



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.

May 2024

So, what is the news?

In this newsletter we bring you; some good news from the Snowy Monaro Regional Council, an update on who is who in MRT Inc, an announcement on a small start to the rail trail at Bombala, progress on the latest round of trail development plans and lastly, we look at The Northern Rivers rail trail and one of the community groups using the trail.

From the President



At the SMRC Council meeting on Thursday 18 April in Cooma, a motion was put to support continued development of the MRT proposal. A summary of the motion is;

- Apply for a grant in the "Regional Precincts Partnerships Program" (RPPP) Federal Government or similar type grant by December 15, 2024 (separately or jointly with QPRC) to engage a consultant to prepare the MRT business case.
- Engage a Project Manager for the Bombala section of the MRT project if funded by the Federal "Investing in Our Communities Grant"

Included in discussion was that SMRC engage a Project Manager with experience in rail trail construction, who can be employed should SMRC be successful with its current application for funding of the Bombala section of the MRT project.

After some discussion the motion was passed unanimously. This is very good news for the MRT and the decision has given the group greater confidence that Council supports the project and its forecast economic benefits for the Snowy Monaro.

The resolution now sets deadlines for important key tasks to get the MRT construction started. Without the resolution, the Council's leadership had stated that it had insufficient resources to work on the MRT as it was a low priority project. This has now changed, and the CEO acknowledged this in the Council meeting. Resources must now be applied to meet the Council's resolution.

So, now it is a matter of getting on with the project and with a real sense of urgency. The good news is that most of the preparation work has been done. The trail development plans, environmental reports and economic studies are either complete or in final draft. The business case needs to be updated to reflect the work that has been done and align with the NSW Government's Rail Trail Framework.



Monaro Rail Trail Newsletter

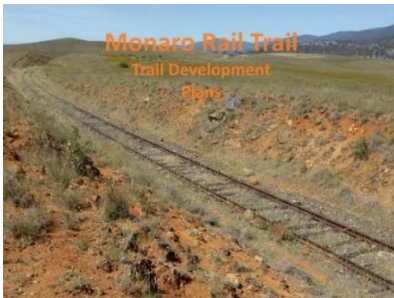


AGM MRT Inc.

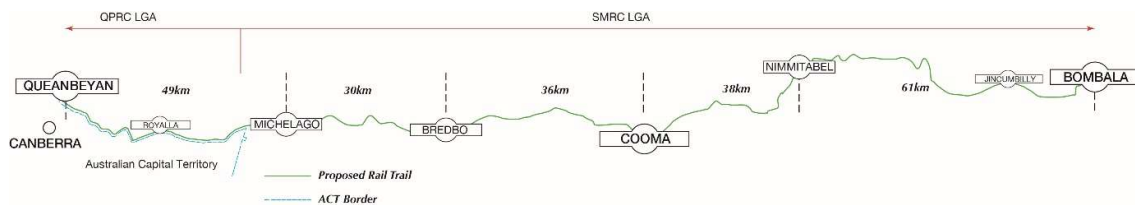
The annual meeting of MRT Inc was held in Cooma on 21 November. Executive positions on the committee remain unchanged – President Carlo Botto (Cooma), Secretary Ric Moor (Queanbeyan), Vice President Frank Bakker (Cooma) and Treasurer Andrew Carter (Canberra). Continuing to work with the committee are Michael Daniel (Nimmitabel), Charlie Maslin (Bombala) and David Byrne (Cooma). New to the committee member is Bernie McDonald of Rock Flat near Cooma. Former president, Ken Lister, has moved to Queensland but retains an active interest in committee work.

It was sad to see two of our founding committee members leave the group. Mary Walters, from Cooma and an early MRT President and Cate Spencer at Michelago who served as Vice- President for 5 years. Both have contributed greatly to development of the MRT proposal and their work as MRT ambassadors in their communities has been invaluable. A special thanks to you both.

MRT Trail Development Plans



Last year we reported that the regional councils, Queanbeyan and Snowy Monaro, had received a grant of \$272k from the NSW Government to continue development plans for the MRT. Sections of the corridor not covered in the previous plan (TDP 1) were to be assessed and these included Queanbeyan to South Jerrabomberra (7km), Michelago to Cooma (65km) and MacLaughlin Siding, (10km south of Nimmitabel) to Jincumbilly (25km). The grant also covered consultancies to; review biosecurity and biodiversity along the corridor, and to identify and review revenue sources to help offset trail maintenance expenses. The work has been completed and once the reports have been accepted by the Snowy Monaro Council we can tell you more on the findings.





Good news for MRT at Bombala ?



In April 2022, prior to Federal elections, Kristy McBain MP for Eden-Monaro announced that Labor would invest in the Monaro Rail Trail. Making the announcement from Bombala she said Labor will commit \$1million to begin works on the rail trail. “The community has been advocating for this project for a long time” and

“We have seen the enormous economic and social benefits that other rail trails have delivered.”

In December 2023 the Snowy Monaro Regional Council applied for that funding via the Federal Government “Investing in our Communities” grant. We believe that an announcement on success or other wise of the application is due very soon. Although this grant would build only 5km of trail it is a big assurance that government at all levels supports the MRT and that we can expect to see the trail extend along the Bombala rail corridor. We will bring you more news on this soon.

The pic shows Kristy McBain with Bombala residents and MRT committee members (April 2022).

Rail trails in NSW.



It has been exciting to watch the development of the Northern Rivers rail trail which when completed will run from Murwillumbah to Lismore and onto Casino, a distance of 132km.

The proposal was floated 10 years ago and the first section, 25km leading from Murwillumbah, was opened in March 2023 and 12 months later traffic counters recorded that more than 140,000 users had been on the trail.

In March this year another section was opened, this time from Casino to Bentley, a distance of 13km and another section is now in construction. One of the very interesting community groups to use the Murwillumbah section has been the Cycling Without Age group, who take aged residents out onto the trail in rickshaws. A fine demonstration that rail trails are for people of all abilities.

For Further Information please see

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

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