



## ***Common Questions about and Benefits of Rail Trails***

First published 2014  
Revised 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020

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### **Introduction**

This document brings together information from a number of people with decades of experience dealing with Rail Trail proposals and developments throughout Australia. The aim is to help everyone to better understand the legitimate concerns of all community members, address their questions and reassure them that there are solutions to the many issues that concern adjoining land holders and trail users.

The whole community has a stake in any proposal, especially those who live, work, are responsible for or visit lands adjacent to or dissected by the proposed route. Others will also have a strong interest in Rail Trails and the impact it may have on their businesses, employment, the potential social, recreational and ecological impacts and implications for the future of their community.

from 'SECTION 6 – LANDOWNER ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS' of *"Busselton to Flinders Bay Rail Trail Trail Development Plan"* by *Transplan Pty Ltd*

**'Adjacent landowners are traditionally – and understandably – apprehensive about trails close to their properties. It is important that these concerns are addressed in the planning phase before the trail conversion takes place. Many landowners resent having things imposed on them, or feeling as if they have no say in what is happening around them. Many landowners are resistant to change of any sort, let alone one they perceive will have detrimental impacts on their lifestyle as well as on their farming operations.'**

**It needs to be appreciated that opposition will never completely cease. Conversely, adjacent landowners who understand and support the reasons behind a trail, and who see that the trail is going to be well organised and efficiently managed, will prove to be extremely valuable partners in years to come. Indeed, some of them will take advantage of business opportunities offered by the rail trail.'**

The following information has been compiled from several sources and we extend our sincere thanks to

\* **Mike Maher and Transplan Pty Ltd** for permission to modify their 'SECTION 6 – LANDOWNER ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS' of *"Busselton to Flinders Bay Rail Trail Trail Development Plan"* by *Transplan Pty Ltd*

^ Guyra Argus Friday August 15, 2014 quoting Councillor Hietbrink (modified)

\*\* The Rail Trails for NSW team

" ... Adjacent landowners are .... understandably ... apprehensive about trails ...

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<b><i>Impact / Issue / Question</i></b>	<b><i>Solutions successfully used elsewhere / Comments from experience elsewhere</i></b>
Why a Rail Trail? **	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In NSW, disused rail lines are a publicly owned resource that the public should be able to benefit from. They cost the State Government money to keep safe and yet the public can't use or benefit from them.</li> <li>○ Tourism and recreational activities are growing business sectors. Rail Trails unlock the potential for a simple, attractive resource that will attract visitors and that locals can also use.</li> <li>○ For many people, especially from large towns and cities, they can be the most accessible way to experience the countryside without being on a road or having to hike along rough tracks in the bush.</li> <li>○ Rail trails have been in operation in the USA for many decades and in Victoria for over 20 years, All states of Australia except NSW have them and are building more. NZ has identified them as an important part of their national Tourism strategy.</li> </ul>
Who will use them? **	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Locals, Grey Nomads, Families, international tourists, interstate tourists, intrastate tourists, walking clubs, bird watchers, wheelchair users, community groups, recreational cycling clubs, schools, power walking parents with strollers, long distance cycling holiday makers, Annual community and charity events. Walkers, runners and if the route is suitable, even horse riders.</li> <li>○ The highest numbers of users are usually cyclists;  <b>“Bike riding is growing in popularity in NSW, with around 1.09 million people on their bikes in a typical week.”</b> From <a href="http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/cycling">http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/cycling</a> April 14, 2014            From <a href="http://www.bts.nsw.gov.au/Statistics/cycling/default.aspx">http://www.bts.nsw.gov.au/Statistics/cycling/default.aspx</a>            NSW Bureau of Transport statistics* for Sydney, Illawarra and Newcastle..</li> </ul>
Will rail trail users have to pay to use the trail? ^	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Charging individual users at time of entry on the rail trail is unlikely to be economic.</li> <li>○ A rail trail has to strike a balance between attracting users who will spend their money in the local town, and raising sufficient income to maintain the rail trail.</li> <li>○ Other possible income sources include advertising and sponsorship signs along the trail, maybe charges to businesses providing for-profit guiding services, horse riding tours, rail bike hire etc..</li> </ul>
Can the railway be used again in the future? ^	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>The creation of a rail trail does not prevent the reopening of a rail line at any time in the future.</b></li> <li>○ The degree of deterioration of sleepers and rail and the poor state of many bridges along a track means that often complete replacement would be necessary to restore the track for trains.</li> <li>○ Also, many older lines have sharp corners and steeper grades that are unsuitable or uneconomic for modern freight or passenger trains. Restoring a train service might require resumptions of private property to allow shallower bends and grades on the route.</li> </ul>
How will the Rail Trail affect the running of a tourist railway, like Trikes or a Historical Train? ^	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rail Trails and Historical railways work well together, with one attracting users for the other.</li> <li>○ The retention and restoration of track can be included. A Rail Trail can be designed to run parallel to the track up to the end of the Historical rail service. In this way businesses and cafes can benefit from the patronage of both Rail Trail users and visitors to the Historical railway.</li> </ul>

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<p>What are the benefits of a Rail Trail? **</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The rail corridor remains in public ownership.</li> <li>○ The local economy is stimulated both during building and afterwards, attracting visitors and giving them a reason to extend their stay in the district.</li> <li>○ The local community has a resource generating recreational, business and health benefits</li> <li>○ The cost of developing a rail trail is very low when compared with road building, creating a brand new path or operating a train service</li> <li>○ The rail trail can one day be moved aside to let train services be restored if they become viable again.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Funding for construction *</b></p> <p>“Who is going to pay for trail project?” How will it affect rates?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Entire construction costs for trails are rarely born by local government, therefore there is minimal impact on ratepayers</b> (even though ratepayers benefit directly from trails and indirectly by visitor spending).</li> <li>○ Many Federal and State Government funding programs are already available for tourism/recreation projects such as trails. Numerous trails around Australia have been funded by major grants worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example, the Adelaide Hills Rail Trail (South Australia) received State Government funding of \$1 million for development of Stage 1. Further funding is expected for future stages.</li> <li>The Port Fairy-Warrnambool Rail Trail (in Victoria) has received close to \$2 million in State and Federal Government funding.</li> <li>The Brisbane Valley Rail Trail (Qld) has received \$3.8 million in State Government funding.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Major companies, such as mining companies, have contributed to trail projects. For example, BHP Billiton contributed \$200,000 towards the Camperdown-Timboon Rail Trail in Victoria.</li> <li>○ Local community volunteers and local sponsorships</li> <li>○ Other low cost resources, including Federal Youth employment and training schemes and in some cases, low risk prison crews have been brought into trail construction and maintenance projects.</li> </ul>
<p>Who pays for the removal of the rails? Who benefits from the sale of the materials? ^</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In other States where rail trails have been developed, the cost of removal of the rail is met by contractors who recover their costs by selling the steel and sleepers and give a proportion of the returns from sales to the local organisation establishing the rail trail. This model could be followed in NSW if the Minister supports the concept.</li> <li>○ Local contractors and suppliers benefit from the building of the rail trail.</li> <li>○ Community members can benefit by having first option to purchase and use the sleepers and rail for local projects.</li> </ul>
<p>Who pays for drainage and resurfacing? ^</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The organisation establishing the rail trail uses the funds it receives from the steel and sleeper sales to pay local contractors and suppliers to do the resurfacing.</li> <li>○ If sales are not sufficient the organisation establishing the rail trail can apply for funding from NSW and Federal Government tourism and Regional development grants.</li> <li>○ Local volunteers and ‘Friends of’ groups can donate labour, materials and raise more funds via community events and sponsorships.</li> </ul>
<p>Will there be effects on ratepayers? ^</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A Rail Trail should not be a financial burden to ratepayers. Councils may provide some administrative support to get a project underway and can benefit by being paid to maintain the Rail Trail after it is built.</li> <li>○ The State Government could redirect payments from the current maintenance contractor should maintenance be undertaken by the Local Government..</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Ongoing maintenance costs. *</b></p> <p>Who will pay, what effect will it have on rates?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Preparation of a regularly reviewed Trail Management Plan covering all maintenance issues (including fencing) prepared in advance of construction is critical. The plan will provide a clear definition of who is responsible for what.</li> <li>○ Proper design and construction of the rail trail at the outset will minimise ongoing maintenance costs.</li> <li>○ Focus of maintenance is erosion, vegetation regrowth, weed control, signage and structures.</li> <li>○ Needs a clear definition of who is responsible for what.</li> <li>○ Division of maintenance into regular inspections and simple repairs and once/twice yearly programs undertaking larger jobs such as signage repairs, culvert cleaning or vegetation control.</li> <li>○ Hazard inspection program (to limit liability and to define maintenance activities).</li> <li>○ The State Government could engage the Local Government to undertake or oversee maintenance.</li> <li>○ Volunteers and community groups have undertaken portions of maintenance on some interstate rail trails..</li> <li>○ The NSW Govt currently pays an engineering company to keep disused lines safe. Negotiations can be undertaken to ensure the pro-rata maintenance funding remains with the Rail Trail.</li> </ul>
<p>What about public liability? ^</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A rail trail agreement between the State Government and a community organisation will require the organisation to carry public liability insurance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Liability *</b></p> <p>–both on-trail and when people stray off-trail</p> <p>Increased insurance risks and consequent increase in premiums?</p> <p>Both public liability and general insurance (upgraded fire insurance and theft)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Rail Trail management body takes responsibility along the full length of the trail regardless of ownership.</li> <li>○ <b>Farmers do not carry any additional liability.</b></li> <li>○ In recent years public liability has become a major issue right across the community. Trails are not immune</li> <li>○ Primary project partners must take responsibility and ensure that their role is clear and unambiguous.</li> <li>○ Effective signposting at trailheads and access points indicating trail regulations and trail use rules and user responsibilities.</li> <li>○ In respect of farmers' general insurance, this has not been an issue in other rail-trails. Fire management plans address the possible fire risk increase, while reports of theft of property have been virtually non-existent (as noted elsewhere).</li> <li>○ Courts are increasingly ruling that people are responsible for their own actions, marking a different emphasis to that which occurred in the late 1990s/early 2000s when managing authorities were held responsible for inappropriate behaviour.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Land value *</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In Australia, we are not aware of any documented evidence to suggest property values decrease.</li> <li>○ What empirical evidence exists comes from the USA. The evidence is that rail trails positively add value to properties along their route. <b>Research and anecdotal evidence suggests conversion of rail trails tends to either have a positive impact or a neutral impact on land values.</b></li> </ul> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">It is positive where land use is changing to more intensive uses (such as from rural production to rural living/rural residential). Single family residential property values along the Little Miami Scenic Trail in Ohio) were positively impacted by proximity to the trail. Properties along the Minuteman Bikeway and Nashua River Rail Trail (Massachusetts) sell for a higher proportion of the asking price and in about half the time that it took for houses in the general inventory. Properties near, but not immediately adjacent to the Burke Gilman Trail (Seattle) sold for an average premium of 6% while those immediately next to the trail sold for a minimal premium (around 0.5%). Neutral-to-positive expectations for property values were held by 87% of adjacent neighbours to the Luce Line Trail (Minnesota). In the same 1988 study, 56% of farm neighbours held that same view, and 61% of suburban neighbours.</p>

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<p><b>Impacts on farmers' lifestyles and incomes *</b></p> <p><i>Uncertainty in both the short-term (until a decision is made) or the long-term (from rail-trail operations)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Any change is difficult and causes stress for many people, especially where it is a change to the way people have operated their businesses and lifestyles for many years.</li> <li>○ One way to address the concerns of landholders is a progressive staging of the project so that landholders and the responsible committee can see how sections work, what problems and issues arise and then react accordingly in subsequent stages. (These concerns may be felt differently by different people in different parts of the corridor).</li> <li>○ All public infrastructure projects create stress and concerns for those who will be negatively affected or perceive they will be negatively affected.</li> <li>○ The experience in rail-trail projects elsewhere is that the problems adjoining landholders believe will occur, do not occur. Concerns are managed primarily by ongoing consultation and good design.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Privacy for adjoining landowners *</b></p> <p><i>Often residences have been constructed in close proximity to the railway corridor. Landowners living near to or alongside the proposed rail-trail anticipate that noise and reduction of privacy will occur.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Design solutions are possible and have been used to good effect on other rail trail projects. Fencing and security screening are the obvious methods.</li> <li>○ Re-routing the trail off the formation away from the affected residence onto an adjacent road reserve or elsewhere in the rail corridor.</li> <li>○ Substantial additional vegetation planting to provide a visual barrier between the trail and the residence (while minimising 'hiding' places).</li> <li>○ Installation of screen fencing/planting to obscure views of houses from the trail. Subject to consultation with individual landowners.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fencing *</b></p> <p>Farmers often believe the project means they pay for additional fencing.</p> <p>If currently unfenced, maybe farmers have adapted practices to suit – eg moving livestock and machinery, developing watering points on both sides etc.</p> <p>Fencing will cause problems and not fencing might create havoc with livestock/trail user interactions, liability etc.</p> <p>Farmers fear time consumed in checking gates regularly after trail users pass through.</p> <p>Extra fencing will require maintenance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fencing may be appropriate in some places and not in other – depends on a number of factors. <b>Consultation with each adjoining landowner is required.</b> For example, fencing through National Parks and Nature Reserves may not be needed or appropriate.</li> <li>○ When fencing is required, livestock crossing points may be necessary to allow movement between paddocks or part-paddocks. Livestock quickly get used to crossing at certain points. A design using a stock grid is recommended (there are proven cycle-friendly grids designs available).</li> <li>○ The cost of fencing where required, will be a component of the project budget. Estimates of costs must make an allowance for fencing (and surveying of property boundaries where fencing is required to be reinstated).</li> <li>○ Vegetation lines may also act as “visual” fences if appropriate.</li> <li>○ A suggestion from several farmers on other rail-trail projects in Australia is for the rail-trail project to supply the materials needed for re-fencing, and for the adjoining landowners to install the fences themselves with the materials supplied to them. This however is not the only way forward. It is recognised that some farmers may want the corridor fenced and some may not want it fenced.</li> <li>○ Management gates on boundary fences and management access gates and chicanes at road crossings points will assist in managing straying stock (and unauthorised trail users).</li> <li>○ Stock grids can be installed across the rail trail corridor itself, leaving an open corridor between paddocks (ie. across the rail trail corridor) completely unfenced, enabling stock to move freely to watering points. Different stock crossing will be appropriate in different circumstances.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Unauthorised trail users *</b></p> <p>Esp. motor bikes and possibly horse use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prohibit motor vehicle and motor bike use where possible through motor vehicle exclusion barriers and effective signage at each road crossing.</li> <li>○ Installation of management gates and/or chicanes at all road crossings is recommended, as they will effectively prevent access to the trail by unauthorised users. On the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail, as with other rail trails in Victoria, a standard gate configuration has been designed for use at all road crossings and trailheads. It allows unimpeded access by walkers, cyclists, people in wheelchairs, etc. Motor bikes find it difficult to squeeze past the gate posts of the narrow chicane (maze). Access by authorised vehicles, such as management vehicles, adjoining landowners (where needed) and emergency vehicles is gained through an adjoining (locked) gate.</li> <li>○ Encourage reporting of vehicle/bike registration numbers of illegal users. Experience on the Murray to the Mountains trail was that motor bikes tended to use the same sections at the same time – enforcement was therefore relatively easy.</li> <li>○ Installation of barrier gates is recommended at the commencement of the project.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Litter</b></p> <p>and toilet waste</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>It has not been a problem elsewhere.</b> The Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (Victoria) is kept spotless, with little or no visible signs of litter. The Gippsland Plains Rail Trail was involved with Clean Up Australia Day, but their involvement was curtailed because they effectively had nothing to do. There was no litter to clean up. The Clare Valley Riesling Trail (in SA) is also litter-free.</li> <li>○ Thoughtful placement of rubbish bins at (some) trailheads.</li> <li>○ Regular maintenance patrols by council staff or volunteers or the trail manager.</li> <li>○ Installation of toilets. The accepted distance between toilets is 25-30 kilometres (recognising that users are mostly cyclists). However, as walkers will also use the trail, locations can be selected for the installation of toilets, such as at proposed trailheads.</li> <li>○ Include “Leave No Trace” principles in Code of Conduct signage at trailheads and in rail trail literature.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Interactions between nervous livestock and trail users including dogs. *</b></p> <p><i>Concern at unrestrained dogs causing difficulties for livestock.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ On other trails, dogs are usually either banned altogether or trail users are required by regulation to keep their dogs on a lead at all times. On some trails, those sections that pass through a town, or are on the outskirts of a town, are the only areas where dogs are permitted (on the proviso that they be kept on leads). The Management Committee will need to determine a policy governing dogs on this rail trail.</li> <li>○ Ongoing monitoring of the policy on dogs should occur and modifications enacted if issues arise.</li> <li>○ If sections of a rail trail are declared ‘dog free’, Council’s ranger could issue infringement notices and the offender could be fined.</li> <li>○ For interaction between people and livestock, appropriate information will discourage people from going off the trails onto farm property and thus placing themselves in close proximity to livestock.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Crime – *</b></p> <p><b>Trespassing, vandalism and theft</b></p> <p><i>especially where the railway corridor is remote from farm buildings and public roads.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Various studies have concluded rail trails do not generate crime.</b></li> <li>○ Research and anecdotal evidence suggests conversion of rail trails tends to reduce crime by cleaning up the landscape and attracting people who use the trail for legitimate reasons (recreation and transport). (Source: Rail-Trails and Safe Communities – The Experience on 372 Trails by Tammy Trace &amp; Hugh Morris, Rails to Trails Conservancy, USA January 1998)</li> <li>○ The manager of the Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail (Victoria) has received no reports of trespassing, theft or vandalism since establishment of the trail, now in excess of ten years. (personal comments)</li> <li>○ The Collie to Darkan Rail Trail (Western Australia) has had no incidents of crime. This rail trail has been operating in excess of ten years. (personal comments)</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Clare Valley (South Australia) Riesling Trail has had 2 incidents along the trail in over 15 years of operation (one of these, a burglary, would have occurred regardless of whether the trail existed at the rear of the property. The other, an incident involving an unrestrained dog attacking stock in an adjoining paddock, is one which can be avoided by trail users following trail rules). (personal comments)</li> <li>○ The Linville-Blackbutt Rail Trail (in South East Queensland) had 2 incidents with trail bike access over a five year period, but these were easily dealt with by the local police. (personal comments)</li> <li>○ The Rails to Trails Conservancy work in the USA includes dozens of testimonials from law enforcement officers in a number of jurisdictions confirming that the expected/perceived crimes simply do not occur.</li> </ul> <p><b>Crime prevention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Designs to minimise theft include installation of security (and additional) fencing and planting. The installation of management access gates and chicanes for trail user access will prevent unauthorised users from attaining access to the trail.</li> <li>○ Trail design can eliminate overgrown plants and tall shrubs that minimise hiding places, creates long sight lines.</li> <li>○ Security lighting at selected trailheads and parking areas adds security.</li> <li>○ Surveillance cameras at points where key assets are placed or near certain access points.</li> <li>○ Emergency phone boxes (in towns) and emergency vehicle access helps increase user security.</li> <li>○ Keeping trail corridors clean and well maintained increases sense of community ownership and ‘passive surveillance’ reducing minor crime such as litter, graffiti and vandalism.</li> <li>○ Plantings of tree-lined corridors along parts deemed ‘vulnerable’ by adjoining landowners could also provide a way of reminding trail users to stay on the trail – these provide a form of visual fence.</li> <li>○ Many trails have a signposted Code of Conduct as a means of reinforcing what is expected of trail users and highlighting inappropriate behaviour.</li> <li>○ Prohibiting motor vehicle use (by regulation and design) reduces property crime. Locked management access gates are a proven method of restricting access on to a trail.</li> <li>○ Volunteer or professional trail patrols ranging from informal monthly clean-ups and maintenance crews to daily patrols. The Murray to the Mountains Trail had a full-time trail manager, part of whose responsibilities include a daily traverse along the trail on a 4-wheel motor bike.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Responsibility for policing *</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rail trails do not attract undesirable people. Adjoining landowners need not be concerned about the typical rail trail users as they do not cause trouble. They are using the trail for a relaxing and enjoyable outing in an attractive environment, free of motor vehicles.</li> <li>○ Volunteer or professional trail patrols ranging from informal monthly clean-ups and maintenance crews to daily patrols.</li> <li>○ Preparation of a regularly reviewed Trail Management Plan contains a clear definition of who is responsible for what.</li> <li>○ Police and/or Council ranger patrols (including on bikes); or by trail manager on regular patrols.</li> </ul>
<p>What about grazing lease holders? ^</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The continuation of grazing either side of the line is valuable and sometimes essential for the success and tourism value of a rail trail. Grazing aids weed control and fire hazard reduction.</li> <li>○ Any agreement between the State Government and a local rail trail organisation will have to contain conditions to protect both grazing leaseholders and recreational users.</li> </ul>



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<p><b>Loss of access to grazing paddocks *</b></p> <p><i>landholders might use the corridor to move cattle between one paddock and another and along the corridor between paddocks. A trail may interfere with this</i></p> <p><i>also concern about gates being left open</i></p> <p><i>Access to watering points needs to be maintained.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>For every existing agricultural use, there is likely to be a way to enable the trail to proceed and the farming practice to continue.</b></li> <li>○ Use of 'stock crossings' (a gating system) that can be closed on either the rail corridor (to allow livestock to be moved across the corridor) or on the paddocks when the livestock are in one or other paddocks. This also reduces the human/cattle interaction.</li> <li>○ There may be other farming practices, such as usage of the railway embankment as an access driveway and tracks for tractor movements, which could continue unhindered by the development of the proposed rail trail.</li> <li>○ The overall width for the trail needs to be sufficient, usually in the order of 10 metres. On some rail trail projects 5-10 metres either side of the original formation (containing the railway embankment and/or cuttings) is often regarded as 'surplus to requirements'. The 'spare' metres either side of the rail trail corridor can be re-fenced and be leased to the adjoining landowners – for grazing or machinery turn-around. An annual fee could be directed into trail maintenance. The land leased to the adjoining landowners would then be managed as part of the farm.</li> <li>○ Amendments to local by-laws may be required to enable leasing of parts of corridor to adjoining landowners.</li> </ul>
<p>What about fire risks? ^</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If the corridor is kept well grazed the fire risk is unlikely to be any greater than in public parks or showgrounds.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Threat of fire *</b></p> <p><i>fires spreading unimpeded along the corridor</i></p> <p><i>additional fire protection will be required</i></p> <p><i>poor access for emergency vehicles,</i></p> <p><i>lack of obvious refuge areas and water points (in case of fire).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Development of an effective fire management plan in close consultation with the local volunteer bush fire brigades, RFS and Local Government are required.</b></li> <li>○ Areas of the trail deemed high fire risk can have more active management controls including re-construction of bridges (where required) to carry 13.5+ tonne fire tenders. New bridges should be designed to carry fire tenders where required.</li> <li>○ Trail closure during periods of fire bans – as occurs on other tracks in high fire areas. The Hume and Hovell Track (in southern NSW) is one example of the use of specific closures. Trails in fire-prone areas can be closed for the duration of the high fire risk season.</li> <li>○ Clearly signposted refuge spots (directional, "advance notice – fire refuge spot 500 metres ahead" – and at-site signs) can be constructed at regular intervals depending on fire risk "zone".</li> <li>○ Smoking can be prohibited on the trail. Councils can declare the public area a smoke-free zone, just as it can with other public areas.</li> <li>○ Missing bridges can be rebuilt, enabling all trail users (and emergency vehicles) access across creeks, rivers and wet areas.</li> <li>○ The removal of fences that have been put across the railway corridor. Their removal will result in unimpeded access along the corridor for emergency vehicles.</li> <li>○ The management of grasses along the corridor (contributing to fire risk) is one that will be overseen by a Management Committee appointed for such decisions. The choices will be to continue to allow grazing by sheep and cattle where appropriate, or to slash the grasses at regular intervals, or to spray when and where appropriate.</li> <li>○ Fire retardant vegetation should be used when revegetation occurs.</li> <li>○ <b>Generally, the development of the rail trail will create a situation in which fire services will be better able to deal with any emergency that arises along the railway corridor. It will be imperative that all emergency services have access to all padlocks on all gates along the rail trail and locks should be keyed alike.</b></li> </ul>
<p>What about weed control? ^</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Existing leases already require lessees to control weeds and pest animals. A rail trail agreement will require a shared weed and pest control arrangement between grazing leaseholders and the rail trail organisation. This arrangement will be negotiated before the agreement goes before the Minister.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Weeds. *</b></p> <p><i>who will remove them and who will keep them under control.</i></p> <p><i>Will they be moved (unwittingly) by trail users?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Weed management programs are already conducted by local governments. Extension into the rail trail corridor would be appropriate.</li> <li>○ The management of grasses and weeds along the corridor is one that could be overseen by a Management Committee appointed for such decisions. The choices will be to continue to allow grazing by sheep and cattle where appropriate, or to slash the grasses at regular intervals, or to spray when and where appropriate.</li> <li>○ Parts of the corridors could be leased to adjoining landholders to allow grazing.</li> <li>○ Grazing of the rail trail corridor (or sections of the rail trail) could be allowed at regular intervals (overnight – controlled with electric fences, some weekdays when activity is quiet, some times of the year – either during low levels of activity or high growth periods).</li> <li>○ Preparation of a regularly reviewed Trail Management Plan covering all maintenance issues prepared in advance of construction.</li> <li>○ Focus of maintenance – erosion, vegetation regrowth, weed control and signage damage.</li> <li>○ Division of maintenance into regular inspections and simple repairs and once/twice yearly programs undertaking larger jobs such as vegetation control.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Farm safety *</b></p> <p>farms are unsafe work places and people are being invited into such unsafe workplaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Good design and appropriate information will discourage people from going off the rail trail onto farm property and thus placing themselves in dangerous work environments or in close proximity to unpredictable livestock.</li> <li>○ Particular attention to the trail design issues around sites where agricultural buildings are close to the rail trail (some of these solutions are discussed in the section on crime prevention).</li> <li>○ An allowance for signage, such as “No Trespassing” should be made in the cost estimates. The Management Committee can determine where these can be erected (upon adjoining landowner request).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risk of livestock disease transfer *</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wandering livestock should not graze the trail. If any grazing is allowed, it will only be by animals from the farms adjacent to the corridor. A gating system at boundaries should prevent stock moving from one landholding to another.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Chemical-free status of livestock / biosecurity issues *</b></p> <p>the risk of contamination of livestock and compromised chemical control (not be under the landholder’s control).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>The rail trail would be considered in the same way as any public thoroughfare would be</b> Advice obtained by proponents of the Goulburn River Rail Trail (Victoria) from the Department of Primary Industries (Victoria) was that a trail should not jeopardise the landowner’s ability to sign the National Vendors Declaration.</li> <li>○ Trail users are no different to road users. Farmers have no control over who uses and what is done on adjoining roads. People may trespass onto private land but most are unlikely to cause significant damage.</li> <li>○ Cars and particularly trucks and tractors moving at speed disperse more dirt from roads and tracks than the collective effort of numerous bikes or pedestrians..</li> <li>○ In respect of chemical control of the corridor, two options are available that allow farmers a level of knowledge. The first is that the adjacent landowner sprays the corridor as it runs through their property, reaching an agreement with the Management Committee for suitable recompense. The second option is cooperative flow of information – the trail manager lets adjoining farmers know in advance what they will be spraying and when they will be spraying. The Management Committee will need to decide the best and most appropriate course of action.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Chemical applications *</b></p> <p><i>impacts on users of chemical spraying with associated spray drift (and possible</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Farmers have the same obligations as any other chemical user in preventing drift and potentially causing damage to adjacent land.</li> <li>○ Farmers have a duty of care to prevent overspray and warn of spraying in progress (or planned).</li> <li>○ For other trails, this has not been an issue. On the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail, grapes and flower growers</li> </ul>

### **Common Questions about and Benefits of Rail Trails**

<p>exposure to liability)</p>	<p>are in very close proximity to the trail – they are in fact tenants renting rail trail land. Spray drift has not been an issue of concern. The same applies to the Riesling Trail (again, most adjoining land owners are grape growers).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Heavy use of rail trails is usually confined to weekends. Spraying “rosters” agreed to between farmers and a Management Committee could manage spraying and confine it, as much as possible, to weekdays. It is acknowledged that this is not always possible due to nature of ownership, on-site presence of farm owner/manager, and climatic factors; it is one solution.</li> <li>○ Notifications on-trail literature (permanent and temporary, such as web sites) can inform about spraying and indicate to users what they are likely to encounter at any time on the trail.</li> <li>○ It is understood that chemicals usually used in spraying are not of such toxicity that incidental exposure for short periods on a one-off or irregular basis (the likelihood of exposure of trail users) will cause any long-term health effects.</li> <li>○ A well vegetated corridor will minimise spray drift. Revegetation of sections of the corridor is appropriate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pest baiting *</b></p> <p>concerns dogs and children accidentally eating baits and consequent loss of stock and native wildlife</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sections of the trail could be declared “dog-free” (such as areas of agricultural activity and wildlife conservation). Management Committee to make policy.</li> <li>○ Trail users need to be made aware of agricultural practices – information needs to be included in all material produced for the rail-trail.</li> <li>○ Regulations require signs to be erected where 1080 baiting is used.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Environmental issues *</b></p> <p>Who is responsible for environmental effects including construction concerns – noise impacts on wildlife and vegetation destruction on rail formation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A project may provide an opportunity to apply for funding to address any current environmental issue (such as poor drainage and removal of rubbish tips).</li> <li>○ Environmental issues along the corridor need to be considered in the planning, design and construction of the proposed rail trail.</li> <li>○ With respect to construction concerns, good trail design and appropriate construction techniques on a site-by-site basis can mitigate environmental concerns. Significant vegetation stands on the boundaries of the formation should be untouched – vegetation growing on the formation needs to be selectively and carefully removed during construction.</li> <li>○ A <i>Construction Environmental Management Plan</i> and <i>Management and Maintenance Plan</i> or similar will be needed to address these issues.</li> </ul>

\* Modified version from ‘SECTION 6 – LANDOWNER ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS’ of report “Busseton to Flinders Bay Rail Trail Development Plan” by Transplan Pty Ltd

^ Modified from information quoted in the Guyra Argus Friday August 15, 2014 originally provided by Councillor Hietbrink

\*\* The Rail Trails for NSW team

## Common Questions about and Benefits of Rail Trails

### Other Useful Resources

Kiwi Chronicles EP 6 - The New Gold Rush <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ob8xn0RWfwg>

How Bicycles Can Save Small Town America - PathLessPedaled.com (*equally applicable to Australia*)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Zfdeo4M4yo&index=3&list=PLjlus5jXA\\_P1MMIZe8AzYuAT8LXM7\\_U3j](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Zfdeo4M4yo&index=3&list=PLjlus5jXA_P1MMIZe8AzYuAT8LXM7_U3j)

Family Bike Camping - PathLessPedaled.com [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQEX-sfWeXk&index=1&list=PLjlus5jXA\\_P1MMIZe8AzYuAT8LXM7\\_U3j](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQEX-sfWeXk&index=1&list=PLjlus5jXA_P1MMIZe8AzYuAT8LXM7_U3j)

Goulburn River Valley RT <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QojeqbexPaw>

O'Keefe Rail Trail (VIC) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqbOjtnCmuk&feature=share>

McLaren Vale Coast to Vines Trail <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQINqATXfQk>

Bike Overnight - Brisbane Valley Rail Trail [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEUg\\_IVUdlc&index=9&list=PLjlus5jXA\\_P1MMIZe8AzYuAT8LXM7\\_U3j](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEUg_IVUdlc&index=9&list=PLjlus5jXA_P1MMIZe8AzYuAT8LXM7_U3j)

Murray to Mountains Rail Trail - Wangaratta to Milawa

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90x9MMZ3V1c&index=10&list=PLjlus5jXA\\_P1MMIZe8AzYuAT8LXM7\\_U3j](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90x9MMZ3V1c&index=10&list=PLjlus5jXA_P1MMIZe8AzYuAT8LXM7_U3j)

Murray to Mountains Rail Trail - Bright to Myrtleford

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7iw2VSHYmA&list=PLjlus5jXA\\_P1MMIZe8AzYuAT8LXM7\\_U3j&index=11](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7iw2VSHYmA&list=PLjlus5jXA_P1MMIZe8AzYuAT8LXM7_U3j&index=11)

AUSTRALIA - BEECHWORTH TO EVERTON - RAIL TRAIL

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9\\_JdAzzZnrk&index=8&list=PLjlus5jXA\\_P1MMIZe8AzYuAT8LXM7\\_U3j](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_JdAzzZnrk&index=8&list=PLjlus5jXA_P1MMIZe8AzYuAT8LXM7_U3j)

The people of NSW will use Rail Trails, see ... <http://newcastlecycleways.org.au/on-your-bike/fernleigh-track>

The Fernleigh Track has been a huge success. <http://www.visitlakemac.com.au/accommodation/bookings/fernleigh-track>

The **Otago Central Rail Trail** is a 150-kilometre walking, cycling and horse riding track in the [South Island](#) of [New Zealand](#). The successful cycle trail joined the [New Zealand Cycle Trail](#) umbrella organisation in 2012. The trail runs along the route of the former [Otago Central Railway](#). The trail has become a popular tourist attraction, with **10,000-12,000 users per year as a conservative estimate, and yearly (and ongoing) user increases for 6 out of the last 7 years (as of 2011)**.<sup>[1][4]</sup>

1. "[Rail trail still proving popular](#)". *Otago Daily Times*. 23 May 2011. Retrieved 4 August 2011.

4. [Jump up to:](#)<sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> Parker, Tamsyn (23 March 2009). "[Why Key's national bike track could be paved with gold](#)". *The New Zealand Herald*. Retrieved 1 November 2011.

**Our thanks to Northern Rivers Rail Trail Inc. for the following listing. See <http://www.northernriversrailtrail.org.au/>**

### **Economic Case studies:**

<http://www.northernriversrailtrail.org.au/rail-trails-work/economic-benefits/case-study-1-new-zealand-cycle-trails/>

<http://www.northernriversrailtrail.org.au/rail-trails-work/economic-benefits/case-study-2-australian-rail-trails/>

<http://www.northernriversrailtrail.org.au/rail-trails-work/economic-benefits/case-study-3-rail-trails-in-america/>

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**Articles:** (Courtesy of Northern Rivers Rail Trail Inc. See <http://www.northernriversrailtrail.org.au/> )

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### *ADDENDUM*

“Visitors – mostly cyclists; some walkers and horseriders – now number in excess of 12,000 per year; and contribute more than \$12 million (NZ) to the Central Otago economy; creating business opportunities and energising small communities.”

Page 5 From Otago Central Rail Trail, Plan for the Future 2012-2022

*N.B. The Otago RT is only one of many NZ bike trails.*

*NZ population is 4.4 million compared with **east coast Australia at 18.1 million** (NSW 7.6 million; Victoria 5.8 million; Qld 4.7 million).*

“The average number of user nights in Central Otago is 3.6, ...” (152 klm total length) Pg 25 Otago Central Rail Trail, Plan for the Future 2012-2022

“78% of users are domestic (tourists)” and “Domestic riders estimated average age – 45; international riders – 37...”

Page 25 From Otago Central Rail Trail, Plan for the Future 2012-2022

“... 3 key events (Rail Trail Duathlon, GoldRush and Cycling Otago) held over the Nov-Mar period”

Page 20 Otago Central Rail Trail, Plan for the Future 2012-2022

2010/2011 User Survey found Per Person Per Trip expenditure is \$nz 582. Page 29 Otago Central Rail Trail, Plan for the Future 2012-2022

“... funds come from a range of sources including ... the sale of Official Rail Trail garments such as t-shirts, polo shirts, caps and vests and the ever popular Passport ... “ also “ ... advertiser support of the Official Otago Central Rail Trail leaflet ... and the Official Otago Central Rail Trail website ... “ Page 34 Otago Central Rail Trail, Plan for the Future 2012-2022

In 2010, the estimated  
total expenditure of cycle  
tourists in Australia was  
**\$2.4 billion**

(inc's domestic overnight, daytrip & international  
overnight visitors who participated in cycling).

(from VICTORIA'S CYCLE TOURISM ACTION PLAN 2011 – 2015 Pg 3)

SGS (2010) study found Murray to Mountains Cycle Tourism  
estimates between 50,000 – 60,000 annual users of Murray to  
Mountains RT

Midpoint estimate = 55,000 annual users.

(SGS – North East Victoria Tourism 2010. Gap Analysis pg. 30)