

LETTER TO MINISTER GUTWEIN

LAUNCESTON AND NORTH EAST RAILWAY - \$50,000 STUDY Meeting held with Ray Bartlett (Raylink) and Steward Sharples (Infrastructure Tasmania)

Following the 2 day visit by the consultant engaged by government and having briefly met with the consultant, we believe the scope of his inspection is inadequate for preparing any detailed report.

The consultancy is based around the Sarah Lebski report which was our initial proposal to reestablish a visitor and passenger experience case was prepared at short notice (in response to a public backlash caused by poor governance). This is not a business case. We now have more information and are in the process of updating it and developing a full business case.

We believe he met with a number of other parties and drove over the track bed in preparation for his report. We believe the scope of the Infrastructure Tasmania process is too narrow to provide sufficient comprehensive information on which to make an informed public policy decision, however the Reports of the two consultants will be an important input and we will work with the consultants.

The approach to the study is rather limited and focuses on costs/risks with both infrastructure set up and operations and lends itself to a conclusion that a small group of volunteers can't possibly manage it all and government will have to dip into the public purse. This is clearly not demonstrated by the success of the Yarra Valley railway in Victoria.

Our understanding of what we agreed at the meeting is:

- 1. That we will have an opportunity to engage with the two consultants and comment on their findings before their reports are completed;*
- 2. We do not consider that the meeting with 'us' constitutes 'consultation' with the community and we would have preferred broader engagement and a more open public process;*
- 3. The reports will be made public upon completion;*

4. *We also now have extensive Australian and international evidence of the viability of heritage rail (without government subsidy). This is clearly demonstrated by the success of the Yarra Valley Railway.*
5. *We believe the appropriate basis for any decision is a much broader assessment of the various value propositions associated with two proposals. There is evidence of bike trail opportunities (in a truly regional/statewide context and that the conversation needs to more explicitly involve other key stakeholders). Our proposal is accommodating for bike riders to come on the train and ride trails from the various sidings.*
6. *That Infrastructure Tasmania is willing to comment on/endorse any proposed scope of work/methodology associated with broader business cases (around e.g. the visitor economy and the education/training value propositions) we may undertake, and for which we may approach Government for support in completing this (as did the Rail Trail Project).*

Due to the total lack of consultation and the haste to which this proposal is being considered, we believe that to be consistent and fair Infrastructure Tasmania should analyse the veracity of the Rail Trail business case and the Government should await the outcome before any decision is made and the Ministers asked to agree to this.

Signed: Professor David Adams, Chris Martin, Wendy McLennan