



## **SMRC or QPRC Councillor Election Briefing Note on The Monaro Rail Trail**

### **1. OVERVIEW**

#### **a) Rail trails are successful where ever they are built.**

- 1. Rail trails are common in NZ, Europe, USA and Canada and are successful tourism attractions*
- 2. In Australia there are over 100 rail trails but only one in NSW – Tumbarumba and 2 more have just received funding – New England and Northern Rivers*
- 3. The 213km Queanbeyan to Bombala rail corridor is a valuable under-utilised asset.*

#### **b) The Monaro Rail Trail (MRT)**

- 1. Monaro Rail Trail Inc. is a community-based organisation that has been working tirelessly since August 2015 to establish the MRT.*
- 2. It has strong local community support with a membership of 15, a Facebook following of 2600 people and over 3500 signatures to petitions. It has developed valuable partnerships with the business sector and many community groups. Importantly MRT Inc has developed good relations with relevant key NSW Government agencies and the Snowy Monaro and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Councils.*
- 2. The MRT puts the disused corridor to use but preserves it for any future rail service.*
- 3. Conserves and maintains heritage listed rail infrastructure – bridges, sidings, the Colinton tunnel and stations.*
- 4. Encourages a new and sustainable tourism activity in the region with employment opportunities*

#### **c) The Monaro Rail Trail is for locals too**

- 1. Creates a recreation trail suiting walkers, runners, cyclists and mobility scooters.*
- 2. Provides a safe off-road recreation asset for locals and tourists.*
- 3. Creates opportunities for related events – charity rides and runs and school excursions.*

#### **d) The Monaro Rail Trail creates business**

- 1. Creates new business opportunities in the hospitality, recreation and tourism sector.*
- 2. Spreads business activity throughout the year.*
- 3. Takes tourists into villages and towns not part of the existing alpine tourism market.*

#### **e) The Monaro Rail Trail Feasibility Study completed in November 2019**

- 1. Reported that the MRT has all the ingredients for success – the appealing and varied landscape, the placement of villages and towns and the big Canberra/Queanbeyan market.*
- 2. Indicated that the MRT will boost the hospitality industry as rail trail users sought food, refreshments and accommodation.*
- 3. Pointed to new business opportunities in bike hire, shuttle services and tour operators.*
- 4. Estimated the economic gains to be \$25m per year.*
- 5 The SMRC CEO estimates 235 new jobs for the Monaro.*
- 6. The Benefit to Cost Ratio for the whole MRT is 8:1 which makes it a compelling economic opportunity*



## 2. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT WITH OTHERS

Consistent with economic and tourism planning at state, regional and local level. In both regional and local Tourism Plans the MRT is referred to as a “game changer”.

## 3. CURRENT STATUS

**a). SMRC & QPRC have contributed \$90k and \$50K respectively for the detailed planning of priority sections;**

- 1) *Tralee/Hume to Michelago section – 41km at a construction cost of \$6.85 million (sealed)*
- 2) *Bombala to Jincumbilly section – 25km at \$3.5 million*
- 3) *Nimmitabel – Old Bombala Road – 11km at construction cost of \$2.56 million*
4. *An important part of the planning is to consult with and consider the requirements of adjacent landholders so their concerns are addressed.*

**4. MRT Inc** is well resourced with relevant professional expertise and has developed a financial business model and is currently developing a Business Case. Objective is to secure revenue to offset maintenance costs. MRT Working Party meets fortnightly with both Councils.

## 5. NEXT STEPS

1. The aim is to have the Trail Development Plan, Bio-Security Risk Assessment, Environmental Review & Business Case complete in early 2022 in order to have “shovel ready” projects ready when applications for capital works funding are advertised.
2. SMRC and QPRC would then be able to apply for grants from Commonwealth and State Governments for construction.
3. SMRC and QPRC also need to agree to;
  - a) *be a partner to any future management arrangement associated with the rail trail*
  - b) *contribute to maintenance costs not met by user contributions, sponsorship, advertising etc*
  - c) *apply for Grants from Commonwealth & NSW Government for construction*
  - d) *seek funding of \$330K for planning and design of the remaining sections of MRT from Government or private sources.*

## 6. WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN MRT Inc. IN REALISING THIS ICONIC PROJECT

Monaro Rail Trail Inc. committee, its members and the community will be keen to know your views about the importance of the rail trail to this region. The upcoming 2021 Local Government Election is one avenue through which you can make your views known. We issue regular newsletters to all our stakeholders and Facebook followers and invite you to include a quotation or short article in our next newsletter which will reach out to a broad audience.

## 7. CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- For further detail or clarification, please contact MRT Inc. President Ken Lister on 0409042932 or email [kencuster@gmail.com](mailto:kencuster@gmail.com)
- Check out our website [monarorailtrail.com.au](http://monarorailtrail.com.au) or [facebook.com/MonaroRailTrail](https://facebook.com/MonaroRailTrail)
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MAP showing possible staged development.

