

Nyora to Leongatha Rail Corridor - The Facts

South Gippsland Shire Council is conscious that there has been a lot of misinformation circulating about the future of the Nyora to Leongatha rail corridor. Here are some of the facts:

- There is no intention from the Victorian Government to return passenger rail services to South Gippsland.
- Any suggestion that the creation of a tourist railway will pre-empt the return of a passenger rail service are false.
- There seems to be some in the community who believe that there is a choice between a train and a rail trail. This is simply false. The only choice is between a neglected, weed infested strip of land and a rail trail that will be used by locals and tourists alike.
- VicTrack has leased the former rail corridor to South Gippsland Shire Council for a period of 18 years for the land to be used as a rail trail between Leongatha and Nyora.
- The lease does not permit the use of the corridor for a tourist rail.
- VicTrack has advised that if the land is required for transport purposes in the future, the agreement will be revisited.
- Any suggestion that the existing rail infrastructure is in a good state of repair is incorrect, as evidenced by the demise of the previous tourist train.
- Removing the redundant rail infrastructure and constructing a rail trail will not create a barrier to the return of a passenger rail service in the future.
- The Great Southern Rail Trail extension is supported by (amongst others):
 - South Gippsland Shire Council
 - Bass Coast Shire Council
 - Cardinia Shire Council
 - Casey City Council
 - Wellington Shire Council
 - Korumburra Business Association
 - Korumburra Round Table
 - Leongatha Business Group
 - Loch Community Development Association
 - Destination Gippsland
 - Regional Development Victoria
 - VicTrack

South Gippsland Shire Council Acting CEO, Bryan Sword said Council staff are focussed on getting the best outcome for the whole community. Administrators and the Council Executive have been briefed by those who are proposing to use the corridor for a tourist train.

“There is a reason we are working towards creating the longest rail trail in Australia. Not only will it be a terrific recreation asset for the community, it will also provide an economic stimulus for all the businesses along its length. This has already been proved with the existing 76 kilometres from Leongatha to Port Welshpool. Council has access to independent expenditure data which can track local and visitor expenditure. After completing the missing link on the Rail Trail between Koonwarra and Meenyan there was an increased visitor spend of 15 per cent in the following peak season across these two towns.

“We will be getting on with the job of constructing the rail trail because it is the only way for us to turn a stranded asset into an iconic asset for the people of South Gippsland,” said Mr Sword.

PR2472 11/11/19

For media enquiries, please contact the Communications team on 5662 9200
South Gippsland Shire Council, 9 Smith St. (Private Bag 4), Leongatha 3953
communications@southgippsland.vic.gov.au
www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au