



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.

## August 2024

### So, what is the news?

Well, it's all good news. A Federal government grant has been secured by the Snowy Monaro Regional Council to make a start on the MRT. The Queanbeyan-Palerang Council confirms it wishes to work towards a grant application to fund construction. Consultant's reports have been completed for construction planning, and biodiversity and biosecurity aspects of the MRT. Finally, we share the good news from the Murwillumbah rail trail and, much closer to Canberra/Queanbeyan comes news of a rail trail proposal at Yass.

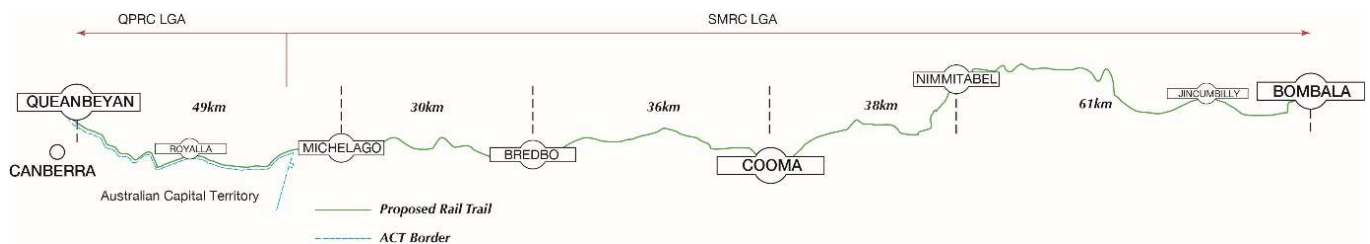
### Bombala – the trail starts.



Snowy Monaro Regional Council has advised us that it has completed a funding agreement with the Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts. This finalized details of the \$1M grant for commencement of the Monaro Rail Trail Project. The grant will enable trail construction to start at Bombala in 2025 and this will be for a 4 or 5km section

This is great news as it confirms the go ahead for the trail and gives the Queanbeyan -Palering Regional Council confidence to pursue planning and funding opportunities for a northern section. Also, it gives both councils experience in the development of a small section of rail trail prior to proceeding with a longer section.

Charlie Maslin, rail trail supporter and local farmer at Bombala, has given us a glimpse of the start point of the MRT at the Bombala rail corridor in this short video. <https://youtu.be/z-S86XfX1VU>





## Trail Development Plans



In Dec 2022 the regional councils, Queanbeyan-Palerang and Snowy Monaro, were notified of a grant of \$272k from the NSW Government to finalize planning reports for the MRT. These covered, engineering aspects of construction, biosecurity and biodiversity and an economic analysis of trail user's expenditure patterns.

The development plans confirm that the construction of a rail trail is possible and is financially viable. The corridor is still in public ownership and the towns and villages are spaced at distances convenient for cyclists. Furthermore, the route passes through attractive landscapes and has many intact examples of early rail infrastructure – buildings, the bridges and tunnel. Construction costs for different sections are provided. For example, at the northern end, Queanbeyan to

South Jerrabomberra (8km), the projected cost is \$2.5M and to continue the trail an additional 23km to Williamsdale will cost \$6.5M. However, a section such as Michelago to Bredbo, 30km, will cost \$22M due to two highway underpasses and restoration of a heritage listed bridge. Development of the full 213km trail is in the order of \$98M.

The consultants reported on biosecurity risk assessment for half of the corridor. This covered; livestock health and welfare, human health and safety, pest animals and weeds. The impact of a failure in management of the identified risks on agricultural economic activity was also reviewed. The consultant's report that the risks can be managed and that trail users are unlikely to have a negative impact on agricultural productivity.

Biodiversity of ecosystems with the rail corridor were also reviewed. No endangered populations of flora or fauna are likely to be impacted. The rail corridor has become habitat for both flora and fauna and even built infrastructure such as bridges, now provide habitat for insects, reptiles, and mammals such as bats and possums.

## Where to from here?

# QPRC



The NSW Government has a framework that guides development of rail trail proposals. Key markers are; evidence of community support, evidence of financial viability, and a favourable assessment of biosecurity risks.

Now that most of this reporting has been completed for the MRT what lies ahead for its development?

Encouraging news has recently come from Queanbeyan-Palerang Council. In July we received a letter from Rebecca Ryan, General Manager of the council advising "that Council remains very supportive of the Monaro Rail Trail project." Ms Ryan said "I am in agreement that the route from Queanbeyan to Williamsdale is the preferred scope of works and QPRC staff have my endorsement to progressing what we need to get the project to grant ready status." MRT Inc will continue to work with council staff to assist in grant preparation.



## Northern Rivers update



A media release from The Tweed Shire Council reveals the 25km Murwillumbah section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail (NRRT) has surpassed expectations, boosting the Tweed economy by more than \$3.7 million in its first year of operation. [read more](#)

## Yass rail trail



Yass Valley Council shows commitment to development of a small rail trail in town. The Yass Rail Trail, a shared zone for pedestrians and bicycles, will use the former Yass Tramway corridor, between Yass Junction, on the main Sydney to Melbourne railway, and the township – a distance of 4.7km. Like other rail services in NSW, this short tramway was closed in 1988. A feasibility study has been completed and more recently the Council received nearly \$700K to complete construction plans and business case for the trail which includes an iconic bridge with heritage listing. The original feasibility study estimated that it would cost \$11 million to construct the Yass Rail Trail. The largest expense within the project was \$4.2 million to repair the Yass River bridge. [read more](#)

For Further Information please see

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