

# Trails of Olympic potential



**WELCOME FUNDING:** Garth Hamilton MP (left) with Toowoomba Mountain Bike club president David Warner and former president Juliet Redding after \$3.3m was announced for the upgrade of mountain bike trails in Toowoomba. Picture: Nev Madsen

## JARRARD POTTER

A MULTI-MILLION dollar plan to develop new and improved bike trails in Jubilee and Redwood parks will herald a new era of adventure tourism for Toowoomba as well as put the city in contention to host an Olympic event.

Today's announcement of \$3.33 million in funding from the federal government for the Great Divide Mountain Bike Destination project, means the dreams of the Toowoomba Mountain Bike Club is closer to reality.

With the current trails through the Toowoomba Escarpment built by volunteers toiling for countless hours, former Toowoomba Mountain Bike Club president Juliet Redding said the development would benefit the region for years to come.

“At the moment it's a local bike park, we do get some tourists coming from Brisbane and southeast Queensland, but if we move to a 60km track that brings us up to a national level where people from around Australia would start coming in,” Ms Redding said.

“If we go up to the 100km that takes us up to the international level, so that's really the key of what we're driving for ... making this a destination to be able to host events.”

Currently, the Toowoomba Escarpment, which straddles both Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley regional councils, has a network of about 28km of mountain bike

trails, with the Great Divide Mountain Bike Destination project to upgrade the existing trails and develop an additional 68.4km over 24 new trails.

The project also includes a plan to develop a primary access node and event hosting space at the Bridge Street Quarry site.

Groom MP Garth Hamilton said the development of a world-class mountain biking facility in Toowoomba would give Brisbane 2032 Olympic organisers plenty to think about in where they host events.

“This will establish Toowoomba as a mountain biking mecca and it will not just service our local mountain bike riders but will bring in people from right across the east coast,” he said.

“There’s been a lot of work put into adventure tourism, and for us it’s a new source of revenue for the region, especially if we can bring in new tourists.

“This will give Olympic organisers a lot to think about as we will have some of the best mountain bike tracks right here, embedded in the community, by the time the Olympics roll around,” he said.

Toowoomba Mountain Bike Club president David Warner said the development would secure the growth of the sport in Toowoomba.