

*Government Administration Committee “B” Inquiry into Tasmania’s North East Corridor.*

## Why A Recreation Rail Trail will positively transform the health, tourism, economy & environment for the North East.

Hello,

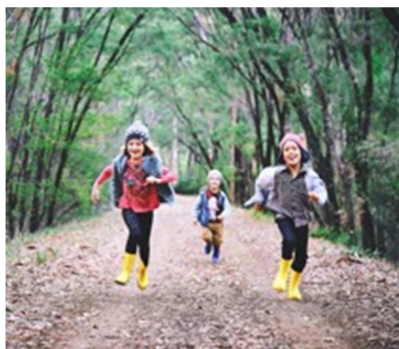
My name is Susan Denny; a 3rd generation North East Tasmanian with a strong attachment to this part of the state. North East history is strong and in the blood.

I have fond memories of the train ride to Herrick in the early 60’s BUT sentiment for an old rail line in decline, remains there, in that past.

### 1. Scottsdale -Lilydale Recreation Rail Trail

Today, I see a bright future with a North East **Recreation Rail Trail**. I am a fervent supporter of this proposal because it has the means to **bring widespread benefit to the greatest number**. From a well-kept secret, the North East could be on the world stage by following the success stories of recreational rail trails across the globe.

This is an opportunity to create a strong and lasting future of tourism, regional health, economic growth, within a sustained environment where everybody benefits.



**The proposed Recreational Rail Trail** would be a walking, biking, hiking, running trail transformed from a disused rail track into a **multi-use tourism, cultural, economic and health hub**. People travel the length or parts of the rail corridor at their own pace stopping and partaking in what is on offer. For the North East, it could be historic sites (the 1888 Tunnel), cottage industries, art galleries, purpose-built accommodation, wineries, retail and food outlets etc..... Multiple possibilities that increase exponentially over time. This typical **“Slow Tourism”** stands to spread its benefits much further than just a one or two stop train ride.

## Examples of successful Recreation Rail Trails around the World

Recreational Rail Trails have been successful all over the world and in mainland Australia & New Zealand. However, Tasmania has been the last to jump on the bandwagon. The top rail trails in Australia include:

Murray to the Mountains, VIC – 116km  
 The Riesling and Rattler Trail, SA – 54km  
 The Great Southern Rail Trail, VIC – 71km  
 Great Victorian Rail Trail, VIC – 134km  
 High Country Rail Trail, VIC – 50km

All these rail trails have had a positive impact: - previously struggling hamlets have noted a huge transformation for the better. The benefits from a Recreation Rail Trail, have changed economies, community health and general wellbeing. That too could be the North East.

## Economic outcomes from a Recreation Rail Trail

According to a study of Economic Analysis of Rail Trails in Australia (Dr Sue Beeton 2003)

*For every visitor day at the Rail Trails \$51.10 of expenditure is injected into the economy...*

- “Economic Analysis of Rail Trails in Australia”, Dr. Sue Beeton, Senior Lecturer in Tourism La Trobe University

This does not consider overnight accommodation expenditure. Based on a 2003 study, today's expectations would **exceed \$80 per day**.

According to her economic study, Dr Sue Beeton also found the potential economic benefits to be

- Creation of jobs during and after construction
- Increased direct expenditure
- Increased induced and indirect regional income
- Increased tax income
- Higher land prices
- Opportunities for new/expanded local enterprises
- Broadening the tourism portfolio of a region

## Health and Wellbeing outcomes from a Recreation Rail Trail

...let's get moving.

*People living in Launceston and North East Tasmania have the highest rate of cardiovascular disease in Australia at 29.9 per cent.*

~ Heart Foundation report 2014

This harrowing statistic of poor regional health must be a huge burden on the public purse. A Recreational Rail Trail could change that by providing a public space for young and old to proactively exercise, free from the dangers of heavy road traffic. **Creating a corridor for locals and tourists to connect and move through beautiful scenery is a positive step towards a healthier and thriving North East.**

## Funding



A Recreation/Rail Trail has the means to recycle existing infrastructure (iron and sleepers) and convert into dollars. Rotary Scottsdale with Dorset Council transformed 28km east of Scottsdale into a people-friendly surface, supported by proceeds from the sale of the redundant material. This was achieved without Government grant moneys.

It is now the hub for organized marathons, (hundreds participated in the running and cycling events August 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 2018), hiking, sports training, dog walking, social and exercise groups and cycling. This is just the beginning.

**A Recreation/Rail Trail makes sense. It is economically, socially and environmentally viable. It has the means to promote a healthy and prosperous community, as well as safeguarding and sustaining a beautiful natural corridor environment. This amenity has all the prerequisites to be the envy of the world. It is a win, win.**

## 2 Lilydale - Turners Marsh tourism railway.

The Train group is openly pressing for a rail line well beyond the suggested Turners Marsh to Lilydale. The motivation would seem not so much to create a train experience, but more to block a Recreation /Rail Trail. Hence, repeated appeals on its part for further inquiries to stall that progress.

The Rail line was inherently problematic in its past. The N.E. terrain with its peaks and gullies proved challenging. The recurring costs of Public Safety compliance to run a safe rail system was a big one, back then. It would be more so today.

Trying to revive a doomed rail service of any length, in this part of the State for nostalgia's sake, with all its hazards, would seem **ill considered and irresponsible.**

There are already 4 similar ventures around the State; however, there are **no Recreation/ Rail Trails.** Here is an opportunity to build on a model which is a proven in other parts of the world, but, will be **unique to Tasmania.**



### Comparison of the proposed Railway Line against the Potential Recreational Rail Trail.

	Railway Line	Recreation Rail Trail
Subsidised self-funding	✗	✓
Health Benefits including mental health, heart and general wellbeing	✗	✓
Community hub	✗	✓
Multi Use	✗	✓
Open travel options ...both directions, stop where you like.	✗	✓
Tourism benefits	✓ limited	✓
More than single stop tourism benefits	✗	✓
Benefit to multiple townships	✗	✓
Safe & viable infrastructure use	✗	✓
Unique tourism offering	✗	✓
Opportunities for new local enterprise	✓ limited	✓
Attraction for organised events such as marathons, cycling, or school excursions etc.	✗	✓
Safe travel options for visitors and locals free from traffic	✗	✓
Maximum use of public corridor space	✗	✓
B&B, farm stay options, or purpose-built accommodation in multiple townships	✗	✓
Varied tourism access to vineyards, townships, craft and art galleries.	✗	✓
Minimum carbon footprint, minimum noise pollution	✗	✓

### Questions of the proposed Railway

- Operational function of all safety warning signals at road intersections?
- Regular engineering checks of all the railway bridges and culverts to National Regulation order?
- Safety of those bridges and costs of compliance?
- Maintenance of storm water drainage and seepage through The Tunnel?
- Maintenance of all rail line, sleepers, and ballast to current National Regulation order?
- A slow train's restricted timetable; (because of terrain) .... reduced to one or two stops?

- The limitations of single directional travel missing smaller towns?
- Local and smaller players missing the potential benefits of increased tourism?
- Beneficiaries more likely to be established tourist concerns?
- No unique offering when four 'Heritage' railways exist in the State already?
- Only a singular, not a multi-use option?
- Does it create a public space?
- Opportunity for event creation like marathons, hiking trails, walks and community exercise gatherings?
- Is the proposed train really "heritage" and deserving of nostalgic credibility?
- Is the train itself compliant to public safety?

### **In Summary**

I challenge that the "loud squeaky wheel" from the Train fraternity may not be a true measure of public sentiment in support of their cause. Rather, closer to the truth, there are many who - nervous of reprisals - elect to remain silent. **Until now, I too have remained quiet.**

Thank you for providing this platform to openly express long held opinions. Despite the last 2 years of antagonism from the Rail Fraternity there is credible reason to remain optimistic. There's an exciting opportunity to create something great for the North East as well as being unique to Tasmania. The **Recreation/ Rail Trail** is the most compelling vision to showcase our incredible part of the world. It will not only attract tourism and economic benefits but, inspire our community to get moving and shift the dial on our health, wellness and social connections. Rail Trails all over the world have become hubs that open townships to opportunity.

Imagine a Tasmania where visitors come not only for Salamanca, MONA & Cradle Mountain but they include the N.E Recreation /Rail Trail on the way to Derby and The Bay of Fires. What if the North East could be known for more than the highest rate of cardiovascular disease in Australia BUT be known for the **only Recreation/Rail Trail in the State.**

This is the opportunity we are now presented with.

Susan Denny.

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Susan Denny is a long-term resident of the North East & daughter of Tim Denny, founder of the Bridestowe Estate Lavender Farm, Nabowla. She has been a passionate advocate for the North East, practices as an artist and is co producer of a successful vineyard in North Lilydale, adjacent to the original lavender farm established by her grandfather in 1923.

