

Dear Member,

There has been much debate, sometimes heated arguments, over the last couple of years with regard to the future use of the now derelict north east rail corridor, which extends between Scottsdale and Launceston. Out of the debate has emerged two proposals;

1. To upgrade the track work and run a Heritage rail service. This is promoted by the North-East Railway group (L&NER)
2. To convert the corridor into a long distance cycle/walking track, to link in with the popular existing section into Scottsdale. This is promoted by the North East Recreation Trail Inc (NERT).

After extensive community consultations and the funding of three independent assessments, the State Government has decided on a compromise that incorporates a section of line for each of the two proposals, with a railway as far as Lilydale, and a recreation trail Lilydale to Scottsdale.

At a meeting last night of the Lilydale District Progress Association (LDPA), it was agreed that the State Government brokered compromise is a clear signal for all interested parties to end divisive debate and to start to work together for the benefit of all. Further it provides much needed clarity to the proponents, the community, local businesses, prospective investors, future corridor managers and all regulatory bodies.

Two motions were put to the meeting and passed by a significant majority. These were:

"The Lilydale District Progress Association (LDPA) supports, unconditionally, the compromise position articulated by the Tasmanian State Government in relation to the future of the North East railway corridor. The LDPA would like to congratulate the State Government on making a reasoned and informed decision that is in the best interests of the Lilydale District community."

"Now that a decision has been made, the LDPA further urges all stakeholders and all levels of government to work together to expedite all legislative and regulatory impediments to enable development of the Recreation Trail to progress as soon as possible and within the timeframe of the federal funding deadline."

The LDPA recognises that there are those who will not accept the compromise position and that it is the nature of compromise that there will be those who hold such a strong emotional attachment to a position that they feel unable to shift in order to accommodate a broader and realistic perspective. This is always unfortunate, however, the LDPA strongly urges representatives, at all levels of Government, to focus on the broader community and respectfully rebut the demands of those who continue to try and undermine a genuine and thoughtful compromise. The Lilydale District Community has made it abundantly clear to the LDPA that the time for divisive debate is over, a sensible compromise has been articulated which has broad support and it is simply time for the two proponents to roll up their sleeves and deliver for the benefit of all.

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(Secretary of the Lilydale District Progress Association)

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