

1 August 2022

Dear Hon. Member,

Re: the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022

Bicycle Network is seeking your support for the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022¹, which will be brought before NSW Legislative Council on 9 August. This amendment will enable the Minister for Regional Transport to lease disused railway assets outside the Greater Metropolitan Region for 'recreation, tourism or related purposes'.

The amendment is an exciting opportunity to transform dormant public assets into facilities that can benefit the community. Converting disused railway corridors into multi-use trails has been shown to play a pivotal role in creating local jobs², stimulating local economies³, and improving community health⁴.

In Victoria, over 1100km of decommissioned railway lines have been converted to rail trails⁵, many of which are now key tourism assets. The Murray-to-Mountains Rail Trail, for example, accommodates over 300,000 visitors each year and generates over \$1 million^{6, 7} for local economies.

The introduction of the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022 will allow New South Wales to achieve similar outcomes. It will remove a costly, time-consuming hurdle for community rail trail projects and help to strengthen regional resilience.

It is important to note that the amendment stipulates public ownership will be maintained, and that trails will be made available for future train services if needed. Furthermore, any construction of new rail trails would be carried out in accordance with the NSW Government's Rail Trails Framework⁸, ensuring that all proposals have a viable business model and community support.

We strongly encourage you to consider the positive impacts that rail trails have had across Victoria, and the prospects for achieving similar outcomes in New South Wales that may arise through supporting this amendment.

Please don't hesitate to contact us for further information.

Kind regards



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