

GETTING RAIL TRAILS ESTABLISHED IN QUEENSLAND

A QUICK-START
GUIDE FOR USER
ASSOCIATIONS
AND COMMUNITY



A QUICK-START GUIDE

Getting Rail Trails established in Queensland

Rail trails repurpose disused railway corridors to create trails for walking, bike riding, and horse riding. These community assets can revitalise regional economies, celebrate local heritage, and promote healthy lifestyles. Establishing a rail trail takes time, collaboration, and strategic engagement – but a growing number of successful examples across Queensland demonstrate what's possible.

Key resources and support organisations

Bicycle Queensland (BQ)

BQ supports active transport projects including rail trails. See BQ's video campaign, [Growing Regional Queensland Through Rail Trails](#), highlighting benefits to local communities and the BQ Rail Trail toolkit, based on [our 2024 Rail Trail Conference](#).

Contact Bicycle Queensland: info@bq.org.au

Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR)

TMR has an established role in the planning and coordination of rail trail development, particularly as most former rail corridors are held and managed by TMR under a perpetual lease from the State. While TMR does not always directly fund or manage rail trails, it may:

- Support the process of obtaining an appropriate lease on disused rail corridors to local councils or not-for-profits for development and management of trails
- Provide technical and strategic planning guidance
- Collaborate with other departments and agencies

Contact TMR: rcm@tmr.qld.gov.au

Rail Trails Australia

The national peak body for rail trail advocacy. Provides resources, including the [Rail Trail Establishment Guidelines \(PDF\)](#) outlining planning, feasibility, and community engagement steps.

Contact Rail Trails Australia: www.railtrails.org.au/contact-us

Your local council

Your council is likely to play a major role in supporting your rail trail project. It is essential to reach out to them early.





Steps to getting started

Consult with Bicycle Queensland and TMR

This will help you determine next steps – choosing approaches to funding and deciding whether your next step is a feasibility study or a more direct approach to opening up your rail trail to recreational users.

Engage stakeholders early

Identify and consult with local councils, Traditional Owners, adjacent landholders, community advocates and the wider community. Collaborative, transparent processes build long-term trust and shared ownership.

Implement small-scale pilot projects

Projects demonstrating short sections of trail can showcase potential and activate public interest. These can be lower-risk ways to test public and council support. Discuss the option of gaining a licence to use your rail corridor from TMR.

Secure local council support

Councils often manage or co-fund trails. Approach your local council to gain their support and assistance in seeking funding opportunities.

Funding and grants

Development of most Queensland rail trails are supported through a mix of local, state, and federal funding. Some funding opportunities to consider include:

- [Australian Government grants programs](#) (for example, the Growing Regions Fund)
- [Queensland Government Grants Finder](#)
- [Local government grants programs](#) (various)

Rail trail resources and exemplars

[Boyne Burnett Inland Rail Trail](#)

Features striking heritage infrastructure and remote natural beauty. The trail is a collaboration between multiple councils and regional tourism bodies.

- [Boyne Burnett Inland Rail Trail plans](#) (Feasibility study, Concept plan, Strategic plan, Trail gate diagrams)



*Proudly supported by the
Queensland Government*



Brisbane Valley Rail Trail

At 161km, this is one of Australia's longest rail trails. Its success is built on sustained government investment, local tourism development, and strong community partnerships.

- [Queensland Government Brisbane Valley Rail Trail website](#)
- [Brisbane Valley Rail Trail Guide](#)
- [Brisbane Valley Rail Trail Bike Tourism Case Study \(2022, TMR\)](#)

Kilkivan to Kingaroy Rail Trail

This 88km trail is supported by the South Burnett and Gympie regional councils and connects several rural communities.

- [Kilkivan to Kingaroy Rail Trail brochure](#)
- [Economic assessment \(South Burnett Regional Council, 2016\)](#)
- [South Burnett Rail Trail sections website](#)

Northern Rivers Rail Trail (NSW)

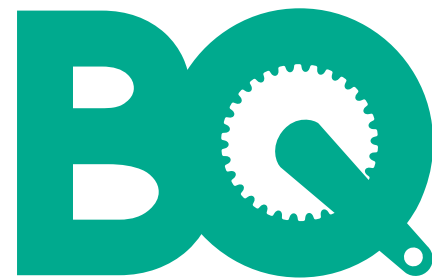
The Northern Rivers Rail Trail is a 132km recreational pathway repurposing the disused Casino to Murwillumbah railway corridor in northern New South Wales. It is being developed in stages, connecting various communities across the region.

- [Economic impact report \(Tweed Shire Council, 2024\)](#)

Tips for success

- Frame the project as an investment in regional development, health, and tourism – not just recreation.
- Partner with tourism operators, local businesses, and council.
- Collect user data and testimonials to demonstrate value over time.
- Stay informed and connect with others through [Bicycle Queensland](#), by becoming a member or signing up to the BQ newsletter.





BICYCLE
QUEENSLAND



Developing
a vision

Securing access
to a rail corridor

Feasibility

Planning, design
& construction

Political engagement
& development

Models of
operation

Marketing
& events

Moving
forward