



# Newsletter January 2017

**Our Mission Statement:** We wish to put the disused Monaro rail way line to productive use as a recreational trail for cycling and in doing so boost tourism, the economy and the well being of the region. At the same time, we wish to preserve the old rail buildings, bridges and the tunnel that are part of the Monaro rail history.

## Rail trails in NSW

All rail trail proposals in NSW are likely to follow a development pathway set by a pilot case at Tumbarumba. Although the Tumbarumba case has been approved, an essential key step before it can move forward is for the NSW Govt to pass legislation to formally close the line and allow the rails to be lifted. Tim Coen, Rail Trails for NSW, believes this legislation may go before parliament in February. However, it may not be blanket legislation to cover all disused lines in NSW and every rail trail proposal will need this same legislative approval.

The NSW National Party is considered to be supportive of rail trails and with John Barilaro, the NSW member for Eden Monaro and now National Party leader, our project may find some sympathetic ears when its turn for assessment arrives.

In the meantime, we continue to inform and seek support. In particular, we plan to involve the ACT Govt in our discussions as the first stage of our proposed development is to open up the Queanbeyan to Michelago segment of the corridor. See the story on page 2. Also, this year we hope to fund a consultant to build the business case.



**Federal politics**  
In November, the MRT committee was given the opportunity to brief Dr Mike Kelly, Federal member for Eden Monaro. He is very familiar with rail trails as he has been involved with the Tumbarumba to Rosewood proposal now approved by the NSW Govt. Mike is a supporter of our proposal as he understands the benefits that rail trails can bring to rural communities.  
On Mike’s right are MRT members, Cate Spencer (Michelago), Will Jardine (Nimmitabel), and to his left is Michael Daniel (Nimmitabel).



**Cycling and Tourism** The two local RT groups, Monaro and Bungendore to Captains Flat, had a November meeting with Martin Darcy, the Economic Development and Business Liaison officer at the Queanbeyan Palerang shire. He is developing a tourism strategy and has appointed consultants to help. Our role was to help the consultants understand how our proposed cycling and rail trails could be part of the local tourism plan. We stressed that cycling is slow tourism and brings tourists who will spend time and money in villages such as Michelago, Bredbo and Nimmitabel. In the photo are Cate Spencer, MRT, and tourism consultant Carl Solomon of Destination Marketing Store.

## Queanbeyan to Michelago rail corridor

We believe that this section of the corridor is now available to be part of our planning. The ACT Division of the Australian Rail History Society has relinquished its interest in the line and that potentially allows it to be a part of our proposal. The ACT border runs along the western boundary of the rail corridor from Queanbeyan to Williamsdale so the ACT government would be major stakeholder to the rail trail. Also, there is great potential to integrate parts of the proposed rail trail into the ACT urban cycle network and provide cycling links from the Tuggeranong valley into central Canberra and Queanbeyan.

MRT member, Jeff Ibbotson, recently rode along a service track parallel to the Canberra end of the corridor and has provided a few images. It's an easy run behind Hume industrial area and then it's an up gradient of 3% with a lovely horse shoe bend to get out of the valley and emerge onto the northern edge of the Monaro at Royalla. Queanbeyan to Michelago is a 49km ride along the rail corridor, so when developed this first stage of the trail will be ideal for a day outing including a coffee at the Michelago General Store.



## Information sharing

We continue to meet with local council committees along the rail corridor and presentations have been given to representatives at Bombala, Berridale and Cooma. These events tend to be pretty intense. We are given 15 minutes to present, answer a few questions and are then shown the door. However, in that time we are able to sow seeds of thought and get our proposal into community discussion circles.

In October, Michael Daniel answered a request for a presentation from the Merimbula Probus club. Although Merimbula is well off the rail corridor, business owners on the far south coast are interested in the potential of the rail trail to feed more tourists into their catchment. Already there are cycling groups who access the south coast via Bombala and down the Mt Darragh escarpment so one day it may possible for the trail to be extended to the coast to support tourism.

Queanbeyan	Michelago	Bredbo	Cooma	Nimmitabel
Bombala				
61 km	49 km	30 km	35 km	39 km
...	...			...
...				

## Contact

Michael Daniel at [monarorailtrail@gmail.com](mailto:monarorailtrail@gmail.com)

## Stay up to date



Friends of Monaro Rail Trail