

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Robert Dickinson and I live in Wyena in North East Tasmania. My property adjoins the subject rail corridor. With regard to this inquiry I would like to address the following points:

1. *the feasibility of the proposed Scottsdale - Lilydale falls rail trail;*

I don't think that the proposed cycle trail will return sufficient money or other benefits to the local community to justify the destruction of the existing railway line. In contrast to the counter proposal of tourist rail, simple mathematics indicate that the economic and social benefits of an unreliable flow of cyclists cannot compare to a group of up to 80 fee paying train passengers per trip. The booming worldwide popularity of heritage rail is amply demonstrated by the Yarra Valley Railway. This service is often fully booked during peak holiday periods. Further to the above, it should be noted that the Federal Government's National Stronger Regions grant of \$1.47 million toward the rail trail proposal comes on the proviso that the grant is matched dollar for dollar. If we are to assume that the money is to be matched by Dorset Council, then this is a \$1.47 million debt that Dorset ratepayers will have to pay. So in effect we will be paying a lot of money to destroy a potential money making asset.

2. *the feasibility of the proposed Lilydale - Turners Marsh tourism railway;*

In contrast to point 1. this is a very feasible project. First, it should be noted that the railway track is in very good condition (as determined by a competent railway engineer). Further to this, there is a dedicated group of volunteers and businessmen who have indicated that they are happy to commit time and funds to restoring and maintaining the track. Please note that they are not asking for government money. As a demonstration of this group's commitment, they have purchased and restored a diesel railcar capable of carrying 80 passengers. Given this groups dedication and resources and the close proximity to a major population center this project is more than feasible. The tourist rail proposal would even provide employment and training opportunities for local people, in a similar manner to the Yarra Valley railway in Victoria.

3. *the feasibility, funding, future management and maintenance of any tourism developments on the North East railway corridor;*

The committee should note that in order to realise the greatest benefit to the region, the train should be allowed to go from Turners Marsh to Scottsdale. Doing this would allow tourists to combine a rail trip with a visit to the already popular Bridestowe lavender farm (accessible via bus from Nabowla siding). A

heritage train ride from Turner's Marsh or Lilydale through the historic tunnel (at Tunnel), then through the beautiful Dennison Gorge with the possibility of getting off at Nabowla siding for a bus ride to Bridestowe, then on to Scottdale would be big tourism draw card for the North East.

4. *Any other matters incidental thereto;*

I would draw the attention of the committee to the dangers of placing all of our tourism eggs in one basket. It would seem that the cycling community is well catered for in our state and that we should use this opportunity to embrace some tourism diversity. Further I would ask that the committee give consideration to placing a moratorium on removing the railway line from Lilydale falls through to Scottsdale, until the heritage rail proposal has had a chance to prove its feasibility. Once the first stage of the heritage rail project can be proved successful, the railway line can be restored in a stage by stage process all the way to Scottsdale as outlined in point 3.

In closing I would like to point out the fact that this railway line is a unique piece of *our* history, once the track is gone it is gone, and will never come back. If we destroy this precious asset now, our children and grandchildren may well wonder "What were they thinking?"

Yours Sincerely.

Robert Dickinson

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