



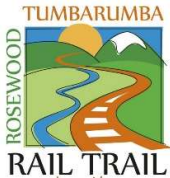
Monaro Rail Trail Newsletter October 2021



Rail trail development in NSW on track

The pace of rail trails development in NSW is picking up. Although not as advanced as other Australian states, NSW is making great progress. The proposed Monaro Rail Trail (MRT) continues to attract high levels of local community and business support, and the MRT committee is encouraged by the NSW Government initiative to explore options to make rail trails a reality for NSW.

So, what's the news?



The 25km **Tumbarumba / Rosewood** trail opened in April last year and with great outcomes: user numbers are close to 20,000 per year and existing small businesses in hospitality have all prospered and six new business have opened.



In August it was announced that the **New England rail trail received \$8.7m** of funding to start construction of the first 35km of the 102km rail trail. Funding came from the *Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Grant*, a joint NSW and Federal government scheme. Both the Glenn Innes Severn and Armidale councils have enthusiastically embraced the project and taken on its ownership.



Queanbeyan Palerang and Snowy Monaro Regional Councils have committed \$50k and \$90k respectively to prepare the Trail Development Plans (TDPs) for two key sections of the MRT. These are, the section between Hume/Tralelee to Michelago (45km), and a 25 km section from Jincumbilly to Bombala. A shorter 10km section south from Nimmitabel will be included. It is hoped the TDPs will be completed by end March 2022.

The consultants main focus will be:

- Check with landholders about their issues and how to incorporate solutions into the TDP.
- Consult the ACT government to consider how ACT residents can access the trail from existing or planned cycle paths in the Territory.
- Determine the need for access points, signage, on trail facilities such as toilets, safety issues, and fencing
- Develop a construction plan



Charity Registration has been achieved by MRT Inc. which gives credibility when seeking grants and philanthropic funding, and the option to affiliate with organizations that offer potential donors a tax deductible receipt. Of course, any business operator wanting to donate now can do so and be issued an invoice.



\$53,859 has been granted by the Boco Rock Community Enhancement Fund to MRT Inc to construct a precinct trail linking local cycling paths to the future rail trail head at Bombala.

It is planned that precinct trails will be established in all communities along the rail corridor and that the rail trail will be linked to other local cycling/mountain bike trails.



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Regional NSW Initiative The Department of Regional NSW is the lead agency on the development of rail trails across regional NSW. In April 2021 DRNSW commissioned an evaluation and review of two pilot rail trail projects; the 21km Rosewood to Tumbarumba Rail Trail that officially opened in April 2020, and the 24km Tweed stage of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail that is expected to be completed in 2022. Preliminary findings of the evaluation have indicated that the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail has been successful in delivering social and economic benefits to the community. The review is expected to be completed in late 2021.

Business support for the trail. We have been looking at what happens on some NZ rail trails where councils have to pick up maintenance costs. A user pays model has been introduced and it is clever in that it targets trail users who are tourists rather than local rate payers. Tour operators booking clients impose a daily levy on the clients and this levy is at a later time handed to the trail management. The model also includes partnerships between trail management and local business. Official partners and preferred suppliers pay an annual fee in return for advertising options.

Thank you for your interest!

Many of you provided letters of support that accompanied MRT Inc.'s application for grant funding from the *Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Program* earlier this year. Thank you for doing so. In the absence of key information, we were unable to progress this application to conclusion, however, the exercise helped us to sharpen our pencils, gain essential local council support, and more fully appreciate the information needs of relevant NSW Government agencies.

We are now confident that the current body of work being undertaken jointly with Snowy Monaro and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Councils will see a road map prepared that will enable discrete sections of the trail to be "shovel ready" in 2022 in time for the next round of NSW and Commonwealth grant funding opportunities.

For Further Information please see

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

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Boco Rock wind farm



Maclaughlin River rail bridge



Jincumbilly siding