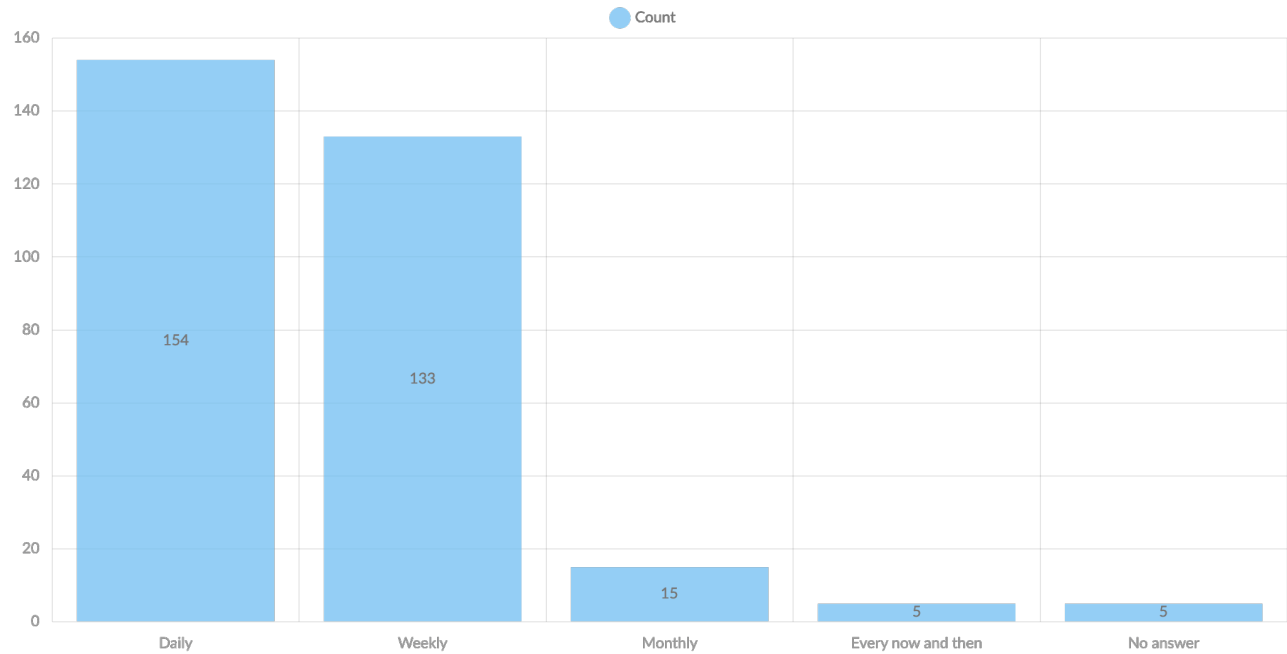
98% of people described their type of riding as **Mountain Bike** riding.



How often do you ride?

Top 50% frequency of riding behaviour - 287 / 312 matches · (92%)

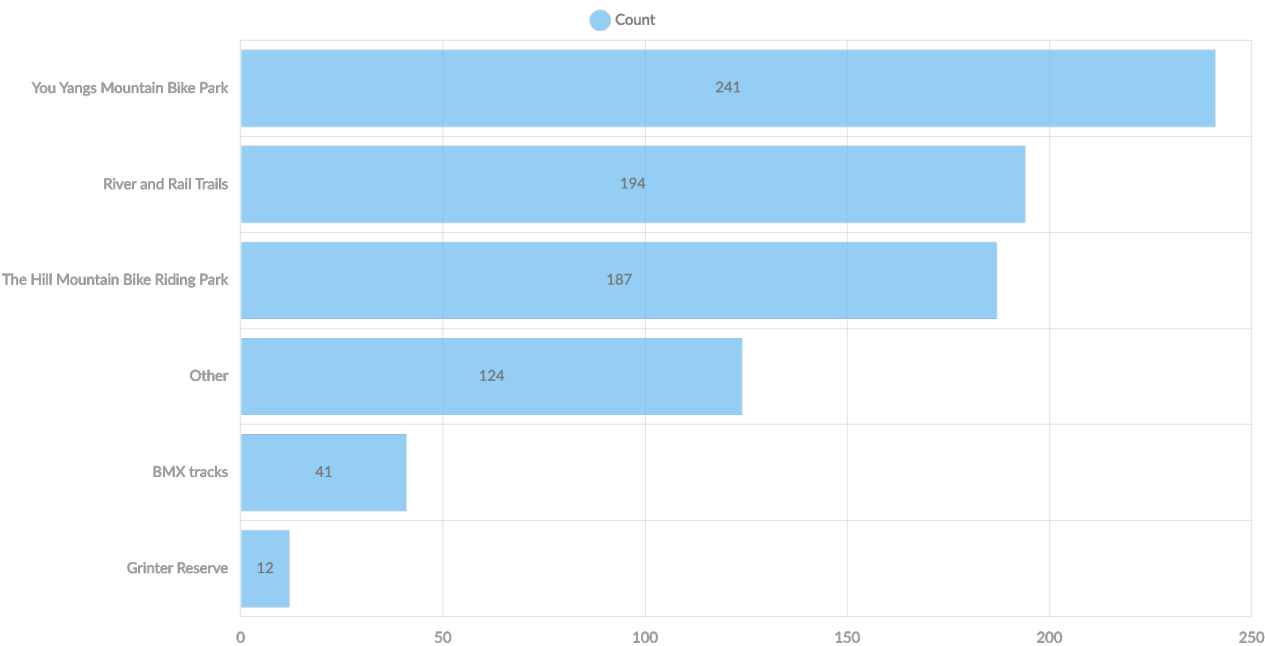
The majority of people (92%) rode their bikes either daily (49%) or weekly (43%)



*Where do you currently ride?

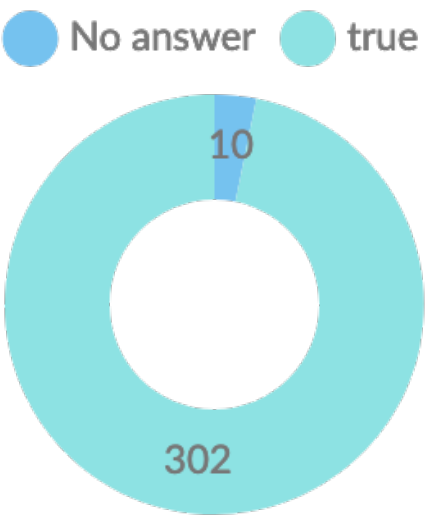
The most popular place to ride was at the You Yangs Mountain Bike Park, followed by the River and Rails Trails and The Hill Mountain Bike Riding Park.

1. **You Yangs** - 241 / 312 matches · 77%
2. **River and Rail Trails** - 194 / 312 matches · 62%
3. **The Hill** - 187 / 312 matches · 60%



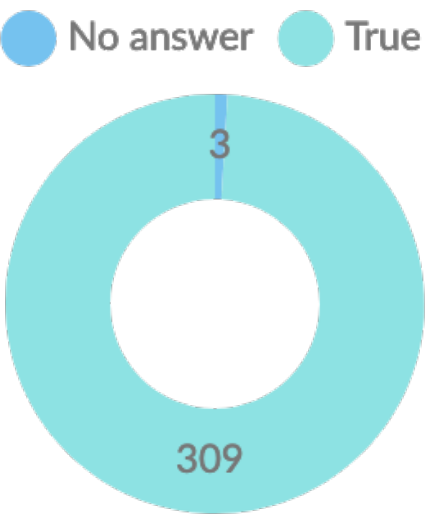
Have you ever been riding on makeshift jumps and/or tracks in the region?

The majority of people have ridden on makeshift jumps and or tracks in the region (97%)



Are you aware of Council’s facility, The Hill, Mountain Bike Park?

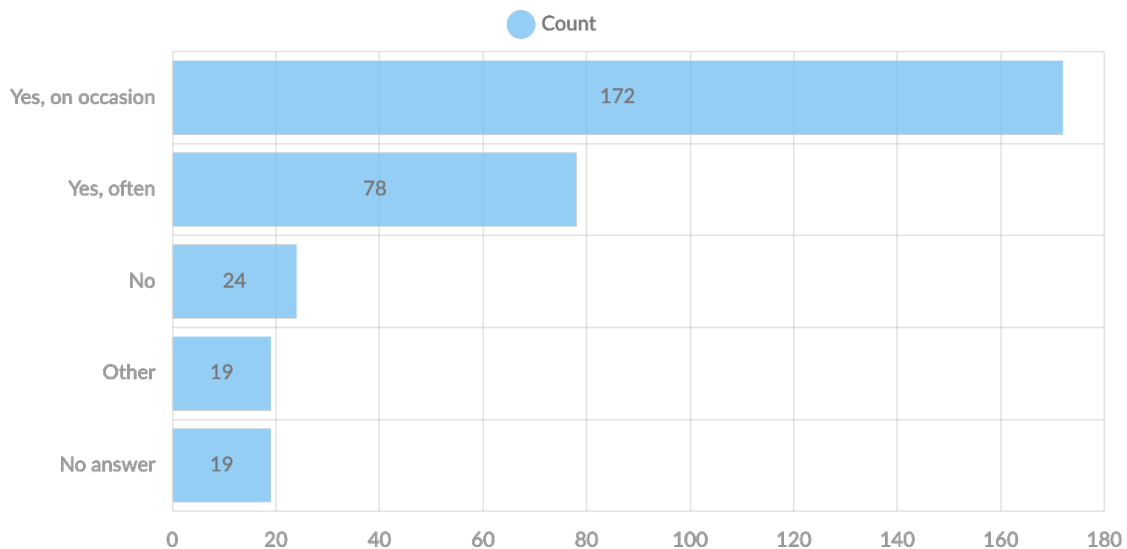
Almost everyone was aware of the Council's facility, The Hill Mountain Bike Park (99%)



Have you been bike riding at The Hill?

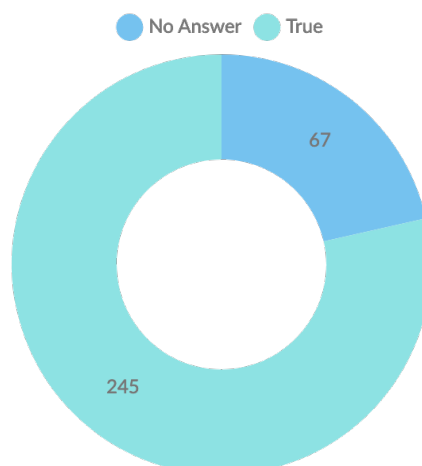
Top 50% frequency of riding at The Hill - 172 / 312 matches • 55%

52% of people occasional ride at The Hill Mountain Bike park



Does The Hill meet your rider skill level?

The majority of people (79%) felt The Hill Mountain Bike Park met there skill level, however, many of those people discussed that The Hill did not challenge them or required bigger jumps or more technical tracks, so the above question does not necessarily imply that The Hill satisfied their skill level.



What are you interested in?

Over 157 (50%) did not answer the question, however, **“being involved in future opportunities to co-design tracks or jumps at the Hill “** 116 (37%) people selected this answer making it the most popular answer.

