

What is a Rail Trail and who uses them?

A rail trail is a trail located along a former railway line. The track or trail will be a gentle grade as it follows the train line and has the added benefit of the trail passing through smaller regional communities.

The trail will be suitable for walkers, mountain bikes, hybrid bikes, prams, children's scooters (large wheels) and wheel chairs. It will allow for two way passage.

Rail trails are used by everyday people including children, tourists, families, retirees and community groups. They provide an opportunity for active recreation and connect outer lying communities via a shared use pathway away from busy main roads.



THE QUESTIONS

Was a tourist train between Lilydale and Scottsdale considered?

Yes. A heritage/tourist rail project was presented as an alternative to the rail trail in 2015 by a community organisation.

Following community feedback the Department of Treasury and Finance conducted an assessment of the two proposals in 2017. The assessment identified the rail trail proposal as low risk and determined that the project had the potential to deliver significant economic benefits to local economies. By comparison, the tourist rail proposal was found as having 'significant risk' due to the financial risks associated with requirements imposed by the National Rail Safety Regulator, financial risks associated with insurance requirements, and funding shortfall risks that placed emphasis on the public to assist in establishment costs.

In 2018 the Tasmanian Government presented a compromise solution to support both proposals with the Rail Trail able to proceed from Scottsdale to Lilydale and Tourist Rail to proceed from Lilydale to Turners Marsh (and later extend through to Coldwater Creek).

A Committee Inquiry in 2018 further cemented this as the recommended option with Dorset Council then voting 7:2 in favour of adopting the Tasmanian Government's compromise solution at the November 2018 Council Meeting.

Can the corridor be used in the future if trains become viable?

Yes. Creating a rail trail by no means prevents the reopening of the corridor to trains in the future. The level of deterioration of the bridges and in parts the rail line and sleepers means that already partial to complete replacement of the infrastructure would be necessary in order to safely put a train back on the line. Rail trails enable the corridor and formation to be properly preserved and maintained rather than left to deteriorate further.

How will this project affect my rates?

The project currently has \$1.47 million in capital funding with the remaining shortfall of \$2.8 million yet to be funded. Ongoing maintenance costs of approximately \$116,000 will, at this stage, be borne by Dorset Council. The benefits of the trail for the regional community of Dorset and City of Launceston are significant with an anticipated \$30.125 million in regional income alone over a 10 year period. The trail has the potential to increase property values, improve services and local business opportunities and viability and encourage our local communities to flourish.

As part of the project we will be looking at donation points and revenue streams to aim for a cost neutral community asset.

What will happen to the rail infrastructure?

For the majority of the corridor, it is anticipated that the rail line and sleepers will need to be removed in order to construct the trail. As required under the *Strategic Infrastructure Corridors (Strategic and Recreational Use) Act 2016* (the Act) the Minister will need to approve both the removal and the disposal of the rail infrastructure. The disposal process, which is also outlined under the Act, is to in the first instance offer the rail line infrastructure to Tasmanian rail groups for the purposes of reuse. If no application is made then it is understood that the metal infrastructure can be sold.

What will happen to the old Scottsdale Railway Station?

The former Scottsdale Railway Station is a Rotary led project supported by Dorset Council. The precinct area around the station has recently received funding to enable its development into a community open space and trailhead. It is anticipated that this project will provide the catalyst for the redevelopment of the former Station building.



The trail borders my property....

What about theft and vandalism?

Rail Trails are not known to attract undesirable behaviour and across Australia there has been no increase in crime recorded as a result of the development of rail trails. Regardless of the development of the trail there exists the potential for property access, the rail trail will not compound this issue and as rail trail users are generally attracted to the trail for legitimate reasons it can be beneficial to have an increased number of people in the area.

What about privacy?

The *Boundary Fences Act 1908* specifies that a Corridor Manager (such as Dorset Council) is not required to make contributions towards erection and repairs of dividing fences. Design solutions, where identified as being needed, will be at the Corridor Managers discretion and as negotiated with relevant landowners.

QUESTIONS CONTINUED

How will the trail affect the chemical free status of my property?

The Rail Trail would be considered in the same way as any public thoroughfare would be and consequently should not interfere with a landowners ability to sign the National Vendors Declaration. Trail users are no different to road users (farmers have no control over who uses and what is done on adjoining roads.) Biosecurity issues are not anticipated to arise owing to rail trail activities being concentrated along the designated trail corridor.

What about weeds in the corridor?

Weed management programs across the municipalities are already conducted by local councils. This will extend into the rail trail corridor. A Corridor Management Plan covering maintenance and management requirements of the trail and the corridor, including vegetation and weed management, will be prepared in advance of construction and reviewed regularly.



What safety measures will be in place for trail users in the event of an emergency?

A Corridor Management Plan will be developed in conjunction with local emergency services. The development of the rail trail will enable fire and emergency services better access to hard to reach areas along the rail corridor to ensure more effective emergency response. The trail is currently inaccessible in parts with at least one bridge unsafe to cross. A well kept corridor will ensure that the fire risk is minimised. A Corridor Management Plan will identify any high risk areas, locations for emergency location signage installation and egress points. With the low gradient and slower pace of travel the rail trail is considered to be at lowered risk compared with mountain biking trails in regards to fall injuries ensuring that proposed strategies will be sufficient in keeping trail users safe.

Mobile phone coverage, besides some patchiness between Lebrina and Wyena, is for the most part available for at least emergency calls across the trail length.

How will environmental risks be mitigated during construction?

Mitigation measures will be put in place through the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a soil and water management plan. This will ensure that there is a low probability of any unreasonable impact on water quality through the potential leaching of heavy metals (such as arsenic, copper, lead, nickel and zinc) from crushed ballast. These measures will be implemented and are based on advice from qualified experts to effectively manage potential environmental risks associated with the project. Mitigation measures may include:

- Efficient drainage to minimise the mobilisation of contaminants by rainwater
- Installation of silt fences to catch contaminated silt from entering watercourses
- Removal of pre-existing contaminated silt from block cess drains
- Removal of contaminated ash stockpiled in the vicinity of the rail corridor
- Removal of existing rail sleepers, which may be an existing source of potential leaching

The removal of the stockpiled contaminants and the sleepers will likely result in a net improvement of the environmental footprint compared to the present state of the railway corridor.

Unless required for safety and maintenance requirements, vegetation outside of the trail formation will be retained so as to minimise habitat loss.

Will dogs be allowed on the trail?

As part of future amendments to Council's dog management policy, dogs would only be allowed on the trail on leash only. This will be reiterated through signage. Dog owners will be under the same requirements as elsewhere for dog on leash areas and subject to the same disciplinary action should they fail to comply. Council would work collaboratively with City of Launceston to implement a similar approach to the control of dogs across the full length of the trail.

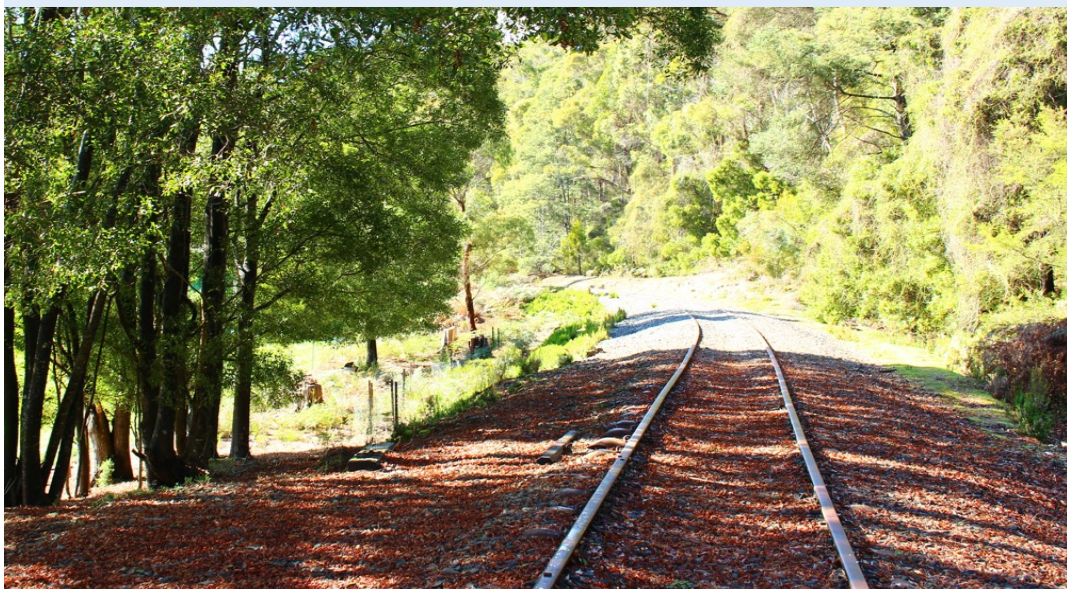
Will the trail cause litter or waste issues?

This has not been a problem elsewhere. Rubbish bins will be provided at trailheads, maintenance patrols will be scheduled as part of the Corridor Management Plan and toilets will be located at the trailheads of Scottsdale, Lilydale Falls (existing) and in between these locations. "Leave No Trace" principles will be reinforced in trailhead signage and in rail trail literature.

QUESTIONS CONTINUED

How will motorbikes be kept off the trail?

Installation of chicanes at regular intervals and access points along the trail that cyclists and walkers can manoeuvre through but motorbikes cannot is expected to decrease the likelihood of unauthorised vehicular access. Signage will also be included at access points and trailheads as well as rail trail literature.



What business opportunities will there be?

Rail trails in other states and countries are significant economic drivers for local communities. As a result of rail trail numerous business opportunities across the hospitality and service sectors are created including businesses such as bike hire, accommodation, farm gate experiences, shuttle operators and tour companies.

