



Newsletter June 2018

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

From the President Mary Walters

The committee has not been out with the road show since the big outing to the Tour L 'Etape event at Jindabyne last December. It was wet but we have since dried out. In the meantime, the committee has met monthly and have been setting plans and goals for the next six months and the exciting news is that in July we should be ready to launch our crowd funding effort to finance the first part of the feasibility study. This study



will give us some data on the economic benefits the rail trail would bring to the region and this will give us a bit more muscle in our discussions with local council and regional tourism planners. At a later date, full engineering costings will be needed to complete the business case including a management plan and evidence of community consultation. Very fresh news is the release of a report to the tourism body for southern region NSW. This identifies strategies and projects that will promote the tourism economy in southern NSW. Included in the ACTION PLAN are the 4 potential rail trails at Boorowa, Bungendore, Goulburn and the Monaro RT Queanbeyan to Bombala. We hope we can now work with the tourism agencies to expand on the value of the MRT in the Snowy Monaro region.

Mary (and Syd) in Athens.

Support for the Monaro Rail Trail Small business operators in hospitality are clear winners with cycling tourism. Michelago is only 48 km from Queanbeyan and much less from the southern Canberra suburbs and so on weekdays and weekends keen cyclists out for a day ride will head for Michelago. Many other riders setting out on the full trail ride of 4 or 5 days ride would certainly be looking for B & B accommodation in the area. Michelago General Store owner Sally Connolly is well aware of the opportunities the rail trail would bring to her business and the local community. She was one of our first business supporters and is shown here with her daughter Kate and shop dog Sox. You can see an earlier interview with Sally on this link. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRVI77u_8pw

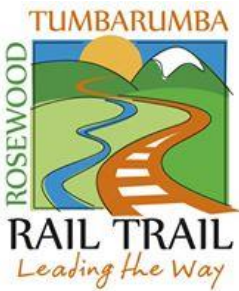


Orange coloured



The bright orange coloured bikes seen in businesses along the MRT corridor are sure evidence of support for the rail trail and you can see plenty of them in the shopfronts of Cooma businesses. Well positioned for passing coffee drinkers is Under the Elms Café at the roundabout by the park and joint owner, Victoria, is always pleased to see you especially if you mention the bikes in the cafe window.

Other rail trail news



After a long wait, work on the Tumbarumba to Rosewood rail trail is just around the corner. Early in May, the NSW Government gazetted the rail corridor as a rail trail reserve held within the Crown Lands Act and to be used for a public purpose. As well, a rail trail reserve trust was established and the Snowy Valleys Council became a member of that trust. The council will be responsible to the trust board for management of the reserve. Mr Greg Alpin, NSW Member for Albury, who has been a keen supporter of the rail trail proposal said “the change in ownership marks a significant milestone for the NSW pilot (rail trails) project to transform the old rail corridor into a scenic walking and cycling trail”. The \$4.9 m funding for construction of the 25 km trail came from NSW Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund.



On the northern NSW coast, the proposal for a 135km long rail trail in the Northern Rivers region has also been moving along. In 2014 the proposal was given strong support when the then local member, Mr Don Page MP, was able to secure NSW Government funding for a feasibility study of the entire route. The Tweed Council then took the matter a step further and paid for the business case study on the 24 km section of Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek. The results of that study were used to gain \$13 m in joint funding from the NSW State and Federal governments to allow development of that section.

Next section in the pipeline is the section Casino to Eltham and the committee have crowd funded \$75,000 for the business case study.



Cycling tourism news

In our December 2017 newsletter we referred to a NZ government report on cycling tourism which suggested that spending a dollar on cycle tourism infrastructure such as cycle paths created a net benefit of \$2.50 for each dollar spent. In this newsletter we look at a report from Tourism Western Australia January 2018 which details some of the characteristics of cycling tourists.

One of the key points from the survey by tourism consultants, Faster Horses, was that nearly one third of Australians in the past 3 years had taken a holiday that involved a cycling experience. For some, the cycling experience was planned and these people purposely went to a particular destination for cycling. For others, the cycle experience was opportunistic and the cycling was just one part of different experiences at a destination which was not necessarily chosen for cycling.

The report suggests cycle tourists fit into four key groups. 'Cruisers' with a casual interest in cycles, 'Achiever' are very keen on cycles and plan cycling holidays, 'Explorer' tend to be testosterone fueled young males seeking a cycle challenge and then there are the 'Socialites' who tend to cycle short distances for a social hookup eg a coffee. The 'Achievers' and 'Explorers' are key groups that would be drawn to the Monaro RT for a tourism cycling experience of the full length of the trail while Canberra's 'Cruisers' and 'Socialites' might have a crack at making Michelago a coffee destination. You can read more at

https://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/Publications%20Library/Research%20and%20reports/Faster%20Horses_TWA_Cycle%20Tourism%20Segmentation%20Executive%20Summary%208Feb2018.pdf

Meet some of the Monaro Rail Trail Committee

Although the overnight temperature went to – 5 °C, several of the committee were up early to set up the marquee at the Cooma Rotary markets on Sunday 20 May. These events create opportunities for the public to engage with us and discuss the proposal. Shown here in the orange MRT shirts are Jack Clayton (Cooma) and Cate Spencer (Michelago) talking with new MRT member Norm Pearce from Bega.



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Friends of Monaro Rail Trail

