



MRT Inc. - 2021 AGM

PRESIDENTS REPORT

It has been an honour to be President of MRT Inc. for the last 12 months and work with such a dynamic and competent team of passionate people to achieve our vision for the Monaro Rail Trail. I also wish to recognise the previous Committee and MRT Supporters and the great foundation work they took on to raise awareness and support.

Much has been achieved through the efforts of many people including the Committee, Steering Team, Precinct Team, Consultants, Ambassadors, Friends of MRT as well as our numerous Business, Political and Community supporters. To each of you, I express gratitude for your contribution to the substantial progress.

Some of the key achievements during 2021 include;

- Gary Nairn AO accepting role as Patron and providing valued guidance and support
- Recognition by the ACNC of MRT Inc. as a Charity
- Funding support from SMRC (\$90k) and Q-PRC (\$50k) for detailed planning of three sections;
 - Bombala – Jincumbilly (25km)
 - Nimmitabel – Old Bombala Road (10k)
 - Tralee – Michelago (41km)
- Awarding of a contract to Transplan P/L and Mike Halliburton & Associates (who did the 2019 MRT Feasibility Study) to provide Trail Development Plans for the 3 sections above.
- Receiving \$53k funding from Boco Rock Community Fund for the Bombala Precinct Trail
- Building Bi-partisan political support and strong advocacy by particular Councillors
- Obtaining letters of support from both Q-PRC & SMRC, Chambers of Commerce at Cooma & Bombala and from many businesses and organisations.
- Public interest and awareness of MRT continues to grow with new supporters at individual and business levels. Friends of MRT Facebook now has over 2600 followers.
- Over 1,000 signatures on a Petition supporting the need for the Monaro Rail Trail.
- Developed relationships with the ACT Government, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation as well the NSW Government Departments of Regional NSW and Transport for NSW
- Lodging an application for funding of \$12.9m under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund (BLER) as part funding for first stage construction.
- Fortnightly Working Part Meetings with Q-PRC, SMRC and MRT Inc officers to co-ordinate and progress key issues together with quarterly SMRC Councillor Briefings.



The main disappointment was the decision by SMRC to narrowly vote against lodging an application for \$6.9m from BBRF (with BLER as co-funding) due to concerns over maintenance cost and asset risks.

I am hopeful that over the next 12 months, the next MRT Inc Committee will;

- complete Trail Development Plans and Biosecurity Risk Assessment for the three initial sections,
- have a Business Plan for the complete trail including updated construction and maintenance costs together with revenue estimates which will provide income sources to defray future maintenance expenses
- have an operating model/structure including maintaining, funding and marketing the whole MRT involving Q-PRC, SMRC and MRT Inc.
- complete the Bombala Precinct Trail which will be the southern Trailhead and first of many “ribs” off the MRT “spine” and will apply for funding for the Nimmitabel Precinct Trail.
- obtain full support from Q-PRC and SMRC in early 2022 to;
 - accept responsibility for leases of the corridor from Transport for NSW & Regional NSW.
 - lodge applications for Grant Funding to commence construction.
- secure funding of \$330k from NSW & Commonwealth Governments (additional to the \$140k from Councils) to complete the remainder of the detailed MRT planning.

To enable the broader scope and intensity of work by MRT Inc as we focus on securing construction funding for some initial sections, I anticipate that the new Committee will need to consider meeting every two months (rather than quarterly) and restructure the Sub-committees to enable greater participation from committee members.

I am grateful to the numerous people who have willingly contributed countless hours towards this magnificent project which will diversify and boost the Monaro economy, creating needed jobs. It will encourage physical and mental health strength as well as complementing other tourism activities.

It is a delight to note the teamwork and progress achieved and I thank you for your active participation.

Ken Lister

President & Steering Group Lead - MRT Inc.