

28 July, 2022

Dear Hon. Member,

**RE: the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022**

Bicycle NSW strongly supports the passing of the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022.

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for over forty-five years, and has over 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups. We are committed to '*make NSW better for all bicycle riders*' from ages 8- 80 and support improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Rail Trails are proven facilities for promoting active transport in safe, and beautiful environments (separate from roads), whilst benefiting regional business, tourism, health and resilience.

On 21 June, the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads introduced the [Transport Administration Amendment \(Rail Trails\) Bill 2022](#) into the Legislative Council of the NSW Parliament. This amendment removes the need for each rail trail proposal to have a separate act of parliament and enables the Minister for Regional Transport to

- permit rail tracks to be lifted and a lease granted only for 'recreation, tourism or related purposes' or 'for roads or road infrastructure' (e.g. public road level crossings),
- The land will remain in government ownership. The land cannot be sold off under this amendment.

The amendment is the result of findings in the recent government report '[NSW Rail Trails Framework 2022](#)'. This report acknowledges that the rail trail movement is international and of great benefit socially, economically, environmentally to all involved. Rail trails are an international drawcard for tourism and a boon to local businesses. Every other state has rail trails except for NSW. The NSW Rail trails Framework is filled with examples of regional communities benefiting greatly by their proximity to rail trails.

You will no doubt have received letters against this amendment to the Act based on a number of concerns. We believe that the act has strong safeguards that are sufficient to allay all reasonable concerns with minimal changes to the Act. The amendment meets important RTforNSW and others' requirements of

1. Keeping the old train routes in public ownership
2. Ensuring routes are available for future train services when required
3. Providing a clearer process with less expense for regional community volunteers and local councils when trying to develop their local rail trail proposal

Furthermore, for any rail trail proposal to be considered, the project must meet the 3 essential criteria found on page 11 of the government's [NSW Rail Trails Framework 2022](#)

- 1. There must be demonstrated community support for the Rail Trail*
- 2. There must be evidence of a viable and sustainable business model*
- 3. Environmental impacts including biosecurity must be addressed*

It would be manifestly unfair for NSW regional communities and visitors to continue missing out on this wonderful social and economic opportunity due to a minority of voices in opposition. These are long-derelict public assets with enormous potential that should not be subsumed into adjoining farms whilst other states thrive.

Thank you for considering this matter. It is a great step forward in helping to develop rail trails across our state by removing the need to go to parliament for an amendment for each new rail trail. It will remove a very costly and time-consuming bureaucratic hurdle for local community rail trail projects while retaining the route in public ownership into the future.

Yours sincerely,



Peter McLean  
CEO- Bicycle NSW