

INQUIRY INTO TOURISM IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Organisation: New England Rail Trail Committee

Date received: 27/11/2013

New England Rail Trail Committee
PO Box 741
Armidale NSW 2350

24th November 2013

The Hon. Natasha MACLAREN-JONES MLC
Chair, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3
Legislative Council
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Committee

The Organising Committee for the New England Rail Trail welcome the opportunity to offer our endorsement of the submission by Rail Trails Australia. We strongly believe that the New England Rail Trail will have a significant positive impact on Tourism in the New England Region. On completion the Trail will be the longest and highest rail trail in Australia. It will run for more than 200 kilometres, encompassing 4 regional Councils, 4 major Towns, and 7 smaller communities. There exists no less than 7 railway stations along the corridor in pristine condition, including the historic Tenterfield Railway Museum. The trail passes through the historic New England Wine Region, a highlight of this is the Tenterfield Wine Trail.

Evidence from Rail Trails in other states clearly demonstrates the benefits to the community. A rail trail provides a safe, secure, and accessible location for a variety of community activities such as fun runs, charity walks, cycling events, marathons and equestrian events. The biggest attraction is that the trail is devoid of vehicular traffic, removing the significant risk and traffic management issues associated with running community events on public roads.

In addition, rail trails are growing in popularity as a draw card for tourists from other areas, even overseas visitors. The New England Rail Trail traverses a wide variety of scenery and landscapes, from open plains to river gorges and mountain passes. We anticipate that tourism businesses along the trail will flourish, in providing staged tours of the trail as well as the many tourism destinations along the route. Every one of the stations would be an ideal location for a café and craft shop, featuring the work of local artisans.

Establishment of a Rail Trail will also ensure that the corridor remains in public ownership. It is anticipated that the trail will be leased to a localised management committee. If at some stage in the future a rail line becomes a viable project the route would still be available.

We believe that the New England Rail Trail is a very viable project for Government support.

Yours Sincerely

Bruce Graham

Bruce Graham
On behalf of the New England Rail Trail Committee.