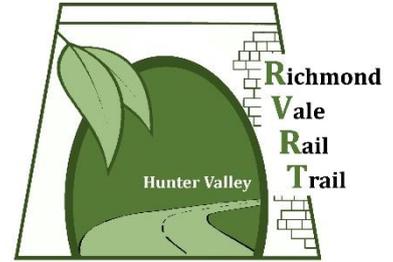


DA Submission Information and Possible Talking Points for RVRT Supporters

August 22nd 2020



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Currently on Public Exhibition: DA2020/00641: Community Facility – Pathway

The **RVRT - Newcastle LGA section** is currently on public exhibition by Newcastle City Council.

Submissions close: **5.00 pm, Wednesday 2nd September 2020**

We need to Demonstrate Strong Community Support for the RVRT

E-mail submissions are preferred (E: mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au), but you can post your submission (to City of Newcastle, PO Box 489 Newcastle 2300). Council's advice - "Submissions must specify: the grounds of objection (if any); **quote DA2020/00641** in the title of the submission; include the submitter's name, address and daytime contact number; and - where possible, an email address".

The Trail: The RVRT will be a multi-use, shared pathway, 40km long (with all connections), typically comprising a 3m wide sealed pavement. The **Newcastle LGA section** runs from **Shortland to Tarro**, and from **Hexham to Lenaghan** (*Pambalong Nature Reserve*), with **Fletcher** and **Minmi** connections.

Please Help:

Have Your Say & Help make the RVRT a Reality!

Everyone is encouraged to send emails 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).

If you **need more information**, either about the trail, [the current DA](#), or [the associated documents](#), please refer to our '[RVRT Update #1](#)' document ([click here – from our website](#)).

- A detailed submission isn't necessary. Focus on what is **most important and/or relevant to you** and **use your own words**. The talking points on the next page are only a guide.
- 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 overall Hunter Region; future local and regional **opportunities** that might arise from the RVRT; and any **specific concerns** that you have (relating either to the Newcastle LGA or the whole trail) – please try to be constructive.

Thanks

Possible Talking Points:

This list of talking points may help you to identify some of the potential benefits of the RVRT.

Health and Lifestyle Benefits

1. A **broad range of users**, across all age groups, are likely to benefit from everything the RVRT has to offer - including walkers, cyclists, runners, bird watchers, reduced mobility users, family and other groups.
2. The RVRT will help **promote active lifestyles**, which will have positive physical and mental health benefits.
3. Some people will experience daily lifestyle benefits, others will participate in regular events like weekend fun-runs, and all visitors will be able to **explore an array of Hunter Valley landscapes and attractions**.

Community Access and Connection Benefits

4. **Rail trails work** and have contributed positively to many communities, both in Australia and overseas. Hunter Region residents should be given similar opportunities to gain lasting benefits.
5. The RVRT connects four LGAs and provides a **safe, pleasant pathway between local communities** (e.g., Fletcher and Minmi), benefitting individuals, families, and a variety of groups, including local schools.
6. The RVRT will **strengthen recreational opportunities** in the Lower Hunter and help connect existing and proposed facilities (e.g., Pambalong Nature Reserve, Stockrington SCA, Blue Gum Hills Regional Park).
7. **Users with reduced mobility** have been **thoughtfully considered** in RVRT designs (e.g., pavement selection; connections to the Hunter Wetlands Centre; access from car parks to the historic brick tunnels).

Cycling-specific Benefits

8. **Increased safety** via alternatives to road network usage, particularly reduced cycling along the highway between Tarro and Shortland.
9. **Daily bicycle commuting** reduces emissions and congestion, has clear health benefits, and saves money.
10. A 32 km **off-road shared pathway** will facilitate safe recreational cycling for casual riders, as well as those who enjoy a long early morning group ride.
11. Families will be able to enjoy a **mixture of cycling and other activities**, going to different parts of the trail on their various visits.

Environmental and Heritage Benefits

12. There are a **host of environmental attractions** adjacent to the RVRT (e.g., coastal wetlands, nature reserves, and national parks), which otherwise wouldn't be accessible to the public.
13. Inclusion of well-constructed **bridges and boardwalks** (e.g., in the vicinity of Ironbark and Fishery Creeks) facilitates access for a variety of users to this special section of the Hunter Wetlands National Park.
14. Over time, **biodiversity and habitat protection and enhancement** along the various sections of the RVRT through local groups and community participation in flora and fauna surveys, workdays and events.
15. There is **substantial heritage value** along the proposed route, including indigenous, coal and rail heritage (e.g., the Pambalong clan lived in the local area, after whom the Nature Reserve north of Minmi is named; more recently, 100+ years of coal extraction/transport).
16. By increasing access to local environmental and heritage features, the **community's ownership and appreciation grows**, contributing to greater long-term protection (e.g. Blue Gum Hills Regional Park).
17. **Potential negative impacts** on the local environment are considered to be **relatively minor and manageable**, mainly because the RVRT uses previously cleared areas.

Economic and Tourism Benefits for the Hunter

18. The RVRT has been shown to be **clearly cost effective**, with expected benefits about two and half times expected costs (*Socio-economic Impact Assessment*). So, the sooner we build the RVRT, the better.
19. Lower Hunter RVRT users will **support local businesses and new initiatives** near the trail (e.g., trail side coffee shops, bike hire, guided walks).
20. The RVRT will improve the Lower Hunter's **image as an active lifestyle destination** – attracting general tourists, bicycle-tourists, and eco-tourists. In combination with other attractions (e.g., vineyards, trails, beaches, waterways), this will boost multi-day stays, benefitting local accommodation businesses.
21. Increased visitors to the Hunter, resulting from the RVRT and its linkages, will **further stimulate local economic growth and business diversity**, particularly in the recreation, hospitality and tourism sectors.
22. **Future beneficial RVRT connections** are also being considered (e.g., to the University, Newcastle Cyclesafe Network, Blue Gum Hills Regional Park, Maitland, and to other trails within Cessnock LGA).