

## NEWS

# Railway plans 'delusional'

BY MELISSA MOBBS

A PROPOSAL to operate a tourist train on the North-East rail line has been described as "fanciful and delusional" by Dorset mayor Greg Howard.

Cr Howard spoke out this week on behalf of those supporting a plan to turn the line into a cycle rail trail, between Launceston and Scottsdale.

The debate over the future of the disused line comes after the Launceston and North-East Railway group hosted a public meeting pushing their plan to instead develop a heritage railway.

Cr Howard said the plans put forward by the group were "poorly thought through" and had "absolutely no prospect of success".

"The Launceston and

North East Railway group have repeatedly failed to present any sort of a business case to support their proposal," he said.

Attending the meeting, Victorian railway engineer Bob Vanselow said it would be a 'crime' to remove the track.

Mr Vanselow had been inspecting the track since Sunday and his report is ex-

pected to be completed over the next couple of weeks.

Despite his backing of the railway group's plan, Cr Howard said they had no access to the railway and the Dorset Council would be appointed corridor manager in the coming months.

"The group has no government or TasRail support and no funding to even begin what they say they want to

do," he said.

"For a rail service to access the North-East line, it would first need to travel on the Bell Bay line from Launceston, something TasRail has consistently ruled out."

The North-East Rail Trail project, which would cater for cyclists and pedestrians, received \$1.47 million in federal funding in 2015.

In 2016, new laws were

passed to allow disused rail corridors to be used for recreational purposes.

"With the proactive support from the state government, this disused rail line will be transformed into a significant economic generator for the North-East that will create many opportunities for a wide range of ventures," Cr Howard said.