



Monaro Rail Trail Newsletter



March 2023

So what's the news?

In this newsletter you can read of changes to the MRT Inc committee at the last AGM. Comments from both the outgoing and incoming Presidents are for you to read. Perhaps a more exciting read though, is the news of a major grant we received from the NSW Government, this grant will finalize trail development plans for the section Queanbeyan to Cooma. MRT Inc committee members meet fortnightly with the two councils involved and new President Carlo tells us a little about that. Finally, we thanks those people who donated to our crowd funding campaign in 2018.



AGM MRT Inc . Our last AGM was held on 14 November in Cooma. Changes in the elected executive stemmed from the retirement of President Ken Lister who has moved to the tropical waters of the Sunshine Coast Qld. You can read his report - [read the report](#) The incoming President is Carlo Botto, keen cyclist of Cooma and he is supported by Frank Bakker (Vice President), Rick Moore (Secretary) and Andrew Carter (Treasurer). Committee members from communities along the rail corridor include Cate Spencer (Michelago), Peter Coumbis (Cooma) and David Byrne (Cooma), Huw Kingston (Jindabyne), Michael Daniel (Nimmitabel) and Charlie Maslin (Bombala) . The pic shows, L to R, Andrew, Frank, Peter, Huw and Rick.

From the MRT President Carlo Botto. I want to start by thanking Ken Lister, who did so much as the previous President in taking the MRT forward. His passion, enthusiasm and professionalism were truly inspiring and thankfully he remains on the Committee.



Over the last 12 months the MRT has progressed significantly. Importantly we have, a Trail Development Plan for the stages of the MRT we are proposing to develop first and a draft business case to seek funding. Also, the NSW Government released a framework mid last year to guide development of rail trails, and we are aligning our activities to ensure we conform with this framework.

I believe this year will be an even bigger year as far as progress in developing the MRT. At our first Committee meeting we agreed our key objective was to obtain grant funding this year for the first stage of the MRT, and if possible, commence construction.

With the substantive work done so far, and a NSW State election in March we are working hard to seek commitment from both sides of politics to support the MRT.

Regional NSW grant. Our year finished with the exciting news that funding of \$273K is being provided by the NSW Government to continue with the Trail Development Plan for the Monaro Rail Trail (MRT) concept. In September 2022, Snowy Monaro Regional Council lodged an application with the Department of Regional NSW to obtain a grant under the Business Case and Strategy Development Fund which supports local councils and community groups with funding to develop business cases or strategies for regionally significant projects and initiatives. The successful news was announced just before Xmas by Nicole Overall MP for Monaro.



Carlo Botto, President of MRT Inc, said this grant will cover completion of a trail development plan for the 113 km section Queanbeyan to Cooma. Included will be, the biosecurity plan and an update to financial data within the business plan.



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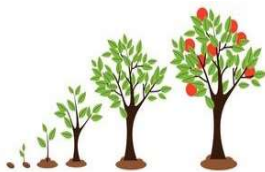
Dealings with councils. MRT representatives have actively engaged with Council staff and Councillors of both Councils over the past 12 months. The MRT grant funding application, construction co-ordination and ongoing operations and maintenance will be done through the two Councils so the MRT is working closely with them to firstly, promote and secondly assist with the MRT development.



We have received in principle support for the MRT's development from both Council's but the substantive issue to be resolved before they commit to final approval and seeking grant funding is resolving on-going funding for operations and maintenance. MRT Inc is working closely with the Councils to assist with this. We are also working with SMRC to resolve the issue of Cooma Monaro Railway Inc (CMR) wishing to use the rail corridor south of Cooma for tourist train activity. Although CMR's plans are relatively undeveloped, with no demonstrated community support or costings, MRT and Council is engaging with them, and this has caused some delay and uncertainty.

Also, a substantive piece of work yet to be completed is the negotiation of a lease between Transport for NSW and the Councils for the rail corridor, and an environmental (bio-security) report for the rail trail – both requirements of the NSW framework.

From little things big things do grow. If you were one of the generous people who in 2018 contributed to the MRT crowd funding campaign (\$12,500) for the scoping study of the MRT proposal, the MRT committee continue to say thank you. Results of that study indicated the potential success of the rail trail and encouraged Snowy Monaro Regional Council to allocate \$75,000 for a more detailed study in 2019. The positive results of that second study prompted Snowy Monaro and Queanbeyan Palerang regional councils in 2021 to engage consultants to develop a trail development plan for two sections of the rail trail, one at the northern end and the other at the southern end. This was completed within a budget of \$140K. Prior to the last Federal election, the sitting Labor candidate Kristy McBain committed \$1M to the proposal. And now, this most recent announcement from Regional NSW of a \$272K grant to complete the trail development plan demonstrates how your early contribution has grown in significance.



Thank you for your interest!

For Further Information please see

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

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MonaroRailTrail>

Email monarorailtrail@gmail.com

Phone President Carlo Botto 0400 926 340