



Monaro Rail Trail Newsletter



Our mission is to create Australia's greatest rail trail where people of all ages and abilities can cycle, walk, and run. It will see the wellbeing of local economies flourish through tourism that brings new business opportunities and preserves the Monaro's rich rail history.

August 2025

So, what is the news?

Hello supporters and stakeholders. We apologize for the lack of communications with you, but we are still here, and busy, and this newsletter will bring you up to date with how the MRT proposal is developing.

It seems a long time ago now, but in August 2015, the Monaro Rail Trail proposal became a formal organization – MRT Inc. Ten years later, has anything happened? Well yes. Bombala at the southern end of the proposed trail is the first point of construction and at the northern end, the Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council has applied for funding to construct 20 km of trail. Meantime, some of the historic timber rail bridges in the rail corridor have been lost to demolition. However, interest in rail trails grows and, in this newsletter, we tell you of a new informal group of rail trail enthusiasts who have formed up to lobby not only for the nine RT proposals in southern NSW but for all RT proposals in NSW.

Birthday anniversary. The tenth anniversary of MRT Inc happened this month. The first meeting of our rail trail supporters was in Nimmitabel on 25 July 2015, a committee formed on 15 August 2015, and MRT Inc was formally incorporated 19 August 2015. Several of that original committee remain active in the group today, and they remain convinced that the trail will one day be built - *good ideas do not go away*. Strong support for the rail trail has come from communities along the corridor. Supporters in The Bombala Chamber of Commerce, Nimmitabel Advancement Group and members of the Cooma Cycling Club have all been enthusiastic helpers.



Left: The first meeting in Nimmitabel 25 July 2015. Backs to camera are Tim Coen (RT4NSW) Pauline Cook, of Nimmitabel and to become the first MRT Inc President. Facing camera is Michael Daniel, of Nimmitabel and to become the first Secretary (and still serving on the committee).

Bombala grant. Late last year the Snowy Monaro Regional Council (SMRC) advised us that it had completed a funding agreement with the Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts. This finalized details of the \$1M grant for commencement of the Monaro Rail Trail project at Bombala and would enable trail construction of a 4 or 5 km length of the trail to start at Bombala. The project is now being managed by SMRC. Work completed to-date includes, community consultation and the review of environmental factors with soil testing for



potential contaminants within parts of the rail corridor. There is also the need to prepare documents to satisfy the NSW Government that the MRT proposal meets the NSW Framework for Rail Trail Development and this has required evidence of - community consultation, financial viability, and a governance model. One part of this work is the preparation of a lease agreement by the NSW Department of Transport and which will be offered to SMRC. This is a slow process and may not be completed until early 2026.

Bridges to be or not to be. Original construction of the 203 km rail line was conducted in two stages,

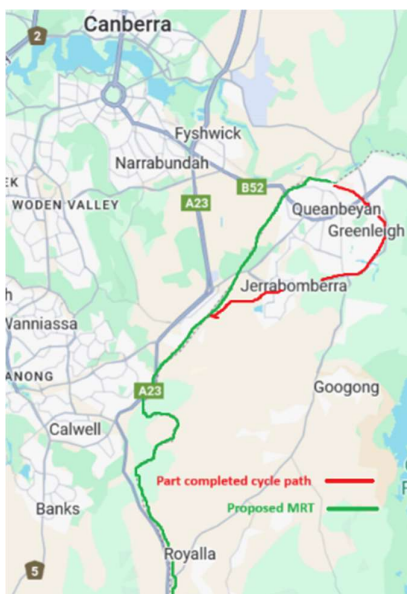


Queanbeyan to Cooma opened in 1889 and Cooma to Bombala opened in 1921.

Consultants who prepared the MRT trail development plans refer to 90 plus timber bridges ranging in length from 5 m to 200 m. The condition of the bridges has been assessed by specialist timber engineers and naturally, after 100 plus years in the Monaro weather, floods, and fires, and with no maintenance since train operations

ceased in 1989, the bridges have deteriorated. Managers of rail corridor infrastructure have recently identified several of the bridges that need to be demolished. First to go was the 22 m long bridge spanning the Old Bombala Road south of Nimmitabel and next will be the 30 m long bridge over Bumbalong Road just north of Bredbo. It is sad to see these timber bridges removed as local communities have long valued these landscape features. Thankfully, there are many other bridges away from roads and hopefully these will last long enough to be incorporated into the rail trail. Two bridges near Bredbo – the Ingelara Creek crossing and Bredbo River crossing have NSW State Heritage protection but in the absence of maintenance their future looks grim unless they are incorporated into the rail trail. This pic shows the 70 m long Queen post deck truss type bridge over Ingelara Creek, just north of Bredbo.

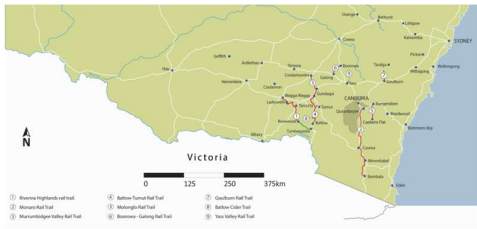
Grant application. In December 2024 the NSW government opened the Regional Economic



Development and Community Investment Program, a grant scheme of \$50million to support initiatives that promote regional economic development and support employment creation and retention. Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council lodged a grant application for funding to construct a section of the trail from Queanbeyan to South Jerrabomberra and then on towards to the QPRC boundary, south of Royalla. Success with the application would allow up to 20 km to be built. Apart from the obvious benefit of creating a safe off-road recreation path this short section also provides commuting options for Queanbeyan and South Jerrabomberra residents. It will also link with the Queanbeyan Riverside/Environs Drive pathway creating a 25 km long circuit around Queanbeyan.

Government announcements on successful applications have just started and we hope for news soon.

Rail Trails for Southern NSW. In August 2024 key supporters of 9 rail trail proposals in southern NSW



gathered in Queanbeyan to share their story for a rail trail and to review some of the common issues slowing down the development of rail trails in NSW. Forty-four participants registered for the day which was supported by Queanbeyan-Palerang Shire Council, NSW Department of Regional Development, and the NSW Government tourism agency Destination Southern NSW.

It was agreed by all that the rail trail movement in NSW had stalled despite the success of the Tumbarumba and Northern Rivers rail trails and the NSW Govt initiative of releasing a guide known as the Framework for Rail Trail Development in NSW. It was felt that action was needed to ramp up delivery of rail trails and that the first step would be meetings with senior government planners. Rail Trails of Australia (RTA) have been able to help with this.

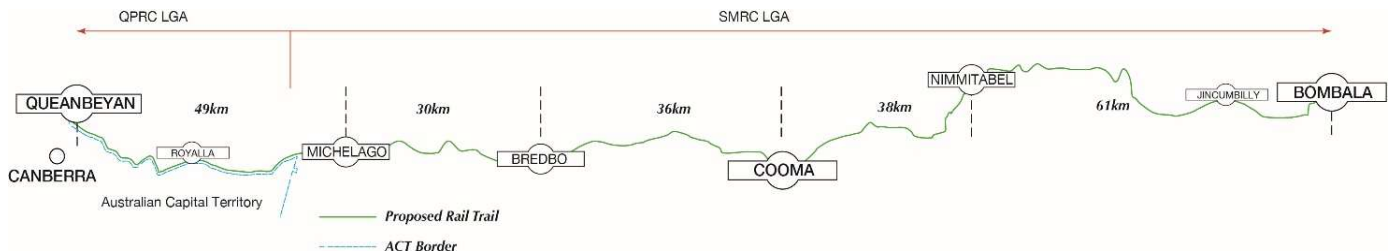
An RTA sub-committee (which includes a member of Monaro Rail Trail Inc's management committee and a retired TfNSW officer) has been meeting with senior Transport for NSW (TfNSW) bureaucrats on a regular monthly basis since early April this year. These meetings have been highly productive culminating in an intensive Workshop held in Newcastle on Friday 15 August 2025 with TfNSW and representatives from three NSW rail trail projects. In addition, a meeting with two NSW State Government Ministers to discuss the funding for rail trails is being held on 21 August 2025 in Newcastle. Also in attendance, and instrumental in setting up this meeting will be the NSW Member for Monaro, Steve Whan, a keen cyclist, and a long-time supporter of the Monaro Rail Trail.

Meetings with joint council QPRC and SMRC. Key to moving the MRT proposal along are the



monthly meetings with the key stakeholders, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and Snowy Monaro Regional Council. QPRC has 49 km of the rail corridor in its Local Government Area and SMRC has 154 km. At these monthly meetings, which have been in place for 3 years, we are able to discuss consultant's reports, review grant applications, and the documentation needed to meet conditions of the NSW Framework for Rail Trail Development. SMRC are the project managers for the trail start at Bombala and these monthly meetings provide the updates on progress of that project. We thank

the council staff for their commitment to the MRT proposal.





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For Further Information please see

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