



April 2022

So, what's the news?

Since our newsletter to you last October we have been busy canvassing candidates in the Monaro by-election and a council election, participating in meetings of the joint Council/MRT working group and assisting the consultants preparing the trail development plan (TDP). A major outcome of the council working group was the preparation and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the three parties- MRT Inc and the two councils Queanbeyan Palerang and Snowy Monaro.

Council elections. All Councils across NSW held elections in December and we made a point of canvassing nearly all candidates in the Shires of Queanbeyan Palerang and Snowy Monaro which “host” the rail corridor. Most candidates in Snowy Monaro were very positive in support for the MRT proposal and it is pleasing to report that the newly elected Mayor, Narelle Davis, is working hard to advance the MRT project. Over the next two months councillors of both Shires will be updated with an MRT briefing now that they are settling into their roles.

Political chit chats. Two key politicians we are regularly in contact with are Nicole Overall in the NSW state electorate of Monaro and Kristy McBain in the federal seat of Eden Monaro. Both have taken a keen interest in the project and most recently we met with Kristy to update her on progress with the trail development plan and the business case. She was particularly interested in and encourages our planning to generate income to offset maintenance expenses. Our Kiwi cousins are well ahead of us in this and recently, NZ cycle tour operator, Cycle Journeys, reported that in 2021 it contributed nearly A\$50,000 to maintenance of the two trails, Alps 2 Ocean and West Coast Wilderness. This money was collected from levies on client baggage transfer.



Memorandum of understanding The MRT Inc relationship with the two Councils achieved a solid footing on 28 Jan 2022 when the three stakeholders signed a Memorandum of Understanding. This agreement formalizes the intent to develop the rail trail proposal further and hopefully will see the Councils be a formal party to applications for construction funding. Previously this lack of formal support blocked our attempts to attract construction money. A spinoff from the signing of the MOU has been a stronger commitment from the ACT Government which, although always supportive of the proposal, has been a spectator on the sidelines. A recent letter from the ACT Government Chief Minister, Andrew Barr, to the Councils has identified that the ACT Government at Cabinet and Policy level now wishes to be formally included in discussions.



Bombala Precinct Trail In our last newsletter we pointed out we had received funding from the Boco Rock Wind Farm community grant. This funding is to build a small cycle trail within Bombala to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy a ride and look at some of the features of the town. Planning is completed and construction of the footpaths will begin soon and in time for an opening in June.



Monaro Rail Trail Newsletter



Trail Development Plan. Last year the two councils committed \$140K for consultants to prepare this plan. It is essentially a master plan detailing where the trail should be built, how it will be built and details how much it will cost. A Project Manager will use this plan to oversee construction. The plan will cover sections of the trail at its northern and southern ends. The 40km northern end will connect the big user market of Canberra Queanbeyan with Michelago and the 25 km southern end will be a drawcard to bring users to Bombala. Some of our committee members walked sections with the consultants and a few pics are shown.



The MRT Business Case is being prepared in readiness for another round of grants that might be available to fund construction. The strength of our case includes a strong alignment with government planning in economic and tourism development strategies at all levels from state to regional and local. We can also demonstrate that there is strong community interest and support in the project. The very important benefit cost ratio has been estimated and is likely to exceed 4. A better feel for this number will be known when the TDP with updated construction costs is provided next month and we can do final estimations.



Who are our business supporters? If you are out and across the Monaro this Easter then drop into and say hello to some of our business supporters. You will find someone in Michelago, Bredbo, Cooma, Nimmitabel and Bombala, just look for the orange coloured bikes. Not sure who the businesses are? then click here [MRT Business Supporters](#)

Thank you for your interest!

For Further Information please see

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