

Hi friends, pls peruse :

Here are a few ideas that came to me/us after inspection of the rail line from M'bah station to Wooyong on Friday with Bill Fenelon (NRRAG) Katie Milne, Troy Green , David Oxenham, and Leon McLeay (TSC Rail Trail designer.)

Yes, lots of vegetation covers the rail corridor and some parts would need major work to run trains again. There is no budget for maintenance or insurance. In other places with rail trails the Council has had to pick up the costs, estimated here to be about \$200,000 annually. Will all ratepayers want to pay for this? Currently the responsibility rests with State Rail, but we don't want them to have another reason to sell the rail line. It seems likely that developers already have greedy plans for the railway land.

We wanted to find out if a Rail Trail could be built alongside the current tracks, and retain the rails, so that the Transport laws will continue to protect the rail corridor. Once the rails are removed ...?

I am suspicious that the vision offered for an economic boom may not materialise (it failed to live up to expectations in 2009 for the cursed car rally.) Proponents of the Rail Trail say they expect 100,000 visitors every year to come for the RT. That would equate to about 300 a day. Given that only maybe 200 days would be suitable for cycling, we might recruit 500 cyclists per day. Is this realistic?

Damned if you do....I am worried that the community will be divided by any decision Council makes.

I suggest we put it to the test before supporting a venture that could condemn the rail corridor to being lost to public transport forever.

The Win- Win option: We could accept the grant money on offer, but change the plan to construct the Rail Trail alongside the tracks up to the Burringbar range tunnel, roughly half way to the shire boundary. We would be able to determine whether the economic benefits are real or a mirage in real time. Council planners said the additional cost is about 50%, so doing only half the distance will allow for a substantial construction (even in difficult parts), suitable fencing, weeds removal, and preserve the rail corridor for a future decision on trains/ transport.

This could be a win-win for our community as most surveys indicate that people want BOTH trains and rail trails/ safe cycling and walking paths. No one knows exactly what the future will require so let's maintain our options.

Vote for a motion that would retain the public ownership. This is the public's prime concern.

Vote for a trial of the Rail Trail. Could be constructed alongside the tracks or constructed **on top** of existing rails that could be removed if the trains are returned/ or RT fails.

Thanks for your consideration. The vote does NOT have to be a yes or no: don't get "railroaded."

All the very best,
Sledge

Consider these FACTS (by Bill Fenelon)

Troy and Co said... the Rail trail need to be 3.0 Metres wide to meet regulations.

The Rail Safe Regulations minimum corridor width is 31.5 Metres fence to fence.

Think carefully about this, Once the rail trail occupies its 3.0 Metres and maybe another 2.0m for good luck, say 5 metres, what will become of the other 26 Metres. ???

Will it just be allowed to overgrow and breed snakes?, will it be maintained?, or will it be best for everybody to sell it to along the track farmers, resorts, mansion owners along the beach. Woolworths in Byron , anybody else who wants a bit ???

What do YOU think will happen ???

If the corridor is **NOT** maintained at **31.5metres**, inclusive of its unexpected maintenance cost, that nobody seem to know how to fund,

the real truth is it's a con job.

I think we should rely on the mechanism that has protect this and every other Railway corridor through out the state for all these years, **Section 99A**

They cannot remove the rails until they pass an act of parliament. If they try to do this there may be an uproar from the community, more than what happened in 2004.

We need to hold on till the next election, vote the bastards out, and then let our great democracy do its work.

Bill

PS: The Shooters Fishers and Farmers MPs -Robert Borsak and Robert Brown - voted against the legislation to remove the protection from the line in 2014, which stopped it getting through state parliament.