



Heart Foundation  
New South Wales  
ABN 95 000 253 289

Level 3, 80 William Street  
East Sydney NSW 2011

Telephone (02) 9219 2444  
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[www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au)

21 July 2015

Marie Lawton  
Public Liaison/Treasurer  
Northern Rivers Rail Trail Inc.

Dear Marie

**Re: Heart Foundation, NSW support for the Northern Rivers Rail Trail proposal**

The Heart Foundation, NSW is pleased to support Northern Rivers Rail Trail Inc. and the vision to develop a disused rail corridor between Casino and Murwillumbah into a significant community asset for walking, cycling and other active uses.

A number of studies confirm that trails and greenways are good for health, by promoting physical activity and mental health. The potential for the Northern Rivers Rail Trail to support a healthier community directly aligns with the Heart Foundations goal for Australians to be more active. Participating in regular physical activity significantly reduces the risk of Australia's biggest killers: heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers, while also improving mental health. Research has shown that participating in regular physical activity can reduce cardiovascular disease related deaths by up to 35 per cent, yet less than 50 per cent of adults and only 30 per cent of school aged children are sufficiently active each day. For people who are inactive, even small increases in physical activity offer measureable health benefits.

We know from our own research that safe, accessible and separated walking and cycling paths and trails are vitally important, especially in encouraging women, children and older adults to walk or ride. Walking and cycling are affordable, accessible and sustainable options for community members of all ages and are considered the most realistic way to build physical activity into peoples daily lives. Development of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail would create a high quality walking and cycling link, connecting people with local towns, shops, schools and services, and providing essential infrastructure for both transport related and recreational physical activity.

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail proposal would also add value to our long-standing community based group walking program, *Heart Foundation Walking*. We have a substantial network of *Heart Foundation Walking* groups in the Northern Rivers region, and our walking community would benefit significantly from access to the safe, natural and scenic walking options created by the Rail Trail development.



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We wish Northern Rivers Rail Trail Inc. every success in securing government commitment and funding to convert the vision of a 132km continuous walking and cycling trail in northern NSW into reality. We note the potential for rail services to return on all or part of the corridor will be preserved, should that become viable in the future.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Kerry Doyle".

KERRY DOYLE, PSM  
Chief Executive New South Wales