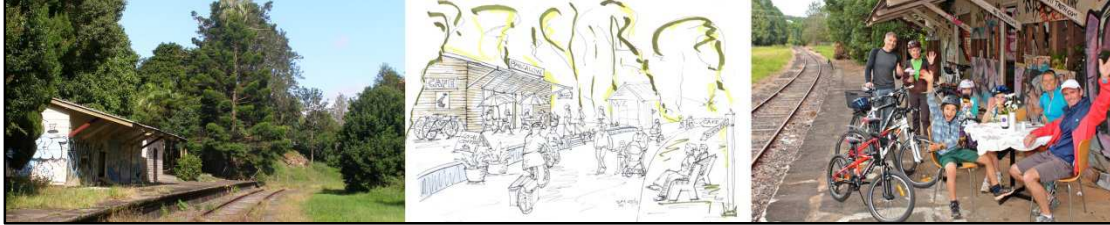


NORTHERN RIVERS RAIL TRAIL

An Awesome Ride



01 NRRT Update July 2013

A COMMUNITY ASSET FOR LOCALS AND VISITORS TO CONNECT AND EXPLORE THE REGION

Thank you for supporting this very exciting and fun campaign. It has taken some time to get organised but we are now well and truly underway and gaining some serious momentum. The Northern Rivers Rail Trail association is now a formally registered incorporation. Our aim is to build a unique community partnership in the NSW, Northern Rivers Region.

Background...

The NSW Government suspended rail services on the Casino to Murwillumbah line in 2004. The recently released NSW Government's Casino to Murwillumbah transport study declares that returning the rail service is not viable for the foreseeable future.

In May, the not for profit Northern Rivers Rail Trail Association Inc was formed by a Steering Committee comprising local business philanthropists known as the Sourdough group, community volunteers, local councillors and people working in the tourist industry. The group came together with a common vision of converting the disused railway line from Casino to Murwillumbah into a rail trail, rather than allowing this valuable community asset to continue to go to waste.

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail Inc. Steering committee

Pat Grier AM	President
Ian Oelrichs OAM	Deputy President
Cameron Arnold	Via Byron
John Bennett	Community
Dr James Cowley	Sourdough
Cr Sol Ibrahim	Byron Council
Pat Knight	Tweed Council
Mitch Lowe	Lismore Council
Steve Martin	Secretary
Marie Lawton	Treasurer & Supporter Liaison

For further information or to be on our mailing list please contact

Marie Lawton mariethebay@gmail.com or 0434 552 283

Where is it?



What is it?

A rail trail is a combined bicycle and walking trail developed in a rail corridor using the rail infrastructure as appropriate.

The disused railway line runs for approximately 130 kms from Casino to Murwillumbah. It passes through four local council areas of Tweed, Byron, Lismore and Richmond Valley; four NSW state electorates of Lismore, Tweed, Ballina and Clarence; and two federal electorates Page and Richmond.

Numerous rail trails are being developed in neighbouring states and around the world, and are growing in popularity. (See www.railtrails.org.au)

In addition some trails or parts of trails are used for horse riding and some, where small parts of the track can be left, have "rail-cycles" that run along the track.

Normally a range of businesses grow to service rail trails and local accommodation and cafes are utilized. In addition services such as cycle hire, visitor and luggage transfer services (move between accommodations) are developed.

Rail trails encourage a wide range of businesses and services to cater for users and visitors.

Why is it a good idea?

It is important to preserve the rail corridor as a community asset.

It promotes health and well-being. Locals will be able to use the rail trail to link up with neighbouring towns, without using their cars and children will be able to walk and ride to school safely.

It will encourage sustainable transport, reducing the number of cars on the road and the need for more car parking spaces in the busy towns.

This Rail Trail will create a beautiful pathway through some of the most scenic country in Australia. It will promote indigenous awareness and education and provides access to world heritage areas.

It can be used for marathons and fun runs, eco-tourism, festivals and events and workplace training in tourism, construction, engineering, environmental science and a host of other disciplines.

Redeveloped Town centres bring beautification and public amenity, and railway infrastructure liabilities are converted into valuable working heritage assets with the preservation of historic bridges, tunnels and station buildings.

It will provide jobs, new businesses can be created and existing businesses have the opportunity to grow.

The Northern Rivers Region attracts thousands of visitors a year and a rail trail would encourage healthy, outdoor activities into the smaller towns and villages of the area. Rail Trail surveys show that they attract higher yield and longer staying visitors.

This Rail Trail between Casino and Murwillumbah could be the "Jewel in the Crown" of sustainable living and sustainable tourism in the Northern Rivers, a linear Nature Reserve and Botanical Garden designed to demonstrate the diversity of the ecosystems of the region, a "Hallmark" attraction.

Preserving the rail corridor as a public asset would enable the possible future use of commuter transport. A shared use, possibly solar electric vehicles or light rail.

It is a proven recipe of success...

There are many examples of Rail Trails in other states and overseas, that have provided major benefits to their regions, by developing disused rail corridors into a multi-use Rail Trails.

The very well-known Otago Central Rail Trail in New Zealand has reinvigorated the region. It has served a catalyst for economic growth, preserved historic culture and become an asset for the locals to enjoy and visitors appreciate.

Qualified supporting research is available at <http://www.otagocentralrailtrail.co.nz/tour-planning/links.html>

The Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail in North East Victoria is another qualified example of a very successful Rail Trail. Beeton, S., 2009, Cycling in Regional Communities: A longitudinal study of the Murray to the Mountains Rail Train in Victoria, Latrobe University. A copy of this research is available on request. Also see Rail Trail Australia <http://www.railtrails.org.au/trail?view=trail&id=50>



Support...

We are starting the build-up of our marketing and public awareness campaign. This is already bearing fruit at the local government level. We aim to have a commitment from the State Government to initiate the feasibility study, with support from all 4 local councils and widespread community support by 30 August 2013. This will only be the start. From that point, we are hopeful that the final feasibility study can be undertaken by 30 November, and during the next 5 months we hope to secure a foundation of commitments from potential business partners to help with the commercialisation of the rail trail, once it has been constructed. Commercialisation means ensuring that it is used to its full benefit, that it is done sustainably and that jobs are created for local people in a wide range of businesses connected to the trail. This will help ease the severe unemployment in the region.

At last count we have

1. a support group of over 800 members on our database
2. an online petition with over 1100 signatures

<http://www.communityrun.org/petitions/support-the-northern-rivers-rail-trail-campaign-from-casino-to-murwillumbah>

3. a supporter facebook group with over 230 members

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MurbahCasinoRT/>

How you can help...

There are a number of ways you can help us

1. By writing letters to the media with positive news/benefits on rail trails. This gives the media good new material. Below are some suggestions for topics:

Connect community

Safe access for kids to school

New events, half marathons

Wi-Fi hubs at stations to generate broadband home business meeting centres

Showcase and educate on indigenous culture

Showcase the environment and educate visitors

Showcase regional Australia and its rich culture

Create cycle/walk/accommodation/ etc. businesses/jobs

Create other businesses-e.g. high quality tours

Create side businesses-to get people into other towns off the line- Ballina/Alstonville/Clunes/ etc

Create wildlife appreciation businesses/jobs

Create new opportunities that kids returning from the city might see and decide to move back

Get people out of Byron so decongest and get the type of tourists they want

Attract conferences with a flow on of numerous side trips

2. Sign our online petition

<http://www.communityrun.org/petitions/support-the-northern-rivers-rail-trail-campaign-from-casino-to-murwillumbah>

3. Sign our handwritten Petitions 1. The legislative assembly of NSW 2. The Mayor, Cr Simon Richardson.

4. Join the facebook supporters group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MurbahCasinoRT/>

5. Join our mailing list; contact **Marie Lawton** mariethebay@gmail.com or 0434 552 283

You can request our Petition forms from Marie



What is happening now...

- We are currently developing our web site. You will soon be able to find it at
- www.northernriversrailtrail.org.au
- We are applying for community grants and funding to support the NRRT campaign.
- A formal Northern Rivers Rail Trail proposal document has been created (by Sourdough)
- Proposal presentations are being given to regional supporter groups, local members, councils, support bodies e.g. Rail trail Australia.
- Pat Grier Radio <http://www.pinnaclebusiness.com.au/images/audio/bb110613.mp3>
- NRRT online brochure. http://issuu.com/apartments_inn/docs/railtrail_13-06-2013

Rail Trail Australia (of which NRRT are part of their NSW action group) are currently lobbying Federal government to establish Rail Trails in NSW.

Documents available:

- The Sourdough formal Northern Rivers Rail Trail proposal
- The Transport for NSW Casino to Murwillumbah Transport Study

For further information or to join our mailing list please contact our supporter liaison officer

Marie Lawton mariethebay@gmail.com or 0434 552 283

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MurbahCasinoRT/>

This vision can become a reality with Public, State and Federal support to establishing this Rail Trail.

There is no benefit to the State or the local community in continuing to let this valuable asset deteriorate, when it could be used to provide a healthy and safe outdoor facility for the Community and create jobs, generate income.

Please get behind this campaign.

