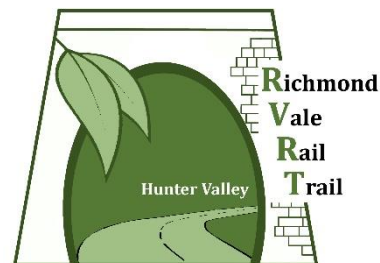


RVRT – Western Section

“Stockrington to Kurri Kurri”

Lake Macquarie & Cessnock LGAs

June 1st
2022



Review of Environmental Factors (REF)

Basic Submission Information & Possible Talking Points

Produced by RVRT Supporters' Group. Contacts: W: <https://www.richmondvalerailtrail.org.au/>
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We Still Need to Demonstrate Strong Community Support for the RVRT

The **REF** for the “Stockrington to Kurri Kurri” (Lake Macquarie & Cessnock) trail section is currently **On Public Exhibition** by Cessnock City Council, on behalf of both Councils (who will then undertake their own approvals processes). It presents Concept Design Plans, key trail features & benefits, environmental assessments & potential mitigation measures.

Submissions close: 5.00pm, Sunday July 3rd, 2022

Written submissions should be titled: “Richmond Vale Rail Trail **REF**” and addressed to The General Manager - via Email (recreation@cessnock.nsw.gov.au), Post (PO Box 152, Cessnock NSW 2325), or In Person (62-78 Vincent Street, Cessnock NSW 2325).

The Trail: The 32km RVRT (40km with connections) will be a continuous off-road shared pathway running from Shortland (near the *Hunter Wetlands Centre*) to Kurri Kurri (*Log of Knowledge Park*).

Western Section Features: This 17km RVRT section will typically have a 3m wide flexible sealed pavement and run along the former Richmond Vale railway alignment. The current proposal includes: restoration and repair of three historic brick railway tunnels; new bridges at Surveyors Creek (15m two-span) & Wallis Creek (70m single-span); four local road crossings; and provision for new car parks and other amenities. Importantly, initial development approval for this section will add to previous approvals within Newcastle LGA, helping to facilitate integrated trail development across the region.

Please Help:

“Have Your Say” & Help make the RVRT a Reality!

Everyone is encouraged to send emails/letters supporting the RVRT (regardless of where you live), including personal and organisational submissions. **All contributions are valued and appreciated.**

Draw on your own personal knowledge and experiences, based on what you already know about the RVRT or similar community pathways elsewhere (e.g., as a cyclist, walker, bird watcher, fun-runner, wheelchair user, Fernleigh Track consumer, family member or carer, etc).

- The **Possible Talking Points** and **Sample Brief Emails** *below* are provided only as a guide.
- A detailed submission isn't necessary. Focus on what is **most important and/or relevant to you** and, preferably, **use your own words**.
- Please **clearly indicate your overall support for the RVRT** at the beginning of your submission.
- Areas that you **might like to mention** include: What the RVRT **means to you and your family** (*personally*); **likely RVRT-related benefits** for your local area and the Hunter Region; future local & regional **opportunities** arising from the RVRT; and any **specific suggestions** that you have (relating to the **Lake Macquarie & Cessnock** section or the whole trail) – please try to be constructive.

If you **need more information:**

- 1) Link to RVRT Supporters' Group “[REF Update #1](#)” – which provides: additional trail, planning and *REF* information; submission guidance; and the complete *REF* Document List & Links; and
- 2) Direct link to Council's “[Have Your Say](#)” page.

Thanks

Possible Talking Points to Consider:

The RVRT ...

Health and Lifestyle Benefits

- ... **promotes active lifestyles**, which will have positive physical and mental health benefits;
- ... will benefit a **broad range of users**, across all age groups;
- ... encourages locals and visitors to actively **explore an array of Hunter Valley landscapes and attractions**;

Community Access and Connection Benefits

- ... provides a **safe, pleasant pathway between communities**;
- ... thoughtfully considers **users with reduced mobility**;
- ... **strengthens Hunter recreational opportunities** and promotes connections between **metropolitan and rural communities**;
- ... will foster **precinct development** and a **mixture of cycling and other activities for families** (encouraging return visits);

Cycling-specific Benefits

- ... **increases safety** via alternatives to road network usage;
- ... **facilitates daily bicycle commuting**, reducing emissions and road congestion;
- ... will promote increased **recreational cycling** by casual riders, as well as those who enjoy a longer group ride;
- ... will improve the Hunter's **image as an active lifestyle and cycling destination**;
- ... will add to the other dedicated local cycleways (e.g., Fernleigh & Tramway Tracks), encouraging **multi-day regional cycling visits**;
- ... will **expand the Australian rail trail network**, which already contributes positively to many communities;

The RVRT ...

Environmental and Heritage Benefits

- ... improves accessibility to a **host of environmental attractions** adjacent to the RVRT (e.g., coastal wetlands, nature reserves, and national parks);
- ... includes well-constructed **bridges and boardwalks**;
- ... promotes **biodiversity and habitat protection** (through education, specialised groups and community participation);
- ... increases access to local environmental, **cultural and heritage features**, promoting **community appreciation** (including indigenous, mining and rail heritage);
- ... **minimises potential negative impacts** on the local environment, by using previously cleared areas;

Economic, Tourism and Other Regional Benefits

- ... is **clearly cost effective (BCR = 2.4)**, so the sooner we build it, the better;
- ... will **support local businesses and new initiatives** (e.g., trail side coffee shops, bike hire, fun-runs, guided walks);
- ... will further stimulate **local economic growth and diversity**;
- ... will provide the **spine for future regional network connections** (e.g., to the Newcastle Cyclesafe Network, BGH Regional Park, other Maitland and Cessnock trails); and
- ... has such **obvious merits**, it should have already been built.

Sample Brief Emails to Council:

Sample Email 1 (General)

To: The General Manager, Cessnock City Council (recreation@cessnock.nsw.gov.au)

From: Name and Basic Contact Information

Re: Richmond Vale Rail Trail *REF*

I strongly support current plans for the 17km western section of the Richmond Vale Rail Trail. In particular, my family looks forward to being able to actively explore new areas in the Lower Hunter, including beautiful bushland settings and historic railway tunnels.

The RVRT will benefit cyclists, walkers and runners, promote healthy active lifestyles, and provide safer off-road connections between communities.

The RVRT is long overdue and approval for this western section by Lake Macquarie and Cessnock Councils is critical. I also call on the local Councils to actively pursue funding to construct the trail.

Sincerely,

Xxxxxxx

Sample Email 2 (Cyclist)

To: The General Manager, Cessnock City Council (recreation@cessnock.nsw.gov.au)

From: Name and Basic Contact Information

Re: Richmond Vale Rail Trail *REF*

As a cyclist, I can't wait to ride both the eastern and western sections of the RVRT, which will provide an off-road round trip exceeding 50-60km. Safety is one of my main concerns. So, having a major new trail that is totally separated from cars is exactly what I want in my local area.

The RVRT will also benefit a broad range of other user groups, promote healthier lifestyles, attract cycling groups to the area, and encourage local Hunter businesses and tourism initiatives.

Approval for this 17km western section by Lake Macquarie and Cessnock Councils is critical and I strongly support the current plans outlined in the *REF*. I would also like to encourage the local Councils to seek trail funding as soon as possible and to commence trail construction.

Regards,

Xxxxxxx