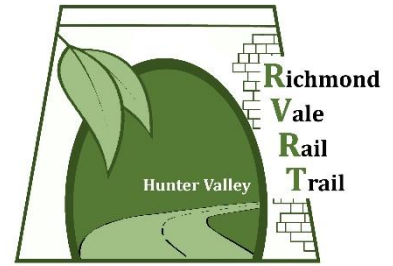


# RVRT Update #1

August 13<sup>th</sup> 2020

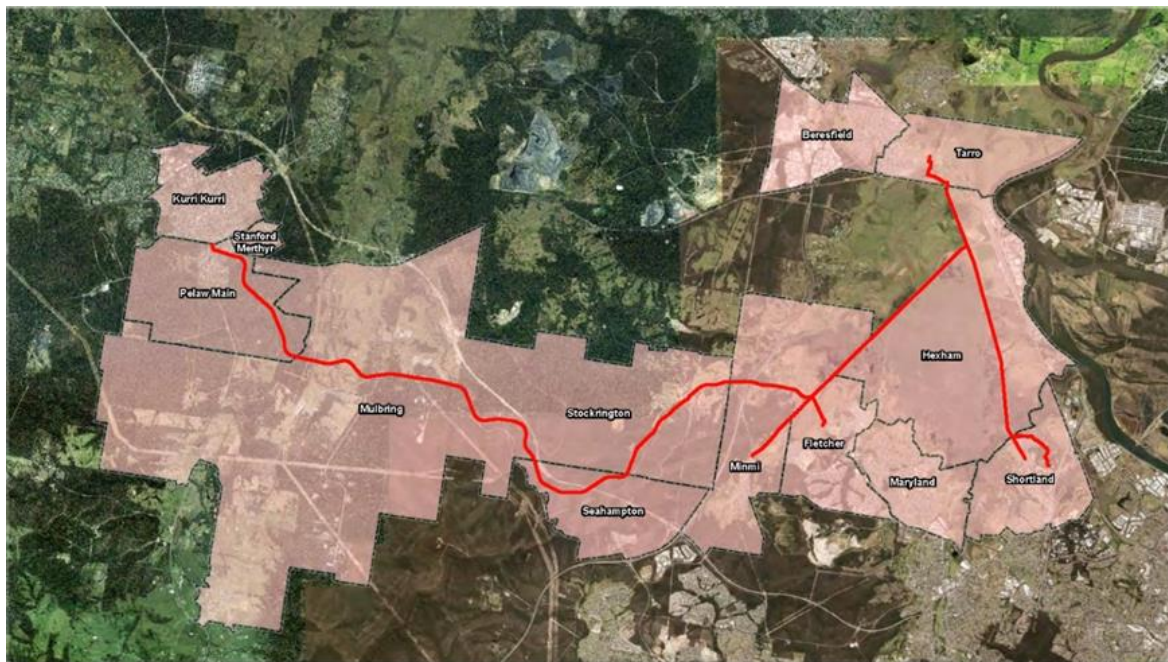
## DA On Exhibition



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### *The Trail: "Connecting Hunter Region communities, tourism and conservation areas"*

- The 32km RVRT (40km with connections) will be a **unique, shared pathway** running from Shortland (near the *Hunter Wetlands Centre*) to Kurri Kurri (*Log of Knowledge Park*), connecting 13 state suburb areas and four LGAs (Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Cessnock and Maitland).
- The RVRT runs primarily along the former Richmond Vale **railway alignment**, as well as utilising Hunter Water Corporation **pipeline corridors** (e.g., Shortland to Tarro segment and Fletcher connection).
- It will be a **multi-use trail**, providing opportunities for walking, cycling, wheel chair users, educational, environmental, indigenous and heritage-oriented activities, including access to three historic brick tunnels. Unlike most Australian trails, the RVRT **passes through or near several high conservation value areas** (e.g., Hunter Wetlands National Park; Pambalong Nature Reserve; Stockrington, Mt. Sugarloaf, and Werekata State Conservation Areas).



Extracted **Local Study Area** from *Socio-economic Impact Assessment* (Appendix M: **Figure 2-1**)

### **Overall Stage: Seeking Planning Approvals**

- **Obtaining planning approvals** for all sections of the trail is the current goal, which will facilitate co-ordinated funding, construction, management and promotional strategies.

As the Newcastle LGA section of the trail ("*Shortland to Tarro and Pambalong*") impacts on **coastal wetlands**, an **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** is required, which forms part of the current Development Application (DA). The trail section crossing Cessnock and Lake Macquarie LGAs ("*Stockrington to Kurri Kurri*") requires **Reviews of Environmental Factors (REFs)** by those Councils, which are being prepared.

## Where We Are Now:

Currently on Exhibition (05/08/2020 to 02/09/2020) - DA2020/00641 (Designated & Integrated Development) Newcastle LGA Section of the Trail: "RICHMOND VALE RAIL TRAIL Shared Pathway – Shortland to Pambalong and Hexham to Tarro. Connections from Minmi Junction to Minmi and Fletcher. Connection from Hunter Wetlands Centre to the main shared pathway".

## Some Useful Information:

- The documents currently on exhibition comprise: **Assessments Covering the Whole Trail**; and **Newcastle LGA Specific Information/Assessments**. The latter includes: The main EIS text; Appendix B - Land impacted by the proposal; Concept Plans; Appendix D – DCP Assessment Requirements; and Appendix I – Biodiversity Development Assessment. All of the remaining appendices (B, C, E to H, and J to M) have relevance to the whole trail, including the general Concept Design work (Appendix C).
- **Where to Start: Appendix M (Socio-economic Impact Assessment)** provides a **good overview of the trail and its regional context**. Consequently, we have **extracted 19 pages from this report into a separate document ([available on our website](#))**. **According to this report:**
  - The path will **typically be a 3m wide sealed pavement**, up to 4m wide where it is expected that a high number of cyclists and pedestrians will interact (e.g., connection between Shortland and Tarro - Hunter Wetlands National Park).
  - The **benefit cost ratio** for the project (**BCR = 2.40**) "... indicates that the level of expected benefits provided by the RVRT is close to **two and a half times** the level of expected costs". This is a **conservative estimate** and the full report discusses additional, secondary or flow-on benefits (e.g., local construction, tourism, retail and recreation-related jobs).
  - The estimated **net present value (NPV)** for the project is **\$44.7m** (i.e., the amount that is generated [Benefits minus Costs] over the 30-year evaluation period calculated in today's dollars).
  - **Great potential** exists to attract a broad range of users, which is well illustrated by the "**Trip types and users**" experiences (Appendix M: **Table 5-2**).
  - **Key benefits identified in this report include:**
    - Improved **physical and mental health**;
    - Improved access to **heritage and high conservation value areas**;
    - **Increased safety** for commuting cyclists between Tarro and Shortland;
    - **Active travel** access to **open spaces** and **social infrastructure**;
    - **Daily commuting** provides financial and environmental benefits;
    - Placing the Hunter Region **on the map as a cycling destination**;
    - Patronage by regional users will **support local businesses** and generate economic benefit;
    - **Growth and diversification** for local business; and
    - Enhanced **property values**.
- **Overview Information: "Summaries Report"** - We have also **extracted a 39-page document ([available on our website](#))** which includes the **Executive Summary from the EIS and Conclusions-Recommendations from Appendices E to M**. Some of the identified **key trail benefits in these reports include:**
  - Improved facilities **linking local communities via a safe, accessible and amenable route**;
  - **Commuter and recreational choice** for tourists and locals to **undertake journeys without having to utilise existing road networks** (such as M1 Pacific Motorway and New England Highway);
  - **Improved access ... to enjoy the heritage** (such as passing through old railway tunnels) and **environmental attractions**, including the Hunter Wetlands National Park and Hexham Wetlands, including for bird watchers and other regular users;
  - Opportunities for **healthier, active lifestyles** for both residents and tourists allowing users to experience the amenity of the route as it travels through various landscapes and environments; and
  - Opportunity for **development of key economic growth areas of tourism and recreation**, while providing social, health and conservation benefits for users and the region.
  - Any **negative impacts of the proposal are considered minor** in comparison (e.g., impacts on visual amenity, water flows, vegetation, habitat, heritage), largely because the **RVRT takes advantage of previously cleared areas**.

- **Want More Details:** All of the documents currently on Public Exhibition are **listed in the attached Table**, together with **embedded links** to Council's website (*Note: Half of these documents exceed 10MB*).

### **How You Can Help:**

Because the RVRT has been **identified as a priority in regional and local plans** for some time, there is a tendency to assume that it will eventually happen anyway. However, the rail line closed in 1987, so it has taken a **long time**, and a **lot of concerted effort**, to get to the point where the first Development Application is **currently on public exhibition**.

**Now is your chance to have a say and to help make the RVRT a reality!**

We encourage everyone (*regardless of where you live*) to **put in personal, stakeholder group, and organisational submissions** about this Development Application (**DA2020/00641**) to Newcastle City Council by the **5.00 pm deadline on Wednesday 2nd September 2020**. (*See submission details below*). **All contributions are valued and appreciated.**

You are also encouraged to **tell other people and groups** about the current exhibition period.

Often, when community members put in submissions about DAs, they are raising strong objections.

In this instance, please **clearly indicate your overall support for the RVRT at the beginning of your submission**, even if you also raise particular concerns.

Some of the areas that you **might like to mention** include the following:

- **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**
- **Any specific concerns that you have (relating either to the Newcastle LGA or the whole trail) – please try to be constructive**

#### **Other factors to consider in writing your submission:**

- NSW has a *relative absence of rail trails*, particularly ones of the quality that the RVRT will provide. Consequently, it is worth stressing that this is a **major regional infrastructure project**, and we need to **set it on the right course from the outset**. For example, the estimated infrastructure capital cost (\$33.2m) equates to about \$830,000 per km, which is consistent with NSW IPART's (2014) guidelines for shared cycleway/pedestrian pathways. Compromising safety or accessibility (e.g., by reducing rest points, lighting, or surface quality, etc) will only decrease usage, and generate ongoing and maintenance costs, which local Councils may not be able to afford.
- As a **multi-use trail**, the RVRT will be expected to **meet the needs of a wide variety of different users**. Some of the associated benefits/issues will be particularly local (e.g., relating to the interface with current and future local groups and facilities), while most will be regional, and some of State-wide significance.
- It is desirable that the **RVRT develops in an integrated way** across the various Hunter Region LGAs, and **every supportive submission helps** towards this goal.

#### **Submission details:**

*"Any person, during the specified submission period, may make submissions to the City of Newcastle concerning the development application. Submissions must specify: the grounds of objection (if any); **quote DA2020/00641 [Community Facility – Pathway] in the title of the submission**; include the submitter's name, address and daytime contact number; and- where possible, an email address. Submissions must be made in writing and submitted via e-mail or post."* (**E-mail submissions are preferred**).

**Current submission deadline: 5.00 pm, Wednesday 2nd September 2020**

E: [mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au) Post: City of Newcastle, PO Box 489 Newcastle 2300

## On Exhibition – DA2020/00641 - Newcastle LGA Section of RVRT– Documents & Links

Key Documents (in Sequence)	Document Filename (Linked to Council's website)	File Size	Coverage (& Document Year)
Public Notice	<a href="#">Public Notice - DA2020-00641 - 81 King Street Shortland - Designated Development</a>	88.8 KB, 2 pages	
Notification Letter	<a href="#">Notification Template Letter - DA2020-00641 - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	115 KB, 2 pages	
Development Application	<a href="#">Public Application Form - July 2020 - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	1.40 MB, 9 pages	
<b>Richmond Vale Rail Trail - Shortland to Tarro &amp; Pambalong - Environmental Impact Statement</b>	<a href="#">Public Environmental Impact Statement - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	12.3 MB, 248 pages	Primarily Newcastle LGA (October 2019)
<b>Appendix A</b> – Secretary's environmental assessment requirements	<a href="#">Public DPI Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	10.2 MB, 84 pages	Whole Trail (2015-2018)
<b>Appendix B</b> – Land impacted by the proposal	<a href="#">Land Impact Assessment - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	86.5 KB, 1 page	Newcastle LGA
<b>Appendix C</b> – Concept design	<a href="#">Concept Design - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	47.2 MB, 61 pages	Whole Trail (January 2018)
(Concept Plans – Newcastle LGA Section)	<a href="#">Concept Plans - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	43.2 MB, 44 pages	Newcastle LGA (February 2020)
<b>Appendix D</b> – Assessment against the requirements of Newcastle DCP	<a href="#">DCP Assessment - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	1.08 MB, 31 pages	Newcastle LGA
<b>Appendix E</b> – Geotechnical assessment	<a href="#">Public Geotechnical Report - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	24.3 MB, 284 pages	Whole Trail (April 2019)
<b>Appendix F</b> – Contaminated site assessment	<a href="#">Public Contaminated Site Assessment - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	22.6 MB, 116 pages	Whole Trail (March 2019)
<b>Appendix G</b> – Hydrology and hydraulics assessment	<a href="#">Public Hydrology and Hydraulics Assessment - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	3.05 MB, 51 pages	Whole Trail (March 2019)
<b>Appendix H</b> – Traffic and transport assessment	<a href="#">Public Traffic Report - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	2.26 MB, 36 pages	Whole Trail (March 2019)
<b>Appendix I</b> – Biodiversity development assessment report	<a href="#">Public Biodiversity Development Assessment - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	9.14 MB, 288 pages	Newcastle LGA (June 2020)
<b>Appendix J</b> – Visual impact assessment	<a href="#">Visual Impact Assessment - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	10.8 MB, 41 pages	Whole Trail (June 2017)
<b>Appendix K</b> – Statement of heritage impact	<a href="#">Heritage Impact Statement - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	45.6 MB, 354 pages	Whole Trail (March 2019)
<b>Appendix L</b> – Aboriginal archaeological survey report	<a href="#">Aboriginal Archaeological Survey Report - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	24.4 MB, 153 pages	Whole Trail (March 2019)
<b>Appendix M</b> – Socio-economic impact assessment	<a href="#">Public Socioeconomic Impact Assessment - 81 King Street Shortland</a>	7.16 MB, 131 pages	Whole Trail (September 2019)