



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.

## March 2025

### So, what is the news?

Well, it's all good news again. Both councils involved in the proposal have moved the project up their agenda.

Queanbeyan-Palerang council has applied for grant funding to commence construction of a 21km section. Also, we tell you how the rail trail will create a very appealing loop trail around the area.

From the Snowy Monaro Council, we learn that they will be reviewing the recently finished consultant's reports.

Furthermore, down at Bombala, at the southern end of the proposed rail trail, Snowy Monaro Council is preparing final documentation for a start to trail construction.

**Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council.** QPRC have also confirmed support for the Monaro Rail Trail

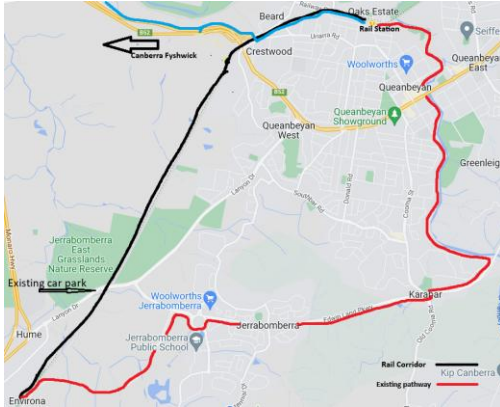


and at the Council meeting of 12 February 2025 approved a motion for council to apply for \$5M grant funding from the NSW Government Regional Economic Development and Community Investment Program. If successful, this will see the first 21km segment of the trail being constructed from Queanbeyan to near Royalla. This rail corridor trail, when linked to the Riverside/Ellerton Drive/Edwin Land Parkway path, will create a 25km loop trail around Queanbeyan with recreation and commuting options for residents of Queanbeyan and the new

suburbs in Jerrabomberra. It will also be a drawcard for ACT cyclists, bringing them across the border and into Queanbeyan's businesses and cafés. QPRC Councillor John Preston commented after the meeting *"I look forward to seeing it progress and eventually enjoying a ride on the new trail."*

One of our valued ambassadors is Steve Whan MP for the NSW electorate of Monaro. Steve has had a keen and active interest in this project for over a decade and supported QPRC's grant application. In his letter he said *"The goal of these trails is not only to encourage an active and healthy lifestyle, but to bring tourism to towns in our area which often get missed when people are travelling to and from the region. It will be an excellent boost to tourism, putting another feather in our caps as one of the state's greatest playgrounds, which is why I support this project."*

**Queanbeyan Precinct Trail.** Two trails will come together to create a great circuit of approximately



25km length and offering recreation and commuting options. At the rail station, the rail corridor meets the cycle path from Canberra and then runs down the western side of Queanbeyan through an area of grassland reserve and then passes between the new suburbs of South Jerrabomberra and the industrial area of Hume (in ACT). This area is about 7km from the rail station and will be a quick commute into QBYN central. Also starting at the rail station is an existing pathway that leads east to the Riverside pathway on the edge of the town centre, from here the path extends south to

pick up the off-road path along Edwin Land Parkway and comes to an end at the soon to be built South Jerrabomberra shopping centre and immediately alongside the rail corridor. This trail will have a nice mix of grassland, riverside and café settings. If you are a Queanbeyan cyclist, we are keen to hear from you. With lots of potential rail trail activity at this northern end of the MRT we need a few more voices from locals to help on our committee to ensure the planning for the trail is right. Local knowledge is paramount. If you have a little bit of time and a few ideas then please contact Andrew at [monarorailtrail@gmail.com](mailto:monarorailtrail@gmail.com)

**Snowy Monaro Regional Council.** On 20th February 2025 Snowy Monaro Regional Council resolved to reinstate investigations into the feasibility and potential future construction of the Monaro Rail Trail (MRT) Project. This decision has been welcomed by trail supporters throughout the region in recognition of the economic, recreation and social benefits the trail will bring to local communities. Speaking to the motion, Councillor Tanya Higgins said *"This is about the future of the region. We should be moving forward rather than stagnating while other councils are being visionary, future oriented and community*

*centric."* The first action to flow from this renewed support is for council to review documentation and the business case prepared for the NSW Government's guide rail trail development in NSW. This framework was released in 2022 and required projects to supply evidence of community engagement and consultation, management of any environmental impacts, and financial viability. SMRC have been able to obtain grant money to engage consultants and that work is now done and ready to be reviewed.

**Bombala - the MRT begins.** A \$1M grant from the Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts has allowed a start of the Monaro Rail Trail Project. The grant will enable trail construction to start at Bombala in 2025 and this will be for a 4 or 5km section. Tyron Bicknell, Project manager at SMRC, gives us an update.



*"This week consultants are doing soil sampling in the corridor as rock ballast used in rail track construction can carry contaminants. Once completed, the results will be part of the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) report which then gets submitted with the Development*



# Monaro Rail Trail Newsletter



*Application to Transport NSW prior to finalising the lease of the corridor to SMRC. Steps to follow include preparing designs for tender specifications and then surveying and fencing as this part of the rail corridor was built to a 'pioneer standard' and is unfenced."*

Although this is a small start to the MRT, it does give the two stakeholder councils experience in the development of a small section of rail trail prior to proceeding with a longer section.

**Southern NSW Rail Trail group.** There are ten rail trail proposals in southern NSW all looking for help



in getting the NSW Government to take notice of their proposal. These include the, Batlow Cider Trail, Boorowa – Galong Rail Trail, Gundagai Rail Trail, Goulburn - Crookwell Rail Trail, Monaro Rail Trail, Molongolo Rail Trail, Riverina Highlands Trail and Wagga Rail Trail and Yass Rail Trail. Representatives from those groups gathered in Queanbeyan on Friday 23 August to share news of achievements and

concerns. Forty participants attended the one day session supported by Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Government.

A common concern expressed by the rail trail groups was the fact that NSW has only two rail trails on public rail corridors and this is despite the very positive NSW Government review of the two pilot rail trails at Tumbarumba and Murwillumbah. All groups felt that rail trail development is being held back by the lack of funding opportunities to hire consultants to prepare the reports required by the NSW Framework for Rail Trail Development. The lack of funding opportunities for construction and subsequent maintenance also inhibits council support for rail trails.

An outcome of the day was a resolution of the group to do a stocktake of all rail trail proposals in NSW and then seek meetings with senior NSW Government staff to make them aware of the opportunities being lost in tourism development in regional areas. Every rail trail built is a catalyst to attract tourists and when a region, such as southern NSW has a number of trails the drawcard becomes even greater.

In the pic you see L to R, Carolyn Paris NSW Dept of Primary Industry and Regional NSW, Dennis Puniard Rail Trails Australia, Rosanne Coumbis Monaro Rail Trail, Ryan Deebank Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and Tim Coen Rail Trails for NSW.

**Queanbeyan Markets.** We set up our information booth at the Queanbeyan markets before



Christmas. In the past we have taken the info stand to southern towns and villages but now with Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council taking a leading role in the project, and hopefully a start to a 21km section, we will be in Queanbeyan more often. These market days are a good way to share information with those residents who have heard a little of the project and want to know more. We had lots of visitors including James and Kez Gallagher who are keen to see it happen, and Chino the family pet looked pretty excited at the prospect of walks on the corridor too.

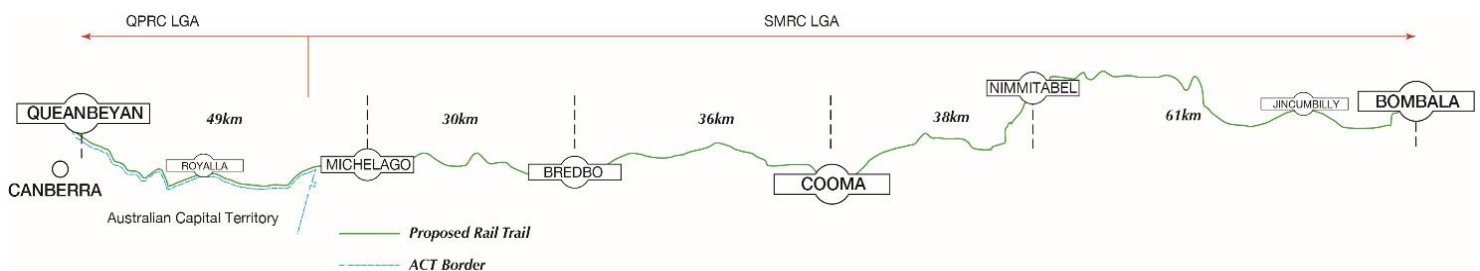
## MRT Marketing Planning. MRT Marketing Planning.



Although the MRT has no trail on the ground at the moment, the imminent start to construction of a small section at Bombala has prompted initial discussions on marketing of the trail. With help from the NSW Government tourism agency, Destination Southern NSW and the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, a half day of training and planning was organized in early February. The focus of the day was to identify the unique selling proposition for the MRT. Although the

mantra “just build it and they will come” is true, maximizing the number of trail users needs a bit more planning and promotional effort. Marketing of MRT must also be directed to local business to ensure they are aware of the MRT and its opportunities and are aware of the level of service that trail users might expect. Community groups who will be ambassadors for the trail also need to be included in marketing programs.

In the pic are, L to R; Nicole Plummer from SMRC Visitor Centre, Rosanne Coumbis MRT, Richard Everson Destination Southern NSW, Dave Byrne and Peter Coumbis both MRT.



For Further Information please see

Website <https://www.monarorailtrail.com.au/>

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Enquiries to [monarorailtrail@gmail.com](mailto:monarorailtrail@gmail.com) Secretary: Andrew Carter