

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 bringing new business opportunities and preservation of the Monaro’s rich rail heritage.

Hello rail trail supporters. In our April newsletter we told you that one of the sticking points in our progress was the delayed release of the report on the return of the Monaro train



service from Queanbeyan to Bombala. New connections were to be made with Canberra and from Bombala the line would be extended to the Port of Eden on the NSW south coast. In September, the NSW Government released a summary which pointed out that the proposal would not be feasible with a build cost of \$6.4B

and a benefit cost ratio of 0.0. This, week John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier for NSW and member for the Monaro electorate commented on the rail corridor. During an ABC radio interview, he said that it will be important to “continue to preserve the rail corridor” and that it would be appropriate to “look at other uses for the rail line – groups using the cycle way for tourism”. This is clearly a very significant point in freeing up options for more discussions on the planning of the Monaro Rail Trail.



The immediate consequence of these announcements is that the Snowy Monaro Regional Council (SMRC) is now able to fully endorse the report on the feasibility of the Monaro Rail Trail. Council funded this study last year and the results were very positive, but accepting the report was subject to the outcome of the train proposal. That restriction has been lifted and this week SMRC invited the MRT team to give a briefing to councillors in early November. We hope the SMRC will seek to engage with the Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council and the ACT

government, both key stakeholders on the rail corridor.



It has been a long wait getting to this point but we have been using this time to better set up our team and to continue to prepare our case. Our inner Steering Group now covers; engineering, legal, town planning, accounting, business, cartography and farm management. We have been reaching out to other groups for information and advice on how we should go about our project. People at both the Tumbarumba and Northern Rivers rail trails have been most helpful.

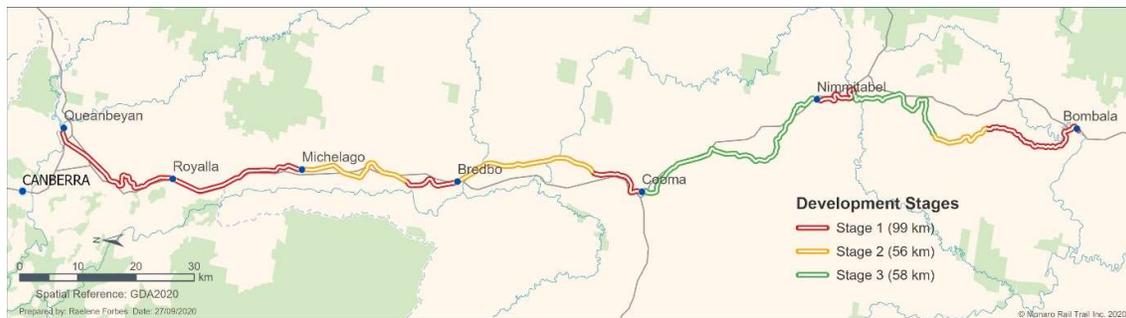




The consulting Project Manager of the Tumbarumba RT was particularly helpful with ideas on costs savings and how to interact with deal adjoining landholders. Managers of the NZ Otago Trail and the South Australian Clare Valley Riesling Trail have helped us with data on trail maintenance costs. Another useful meeting was held with NSW Local Land Services to talk about biosecurity issues and the general feeling was that the rail trail would not present any unsolvable issues.



One key meeting was with NSW Senator Jim Molan. He approached MRT for a meeting in September and from that meeting the committee decided to put in a submission for federal government funding of detailed planning studies such as the business case and a technical development plan. A copy of the submission was sent to the John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier of NSW. In that submission we outlined our plans for a 3 staged development. Stage 1 is the Queanbeyan to Michelago (49Km) and with small sections in each of the other settlements, Stage 2 completes Michelago to Cooma and Stage 3 is Cooma to Bombala.



The committee will continue to actively engage with all stakeholders throughout the project to enable new ideas and approaches to be considered, and importantly resolution of any issues of concern.

All this activity indicates we are in a very exciting phase of our planning and we really hope to be able to share lots of good news over the next few months.

Thanks for your continuing interest and support and thanks to our photographers, Steve Dunn, Mary Walters, Peter Gamble and Charlie Maslin.

Michael Daniel for the MRT Inc team.

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