



Ordinary Meeting of Council

SUPPLEMENTARY

AGENDA

16 December 2020

On-site Inspections - Nil

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORTS

9.25 Monaro Rail Trail.....3

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS –

(Copies available from General Manager's Office on request)

Open Attachments

Item 9.25 Monaro Rail Trail

- Attachment 1 Snowy Monaro Regional Council Letter to QPRC (Under Separate Cover)*
- Attachment 2 MRT Inc Letter to QPRC (Under Separate Cover)*
- Attachment 3 Canberra to Port of Eden Feasibility Study (Under Separate Cover)*
- Attachment 4 Monaro Rail Trail Feasibility Study (Under Separate Cover)*
- Attachment 5 SMRC 10 Recommendations (Under Separate Cover)*

Closed Attachments

Nil

File Reference: Monaro Rail Trail

Summary

The Snowy Monaro Regional Council and the Monaro Rail Trail group are seeking in-principle support from QPRC for funding for the Monaro Rail Trail.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. Provide in-principle support for the establishment of the Monaro Rail Trail.**
 - 2. Provide a Letter of Support for the MRT Inc grant application under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund.**
 - 3. Subject to the agreement of NSW State Rail (or other relevant authority), amend the respective Local Environmental Plan to permit rail trails and associated facilities in the Goulburn-Bombala Rail Corridor.**
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Background

The Monaro Rail Trail proposes a 213km cycling corridor along the disused rail line from Queanbeyan to Bombala. The route expects to connect and unite the city of Queanbeyan with the towns and villages of Royalla, Michelago, Bredbo, Cooma, Nimmitabel, and Bombala. The first 30km of the proposed trail is in the Queanbeyan-Palerang local government area (LGA).

QPRC has recently received written requests from both the Snowy Monaro Regional Council (SMRC) and the Monaro Rail Trail (MRT) Inc for in-principle support for the project:

1. At its meeting on 19 November 2020, Snowy Monaro Regional Council resolved to support the MRT in principle and back a series of 10 recommendations (attached) to progress the project. Among these was a recommendation that SMRC write to QPRC expressing SMRCs strong support and desire to expedite the development of the Monaro Rail Trail. A request has since been received by QPRC.
2. MRT Inc is seeking in-principle support for the following:
 - a. MRT Inc proposed funding application under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund.
 - b. Subject to the concept being supported by relevant government authorities, MRT Inc are also seeking an amendment to Council's local environmental plan (LEP) to permit rail trails and associated facilities in the Goulburn/Bombala Rail Corridor.

Both requests are attached.

This follows the release of research into the feasibility of the Monaro Rail Trail that was commissioned by SMRC in November 2019. This report showed significant economic and social benefits were associated with the concept and likely to flow through to the broader region. The MRT Inc also believe they can significantly reduce any ongoing operational and maintenance costs associated with the proposal using volunteer labour and sponsorship. The Feasibility Report is attached.

9.25 Monaro Rail Trail (Ref: ; Author: Richards/Darcy) (Continued)

The attached Canberra to Port of Eden Feasibility Study commissioned by the NSW government reported that the reinstatement of the rail line from Canberra to Eden is not viable due to the high costs and low benefits, essentially ruling out the line being recommissioned for rail use.

Monaro Rail Trail Inc is seeking Federal and State Government support with grants to finalise planning and design over the coming 6 months with the objective to have a 'shovel ready' project by mid-2021 and then seek capital grants for construction.

If the concept were supported by QPRC and other relevant government stakeholders, it is likely an amendment would be required to Council's respective planning controls to ensure the proposed activities associated with the rail trail can be undertaken. Any planning proposal would be subject to the support of State Rail (or relevant authority) responsible for operating/maintaining the rail line at this time.

Implications***Social / Cultural***

A Rail Trail has the capacity to deliver significant social and cultural benefits to the community by encouraging cycling as a recreational activity and attracting tourism to the LGA and broader region for that purpose.

Economic

The Monaro Rail Trail Feasibility Report reported that the predicted additional economic expenditure from the Rail trail would be \$24m p.a. plus additional business stimulus. The creation of a rail trail would enhance the tourism and experiential product offering across the region.

Strategic

The rail trail concept gives effect to two identified actions under Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement, these being:

4.25 – Develop Cycle Tourism masterplan including mapping existing infrastructure; and

4.4.2 – Investigate options to enable and promote additional tourism in rural areas.

The Monaro Rail Trail also aligns with the Queanbeyan-Palerang Tourism Plan and the Destination Southern NSW Destination Management Plan 2018-2020 regarding cross regional linking products, leading experiences and as a defined 'Game Changer' project for the Snowy Monaro Region.

Engagement

SMRC conducted community consultation as part of the Feasibility Study. As reported in the SMRC Council Report on 16 April 2020, from the 611 responses received, 95% supported the development of the rail trail, 3% were opposed and 1.2% were undecided (the remaining 0.8% skipped the survey question). Full details are available in the Feasibility Report attached.

Financial

At this stage, the Monaro Rail Trail Inc is not seeking financial contribution from QPRC with funding intended to be supported through Federal and State Government grants.

Conclusion






The Monaro Rail Trail concept has the potential to attract significant new visitors and tourism related activities to Queanbeyan and the surrounding region.

9.25 Monaro Rail Trail (Ref: ; Author: Richards/Darcy) (Continued)

There is also an opportunity for the Council to identify Queanbeyan as the starting point for the rail trail and to potentially leverage significant new tourism and the economic benefits associated with the concept.

At this stage, no funding is being sought from QPRC. Contributions will be sought from Federal and State Government grants.

Attachments

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| Attachment 1  | Snowy Monaro Regional Council Letter to QPRC (<i>Under Separate Cover</i>) |
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| Attachment 3  | Canberra to Port of Eden Feasibility Study (<i>Under Separate Cover</i>) |
| Attachment 4  | Monaro Rail Trail Feasibility Study (<i>Under Separate Cover</i>) |
| Attachment 5  | SMRC 10 Recommendations (<i>Under Separate Cover</i>) |