

Somerset Regional Council and Bicycle Queensland

Rail Trails and Tourism Conference

6 - 7 November 2024
Esk, Queensland

Synopsis and Program



1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Proudly supported by the Queensland Government, Bicycle Queensland (BQ) and Somerset Regional Council (SRC) are collaborating to hold a no-cost 2-Day conference at Esk in the Brisbane Valley west of Brisbane. The conference name is “Rail Trails and Tourism”

BQ and SRC share a common commitment to the economic health of our communities. We also share the philosophy that collaboration and good will can overcome most obstacles and result in great community outcomes.

Bicycle Tourism around Queensland, Australia and the world has increased exponentially and rides on the back of State and Local Government involvement coupled with Rail Trail Association passion and the community support they attract.

This is an inaugural event with plans to expand the format and reach into the future.

2 Overall Program

The Rail Trails and Tourism 2024 conference program is split into 2 days. Each day has a different focus, with the programs designed to appeal to slightly different audiences.

The objective of the conference team is to attract interest and registration for both days but offer a one day only registration also. It is hoped that conference being at no cost to participants will therefore remove the possible barrier to 2-day participation.

2.1 Day 1 - Wednesday 6 November – Let’s Build Rail Trail Tourism

Day 1 is designed to provide an energising dose of inspiration from experts, on-the-ground, operators and leaders in cycle tourism. It will feature in-depth discussions about Brisbane Valley Rail Trail visitors and their expectations, identifying untapped business opportunities, and ways to provide such a great experience for our visitors that they tell their friends and come back again and again.

Day 1 is Pitched to tourism owner-operators, industry professionals, investors and land managers across all levels willing to invest a day exchanging ideas, collecting knowledge and building professional networks.

2.2 Day 2 - Thursday 7 November – Let’s Build a Rail Trail

Day 2’s aim is to collectively build a practical Toolbox for Rail Trail advocates to use to turn a line on a map into a trail we can all enjoy.

This is an opportunity to learn from the experience of others to improve your chances of success and make your rail trail project journey simpler. It will look at trail concepts, feasibility, planning, approvals, funding, construction, maintenance and governance.

Rail Trail Associations, grassroots advocates, trail professionals, land managers and recreation enthusiasts will gather to share experiences and ideas on how to get a new trail concept off the ground.

3 DAY 1 Detailed Program – Somerset Regional Council

Synopsis - Day 1 will feature in-depth discussions about Brisbane Valley Rail Trail visitors and their expectations, identifying untapped business opportunities, and ways to provide such a great experience for our visitors that they tell their friends and come back again and again.

Pitched to tourism owner-operators, industry professionals, investors and land managers across all levels willing to invest a day exchanging ideas, collecting knowledge and building professional networks.

Time	Item	Presenter
9am	MC introduction and welcome	Rowan Lamont – Blue Sky Trails
9:15	Setting the Scene	Alton Twine - CEO Bicycle Queensland
9:35	BVRT Visitor Research	Professor David Solnet and Professor Pierre Benckendorff (University of Queensland)
10:25	Morning Tea	
10:40	Cycle Tourism – Target markets for businesses	Dr Richard Buning (University of Queensland, Bicycle Qld Director)
11:30	Keynote Presentation: Designing Visitor Experiences	TBC
12:30	Lunch	
1:20	Regional Tourism trends and lessons	Peter Homan (CEO Qld Country Tourism)
1:50	Breakout session Group activity: Local Tourism Operator Information Share	All (3 or 4 groups)
2:30	Elite Cyclist Panel Q&A	A panel of elite cyclists talk about their rail trails experience. Panelists include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna Beck • Joris van der Tang • Chevonne Arrowsmith • Troy Szczurkowski
2:50	MC wrap-up	Rowan Lamont – Blue Sky Trails
3pm	Close	
5pm	Social event	Esk Grande Hotel

4 Day 2 Detailed Program – Bicycle Queensland

Synopsis – Day 2 of the conference is a workshop themed around "Let's Build a Rail Trail". The day will focus on the challenges that face corridor custodians, local governments, community groups and landowners in developing expanding, operating, managing, and maintaining rail trails. The program will draw from lessons learned from successfully delivered rail trails as well as experience from rail trails in development.

The format will include a range of presentations by industry experts and operators covering key rail trail development and operation processes and culminate with a group workshop assembling the best ideas from the day and use these to build a "Rail Trail Development Toolbox" as a resource for current future rail trail promoters'

Time	Item	Presenter
7am to 9am	BVRT bike ride and cafe breakfast	Andrew D and Paul Heymans - ride leaders
9:00am – 9:15am	Opening presentation - Set the scene and program for the day.	Alton Twine – CEO Bicycle Queensland
9:15am – 9:50am	"You need a Vision" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the Rail Trail Association • Forming and Association • Development, governance and administration. 	Desley O'Grady - President BBIRT
	20 mins Discussion	All
9:50am - 10:25am	"Securing a corridor" Corridor custodian requirements, stakeholder relationships, tenure, private landowner involvement, agreements and risks	Craig England – TMR Manager (Rail Corridor Management)
	20 mins Discussion	All
10:25am – 10:45am	Morning tea	
10:45am - 11:20am	"Planning" An assessment of corridor development requirements and the role of the Feasibility Study.	Craig Meinicke - Blue Sky Trails Director
	20 mins Discussion	All
11:20am – 11:55am	"Politics and Staged Development" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading the political landscape • Active and passive paths to success • Being prepared for staged delivery 	Paul Heymans – Patron BVRTUA

	20 mins Discussion	All
11:55am – 12:30pm	“Models of Operation - Community or Council” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation, management and maintenance • The volunteer workforce and working with the community 	Rowan Lamont and Andrew Demack
	20 mins Discussion	All
12:30pm – 1:15pm	Lunch	
1:15pm – 1:50pm	“Events and Event Partnerships” Funding, peak body assistance, independence, trail marketing and promotion.	BQ - Paul Dalitz and Mike Blewitt
	20 mins Discussion	All
Break into Groups		
2:00pm to 3:45pm	Workshop Session – Groups session that will take the best examples of topics from the day and use to compile a Toolbox to assist current future Rail Trail promoters. “A model to build a successful Rail Trail”	All - Groups
Informal afternoon tea		
4:00pm	Wrap up, summary of key points, and close	Alton Twine – CEO Bicycle Queensland

4.1 Contact Details

If you have an interest in attending either or both days of the proposed conference, please contact Ben or Paul as per the below.

Ben Thomas - Trails Officer
Somerset Regional Council
PO Box 117, ESK QLD 4312
T: 07 5424 4000
bthomas1215@somerset.qld.gov.au

Paul Dalitz - Events and Projects
Bicycle Queensland
Sports House 150 Caxton Street, Milton 4064
T: 07 3844 1144 | M: 0433 245 766
p.dalitz@bq.org.au