

6 September 2010

Cr Christine Richards
Mayor
Frankston City Council
PO Box 490
Frankston VIC 3199

Dear Cr Richards,

We have a number of concerns with the Bay Trail agenda item being considered at tonight's Council meeting. Most importantly, the text of the item appears to prejudge the outcomes of an objective study of all proposed options for the connection between Seaford and Mile Bridge.

We know that there are three routes under consideration:

- Seaford Foreshore
- Kananook Creek
- Rail Link

Based on the conclusion in tonight's item, the Kananook Creek option is distinctly excluded from the further study. This is, to say the least, alarming.

The text notes that "it is recognized that there are topographical, environmental and safety constraints in achieving a trail along Kananook Creek. For these reasons, the Kananook Creek is not recognised in any State or Council Strategies as providing a viable option for a shared path trail."

Parks Victoria considers the Kananook Creek option as a viable route for the Trail. Your agenda should therefore be amended to reflect that reality.

Furthermore, the agenda contradicts itself later in the document: "to date, assumptions have been made about the environmental impacts on Kananook Creek and Seaford Foreshore however an objective study has not been undertaken."

If no objective study into the environmental impacts on the Kananook Creek has been conducted, how can you conclude that a trail here cannot be viable?

The Kananook Creek must be included in any further study, along with the other two options. We are not yet at the point where we can specifically exclude any option.

We know there are difficulties with the other two options, and to consider them without the Creek option will result in flawed conclusions.

We know that the Department of Sustainability and Environment has already raised some environmental concerns with the Seaford Foreshore. In certain sections, the Creek may be less environmentally sensitive than the Foreshore.

We know from Parks Victoria that the Rail Link would be the most expensive and most technically difficult. The agenda item notes the same: “a key constraint for the rail link is cost and linking past the Kananook Station to the CAD.”

Since the Bay Trail is a recreational trail on Melbourne’s MTN, Parks Victoria has also noted that the Rail Link would be the least appropriate from an amenity and experience point of view.

The item also mischaracterizes Bicycle Victoria’s position on the Rail Link as supportive because it would be a good commuter path. Our view of the Rail Link is that it is the least viable of the three proposed options due to the concerns raised above. This should be immediately amended in the item.

While the Bay Trail may indeed be used to commute by bike, it is primarily a recreational asset. The agenda accepts this view: “the intent of the Bay Trail is to provide a high quality experience for recreational cyclists and walkers in an attractive and safe surrounds.” Yet, there is a distinct effort to connect developments along the Bay Trail to VicRoads PBN review process.

These references should be removed, and the focus on the recreational amenity of this project should be re-emphasized.

In summary:

- Bicycle Victoria supports a comprehensive environmental, technical and financial review of all three options. Such a study will clarify the pros and cons of each option.
- The Kananook Creek must be included for a fair and open process. Any environmental concerns with the Creek option have yet to be objectively studied.
- Bicycle Victoria’s comments about the Rail Link are mischaracterized and must be amended to remove any possibility of them being misinterpreted by Council.
- Any reference to hypothetical outcomes from VicRoads PBN review should be removed.

I look forward to these changes being included in tonight’s agenda item, and are eager to support an honest and comprehensive study of all options so that we can continue to make progress towards a solution for the Bay Trail gap in Frankston.

Kind Regards,



Arlen Keen

Recreational & Rail Trail Development Manager