



Newsletter July 2016

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.

Building community awareness

Informing people and communities along the route continues to be the focal point of our activities. Our Secretary, Michael Daniel, has given presentations to the Cooma Lions Club, Cooma Rotary Club and the Nimmitabel Garden Club. In all cases he has been well received and letters of support have been offered. Mary and Syd Walters, Cooma landholders and MRT supporters, continue to meet with key landholders for talks.



The MRT banner had an outing to the Michelago Mayfair.

Although a sunny day, it was extremely windy and some stall holders and marquees battled to stay in place. Consequently visitor numbers were well down compared with previous years but it was still a very useful day for the MRT team. We engaged with locals and several new members signed up. In the photo are Romney Kelly, President of the Michelago Progress Society and Cate Spencer, MRT Vice President.

On two occasions MRT has been approached by local ABC radio for interviews. In Canberra ABC 666 hosted an interview by Genevieve Jacobs with local MRT committee member Jeff Ibbotson. At Bega ABC South East Region hosted a longer program featuring interviews with our Secretary Michael Daniel and landholder Buzz Aboud from Bredbo. Buzz will be familiar to some of you from his video on our Facebook page. As a result of this radio show two groups on the far south coast have approached Michael for a presentation. Tourism promoters in this part of NSW are well aware of the potential for extra visitors should the MRT be established.

Local council amalgamation.

The three local councils on the Monaro have recently amalgamated to form the Snowy Monaro Council. This has meant we have had to begin dealing with the new Council and go over ground already covered in dealings with the previous Cooma Monaro and Bombala Councils. However one opportunity to arise from the amalgamation has been the chance to apply for money for community projects and we have applied for funds to support a feasibility study of the business case for the MRT.



Looking ahead could be gloomy.

We have recently learnt that rail bridges such as this one near Nimmitabel may have an uncertain future and that the first to be scheduled for demolition is the rail bridge at Michelago. Many residents in Michelago are disappointed that the bridge which is such a valued part of their village landscape could be so easily taken away. The bridge has been deemed as unsafe for under passing road traffic. Michelago residents have indicated to John Holland Pty Ltd, the rail corridor managers, that they want the bridge to remain. Monaro Rail Trail will support the residents as the issue of this bridge raises the broader question of who is caring for the many rail bridges along the Monaro rail corridor. The heritage listed bridges at Ingelara and

Bredbo are in a similar condition to that at Michelago, will they be allowed to quietly rot away until considered dangerous and then be scheduled for demolition? A rail trail is one way of ensuring that these bridges and other related examples of Monaro rail history are preserved.

May MRT outing to Bush Heritage Australia



Thirty MRT supporters gathered at the Bredbo Bush Heritage Australia property Scottsdale, to look at the conservation work on this former sheep and cattle grazing property and to inspect the nearby Colinton tunnel. The visit began with a great morning tea in the converted woolshed and then the manager, Phil Palmer, took us on a tour of the property to look at a few examples of the work been done to restore native grasses and tree cover. Efforts to control a major erosion gully have been very successful and resulted in the restoration of a small stream with rock pools. Following a look at the Murrumbidgee river, we had plenty of time to walk along the adjacent rail corridor and admire the tunnel, 161 metres in length and built in 1889.

Managers of Scottsdale have been very supportive of the MRT proposal and since our visit we have been able to make a small financial contribution to Bush Heritage Australia.

Annual General Meeting

Monaro Rail Trail Inc. will hold its first Annual General Meeting at 6 pm on Tuesday 30 August in the meeting room first floor of the Alpine Hotel Cooma. Everyone is most welcome to come along and meet the committee and ask some questions and put forward some suggestions. If you think you are able to attend perhaps let Michael Daniel know.

Contact

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Friends of Monaro Rail Trail