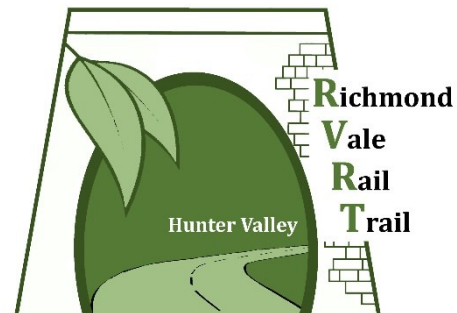


## Facebook Post – October 12<sup>th</sup> 2024: (Corrected)

<https://www.facebook.com/richmondrailtrail/posts/pfbid0HYCPfe3FF66PUIiNmrXk4Diy62LoufMLy7uE6ECFaLkkqophQgSfGT7HM7oyFs8TBI>

From Terry J. Lewin (RVRT Inc. President - RVRT Supporters' Group)

### Federal Electoral Re-distribution – Relevance for proposed RVRT and Shiraz to Shore cycle trail:



The re-distribution of Federal electoral boundaries within NSW was finalised recently (10/10/2024). With respect to the proposed 100+ km *Shiraz to Shore* (S2S) cycle trail, the **same four Federal electorates** are still relevant - **Hunter** (currently held by Dan Repacholi, MP), **Paterson** (currently held by Meryl Swanson, MP), **Newcastle** (currently held by Sharon Claydon, MP) and **Shortland** (currently held by Pat Conroy, MP). However, what has changed is the **relative balance**, with proportionately more of the S2S now within the Hunter electorate (which is detailed further below).

The proposed RVRT and S2S are **regional trails**, which need to be promoted and developed in an **integrated fashion** if we are to optimise their identified multi-layered benefits for local communities and the overall Hunter Region. So, arguably any electoral re-distribution is largely irrelevant if our local elected representatives (and any future replacements, regardless of their political affiliations) continue to work together and to strongly advocate for trail funding, construction, maintenance and co-ordinated governance and promotion.

Likewise, the S2S comprises a mix of existing and proposed shared pathways (see **Pic. 6**), so electorates (and Councils) will vary in the amount of money required to develop and maintain their part of the trail. However, established areas are likely to experience considerable (and potentially earlier) reciprocal benefits from region-wide increases in tourism, as well as from increased expenditure by residents from adjacent areas. So, advocating for **full and integrated S2S/RVRT development** is in everyone's interest. The same applies to continuing to develop inter-connected local shared pathways (between local schools, parks, recreational/sporting facilities, and shopping/business centres) that also link to the **backbone provided by the S2S/RVRT**.

On the other hand, there is always an array of competing interests and opportunities, and community infrastructure funding is hard to secure - so it is probably useful to know which parts of the S2S/RVRT proposal fall within your particular electorate (and what infrastructure Councils actually require) when you communicate with your local MP or potential future candidates.

An updated map of the full Hunter electorate and surrounding electorates is provided in **Pic. 1**, with an overlaid stylised version of the proposed S2S/RVRT. **Pic. 2** presents an easier to read extract from **Pic. 1**, together with a legend showing the 8 core S2S sections. **Pic. 3** shows the Local Government Areas (LGAs) that the RVRT and S2S traverse and further highlights their interdependence, with 20 km of the RVRT (from Kurri Kurri to Fletcher) directly overlapping with core sections of the S2S.

Together, the core sections of the S2S and the remainder of the RVRT total approx. **120km**. Just over 7km of the RVRT (from Newcastle LGA western boundary to Hexham Junction) falls along the common boundary between Paterson and Newcastle Federal electorates, which for convenience (and to avoid double-counting) we have allocated to the Paterson electorate tally. So, here is the approx. S2S/RVRT breakdown by Federal electorate:

**Hunter electorate:** 57.9km (from Belford in Singleton to Tunnel #1 in Seahampton), of which **11km** is an existing trail (along Hermitage Road). This S2S/RVRT segment traverses Wine Country, Werekata National Park, Country Towns & Heritage and Mining Areas (including Abermain and Kurri Kurri), Wallis Creek, and parts of the Sugarloaf Range (including three historic brick-lined railway tunnels). Potential future extensions could include links from Section S6a towards Toronto and through Edgeworth. [Prior to the re-distribution, there was a 48km S2S/RVRT segment within the Hunter electorate, with the **additional 9.9kms transferred from the Paterson electorate**].

**Paterson electorate:** 14km (which could now be characterised as “**Tunnel #1 to Tarro**”) via Stockrington State Conservation Area, Pambalong Nature Reserve, Minmi Junction and Hexham Junction, and the M1 Extension link, all of which requires trail construction. This S2S/RVRT segment features extensive Coastal Wetlands, opportunities to provide off-road shared pathway routes through Tarro and Beresfield communities, and on-road links from the M1 Extension to Maitland and Raymond Terrace, together with active transport links to Newcastle – all of which would be advantaged by construction of a new Shared Pathway Bridge across the New England Highway facilitating access to Anderson Drive. [Almost all of the trail within the Paterson electorate is part of the long-standing RVRT proposal to re-purpose the former Richmond Vale Railway corridor].

**Newcastle electorate:** 38.8km (excluding shared sections with Paterson electorate) from Hexham Junction to Shortland, and Minmi to Newcastle Beach and Glendale via Minmi Junction, Fletcher and Wallsend); of which, approx. 22.5km is existing trail. This S2S/RVRT segment features Coastal Wetlands, Hunter Wetlands National Park (HWNP), Ironbark Creek, Indigenous Heritage, Urban Pathways and Parklands, and Riverside and Harbour views. Potential future extension opportunities abound, including links to new and proposed housing estates and recreational areas, links from established suburbs such as Shortland to existing shared pathways in Newcastle, and via improved links to the Fernleigh Track at Adamstown.

**Shortland electorate:** 9+km (from Glendale to Lake Macquarie) along an existing off-road trail. While this core S2S/RVRT segment requires minimal funding initially, there are considerable opportunities to build stronger links throughout the Lake Macquarie LGA, enhancing reciprocal regional tourism, active transport and recreational benefits. These include finalising shared pathway links between the Fernleigh Track/FAST and the S2S at Glendale, via Charlestown and other routes. Future regional tourism campaigns could also promote multi-day cycling, walking and ecotourism stays, featuring both the Fernleigh Track/FAST and the S2S/RVRT.

In total, approx. **76km (or 63%)** of the joint S2S/RVRT comprises ‘**trails that need constructing**’. ... And, of course, attracting Federal funding is only **one potential piece in the puzzle**. We need local communities, businesses and all tiers of government to continue to work together to help make the S2S/RVRT a reality.

... And a little bit of **friendly rivalry** between MPs in adjacent electorates, or between State and Federal MPs, or between adjacent LGAs, may also be beneficial if it aids the pace of trail construction or the quality and sustainability of the finished product (see **Pic. 4**).

The S2S/RVRT segment remaining within the Paterson electorate after the recent re-distribution is further highlighted in **Pic. 5**.

Finally, we need to maintain a **balanced focus** – ensuring that the ‘*Shiraz*’ and ‘*Shore*’ ends of the trail do not dominate deliberations - as there are opportunities along the full length of the S2S/RVRT to enhance, protect and promote local communities and conservation areas, including unique opportunities around the **trail midpoint** in Kurri Kurri (see **Pic. 6**).

*Thanks to all of our RVRT and S2S supporters. CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK WELCOME.*

**RVRT Inc. Contact Information:**

WEBSITE: <https://richmondalrailtrail.org.au/> FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/richmondrailtrail/>

*President:* Terry Lewin

*Email:* [Terry.Lewin@bigpond.com](mailto:Terry.Lewin@bigpond.com)

*Telephone:* 0404 439 616 (*Terry*)

*Secretary & Treasurer:* Sam Reich

*Email:* [rvt.inc@gmail.com](mailto:rvt.inc@gmail.com)

*Telephone:* 0418 402 644 (*Sam*)

*Vice-President:* Leigh Gibbens

*Email:* [Leigh.Gibbens@gmail.com](mailto:Leigh.Gibbens@gmail.com)

*Telephone:* 0433 570 920 (*Leigh*)

*Founding President:* Billy Metcalfe

*Email:* [wmetcalfe@bigpond.com](mailto:wmetcalfe@bigpond.com)

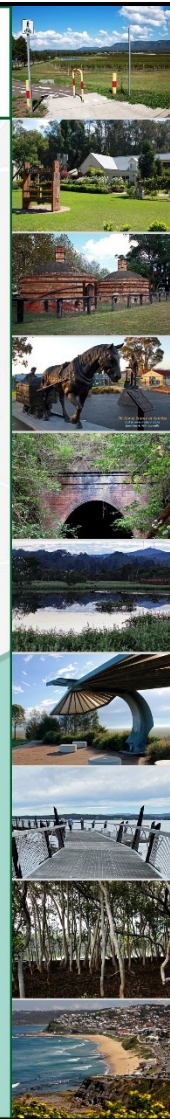
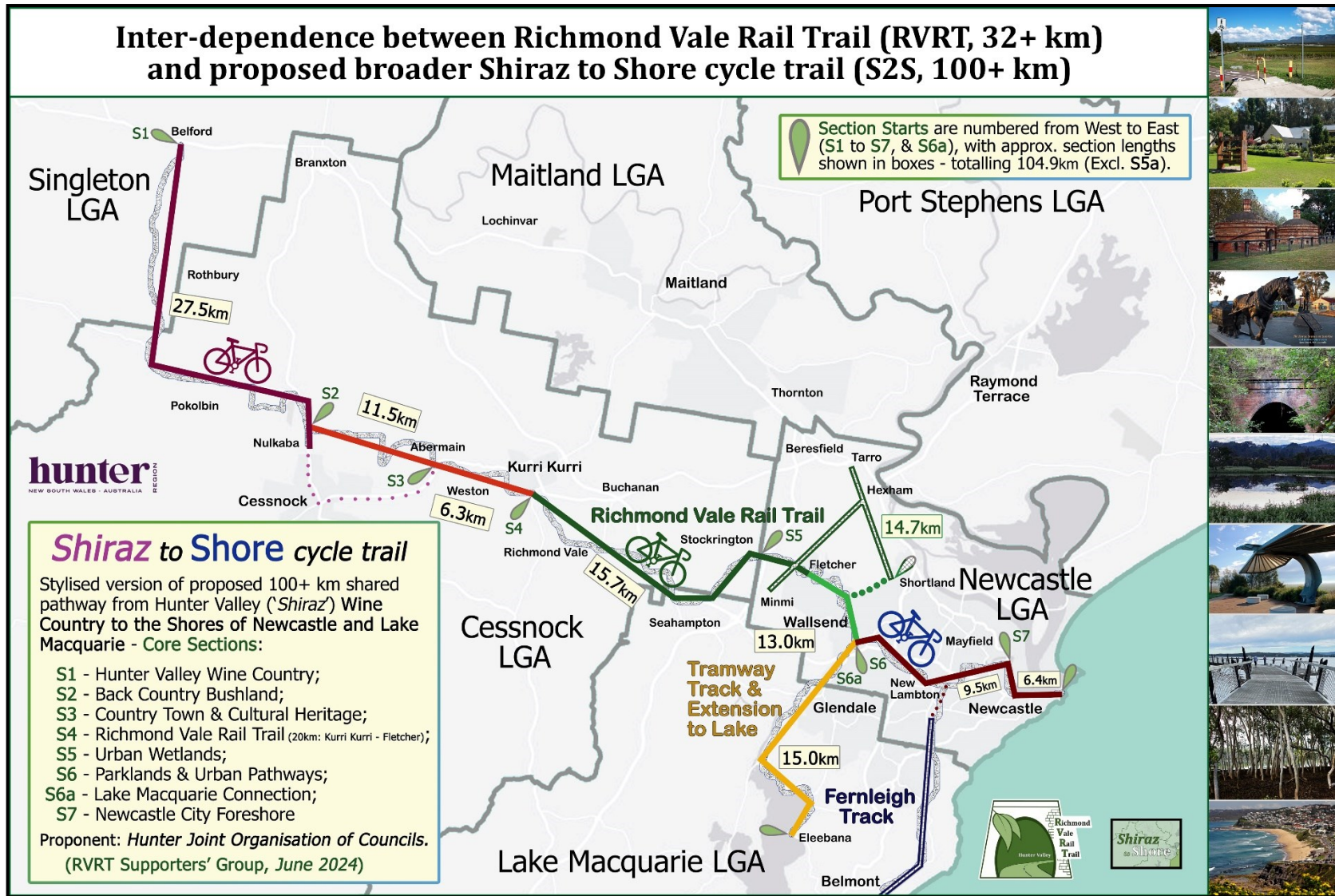
*Telephone:* 0417 453 152 (*Billy*)



**Pic. 1:** Map of **Hunter** Federal Electorate (White) with Surrounding Electorates (Yellow) – as recently gazetted (October 10<sup>th</sup> 2024) following a re-distribution ([https://www.aec.gov.au/redistributions/2023/nsw/final-report/files/maps-a4/2024-aec-nsw-a4-map-hunter\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.aec.gov.au/redistributions/2023/nsw/final-report/files/maps-a4/2024-aec-nsw-a4-map-hunter_FINAL.pdf)). Stylised version of proposed 100+ km *Shiraz to Shore* (S2S) cycle trail has been overlaid, together with the remainder of the Richmond Vale Rail Trail (RVRT).



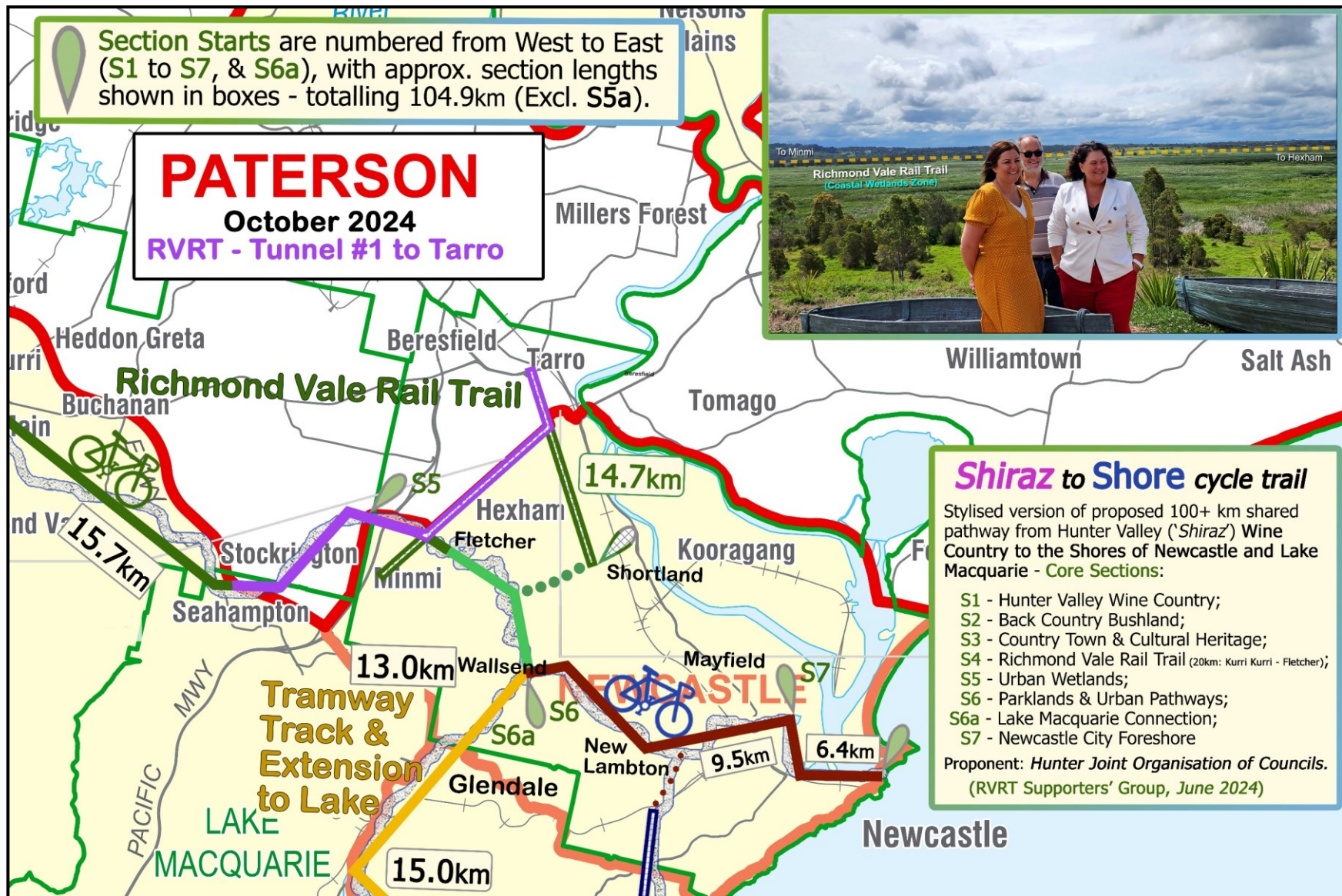
**Pic. 2:** Extract from Pic. 1, with addition of Shiraz to Shore (S2S) Legend for proposed Core Sections (as per August 2024 Concept Plan and Business Case). S2S traverses four Federal Electorates: Hunter, Paterson, Newcastle and Shortland. The core sections of the S2S and the remainder of the RVRT total approx. 120km (see main text for breakdown by electorate).



**Pic. 3:** Stylised version of 100+ km Shiraz to Shore (S2S) cycle trail, with the full Richmond Vale Rail Trail (RVRT) identified as the middle section; 20 km (from Kurri Kurri to Fletcher) of the 32+ km RVRT directly overlaps with core sections of the S2S. Together, the proposed RVRT/S2S trails will simultaneously promote the region as a major cycling tourism destination and directly benefit local communities, families and businesses.



**Pic. 4:** The re-distributed boundary between the Hunter and Paterson Federal electorates now largely follows the **Hunter Expressway**, which goes right over Tunnel #1 (at Seahampton) – potentially fostering some friendly rivalry between the respective Federal MPs.



**Pic. 5:** Extract from October 2024 Map of **Paterson** Federal electorate, with a Richmond Vale Rail Trail (RVRT) and *Shiraz to Shore* (S2S) cycle trail overlay highlighting the 14km “**Tunnel #1 to Tarro**” segment. This S2S/RVRT section includes: Stockrington State Conservation Area, Pambalong Nature Reserve, extensive Coastal Wetlands, and the M1 Extension link.





**Pic. 6:** There are opportunities along the full length of the Shiraz to Shore (S2S) cycle trail to enhance and promote local communities and the overall Hunter Region, not just at the ‘Shiraz’ and ‘Shore’ ends - including around the trail Midpoint, which could be usefully framed as the “Log of Knowledge” Trails Precinct (Kurri Kurri).