

Media Launch – Rail Trails for New South Wales
Fountain Court, NSW Parliament House, Macquarie St.
Wednesday, March 26th at 1.30 pm

Welcome

I welcome you all to the official launch of Rail Trails for NSW.

Before we begin proceedings I would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people on whose land we meet today - and pay my respect to elders past and present.

Today's event reinforces the interest and support that this Government has for rail trails in NSW.

Rail Trails establishment in NSW – role of community

This formalisation of the NSW chapter of Rail Trails brings together 14 individual groups, who are working on proposals for Rail Trails throughout regional NSW.

It is encouraging to see these volunteer groups pulling together to work with government to progress the establishment of Rail Trails in NSW.

The community's enthusiasm for rail trails is clear, and these projects provide a great case for the planning, funding, developing and operating their local resources.

Heritage values

As Heritage Minister, I am particularly excited by how rail trails provide a new way for the public to experience our built heritage. Along former rail routes the historical buildings and structures give an insight into the history and development of our State.

Rail trails are a great way to reinvigorate and reuse our 19th and 20th century rail heritage. I would encourage you to work with the Office of Environment and Heritage to maximise the benefits of, and protection for, heritage.

Tourism drawcard

Another aspect of rail trails that excites me are the potential tourism and recreational benefits. As Minister for the Environment with responsibility for the National Parks system, I recognise the flow-on benefits for regional economies of tourist visitation and recreation.

There is clearly high demand for new opportunities in NSW for recreational cycling in unique environments. Rail trails respond to this demand and provide an exciting experience that will also entice cyclists from interstate and overseas.

Rail trails in the Hunter

As member for Maitland I also have a particular interest in rail trails for the Hunter. The industrial history of our area means that there are some unique opportunities for rail trail development, and it would be great to see these utilised.

We already have the Fernleigh Track that runs along the former railway from Adamstown to Belmont but it would be great to see

more rail trails in our area. The Fernleigh Track is a popular recreational destination and serves as a great case study for how rail trails can work.

Casino to Murwillumbah Rail Trail

The NSW Government recently announced a feasibility study for the Casino to Murwillumbah Rail Trail.

This study will consider the economic benefits of the proposed rail trail and how it could be constructed. The study is an important first step in delivering an effective and sustainable rail trail asset for the Northern Rivers.

This study is the result of close cooperation between local members, various ministerial offices and the community. It demonstrates the NSW Government's commitment to the concept of rail trails.

Conclusion

I wish Rail Trails the very best in their endeavours.

As the Minister for Heritage, I am pleased to support a venture that not only is good for business in regional NSW but also delivers some clear heritage benefits.

I am delighted to officially launch this Rail Trails for NSW event.