

Your ref:

Our ref: HR:

1 November, 2018

Hon. Rosemary Armitage MLC  
Inquiry Chair: Government Administration Committee 'B'

### **Inquiry into Tasmania's North-East Railway Corridor**

Dear Chair, Deputy Chair and other Honourable Members

1. Please consider the following matters in your Inquiry.
2. Quoted references are extracted from the public record of Honourable Members.

#### **Scope of Inquiry**

3. The Terms of Reference for this Inquiry require consideration of tourism opportunities provided under the *Strategic Infrastructure Corridors (Strategic and Recreational Use) Act 2016* ("**Corridors Act**").
4. The Corridors Act is concerned with recreational use of Tasmania's corridors, where recreation is defined – for the purposes of the Corridors Act – as follows (s.3 of the Corridors Act):

**recreational purposes means for the purpose of –**

- (a) use by walkers or runners; or**
  - (b) use by horse riders; or**
  - (c) use by persons riding bicycles, including power-assisted bicycles;**  
**or**
  - (d) use for a prescribed recreational activity;**
5. No recreational activity has been prescribed for the purposes of part (d) of the definition.
  6. It is evident that neither tourism nor railway are within core focus of the Act.
  7. If the land of the former North East Line becomes a designated corridor, the Minister may, under the *Crown Lands Act 1976*, grant in relation to that land a lease or licence as may be empowered by the *Crown Lands Act 1976*: ss. 21(1)(c) Corridors Act.

8. Subsection 98 (1) Corridors Act provides that, without limiting the generality of s.21(1)(c) Corridors Act, a lease in relation to a corridor may be granted for the purposes of the operation of a tourist **or** heritage railway on the corridor.
9. Subsection 99(2) Corridors Act provides for approved removal of railway track if the Minister is satisfied that –
  - (a) **it is not reasonably practicable, or would be unreasonably costly, for the designated recreational use to occur on land within the corridor, other than the land on which the railway track is situated; and**
  - (b) **the removal of the railway track is reasonably necessary for the purposes of enabling the use, or the safe use, of the corridor for the designated recreational use in relation to the corridor.**
10. Subsection 99(2) shows clear priority in legislative intent for recreational use of the corridor over any other purpose for which the corridor may be used.
11. Honourable Members are invited to have regard to this priority in evaluating the relevance and merit of all submissions reviewed in this Inquiry.

#### **Feasibility of the proposed Scottsdale-Lilydale Falls rail trail**

12. The Commonwealth has reviewed and approved the project for conversion of the former North East Line to recreational use by Dorset Council. The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development has noted that recreational use – walking and bike riding – will increase visitation and investment in the region.
13. Commonwealth current listing of the project is recorded here: [infrastructure.gov.au/departments/grants/files/National\\_Stronger\\_Regions\\_Fund\\_28112017.xlsx](https://infrastructure.gov.au/departments/grants/files/National_Stronger_Regions_Fund_28112017.xlsx)
14. The Application approved by the Commonwealth, with supporting community endorsements, is attached: **Enclosure 1** and **Enclosure 2**.
15. State Government recognition of feasibility of the project is set out in the Treasury Review published July 2018: ***Tasmania's North-East Rail Corridor: Assessment of the Launceston and North-East Railway and the Rail Trail Proposal***, see material under headings **Demand and Economic and Social Benefits** and **Assessment of the Costs, Benefits and Risks of the Rail Trail**.
16. Honourable Members are invited to have regard to the implicit recognition of feasibility of the proposed Scottsdale-Lilydale Falls rail trail evidenced by Commonwealth support for the project.
17. Honourable Members are invited to consider that there are 4 railway operations in Tasmania which address the tourism market but, to date, no recreational rail trail.
  - *Rail trails and disused railway corridors have been successfully created in other Australian states and around the world and have proven to be popular recreational facilities. Within Tasmania, rail trails and cycling tourism have been identified as a positive opportunity to rejuvenate regional areas.*

### Feasibility of the proposed Lilydale-Turners Marsh tourism railway

18. The terrain of the North East is beautiful and most challenging for efficient and effective operation of any railway. In their day, derailments were regular in railway operations on the former North East Line. There has been no change to the geographic factors that provided a heritage of derailments.
  - *TasRail stated that none of the rails proposed for these rail trails are currently fit for purpose. In the case of the North East Rail Trail, it would cost in excess of \$30 million for light rail and another \$60 million for freight. TasRail also stated that many current tracks would need to be pulled up and new tracks laid, including the proposed North East Rail Trail, if any trains were to run on these tracks.*
19. Operational standards have changed. The National Rail Safety Regulator will apply contemporary standards to any proposal to reinstate railway operations in the North East Corridor. The feasibility of compliance with those standards is unknown, as there has been no consideration by the Regulator of any application to operate tourism railway on the former North East Line.
20. Publications of those supporting tourism railway for Lilydale to Turners Marsh cite volunteer and participants in the Commonwealth Department of Jobs and Small Business **Work for the Dole** program as human resources for the management and maintenance of the railway. While that opportunity may be valuable for participants, if feasible, the demands of modern railway operations require specialised skills and contemporary railway experience.
21. The Treasury Review published July 2018 noted that the gap which may exist between the safety standards that the tourism railway proponents have been assuming and the requirements that the National Rail Safety Regulator may impose is **a significant financial risk to the project.**
22. Honourable Members are invited to consider that there are 4 railway operations in Tasmania which address the tourism market (but, to date, no recreational rail trail) and to note that this presents a threat to competitive advantage of any tourism railway use of the former North East Line.
  - *Sometimes we have to accept what we can have, otherwise we risk having nothing*

### Feasibility, funding, future management and maintenance of any tourism developments on the North East Railway Corridor

23. Letters in support of the application for National Stronger Regions funding attest to the feasibility and enthusiasm for tourism developments on the North East Railway Corridor, if it is turned to recreational use for cycling and walking: see **Enclosure 2**.
  - *It was mentioned by some that, currently, cyclists do not tend to spend a lot of money and that is probably true for those training or locals going for a ride. What we are pitching for is tourists - people who otherwise might not come to Tasmania but are tempted by our beautiful scenery and*

*trails. They have to sleep somewhere and they have to eat somewhere. Hopefully they will enjoy their Tasmanian holiday so much they will return and spread the word.*

**Matters incidental**

24. There are two matters incidental to tourism which, I urge, should attract the attention of Honourable Members in present context:
- (a) Community health and wellbeing; and
  - (b) Community employment.
25. On both counts, the project to convert the former North East Line to recreational access will achieve benefit. As set out in the successful application for Commonwealth funding (*Enclosure 1*):
- (a) The population and wealth of the economy of the Dorset LGA is clearly in decline, and the research has demonstrated that there is a correlation between relative lower socio-economic status and poorer health outcomes. 34% of the adult population living in Dorset are obese while only 16.4% of Dorset adults report that their health is poor or fair, compared with 19% for the state average (Heart Foundation, 2014). The provision of a trail infrastructure that is accessible and at no- cost to the user, will make the choices easier to engage in walking and cycling and will help reverse the high-risk factors such as diabetes and heart disease thus providing significant cost-benefits to society and our health system.
  - (b) Another significant indicator is that 70.1% of those on welfare support (Newstart Allowance) have been receiving payments in excess of 365 days. Between 2008 and 2010, Tasmania's forestry industry experienced a 33.3% downturn in employment and the impact of this downturn was particularly significant for the Dorset local government area (Select Committee Submission 2013 p. 7). The region has been undergoing significant structural adjustments from a heavy reliance on resource commodity production; forestry, manufacturing and agricultural and transitioning to a more diversified economy with an emerging service-based economic platform. The impact of job loss severely affects the capacity of young families to stay in the region, work live and invest. This is reflected in lower school enrolments and the capacity of the region to maintain and service community infrastructure; clubs and health service provision. The project will help Dorset to transition its economy by stimulating new activity and will leverage new private sector investment and job creation.
26. I consent to publication of these submissions. Please allow me to speak to these submissions if Honourable Members consider that might assist, thank you.

Yours faithfully



HARRY RIGNEY, LL.M. (Harvard '80) LL.B. (Hons.) (UTAS) TEP  
Australian Legal Practitioner, Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Tasmania

## NORTH EAST RAIL TRAIL APPLICATION

Assessment Criterion 1: the extent to which the Project/Sub-Project contributes to economic growth in the region

The Project is a major tourism and recreational product for local and visitors alike that will bring significant outcomes for Northern Tasmania in terms of employment, a sense of community and economic gains in business development, diversification and sustainability. The rail corridor in the NE has been non-operational for around 20 years and passes through pristine wilderness, quaint villages, and diverse picturesque farming land including award winning vineyards. Based upon the findings of the independent economic analysis by TRC, commissioned by Northern Tasmania Development (see NTD 2014) 23,000 visitors (local, interstate and international) are estimated 5 years post construction and this will grow to 35,000 trips after 15 years. Rail trail tourism will bring an estimated \$3.5 million per annum to the region five years post construction with flow on impact to the state as a whole by \$6.8 million per annum and will also increase gross state product (GSP) by \$3.3 million per annum. This level of economic activity is estimated to support 40 FTEs 5 years post construction and at 15 years post construction 67 long term FTE positions to 83 FTEs (plus additional skills outcomes) are estimated and will be spread across various trades and service industries such as accommodation and food that are both directly and indirectly related to the impact of the project (NTD 2014 p19). The economic impact fifteen years post construction is estimated to be \$11.2 million per annum, and GSP by \$5.4 million per annum (NTD p.16). The economic contribution of this rail trail will continue to grow, with existing and new business development opportunities.

Entrepreneurs have already indicated that they would open longer hours and employ more people and provide additional services, products and experiences (Letters of Support). Experience on other Rail Trails shows that increased visitation brings new and innovative tourism ventures in proximity to rail trails such as cafes, bicycle hire, accommodation, food, bicycle tours (Clare Valley Riesling Trail p. 15, 17, Letters of Support). The NE region is well connected to the rest of the state and mainland Australia through existing transport infrastructure and Launceston provides key regional infrastructure, facilities and services. The physical location of the project contributes to an existing touring route from Launceston to Scottsdale and the surrounding communities, allowing for increased expenditure and many businesses which are struggling due to the economic downturn in the region will benefit from an increase in tourist numbers. With its clean and green image, the Project will help position NE Tasmania in the nature-based all year round tourism experiential market including food, wine and historic heritage in the region (Strategic Planning Northern Tasmania). A study of three Victorian rail trails (Beeton 2009) showed that recreational cyclists are a high yield and high spending market and typically stay longer; the average spend per visitor is \$244 per day and with indirect expenditure on accommodation for example this figure is \$447 per person per day. The growing soft adventure/slow tourism market of the rail trails experience definitely boosts tourist numbers and increases visitor spend. In Tasmania alone there are 44,600 cyclists over 15 years of age which equates to 11.1% of the population, and 154,700 people who participate in walking (excluding bushwalking) which equates to 38.4% of the population. (Business Case p.11) The demand for new and interesting places for recreation which this Project will meet appeals to a broad range of markets including families with children as well as mobility impaired individuals. The trail can also leverage off the existing 90 Kms network of mountain bike trails in the NE making the region a truly competitive tourism and cycling destination plus attracting further investment in the region

and resulting job creation. The economic benefit to society of getting an inactive person to walk or cycle is calculated between \$5,000 and \$7,000 per year. A well-built, well planned trail that is set in an attractive environment will actively encourage people to exercise more. A related emerging economic issue is the migration of people away from the North Eastern region due to the social and economic impacts associated with the industrial downturn. The success of the Project as measured by increased visitation and economic activity will contribute to the requisite liveability and community resilience to mitigate and ultimately reverse this migration trend. The assumption for the response to this issue is supported by research undertaken by the Tasmanian Government, that for every \$1 invested in sport and recreation infrastructure, the community receives \$4 in return through health, participation and other related benefits (Value of Sport and Recreation to Tasmania).

Assessment Criterion 2: the extent to which the Project/Sub-Project supports or addresses disadvantage in a region

North East Tasmania is a regional economy facing significant and complex issues including the impact of an ageing population and socioeconomic disadvantage; low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment. Currently, Dorset LGA has the highest unemployment rate (9.2 %) in Tasmania, well above the state-wide rate of 7.1%. General literacy levels are also low with only 43% of the population aged 15 to 64 years who have educational attainment post year 10. The median weekly household income is \$733 compared to the rest of Tasmania at \$948. The population has declined from 7,214 (2006) to 6,826 (2013) and 50.3% of the population is over 45 years of age up from 46.4% in 2008. (ABS Regional Statistics, Tasmania, 2011). The population and wealth of the economy of the Dorset LGA is clearly in decline, and the research has demonstrated that there is a correlation between relative lower socio economic status and poorer health outcomes. 34% of the adult population living in Dorset are obese while only 16.4% of Dorset adults report that their health is poor or fair, compared with 19% for the state average (Heart Foundation, 2014). The provision of a trail infrastructure that is accessible and at no- cost to the user, will make the choices easier to engage in walking and cycling and will help reverse the high risk factors such as diabetes and heart disease thus providing significant cost-benefits to society and our health system. Another significant indicator is that 70.1% of those on welfare support (Newstart Allowance) have been receiving payments in excess of 365 days. Between 2008 and 2010, Tasmania's forestry industry experienced a 33.3% downturn in employment and the impact of this downturn was particularly significant for the Dorset local government area (Select Committee Submission 2013 p. 7). The region has been undergoing significant structural adjustments from a heavy reliance on resource commodity production; forestry, manufacturing and agricultural and transitioning to a more diversified economy with an emerging service-based economic platform. The impact of job loss severely affects the capacity of young families to stay in the region, work live and invest. This is reflected in lower school enrolments and the capacity of the region to maintain and service community infrastructure; clubs and health service provision. The project will help Dorset to transition its economy by stimulating new activity and will leverage new private sector investment and job creation. Similar trails, such as the Otago Central Rail Trail in New Zealand and the Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail in Victoria, attracted up to 45,000 people a year and had created hundreds of jobs (NTD 2014). There is strong evidence to suggest that the NE Rail Trail and cycle tourism will bring economic benefits with

associated social benefits resulting in regional communities that are vibrant and reinvigorated. The project will create employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers in the region also reversing the impact of the migration of people especially the 20-44 year olds, away from the NE. During the two year construction phase it is estimated that the Project will support 7.8 full-time equivalents (FTEs) positions and with the projected increased economic activity across the region 40 FTE's 5 years post construction, with 67 to 83 FTEs 15 years post construction. Most of these jobs would be created within the region (85%) and spread across existing and new businesses along the length of the trail such as cellar doors, accommodation, food services, specialty boutique and farmgate produce and secondary services such as transport, package operators, bike hire and guiding services for example. There is significant communal benefit to rail trails in regional areas; increased employment, the boost to morale, sense of pride in community, social interaction and significant health benefits. The overall well-being and liveability of the small townships and communities in the NE region will be both positive and profound. The NE Rail-Trail will be one of Australia's leading Rail Trail experiences within a context of beautiful scenery and showcasing the natural and cultural heritage values of NE Tasmanian farming activity and social history.

Assessment Criterion 3: the extent to which the Project/Sub-Project increases investment and builds partnerships in the region

The positioning of Dorset as a cycling trails destination is a key outcome and The NE Rail Trail Project is the missing 70 km link to the existing trail network which will arguably become the most extensive, multi-purpose network (200 kms) in the world, catering for all ages, groups and levels of difficulty from the gentle gradient of the NE Rail Trail (0%- 3%) to the more technical and advanced levels of the North East Mountain Bike (MTB) network. Dorset Council is the lead agency for cycle tourism in the region and has been proactive in positioning the NE as an iconic cycle tourism destination and has worked closely with Northern Tasmania Development, an organisation owned by the 8 local councils in Northern Tasmania who will provide support in administration and coordination of the Project and the Steering Group, Tourism Northern Tasmania and Tourism Tasmania for assistance in the marketing and promotion of the NE Rail Trail (Letters of Support). A legal agreement will be entered into with the Tasmanian Government whereby the North-East Rail Corridor is made available to the Dorset Council (Letters of Intent). Dorset Council will be responsible for the management and risk management of the Rail Trail during the construction phase (Project Management Plan) and has also pledged an in-kind contribution of \$56,485 for Project Management (Letter of Commitment). The project has strong community and stakeholder support both within the NE community and the cycling community as a whole (Letters of Support). A Steering Group of key stakeholders; proven business people, Dorset Council, residents and community leaders from Launceston to Scottsdale has formed an incorporation to manage the project provide guidance to council on issues that relate to the Project and meet regularly to ensure that the project will be delivered on time and on budget. Fears and concerns of the local community have been recognised and addressed (Consultation Strategy). As a result of various multi session consultations, sustainable partnerships have already occurred with various stakeholders; government and non-government organisations at both local and state level, community organisations, business owners, adjoining land owners, user groups, and the host communities. Discussions with Parks and Recreation at Launceston City Council are in progress regarding the

intentions of the Council to upgrade the facilities at Lilydale Falls which will run concurrently with the Project thereby contributing to the value of the amenity and the Rail Trail Experience. Natural Resource Management (NRM) is another organisation which has pledged support by providing advice on land management and conservations issues; programs for weed control and monitoring, buffer zone plantings, 'Green Army' to undertake maintenance services including the native revegetation requirements on the trail additionally providing job skills training outcomes (Letters of Support). The project is also supported by various proposed businesses that intend to make investment decisions on the basis of the project (Letters of Support). Existing community entrepreneurs are likely to capitalise on opportunities and provide additional services, products and experiences for the trail visitors such as transport, merchandise, accommodation or provisioning and guiding services. The townships are already engaged and feeling empowered in discussing the opportunities that this project will bring such as the linking of the Rail Trail experience with local community festivals and regional events such as Lilydale Market, The Bridport Cycle Challenge, Great Tasmanian Bike Ride and Blue Dragon MTB Challenge (Letters of Support). The interaction of visitors and the host communities can increase the sense of pride in the local community of their assets and already this is evident through community engagement and the excitement that has already been generated in the Project. Once the NE Rail Trail is constructed the management will evolve into a full commercial model as has been the case with other trails such as Otago Rail Trails in New Zealand (NTD, 2014) under the auspices of North East Trail Association Inc. (NERT Maintenance Funding Strategy).

Assessment Criterion 4: the extent to which the Project/Sub-Project and Applicant are viable and sustainable

The viability of the project is validated via the "Preliminary Demand and Economic Benefit Assessment – North East Rail Trail" report (NTD 2014) prepared by TRC Tourism on behalf of Northern Tasmanian Development. The report critically analyses the market demand and makes projections about the socio-economic impact of establishing the rail trail. The cost of the project is estimated at \$2,942,000, (Project Man Plan) and includes three major cost components; the decommissioning of the existing rail infrastructure, the construction of the trail surface and construction of decking and hand rails on bridges. A 15% contingency for overruns has been built into all three cost components. In addition, Council has significant knowledge of the latter two cost components based upon its experience in constructing the North East Mountain Bike Project (MTB) which is being funded by a \$2.5 million grant under the Federal Government's Community Development Grants (CDG) Programme. Council will fund 50% of the project costs through the realisation of approximately \$1,472,000 in cash via the sale of scrap materials recovered during the decommissioning of the existing rail corridor. The Minister for Infrastructure (Letters of Intent) has confirmed that the existing rail corridor will be transferred to Council if the funding application is successful. The projected revenue from the sale of scrap materials recovered during the decommissioning phase is expected to cover the decommissioning costs and provide a surplus of cash which will be applied to the construction of the trail. This assumption is predicated on information supplied by TASRAIL, the state owned rail operator which is currently decommissioning 10km of rail between Scottsdale and Tonganah. TASRAIL and the contractor engaged by TASRAIL have both confirmed the validity of this assumption verbally and TASRAIL has provided written



confirmation that the value of the scrap metal alone is projected to cover the decommissioning costs associated with the Scottsdale to Tonganah portion of rail corridor (TasRail Projections). It should be noted that the Scottsdale to Tonganah decommissioning does not form part of this funding submission but rather is used as tangible evidence to validate the assumption made about the value of sale of scrap materials recovered during the decommissioning phase. In addition to the information provided by TASRAIL, the scrap value and estimated quantities of the materials have also been independently validated by a local contractor who has provided written confirmation of estimated quantities and values of the recoverable materials (see 'Reasonability Testing' Project Man Plan p. 21 , Est Salvage Value). In the event of a shortfall in projected cash realised from the sale of recovered scrap materials or cost overruns in excess of the 15% overrun contingency included in the budget, Council has the financial capacity to fund any shortfall (Partner Funding). This is further validated by Council's financial position as at June 30 2014 which shows financial assets of \$14,000,000 (Financial Statements). Annual costs of maintaining the rail trail once constructed are extremely minimal and based on research conducted in South Australia (Clare Valley Riesling Trail), are estimated to be in the vicinity of \$10,000 - \$20,000 per annum. A community group comprising representatives from the local business community and Rotary clubs has established an Incorporated Association which will maintain the rail trail on behalf of Council (NERT Maintenance Funding Strategy). Based on the research conducted on the Riesling Trail it is envisaged that the Incorporated Association will raise sufficient funds to finance the annual maintenance costs, thereby making the trail self-sustaining. If required Council has in place a contingency to provide the association with up to \$20,000 per annum for a period of five years post construction to cover any shortfall in their fund raising initiatives (Letter of Commitment). There are no planning limitations, such as zoning or other issues. Evidence of this is the attached Planning Permit and associated planning report (Planning App Scotts to Tonganah, Tonganah Planners Report) which was recently issued for the Scottsdale to Tonganah portion of the rail trail and will be constructed by Scottsdale Rotary Club once TASRAIL completes the decommissioning of the line in early 2015. Planning Permits, preparation and letting of contract tenders would all occur within six months of the execution of the funding agreement (Project Man Plan p.15 ). Recent evidence of Council's capacity to meet project milestones related to grant funding is the \$4.26 million Trail of the Tin Dragon and the \$1.3 Million Dorset Rural Primary Health Services Program (Evidence of Experience). The \$2.5 million MTB Project is current evidence of experience in similar project management with the first stage due for opening in February 2015.



# ANDREW NIKOLIC AM CSC MP

Federal Member for Bass



27 November 2014

To Whom It May Concern

Re: North East Rail Trail

I write in support of the Stronger Regions Fund application being submitted by the North East Rail Trail Project. This project has the potential to be an important component in the necessary diversification of Northern Tasmania's economy, following the collapse of the forestry industry.

A 100 kilometre recreational cycling and walking trail, on a currently disused rail line, would link Launceston and Scottsdale in Tasmania's picturesque North East. The North East Rail Trail project has the potential to generate widespread economic benefits to a region of high unemployment, particularly among young people.

I believe that interstate and overseas tourism can become a significant economic driver in this region and note that over 25,000 tourists visit Tasmania each year for a cycling purpose. I have been a strong supporter of the North Eastern Mountain Bike Trails Project, which is being developed as a world-class facility for competitive mountain biking.

The North East Rail Trail Project can build on the mountain bike trails by catering to recreational cyclists (and others) to create a strong tourist attraction for this region, and Tasmania as a whole.

Experience interstate suggests that the project has the potential to generate much-needed employment by increasing opportunities for new enterprises such as cafes, bike hire, tour companies, local food and wine products, arts and crafts and accommodation.

I have seen first-hand the disused rail line to be developed in this project and with the strong support of adjoining councils, the State Government, local businesses, community organisations and landholders, I consider it a project of considerable value.

I happily add my support to this funding application.

Yours sincerely

**Andrew Nikolic AM CSC MP**  
Federal Member for Bass



25 November 2014

**North East Rail Trail Incorporated Association**

Dear Ms Hirst

Tourism Northern Tasmania (TNT) is the regional tourism organisation for Northern Tasmania. Guided by the Northern Tasmania Destination Management Plan (DMP) we lead and inspire the development of economic, social and environmental outcomes from growing tourism in the region. One of our 'game changing' priorities is the positioning of Northern Tasmania, and in fact Tasmania as a whole, as a world class cycling destination.

As such TNT congratulates the North East Rail Trail Incorporated Association for the initiative and foresight in pursuing the repurposing of the existing disused freight railline to an all-purpose pedestrian thorough-fare commonly known as a Rail Trail.

The Northern Tasmania DMP identifies cycling tourism to be a 'game changer' for the future prosperity of the North. To achieve this goal we need investments in trail and road infrastructure to ensure the natural advantages the region has are optimised to drive demand and increase economic returns for Northern communities.

A community driven project like the North East Rail Trail, spanning 100kms and linking a string of rural communities such as Lilydale, Scottsdale and Ledgerwood we see as essential in achieving the goal of being a truly world class cycling destination.

This style of project is ideally suited to the North East of Tasmania. We believe for the North East communities this project will provide a much needed increase visitor numbers and spending in that it will provide a means by which visitors can travel through this region at a slower pace. This will allow for a higher degree of engagement with local communities, spending at local shops, eating at local cafes and restaurants, and using accommodation scattered along the length of the rail trail.

We also believe an investment in this infrastructure will predicate private sector investment in above mentioned businesses, providing for jobs in the rural communities along the corridor and attracting new skills and money to the region.

Tourism Northern Tasmania would like to thank the North East Rail Trail Incorporated Association for its ongoing commitment to the growth of tourism in the North East and we fully support any funding submission which will enable the Rail Trail to become a reality.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Griffin", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Chris Griffin  
CEO, Tourism Northern Tasmania Inc.

27 November 2014

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To Whom it May Concern,

I write in support of the North East Rail Trail application for assistance under the Australian Government's National Stronger Regions Fund.

Northern Tasmania Development is an organisation established to facilitate and coordinate economic and social development in Northern Tasmania. Our members are the eight councils in the North of the State. A key role for this organisation is to support the tourism sector as a key economic driver for this region.

In recent years, cycle tourism has emerged as a distinct and exciting opportunity for Tasmania. Extensive research and background analysis clearly indicates that the North East Rail Trail has the potential to become one of the nation's leading trail experiences providing opportunities for walking and cycling. The trail will also provide recreation, health and wellbeing opportunities for both the local community as well as visitors whilst showcasing the amazing natural and cultural heritage values of the area.

Independent economic analysis recently undertaken by Northern Tasmania Development indicates that job outcomes would be approximately 8 FTE during construction (plus additional skills outcomes) and ongoing employment of 40 FTE. These employment outcomes will help to underpin the estimated 94 FTE outcomes that will result from the existing North Eastern Mountain Bike Development Project.

In order to grow the significance of tourism, it is imperative that this region continues to focus on the provision of new infrastructure and tourism experiences. As such, I applaud efforts to further develop cycle tourism experiences offered in Northern Tasmania through the construction of the North East Rail Trail.

Importantly, with the assistance of government funding, this trail project will create tourism opportunities that will leverage new private sector investment and job creation. With a particular focus on nature based tourism experiences, the northern region of Tasmania will be well placed to meet the expectations of new visitors to Tasmania.

Yours sincerely



Derek Le Marchant  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICER**



**TCCI**  
*Invigorating Business*

November 18<sup>th</sup> 2014

Dear Madam/Sir

## RE NORTH EAST RAIL TRAIL

Tasmania's stunning North East region is set for a dramatic and much-needed revitalisation if the North East Rail Trail project proceeds.

We expect up to 30,000 people per year will travel to northern Tasmania to walk and cycle the trail from Launceston to 28km past Scottsdale – an incredible 100km of track through pristine wilderness, award-winning vineyards, internationally-recognised tourism businesses, quaint villages and diverse farmland.

While existing businesses are anticipating a boost like no other, we are also confident that new businesses – ranging from accommodation to cafes to bike hire to tour companies to farmgate experiences – will open and prosper in the region. This certainly has been the case along trails throughout Australia, New Zealand and around Europe.

The project is now being managed by a group of passionate, enthusiastic, determined and proven business people and community leaders located from Launceston to Scottsdale. They have formed an incorporated association, are meeting regularly and have completed an exceptional amount of leg work to ensure this project is delivered on time and on budget.

They have travelled to a number of similar-sized rail trails around Australia and learned so much about track construction, drainage, self-funding models and marketing. We are confident that the association, in conjunction with the forward-thinking Dorset Council, has the necessary skills and leadership to construct and manage the Rail Trail to the benefit of the whole of Tasmania. We would love to long-term see a bike trail around the entire State linking with the North East Rail Trail.

The Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry supports 100% the development of a rail trail from Launceston to Scottsdale and looks forward to working with existing and new businesses to generate significant additional economic activity in the region and beyond.

Yours sincerely

Michael Bailey  
Chief Executive Officer

### Southern Office

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Invigorating Business

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## LILYDALE DISTRICT PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

The North East Rail Trail Steering Committee  
C/- Sarah Hirst, Lilydale Larder  
By email to [info@leaningchurch.com.au](mailto:info@leaningchurch.com.au)

7 March 2014

Dear Sarah

### **RE: LDPA SUPPORT FOR THE NORTH EAST RAIL TRAIL**

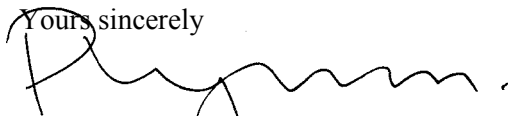
The Lilydale District Progress Association Inc. (LDPA) has, for some time, been concerned about the future of the North East rail line which passes through the district. From our perspective this represents both an idle asset left redundant by changing transportation needs and a concern because an unmanaged corridor of land provides a vector for weed transmission through the area.

The proposal to convert the rail line into a 'rail trail' has been discussed by the LDPA and has found favour on several points:

- ⌚ The proposal is strongly aligned with the objectives of the LDPA which, in turn, were developed from broad based community forums. Specific compatible objectives are that the proposal would:
  - enhance the tourism potential of the district and thereby assist the diversification of rural enterprise; and
  - contribute towards improving the robustness and sustainability of both social amenity and economic activity within the district.
- ⌚ The LDPA is conscious of the growth of tourism dependent enterprise within the district, particularly hospitality, as well as the benefit to 'main street' retailers and service providers from increased visitor numbers. It is clear that there is a healthy level of entrepreneurial drive within the community, an asset for future growth that would likely be significantly enhanced by a visitor drawcard such as the proposed bike trail.
- ⌚ The prospect of clear responsibility for ongoing management of the rail corridor would alleviate many concerns, such as weed transmission, voiced by local landowners

The proposal was discussed by the LDPA at a General Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014 during which we unanimously resolved to offer unqualified support for the proposal. We are prepared to assist in any way we can to bring this concept to fruition.

Yours sincerely



Peter Lynam, President  
Lilydale District Progress Association Inc

Lilydale District Progress Association Inc ABN 86 572 487 635 | PO Box 3 Lilydale TAS 7268 | [ldpa@lilydale.mygbiz.com](mailto:ldpa@lilydale.mygbiz.com)  
The association of residents and businesses of the 7268, 7267 and 7254 postcode areas in the Launceston municipality.

President **Peter Lynam** Ph: 0415 350 942 | Vice President **Jeff Sims** | Treasurer **Tom Dancer** | Co-Secretary **John Alford** | Co-Secretary **Carmencita Palermo** | Public Officer **Mike Scott** | Festivals Manager **Simon Lockett** | Committee Members **Maree Blyth** **Bill Gibbins** **Christine Towns**

Publisher of **The Lilydale Progressive** | [lily.progressive@gmail.com](mailto:lily.progressive@gmail.com) | Editor **Gordon Treloar** | Advertising Editor **Margaret Treloar**  
Owner and operator of the [Lilydale Village Market](http://Lilydale Village Market) | facebook: "Lilydale Village Market" | [lilydalevillagemarket@gmail.com](mailto:lilydalevillagemarket@gmail.com)



Tamar Bicycle Users Group  
PO Box 5059  
Launceston 7250  
27 November 2014

## North East Rail Trail Support

### To whom it may concern

This letter is tendered as support for the North East Rail Trail Association's application for funding for the development of the North East Rail Trail (NERT) from Launceston to Scottsdale.

Around the world and across Australia local communities are taking advantage of disused rail routes to develop bicycle trails. Rail Trails are an experience that people associate with off-road well graded trails that are well serviced by local cafes, overnight accommodation, and beautiful rural landscapes with historical and natural interpretation. Rail Trail riders tend to travel slowly, require a low-stress experience by being separated from roads, apart from the occasional road crossing, and require gentle gradients.

Spending money in the local economy is an integral part of a rail trail experience.

There are multiple advantages of these trails:

- local contractors are engaged in construction and maintenance;
- local business activity is generated in hospitality, tourism and additional specialist support services such as bike hire, supported tours, maintenance and guiding.
- tourists looking for active holidays in new areas are attracted to the region
- diverse economic activity is generated in regional areas, often disadvantaged, for relatively low public and private capital expenditure.



Cafe, Otago Rail Trail

A 2009 study of the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail found that rail trail visitors spent an average of \$244 per day over Easter on accommodation, food, entertainment and other expenses in the Bright region of Victoria. (*Beeton S, Cycling in Regional Communities: A Longitudinal Study of the Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail, La Trobe University School of Management*). The 150 km Otago Rail Trail in New Zealand sustains 121 full-time equivalent jobs and contributes \$NZ12.28m to the Otago economy (*Otago Rail Trail User Survey 2011/12*). Since these surveys were undertaken, rider numbers have increased, thus increasing the economic benefit as new services are developed and existing ones expand.

There is a growing market for low impact, experience based tourism that also provides a healthy activity. Medium and long distance, supported and self contained bike touring meets these criteria. As the “baby boomers” retire, the market of “cashed up” active tourists and locals is increasing and from personal experience, the numbers of bicycle tourists around the world, including Northern Tasmania, is increasing.

The NERT will provide a recreational resource for a wide variety of users. Typical users will be;

1. Local riders and walkers from communities along the Trail using mid-sections of the Trail for exercise and recreation.
2. Mid-distance riders and walkers who will use the full length of the Trail for full day and overnight rides, riding the Trail from the trail heads.
3. Long distance touring riders who will use the Trail as a transit route to the North East and East Coast for longer bicycle tours.
4. Mountain bike riders accessing the new mountain bike trails at Holly Bank and the Blue Tier. The NERT will provide a family friendly ride that compliments the relatively more extreme experiences of the mountain bike facilities.

All these users will generate tourism and hospitality based economic activity in the region. The economic benefits of travel by bicycle is that the daily travel distances of 40-100km a day means that spending on accommodation, meals and snacks is widely spread across the region, not just at major centres. For example, on a typical five day bike tour around the region, the author and travel partner spent \$105/head/day. This spend was spread across 17 food, beverage and accommodation businesses throughout the North East.

The NERT has been assessed as having significant economic impact on the region. The Premier's North East Working Group chaired by then local MHR Brian Wightman identified 20 projects likely to contribute to the region's long term economic stability. The NERT project was ranked the fifth in terms of its potential to contribute to future economic development of the region and second out of 20 projects in terms of an immediately feasible project.

The strategic fit is well documented in regional plans and strategies for northern Tasmania. Scottsdale Rotary has been working with state agencies and government enterprises (Tourism, Economic Development, Forestry, Sport and Recreation and TasRail) to identify economic and tourism potential of the NERT and has identified strategic links such as the *Northern Tasmanian Regional Recreation Trails Strategy 2004*, *Trails Tasmania Strategy 2007*, *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Strategy* and *Tasmania's Innovation Strategy 2010*. which emphasised promoting the „livability“ of the region.

In 2009, the Scottsdale Rotary Club began working with the Dorset community to develop a the multi-user surface along the Crown Land easement from Tonganah to Legerwood. Like the line from Launceston, the trail passes through beautiful State forest with a range of forest types, views and features such as spectacular granite cuttings of up to 20 metres. Scottsdale Rotary has



committed to completing the section from Scottsdale to Legerwood. Currently the line is being removed between Scottsdale and Tonganah. The development of the trail from Launceston to Scottsdale will be the vital link in creating a significant trail. The Trail will then be of sufficient length to attract interstate and international riders in the same way as Trails such as the Victoria's High Country Trails and international Rail Trails such as the Otago Rail trail in New Zealand, the Carilet in Spain and long distance touring routes such as The Way of St James across France and Spain.

The Trail has strong local and statewide support. The two local bicycle user groups Tamar BUG (TBUG) and Dorset BUG (DBUG) are strong advocates for the Trail. There is also strong national support from Rail Trails Australia and the Bicycle Network.

An introductory ride on the initial section of the Trail was conducted by TBUG on 30 September 2012 to provide feedback to the Scottsdale Rotary Club on the surface and facilities required for the Trail. The photo shows some of the 200 riders who took part. Formal feedback was highly supportive of the trail.



Tamar Bicycle Users Group fully supports the North East Rail Trail from Launceston to Scottsdale for the following reasons:

- The Trail will link with the initial section of the Trail from Scottsdale to provide a trail that will be iconic because of the experience it will be able to deliver.
- The Trail will provide a recreational resource for the North of Tasmania that will deliver health and fitness benefits to both the local and wider community through a safe and easily accessible off-road trail.
- The Trail will stimulate significant tourism based economic activity for the region as the trail becomes an internationally recognised Rail Trail.

Malcolm Cowan,  
President, Tamar Bicycle Users Group  
[Malcolm.cowan@bigpond.com](mailto:Malcolm.cowan@bigpond.com)  
0417 573 991



*Tracking the Arts Across Tasmania's North East*

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN RE: NORTH EAST RAIL TRAIL

Dear Madam/Sir,

Arts On Track inc. is excited by the prospect of a rail trail extending through the north east from Launceston.

As our primary function is to “track” and “bring focus” to the arts in all its forms throughout the greater North East, we believe such a link would be a huge stimulus to the region and contribute to the fostering of the talent in the wider artistic community. Public exposure to all these treasures, hidden in beautiful country, is long overdue.

A rail link would foster “slow tourism” by allowing time for visitors to discover what is on offer. It would create the perfect climate for home or vineyard galleries to emerge, branching out from the railway spine. We believe it would serve as a catalyst to attract other artists to the region and ultimately procure a public profile of international standard.

Rail trails throughout the world have been a proven success for smaller outposts that may have in other circumstances failed to thrive. The North East Rail Trail proposal undoubtedly would give impetus and new life to forgotten points along the railway route as well as flowing on to other parts. The financial and cultural benefits to all in the area would be immeasurable. Simultaneously, the North East would be showcasing to the world its enviable beauty and unique charm.

We are convinced it is a resource that will pay dividends.

Yours sincerely

*Edwina*

Edwina Powell

Secretary



27 November 2014

Sarah Hirst,  
Chair  
North-East Rail Trail Association  
76 Brooks Road  
Lalla TAS 7267

Dear Sarah,

I write to commend the project to continue the development of the North-East Rail Trail.

Your funding application to the Federal Government's National Stronger Regions Fund is worthy of the full support of Bicycle Network and its 45,000 members across Australia.

The North-East Rail Trail is pivotal to the economic rejuvenation of North-East Tasmania, and the work already done by the local community has been driven by this imperative.

There is a wealth of evidence from Australian and international experience that Rail Trails deliver considerable economic and social benefits to the regions they pass through. The association, in its submission, outlines in detail that evidence.

The North-East Rail Trail has been identified by the Tasmanian Government, the Dorset Council, the local community and Bicycle Network as a project that delivers three key Tasmanian imperatives:

- To tap into the rapidly growing bicycle tourism market by promoting Tasmania as a destination delivering experiences such as the North-East Rail Trail
- To identify projects that will deliver an economic benefit to regional Tasmania, in particular to towns and businesses linked by the rail trail.
- To encourage more Tasmanians to cycle and walk more often with its intendant health benefits to individuals and to the community.

Of 20 project identified by the Tasmanian Government as likely to contribute to the region's long-term economic growth, the rail trail was ranked fifth. As the association's submission makes clear, the state continues to back the project.

We know that the people across Tasmania want the opportunity to capture the tremendous health benefits of cycling for transport and for recreation.

Bicycle Network strives to make bike riding an easy and accessible choice—part of everyone's day. This can only be achieved when riders have a continuous and attractive network of routes.

**More people cycling more often**

Level 4, 246 Bourke Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia **p.** (03) 8376 8888 **f.** (03) 8376 8800 **freecall:** 1800 639 634 (country callers)

[bicyclenetwork.com.au](http://bicyclenetwork.com.au)



Therefore the continued development of the North-East Rail Trail is critical to our mission and we have no hesitation in supporting this funding application.

Sincerely,



Chris Carpenter  
General Manager, Government and External Relations

**More people cycling more often**

Level 4, 246 Bourke Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia p. (03) 8376 8888 f. (03) 8376 8800 **freecall:** 1800 639 634 (country callers)

[bicyclenetwork.com.au](http://bicyclenetwork.com.au)



ABN 87 953 234 886  
**23 Kingsway**  
**Launceston 7250**  
**Tasmania, Australia**  
**03 6331 3377**  
**info@bike-central.com.au**

Tim Watson  
General Manager  
Dorset Council  
PO Box 21  
SCOTTSDALE TAS 7260

Dear Tim,

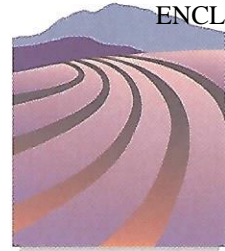
I am writing to confirm my support for the development of the North East Rail Trail stage from Launceston to Scottsdale.

As the owner of Bike Central, Launceston, I am excited about the increased opportunities this project will bring to my own business and for the region for participation in cycling for a wide range of capabilities. North East Tasmania and Tasmania as a whole is certainly building a reputation as a cycle tourism destination.

Kind regards

Dale Woolston - Bike Central, 23 Kingsway, Launceston, 7250





## Bridestowe Lavender Estate

ESTABLISHED 1922

Gillespies Road, Nabowla,  
N.E. Tasmania, Australia 7260  
Phone (03) 63528182

E-mail: [admin@bridestowelavender.com.au](mailto:admin@bridestowelavender.com.au)  
[www.bridestowelavender.com.au](http://www.bridestowelavender.com.au)

November 27, 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Bridestowe Lavender Farm has established itself as leading international tourism and manufacturing business in Tasmania's iconic North East. The business attracts 65,000 visitors each year, which has increased by 250% in the past decade.

We have put our hearts and soul into tourism in this region, which has endured so much following the demise of traditional forestry and processing industries.

That's why we support any initiative that will generate employment, attract permanent residents and new business, boost visitor numbers and spend, and further enhance the North East Tasmania Tourism Brand. The North East Rail Trail initiative is one of the most exciting to be put forward from our region and we have no doubt this development will have significant positive economic benefits for the whole of northern Tasmania – including Bridestowe Lavender Farm.

We have already taken steps to make Bridestowe Estate more bike friendly and are working with many businesses from Launceston to Scottsdale to ensure we are product ready for this development.

There's no doubt that we will need to employ additional staff once the Rail Trail has been constructed as we anticipate additional tour groups, families and individuals to explore our lavender farm and other premium tourism facilities between riding days of cycling.

We urge the Federal Government to support North East Tasmania by providing funding for the North East Rail Trail project and we look forward to incorporating cycling tourism into our offering throughout the area.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ravens

**Owner, Bridestowe Lavender Farm**

# ***BRIDESTOWE RIDGE***

*Gallery & Vineyard  
Foothills of Mount Arthur*

106 Browns Road,  
North Lilydale TAS 7268  
PO Box 42  
LILYDALE TAS 7268  
03 6395 1166  
A.B.N. 78 475 811 218

E: [estatebridestoweridge@bigpond.com](mailto:estatebridestoweridge@bigpond.com)

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## **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Dear Madam/Sir

We write in support of conversion of the North East rail line corridor to a world class cycle track.

This proposal offers economic opportunity for business in all areas of Tasmania.

We shall join with other local businesses in assisting to supply the economic demand to be generated from the people who will pass through this precinct.

At our level, we are considering provision of a shuttle service between our vineyard/gallery and Lilydale, to encourage patronage from visitors passing along the cycle trail. One way this may be done is by working through arrangements with operators of a small bus fleet who are established in our area.

In a nutshell, we share the passion on which this project is riding, we are enthusiastic about contributing to its establishment and success. This is a one-off, game-changing opportunity for Tasmania.

With Regards,

Susan Denny & Harry Rigney, Proprietors

BRIDESTOWE RIDGE





## Eric Hutchinson MP

Federal Member for Lyons

26 November 2014

To whom it may concern,

### LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR NORTH EAST RAIL TRAIL

I am delighted to provide my support for the funding application for the North East Rail Trail. As you are aware, the proposal includes the redevelopment of 100 kilometres of existing rail corridor from Launceston to Scottsdale.

The proposal is set to increase job creation in Tasmania, attracting thousands of tourists and providing an injection of much needed funds directly into the Tasmanian economy; which has been affected by economic downturn and the closure of the forestry industry. I understand this venture will not only increase visitation and expenditure in effected towns but also provide a tourism flow on effect to other Tasmanian businesses.

Whilst this project is not located within my electorate of Lyons it will by its very nature act as a catalyst to increase tourist numbers in northern Tasmania. At a local level benefits will flow not only to the greater northern Tasmania businesses but also to the north east region of the Break O Day municipality, which forms part of my electorate.

I believe that this project has considerable and significant community benefits and respectfully ask that the application for funding be given your full consideration.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries or require further information.

Yours sincerely

Eric Hutchinson

br/14

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#### Perth Office

53B Main Road, Perth TAS 7300

Post PO Box 50, Perth TAS 7300

Tollfree 1300 132 689 Phone 03 6398 1115

#### Brighton Office

205 Brighton Road, Brighton TAS 7030

Post PO Box 151, Brighton TAS 7030

Phone 03 6268 0922

#### Parliament House

House of Representatives

Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

Phone 02 6277 4946

Email [eric.hutchinson.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:eric.hutchinson.mp@aph.gov.au)

Web [www.eric.hutchinson.com.au](http://www.eric.hutchinson.com.au)

f [/eric.hutchinson.9212](https://www.facebook.com/eric.hutchinson.9212)

@hutchinson\_eric





November 15, 2014

## **NORTH EAST RAIL TRAIL LETTER OF SUPPORT**

After spending 10 years working around Australia and overseas as a journalist and director of marketing and public relations, I returned to Tasmania to pursue my dream of owning and operating a value-adding agricultural business.

My husband and I purchased Leaning Church Vineyard in Tasmania's North East more than five years ago and have developed a multi-award winning tourism and events business that caters for all fine wine experiences – from tastings to top-end weddings to sit-down degustations for up to 360 people.

Two years ago we purchased the former Lilydale Tavern and invested almost \$250,000 to rebrand and relaunch the business as Lilydale Larder – focusing on local food, wine, whisky, craft beer and cider.

There's no doubt regional tourism is tough. We work long hours and put our hearts and soul into our businesses. Last year we were fed up with bureaucratic red tape, lack of visitors to the area and the difficulties in attracting staff to regional areas...and decided to list both businesses for sale.

However, we now have a "light at the end of the tunnel" in the proposal for a Rail Trail through our spectacular North East. We have taken our vineyard off the market, have appointed a manager to the Lilydale Larder and have worked with other local businesses to form an incorporated association to attract funding to construct a world-class walking and cycling track through our region.

I confidently state that this infrastructure will be instrumental in revitalising North Eastern Tasmania. As soon as the North East Rail Trail is constructed, I will open Leaning Church Vineyard seven days a week all year round (currently open October 1 to April 30) and employ additional cellar door and functions staff. We are also considering a \$700,000 investment to replace our marquee with a permanent function centre and build four luxury accommodation chalets on site. We would need to double our staff numbers at Lilydale Larder and increase evening meal offerings from one night to seven.

I have just returned from riding rail trails in South Australia's Clare Valley and Barossa, and was blown away by the opportunities for business and tourism. We estimate we will need an additional 60 accommodation beds in Lilydale alone, as well as bike hire businesses, tour companies, more farm gate experiences, a micro-brewery and a distillery, more cafes and restaurants, and so much more.

The North East Rail Trail will attract business, investment, tourists and locals to ride, walk, sip, savour, spend, explore and immerse themselves in the natural beauty, art and culture of our spectacular region. I urge you to support this healthy lifestyle infrastructure to assist us all in growing our businesses and cement North East Tasmania as a must-see and must-ride destination for local, interstate and overseas tourists.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hirst



*Lilydale Pharmacy*

**Helen & Colin Denney**  
**Pharmacists**  
**Ph. 03 63951336**  
**Fax. 03 63952047**

**Lilydale Pharmacy**  
**1979 Main Road**  
**Lilydale**  
**Tasmania 7267**

Sarah Hirst  
North East Rail Trail Inc. Assoc.  
24/11/2014

Dear Sarah,

We are writing to offer our support to the North East Rail Trail project. The trail would make a spectacular experience for tourists. The project would also be complimentary to other attractions in the region, such as the Hollybank treetops and bike trail activities, wineries, Bridestowe lavender farm, etc.

We have owned the Lilydale Pharmacy since 1981. Forestry used to be a major industry, but that is no longer the case. Other options are needed to sustain the population. Tourism in our region is increasing with numerous small business activities. While our customer base is mostly local residents, we need regular employment in the region to sustain our residents.

We believe that the rail trail project will provide many business opportunities for the region and we totally support it.

Colin and Helen Denney

**Little Rivers Brewing Company**

22 Victoria Street  
Scottsdale TAS 7260  
Ph: 63524886  
Mobile: 0408174315



24<sup>th</sup> November 2014-12-27

To Whom it May Concern,

We are writing this letter in support of the construction of a Rail Trail between Launceston through to Scottsdale and onto the Billycock, where the Rotary Club development from there through to Legerwood has already been completed.

We have recently opened a small craft brewery in the town of Scottsdale. After moving back from a few years in Queensland, we wanted to begin this journey of opening our own brewery and quickly realised that there was no better place to do this than the area in which we both grew up. We have been thoroughly overwhelmed by the response to our product so far. In the next few weeks will open our cellar door and tasting centre. Tourism will be our focus as we want to showcase the quality of Tasmanian beer.

The North East area and has many amazing natural attractions to offer. We need to facilitate a way of encouraging people to visit this area in the first place and creating a reason to stay a while. Barnbogle & Lost Farm 5 star golf courses have been a great example of what can be achieved. They have not only created many jobs but showcased to the rest of the world how beautiful this part of Tasmania really is.

Our brewery is approximately 100m from the railway track. We could see this as a huge economic benefit to both our business and the surrounding area. We fully support this initiative and are more than happy for anyone to contact us to discuss this topic further.

Regards Jessica Coniston

Co-owner and Director  
Little Rivers Brewing Company

# North-East Rail Trail

## MEDIA RELEASE

February 21, 2014

### **BUSINESSES CALL FOR FUNDING FOR THE NORTH EAST RAIL TRAIL**

North East businesses have called on all political parties to commit to the construction of the North East Rail Trail in a bid to create at least 100 jobs, attract thousands of tourists and inject much-needed funds into the region.

The proposed Rail Trail, involving the re-development of 86kms of disused rail corridor from Launceston to Scottsdale, would revitalise the townships of Karoola, Lalla, Lilydale, Tunnel, Lebrina, Nabowla and Legerwood.

An economic Benefit Assessment of the North East Rail Trail, prepared for Northern Tasmania Development, shows more than 23,000 people a year would walk or cycle the trail each year. And similar trails, such as the Otago Central Rail Trail in New Zealand and the Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail in Victoria, now attract up to 45,000 people a year and estimate hundreds of jobs have been created through construction and tourism service delivery.

“This is exactly what we need in the North East of Tasmania,” Lilydale Larder and Leaning Church Vineyard Owner Sarah Hirst said.

“Thousands of people would be cycling and walking through our spectacular natural wilderness, sampling our local produce, meeting our crafty characters, staying in our unique B&Bs, exploring our internationally-acclaimed attractions and telling the world that they must visit North East Tasmania.

“We call on all Tasmanian political parties to recognise the incredible impact this Rail Trail would have on existing and new businesses, and commit to an initial one-off investment of \$3.9 million to make it happen.”

Mrs Hirst said if the Rail Trail was constructed, she would re-open Leaning Church Vineyard all year round, and employ at least another two people at the vineyard and a possible extra five people at Lilydale Larder.

Yondover Goat Cheese Owner Gina Butler said she would employ at least three more people if the Rail Trail went ahead.

“This development offers a unique opportunity for small business to showcase their local premium products to tourists that are walking and cycling through the country where we produce our boutique goods,” she said.

“We’d also be able to offer a more reliable tourism experience as it would be worth opening our farmgate and café all year round.”

Landscape Architect Leon Lange, of Lange Design, moved to Lilydale almost three years ago and plans to construct luxury accommodation and extensive designer gardens on his property.

“A development such as the Rail Trail would enable us to bring our plans forward and work towards providing accommodation and an amazing new attraction for the thousands of families and cyclists that would visit our area,” Mr Lange said.

Jeni Nunn, the owner of Plovers Ridge Country Retreat on Lalla Road, near Lilydale, said if the Rail Trail resulted in a large increase in bookings of their 12 beds, then they would also employ new staff.

“We’d encourage everyone to get behind this project and make it happen as quickly as possible as we are all ready to meet, greet and exceed every expectation of every visitor,” Mrs Nunn said.

Gordon Cuff and Susie Aulich, owners of The Trig boutique eco accommodation on Mount Arthur, said the North East Rail Trail would bring numerous social, health and financial benefits to communities from Lilydale to Legerwood.

“The Rail Trail would enviably see an increase in our occupancy rate, thus an increase in spending in Lilydale for provisions for our guests and of course by our guests, as well as further employment opportunities for our staff,” they said.

New Zealand’s Central Otago Rail Trail’s Kate Wilson, who recently visited Tasmania’s North East, was overwhelmed by the beauty and high standard of existing attractions in the region.

She said in her local area, pubs that had been closed for 20 years had re-opened, new cafes were built, bike hire businesses were created, tour companies expanded and locals enjoyed the fresh air, exercise and exploration of their own backyard.

North East businesses are hopeful that all political parties will commit to funding the North East Rail Trail prior to the March 15 election in a bid to start construction in 2014.

---

**For more information, please contact:**

Sarah Hirst, Owner of Lilydale Larder and Leaning Church Vineyard	0448 906021
Leon Lange, Owner of Lange Design	0412 336381
Gina Butler, Owner of Yondover Goats Cheese	0408 956668
Jeni Nunn, Owner of Plovers Ridge Country Retreat	0407 951722
Gordon Cuff, Owner of The Trig Accommodation	0408 500444



North East Rail Trail Incorporated Association  
**Attn: Sarah Hirst (Chair)**

**25 November 2014**

**Dear Ms Hirst**

NRM North is the natural resource management organisation for Northern Tasmania. Guided by the Northern Tasmania Natural Resource Management Strategy, we lead the development and coordination of environmental outcomes in the region.

NRM through that strategy has a particular interest in seeing sustainable utilisation of natural areas in ways which preserve their natural values while still being managed for productive use and made accessible for the community at large to enjoy.

The proposed Rail Trail meets this objective and as such we enthusiastically support its development. Further, we would be happy to have further conversations as to how we may be able to contribute to potential interpretative signage with regards to natural values on the trail and also with regards to any opportunities to inform and support the reduction of any potential biosecurity issues relating to transport of weeds and disease. This could be in similar fashion to our work with the new mountain biking trail developments.

We would also be happy to support the development of any applications for relevant work crews such as can be found under the Australian Governments Green Army program.

We see the utilisation of this rail corridor as a great outcome, including the opportunity to see it actively managed for weeds and making the natural area through which it passes accessible to the broader community.

We wish you all the best for the project and look forward to working with you on relevant elements.

**Yours faithfully**  
**NRM NORTH**



**JAMES MCKEE**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

p: 03 6333 7777  
f: 03 6334 2822  
PO Box 1224  
Level 2, 63 Cameron Street  
Launceston TAS 7250  
[www.nrmnorth.org.au](http://www.nrmnorth.org.au)  
[admin@nrmnorth.org.au](mailto:admin@nrmnorth.org.au)

Natural Resource Management  
in Northern Tasmania

26<sup>th</sup> November, 2014

The Steering Committee,  
North East Rail Trail Network  
C/- Dorset Council  
Attention: Tim Watson  
PO Box 21  
SCOTTSDALE TAS 7260



Dear Tim,

As the owner of Red Dirt Cycle Company in Scottsdale, I am pleased to confirm my support for the development of the North East Rail Trail from Launceston to Scottsdale.

This development will provide welcome support and bring opportunity for growth to the regional businesses and communities of North East Tasmania and will further cement the region as a Cycle Tourism Destination.

I wish the committee well in their funding submission.

Yours sincerely

Max Rainsford  
Red Dirt Cycle Company

18 Ellenor Street  
Scottsdale TAS 7260



[www.reddirtcyclecompany.com.au](http://www.reddirtcyclecompany.com.au)

**Max Rainsford**

**0405 653 825**

[max@reddirtcyclecompany.com.au](mailto:max@reddirtcyclecompany.com.au)

Corner of Alfred and Ellenor Streets  
Scottsdale, 7260

# Scottsdale Visitor Information Centre



Email: [scottsdalevic@bigpond.com](mailto:scottsdalevic@bigpond.com)  
Phone: 03 63526518 MBL: 0437973265  
[www.dorset.tas.gov.au](http://www.dorset.tas.gov.au)

4 Alfred Street  
(PO Box 267)  
Scottsdale, Tasmania 7260

## **NORTH EAST RAIL TRAIL**

### **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

The North East Rail trail that currently is in operation from Tonganah to Billycock and the proposed next section that will link up from Launceston through Scottsdale and then join the existing rail trail at Tonganah represents an outstanding development opportunity on many levels for the North East region in Tasmania.

At the Visitor Centre we field many enquiries regarding the existing rail trail and we direct many visitors to Tonganah to ride or walk the trail.

This past week we had a gentleman from New Zealand visit the centre and he was relating the story of the extensive rail trail in New Zealand and how it had very much saved the region on an economical level as people visit from all around the world to experience this rail trail.

The increase in tourist numbers that will visit to experience the rail trail will drive demand for further business and infrastructure in the towns involved along the rail trail. There will be an increase in demand for accommodation, eateries, technical assistance businesses and more. The flow on from this demand will undoubtedly be an increase in employment opportunities in the North East region, something that is desperately needed.

The Scottsdale Visitor Information Centre offers our full support to the project and congratulates the North East Rail Trail Incorporated Association for their hard work in bringing this idea to fruition.

This project will be an outstanding economic opportunity for this region.

Yours

*KaDodds*

Kathy Dodds

Manager

Scottsdale Visitor Information Centre.





Dorset Council  
PO Box 21  
SCOTTSDALE TAS 7260

Dear Tim,

I am happy to confirm my support for the development of the North East Rail Trail Project and look forward to the opportunity for growth for the businesses and communities of Launceston and North East Tasmania and to the additional cycling market segments which will continue to see both the North East and Tasmania as a whole build a reputation as a 'must see and do' cycle tourism destination.

Regards

Nathan Jackson  
Cycle 2  
46 Brisbane St,  
Launceston, TAS 7250



18 November 2014

LETTER OF SUPPORT- NORTH EAST RAIL TRAIL

The Tamar Valley Wine Route is the peak group representing small, medium and large wineries and vineyards around Tasmania's pristine Tamar Valley. The majority of our members own and operate cellardoor, offering wine and food tasting experiences to tens of thousands of visitors each year.

Our East Tamar members have been working on a number of proposals to boost visitation to their properties in recent years. The North East Rail Trail is a fabulous initiative that will enable cyclists and walkers from around the world to taste our internationally-acclaimed wines, explore our vineyards, purchase our wines, boost cellardoor profitability, enable vineyard owners to expand production and tourism offerings and further enhance the Tamar Valley wine brand.

The Pipers River Wine Region in North East Tasmania is continually compared with France's Champagne Region as we are able to produce cool-climate Sparkling better than most around the globe. To open this region to the world through a 100km-long cycling track is one of the most exciting proposals in decades.

Rail Trails are a proven drawcard in other wine regions around Australia, including the Clare Valley and Barossa in South Australia where up to one million tourists flock to cellardoor each year – many of whom arrive on bikes and arrange for wine to be shipped home by the dozen.

We are aware of several of our members already planning to employ chefs, open cafes, install bike-friendly infrastructure and work with tour companies to offer transport for locals and tourists wishing to ride all or part of the trail.

The Tamar Valley Wine Route is delighted to support the North East Rail Trail Association Inc.'s application for funding and will work closely with the group of business and community representatives that will manage the project to ensure our vineyards can attract additional visitors, boost profitability and market their wine to the world.

Yours faithfully

Anthony Woollams,  
Marketing Officer  
Tamar Valley Wine Route



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## TIN DRAGON TRAIL COTTAGES SUPPORTS THE NORTH EAST RAIL TRAIL

The North East Rail Trail involves removing the railway iron, sleepers and ballast from almost 100km of rail corridor from Launceston through Scottsdale to Billycock, and converting it to a world-class cycling and walking track.

The North East region has suffered economically from a downturn in the timber industry and the closure of large businesses including timber mills, dairy-processing and vegetable-processing businesses. Our region needs business diversity to create economic resilience, with thriving small businesses being the life-blood for our region.

The North East Rail Trail is a community-driven project which has the potential to deliver real outcomes for our region. Certainly, tourism is a sector with the capacity to stimulate new business and employment opportunities. The North East Rail Trail along with the newly constructed Mountain Bike (MTB) trails, world-class golf at Barnbougale and Lost Farm, walking tracks and fabulous North East landscapes combine to present the North East as a premier tourism destination.

Our business suffered a decline over the past three years, but with the promise of new MTB trails and an extended North East Rail Trail, we are currently expanding our accommodation. Already we have noticed an increase in visitation and overnight stays from tourists interested in cycling. We are also assisting/mentoring two other new businesses nearby, who are developing accommodation to meet the expected demand from cycling tourists.

The development of the MTB trails near Derby and the promise of an expanded North East Rail Trail has encouraged local hospitality and accommodation businesses to feel optimistic, for the first time in many years.

We wish the North East Rail Trail Inc. every success!

Regards

Christine Booth  
M 0407501137

24 November 2014