

Rail Trail team learns from Brisbane Valley experience

Ride fuels passion to build the best

Council staff working on the design of the first stage of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail literally got on their bikes last weekend to gain first-hand experience of a successful rail trail operation.

The team, led by Rail Trail Project Manager Iain Lonsdale, rode 40 kilometres along the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail with the President of the trail's Users Association Paul Heymans to learn lessons from their experience with the ongoing construction of this 162-kilometre trail and its operation.

"We spent several hours riding the trail with Paul and discussing all aspects of how they established the trail and how it has grown over the past decade," Mr Lonsdale said.

The research ride allowed the team of design engineers and environmental scientists the opportunity to inspect the different kinds of surfaces used along the Brisbane Valley trail, which will help Tweed decide the best design option for Stage 1 of the Northern Rivers trail from Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek.

"We also saw how Brisbane Valley used the existing rail infrastructure, incorporating bridges, tunnels, railway track, signage and station buildings into their design."

On the day of the ride, the Brisbane Valley trail was hosting a 160-kilometre endurance run with refresher stations and supporters at various points along the trail.

"Seeing the patronage of the rail trail and how well it worked for a major regional sporting event was very encouraging.

"Without exception, everyone we spoke to on the trail was enthusiastic and welcomed the prospect of a new rail trail in the Tweed."

The Tweed team was particularly interested to learn of the business opportunities provided by the trail, reporting that the demand for accommodation generated by trail users had prompted a \$1 million expansion and upgrade of the Esk Caravan Park.

"Our visit to Brisbane Valley certainly fuelled the passion of the Tweed team to deliver a first-class rail trail product for northern New South Wales to build a new regional tourist attraction to drive economic growth and jobs."

For more information about Stage 1 of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail and to have your say about the proposed trail, visit <https://www.yoursaytweed.com.au/RailTrail>.

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