

Presidents Report 2017 - 2018 for Monaro Rail Trail Inc



Our awareness program continued this year with an emphasis on engaging with small business throughout the southern part of the Monaro. Last year it was the businesses community in Nimmitabel that showed their support by displaying the orange colored bike and promotional stickers at their business. This year we turned our attention to Cooma and Bombala and the support in Cooma was especially encouraging and you can see orange bikes displayed around businesses in town. These bikes have been silent but strong advocates for our proposal.

The region's media continue to take a keen interest in the proposal. ABC radio South East region, ABC radio Canberra and The Canberra Times have all initiated stories that have helped raise the profile of the proposal and offer information to the local community. Our attendance at the registration day of the Tour De Etape in December helped us contact many cyclists and our presence at the Cooma Lions Markets also put us in touch with locals. More of these open events are planned for the coming 12 months.

It has been encouraging to see a number of reports that indicate government planners are aware of the potential of rail trails to boost regional development. These reports specifically mention the Monaro Rail Trail proposal.

- In July 2017 The NSW Government Planning and Environment released its "South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036" It suggested the disused rail lines at Goulburn and Bungendore and the Monaro line could all be a key part of new regional tourism.

- In November 2017 the NSW Department of Transport released a vision statement that suggested the unused assets within that Department that could be repurposed for regional cycling tourism. Amongst those assets, 3500 km of disused rail lines were identified and mentioned for their value as potential rail trails.

Tourism planners have also picked up the conversation on rail trails.

- The key tourism planning report "Destination Southern Region NSW Management Plan 2018 – 2020" by the NSW Government clearly identifies the proposed Monaro Rail Trail as a means of expanding the region's tourism potential.

- Similarly, the recently released cycle tourism report by the ACT government identifies niche cycle trails such as rail trails as a means of enabling new tourism for the ACT and region.

A most significant move in recent months was the appointment of locally based tourism consultants TRC Pty Ltd to evaluate the economic benefits of the business case for the rail trail. To fund this work, we decided to undertake a crowdfunding campaign. This was launched to the public in mid-July and the result was that we raised \$12000 in 5 days. We were very encouraged at the support from members and other interested people and I would like to thank to all those members who generously contributed. The report should be available early in October.

My sincere thanks must go to executive committee of Cate Spencer as Vice president, Andrew Carter as Treasurer, Michael Daniel and Jen Smart as Secretaries, who are all an enormous support to me in my role as President. Guiding me in all that is happening in government reports, encouraging me to remain buoyant re our vision and putting 100% into their roles on the MRT committee.

Thanks, are also due to other committee members, Will Jardine, Angie Ingram and the new committee members Jack Clayton and Peter Cottrell who have achieved a tremendous amount of work for the MRT during the last six months.

Thanks to all new members who have joined this year - the increasing support base will prove that the community is behind the proposal. This seems to be the significant requirement at the moment for government acceptance.

I am looking forward to the results of the business case study and the progress for next year.

Regards
Mary Walters
President
31 st August 2018