

More than 7,000 children and adults took part in an 11-day Scouts Victoria jamboree, known as 'VicJam 2022', this \$5.5 million event was based at the Elmore Events Centre north of Bendigo, from 28 December.



There were plenty of tech-free activities including rock climbing and abseiling.

While this Centre became a temporary 'town' the size of Kyneton, with most of the scout's activities being based at this Elmore location, one activity was held on the O'Keefe Rail Trail between 2 – 7 January.

"It's the equivalent of 200 school camps all happening on the same site at the same time, so we've had to build infrastructure, including recycling, a medical centre, a radio station, nightly concerts and lots of activities." Scouts Victoria executive manager Jon McGregor said.



Scouts gather for the 'VicJam' opening.
Photo: Riverine Herald www.riverineherald.com.au

With the jamboree's cycling activity being centred on the Koolamurt Scout Camp in Spring Gully for 100 scout children aged 11 to 14 years and 40 adult leaders/helpers, this required a delivery of 200 specially branded new bikes that only arrived in Spring Gully late on 29 December.

With little time available, each of these 'boxed' bikes were then required to be assembled and tested before the staged activity began on 2 January!

Check out this bike assembly process! <https://youtube/0wCZFZJDa0I>

Riding started along Bendigo's urban off-road trails and then the O'Keefe Rail Trail, with the mid ride destination being Peppercorn Park at Longlea. Portable toilet facilities and drinking water needed to be provided at Longlea, as no permanent facilities are located there for trail users. With the scouts riding in groups of 4 to 6, part of the activity was for the learning of leadership skills. From Longlea, each group over the 5 days returned via the same trails to Spring Gully.



Requiring to negotiate a number of road crossings, like the challenging Napier Street's crossing for rail trail users at White Hills (Bendigo), VicJam volunteer road marshals needed to assist the scout riders and achieved an overall safe outcome for this activity.

In appreciation of using this public rail trail facility, the Victorian Scout Cycling coordinator Luke Moore indicated that in support of the work that the Friends of the Bendigo-Kilmore Rail Trail have done, and do on the O'Keefe Rail Trail, this scout organisation would like to work on a rail trail related project in the future to say "Thanks".

VicJam volunteers Jeremy & Brad at the Napier St road crossing.
Photo: Lindsay Clay