

# Communication Plan

<b>Project:</b>	Northern Rivers Rail Trail
<b>Unit:</b>	Planning and Infrastructure
<b>Directorate:</b>	Engineering
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Leon McLean
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Leon McLean
<b>Date:</b>	v1: 19 May 2014. v2: 27 May 2014. v3: 25 September 2014

Visit the [Communications Toolbox](#) for a wide range of templates to assist your project.

## Delivery Program / Operational Plan

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|--------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>Civic Leadership</b>          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>Supporting Community Life</b>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>Strengthening the Economy</b> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |  | <b>Caring for the Environment</b> |

Strategy Number:	2.4	Item Number:	2.4.3
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## Community Engagement Strategy

View Council's [Community Engagement Strategy](#) for assistance with definitions.

### Impact of Project (please tick one only).

- Shire-wide / High Impact:** Strategic plans, major projects and resource issues.
- Shire-wide / Low Impact:** Management Plans and Policy Development, minor projects and major projects with limited impact.
- Locality Based / High Impact:** Locality improvement and site specific matters and events or small audience numbers in comparison to the Tweed population.
- Locality Based / Low Impact:** Council service / program planning and delivery.

### Stages of engagement for this project (please tick one only)

- Inform - Keep the community informed about the project.**  
When a project involves one-way communication that requires straight forward awareness/promotion consider using the [Quick Communication Checklist](#), rather than a full communication plan.
- Consult and Inform - Listen to community members, consider their ideas and concerns and keep them informed.**
- Involve/Collaborate, Consult and Inform - Work with community members so their ideas, concerns and aspirations are considered.**

## **Introduction/Background**

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Council is liaising with State Government and the other three local governments along the Casino to Murwillumbah rail corridor to investigate the creation of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. Council is also involved in discussions with community groups about the proposed trails, including Northern Rivers Rail Trail Incorporated.

Initial investigations have shown the rail corridor, its scenic surrounds and the attractions it would link have the attributes to be a very popular rail trail, to replicate the success of similar projects throughout the world.

Rail trails throughout Australia and overseas have proven to be popular tourist attractions, often bringing economic benefits to rural towns and villages that are otherwise in decline.

Rail trail tourists are typically middle aged, well-educated cycling enthusiasts who prefer quality accommodation and good food. Numerous examples around the world show rail trails attract millions of dollars in tourist spending and create new jobs to service trail users.

## **History**

The Casino to Murwillumbah Rail Line was opened in 1894, a single-track, standard-gauge railway line spanning 130km through the four local government areas of Bryon, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Tweed.

A daily return express passenger train (XPT) service between Murwillumbah to Casino, and continuing to Sydney, operated from 1990 to ceased in April 2004, following a decision by NSW Government to suspend rail services. A replacement bus service has been in operation since this time.

Subsequent studies into future use of the Murwillumbah to Casino rail corridor have been unable to demonstrate the viability of reinstating rail services, because of patronage levels and the cost of necessary upgrades to the rail line. The most recent study, the Casino to Murwillumbah Transport Study concludes an improvement of bus services offers the most potential to address the area's transport needs of the study area and recommends rail services remain suspended.

Council's May 2013 meeting noted the study's recommendations about train services with regret and resolved to actively support and promote the establishment of a Northern Rivers Rail Trail on the Casino to Murwillumbah rail corridor

In November 2013, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, appointed Arup Pty Ltd to undertake a scoping study to investigate converting the corridor into a rail trail. The results of the feasibility study were released in June 2014 and found that:

1. The regional rail trail would cost approximately \$75.5 million
2. At the predicted visitation levels *the rail trail would be financially viable.*

Following the release of the feasibility study, the Deputy Premier asked Infrastructure NSW to assess whether this rail trail should be considered for some level of Government funding. The outcome of this assessment is yet to be announced.

In addition, the NSW Government is currently considering a proposed amendment to the Transport Administration Act 1988 that would allow disused rail corridors to be used for rail trails.

The Murwillumbah to Casino rail corridor is disused, poorly maintained and provides no benefit to the community, leaving it vulnerable to being permanently closed and sold off. Establishing a rail trail on the corridor would mean the asset is utilised, maintained and once again a community asset, protecting the corridor from closure and ensuring portions of the land are not sold.

The corridor is overgrown with weeds and valuable rail heritage, such as railway stations and bridges, continues to deteriorate unchecked. The creation of a rail trail would ensure weeds are controlled, bush is regenerated and heritage-listed items and other infrastructure is maintained.

It is proposed the rail trail would be constructed in a number of stages, starting with a 2.5km pilot rail trail for pedestrians and cyclists from the Murwillumbah railway station to Tweed Regional Gallery. (See communication plan for pilot rail trail).

## **Communication Objectives**

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- Enhance community awareness and support for the Northern Rivers Rail Trail
- Demonstrate community support to encourage State and Federal Government commitment to the project

# Communication Plan

- Demonstrate Council support for the rail trail

## **Key Messages**

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- The Northern Rivers Rail Trail would bring a considerable injection of life and economic activity in Murwillumbah and the rest of the region
- Murwillumbah would be the northern gateway to the Northern Rivers Rail Trail, which would be a national and international tourism attraction.
- The Northern Rivers Rail Trail would provide a safe environment for recreation and commuting for cyclists and pedestrians, building upon the Murwillumbah railway station to Tweed Regional Gallery pilot rail trail.
- The Northern Rivers Rail Trail fits perfectly into the region's push for eco-tourism.
- A recent independent transport study found it was not economically feasible to restore train services along the Murwillumbah to Casino rail line, including a light rail service
- Much of the existing rail infrastructure would need to be replaced before a train service could resume along the corridor, so removing that infrastructure for a rail trail would not endanger any long-term restoration of train services
- Creating a rail trail along the corridor would help ensure the land remained in public ownership
- Reinstating rail services will not meet existing and future public transport needs for the region and patronage demand does not warrant the significant investment (in excess of \$900 million) needed for a safe operational rail corridor.
- The experiences of other rail trails in Australia indicate they do not bring an increase in crime, littering, burglary, trespassing or vandalism

## **Secondary messages**

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- The Northern Rivers Rail Trail will assist with efforts to make the Tweed community more active and healthy
- The rail trail will reactivate the corridor and create opportunities for bush regeneration and weed control
- Will boost non-motorised transport and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Council officers are available to speak personally to any residents who have any questions or concerns about the rail trail.

## **Target Audience / Stakeholders**

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### **Primary**

- Tweed Shire residents
- Residents and property owners adjoining the rail corridor
- Northern Rivers residents
- Bicycle user groups
- Councillors and Council staff

### **Secondary**

- Media

## **Equity Stakeholders**

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Tweed Shire Council  
NSW State Government  
Federal Government (depending on the source of any grant funding)

# Communication Plan

## Issues Matrix

Issue	Affected Target Audiences	Impact/Implication	Mitigation Measures (optional section)
<i>There has been a long-running anti-rail trail campaign by lobby group, Trains on our Tracks, which receives considerable media exposure.</i>	<i>Tweed residents</i>	<i>TOOT lobbying could erode community and business support for the rail trail.</i>	<i>Campaign materials will address issues raised by TOOT's campaign information, including the findings of a transport study that it is not economically feasible to restore train services along the Murwillumbah to Casino rail corridor.</i>
<i>There has been a long-running anti-rail trail campaign by lobby group, Trains on our Tracks, which received considerable media exposure.</i>	<i>Tweed residents</i>	<i>TOOT lobbying could erode community and business support for the rail trail.</i>	<i>Project representatives will liaise with Northern Rivers Rail Trail officers to respond to media reports and letters by TOOT which campaign against the rail trail.</i>
<i>The existence of two concurrent projects - the pilot project and the larger Northern Rivers Rail Trail - could create confusion for some members of the community.</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>People confused by the potentially conflicting messages of two very similar and associated projects could become resistant to the pilot project because they don't fully understand it.</i>	<i>Campaign information will carefully explain the two projects and how they relate to one another.</i>
<i>There is a negative perception of cyclists among some motorists, often enflamed by divisive media coverage.</i>	<i>Residents</i>	<i>General negativity towards cyclists among some road users could, by association, lead to some opposition to the rail trail if it's perceived as an expensive facility just for cyclists.</i>	<i>Campaign material will emphasise the rail trail pilot is not just for cyclists, but would be used by pedestrians, young families, people with wheelchairs and other mobility device, and horse riders.</i>
<i>There is a negative perception of cyclists among some motorists, often enflamed by divisive media coverage.</i>	<i>Residents</i>	<i>General negativity towards cyclists among some road users could, by association, lead to some opposition to the rail trail if it's perceived as an expensive facility just for cyclists.</i>	<i>Campaign material will emphasise the rail trail pilot will help reduce bicycle traffic on the roads.</i>
<i>There is still some hope among Northern Rivers resident that a train service could be restored to the corridor in the future.</i>	<i>Tweed residents Northern Rivers residents</i>	<i>Could create community uncertainty about supporting the rail trail</i>	<i>Campaign material will emphasise the rail trail pilot will help preserve the existing rail corridor, by keeping the land in public ownership and encouraging maintenance of weeds etc.</i>
<i>There is still some hope among Northern Rivers resident that a train service could be restored to the corridor in the future.</i>	<i>Tweed residents Northern Rivers residents</i>	<i>Could create community uncertainty about supporting the rail trail</i>	<i>Campaign material will emphasise the existing sleepers; ballast and bridges would need to be replaced if train services were ever restored. Therefore, removing or altering the existing</i>

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			<i>infrastructure for a rail trail would not inhibit the return of train services in the future if they ever became viable.</i>
<i>The experiences of creating similar rail trails in other parts of Australia and overseas has revealed concerns among adjoining landholders about a possible increase in antisocial behaviour.</i>	<i>Adjoining landholders</i>	<i>Could reduce neighbouring landholders' support for the rail trail</i>	<i>Campaign material will emphasise that all previous rail trails in Australia and New Zealand have not brought any increase in vandalism, theft or other forms of antisocial behaviour.</i>
<i>The experiences of creating similar rail trails in other parts of Australia and overseas has revealed concerns among adjoining landholders about a possible increase in antisocial behaviour.</i>	<i>Adjoining landholders</i>	<i>Could reduce neighbouring landholders' support for the rail trail</i>	<i>Campaign material will emphasise that the experience of rail trails in Australia and New Zealand have shown the people who use the rails trails are typically not the type of people who engage in antisocial behaviour. In fact, the positive use of the corridor would provide better surveillance of the corridor, compared to the current situation.</i>

## **Timeline**

This communication plan only covers investigations and planning for the Tweed portion of the regional rail trail. A separate plan will be created for the construction, official opening and subsequent promotions of the Murwillumbah to Tweed Regional Gallery Pilot Project.

The timeframe for this communication campaign is governed by the timing of a state government announcement. The Murwillumbah to TRAG Rail Trail project is intended to be 'shovel ready' in time for an anticipated change in legislation, to enable rail trails, is passed. Key milestones and deadlines (identified in the [Implementation Plan](#)) for the project are:

- Mid 2014 - Release of State Government's Rail Trail Feasibility Study
- October 2014: Public exhibition of concept designs
- November 2014: End of public exhibition
- January 2014: Completion of detailed design
- January 2014: Finalise approval for design
- January 2014: Project is 'Shovel Ready'

## **Budget**

Total budget for communication activities is \$10,000. Itemised budget is detailed in the [Implementation Plan](#).

## **Evaluation**

Discuss methodology for evaluating your project to see if the communication tools worked and your project was a success. Provide tangible outcomes where possible and always consider ways to measure and receive customer feedback both during and on completion of the project. See [Communications and Marketing Toolkit](#).

## Communication Plan – Implementation Table

Dates/Schedules	Target Audience	Communication Method	Distribution Methods	Budget	Action Officer and Additional Comments
Completed June 2014	All	<b>Customer Contact Centre</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Corporate Knowledge Base</li> <li>Provide contact centre staff with copies of the fact sheets</li> <li>Brief contact centre staff</li> <li>Provide FAQs</li> </ul>	Council's offices in Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads		Danny Rose Scott Green Sue Thompson
Completed June 2014	All	<b>Website</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update website content</li> <li>Provide FAQs</li> <li>Attach pdf of factsheet</li> <li>Provide link to Destination Tweed rail trail video on Council's YouTube page</li> <li>Provide link to NRRT page</li> <li>Provide link to website for existing rail trails in Australia and overseas</li> </ul>	Web		Craig Heyen Leon McLean Scott Green
Completed 16/6/14  As required	All	<b>Tweed Link</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articles                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release of feasibility study / Council response</li> <li>Murwillumbah to TRAC Rail Trail completed, time to look beyond for Northern Rivers Rail Trail</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Distributed by Australia Post to 40,500 Tweed households		Michael Patterson Leon McLean Scott Green
<b>As required</b>	All	<b>Advertising / features</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paid advertising</li> <li>Relevant milestones</li> </ul>	Paid advertising in Tweed Newspapers		Scott Green Leon McLean
Completed 16/6/14  As required	Media	<b>Media releases</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release of feasibility study / Council response</li> <li>Murwillumbah to TRAC Rail Trail completed, time to look beyond for Northern Rivers Rail Trail</li> </ul>	Distributed through Council's electronic subscription distribution network		Leon McLean Scott Green

## Communication Plan – Implementation Table

Dates/Schedules	Target Audience	Communication Method	Distribution Methods	Budget	Action Officer and Additional Comments
Late 2014	Media	<b>Direct contact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Northern Star newspaper to discuss feature or series of articles on Northern Rivers Rail Trail</li> </ul>	Direct contact		Scott Green Leon McLean
Late 2014	Media	<b>Direct contact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Prime Television to discuss feature or series of articles on Northern Rivers Rail Trail</li> </ul>	Direct contact		Scott Green Leon McLean
October 2014	Rural Landowners adjacent rail corridor	<b>Direct Contact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural landowners identified as 'high priority' (residence/farm operations within 50m of rail corridor) to be contacted directly and met with to discuss concerns</li> </ul>	Direct contact		Scott Green Leon McLean
Late 2014	Media	<b>Site visit / media opportunity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site visit to one of the bridges etc that would need to be replaced before train services could be restored</li> <li>To show the state of disrepair of infrastructure and an example of assets that would need to be replaced</li> </ul>	Site tour		David Oxenham Barry Longland Scott Green Leon McLean
Late 2014	Bike path users	<b>Onsite signs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signs along existing cycle / pedestrian paths</li> <li>Could read 'Imagine if you could ride all the way from Murwillumbah to Casino without riding on the roads'</li> <li>Direct readers to website</li> </ul>	Direct contact		Scott Green Leon McLean
October 2014	All	<b>Promotional material</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated brochure with finalised detailed plans</li> <li>Direct readers to website</li> </ul>	Council officers Visitor information centres Website Cycling events/clubs Walking clubs Tweed Regional Gallery		Michael Patterson Scott Green Leon McLean

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Dates/Schedules	Target Audience	Communication Method	Distribution Methods	Budget	Action Officer and Additional Comments
October 2014	Landholders along rail corridor	<b>Direct contact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phone / send letter to each household / landowner</li> <li>Invitation for personal briefing (see below)</li> <li>Follow-up email with link to website</li> </ul> <b>Personal briefing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite large-area landholders to meeting with Project Manager and Director of Engineering</li> <li>Provide with existing brochure</li> <li>Provide with testimonials/websites/promotional information/ contacts from existing rail trails.</li> <li>Direct to website</li> </ul>	Phone call / Direct mail  Email  Personal briefing		Scott Green Leon McLean  David Oxenham Leon McLean Scott Green
Late 2014	All	<b>Community displays</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travelling medium-term rail trail display at libraries in Tweed, Byron, Lismore and Richmond libraries</li> <li>Updated brochure               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct to website</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Community displays		Scott Green Leon McLean
Late 2014	All	<b>Onsite signage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotional sign near Murwillumbah railway station</li> <li>Teaser about future rail trail</li> <li>Direct readers to website</li> </ul>	Onsite sign		Michael Patterson Scott Green Leon McLean Sign shop
As required	All	<b>Council facilitated events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information stall at official opening of Arkinstall Park</li> <li>Teaser about future rail trail</li> <li>Direct readers to website</li> </ul>	Onsite sign		Michael Patterson Scott Green Leon McLean Sign shop
2014	Visitors to Murwillumbah	<b>Display at visitor information centre</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long-term rail trail display at Rainforest Information Centre</li> <li>Updated brochure</li> <li>Direct to website</li> </ul>	Display		Scott Green Leon McLean Sign shop
September 2014	Residents and ratepayers associations	<b>Direct mail</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct mail to association</li> <li>Provide with existing brochure</li> </ul>	Direct mail		Leon McLean Scott Green



## Communication Plan – Implementation Table

Dates/Schedules	Target Audience	Communication Method	Distribution Methods	Budget	Action Officer and Additional Comments
	Murwillumbah Mooball Stokers Siding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite to contact Project Manager for further information</li> <li>• Provide with testimonials/websites/promotional information from existing rail trails.</li> <li>• Direct to website</li> </ul>			
September 2014          Completed March 2014	Murwillumbah District Chamber of Commerce  Tweed Heads	<p><b>Direct mail</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct mail to chamber <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise about public exhibition of concept plan</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide with existing brochure</li> <li>• Invite to contact Project Manager for further information</li> <li>• Provide with testimonials/websites/promotional information from existing rail trails.</li> <li>• Direct to website</li> </ul> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address chamber meeting</li> <li>• Provide with updated brochure</li> <li>• Invite to contact Project Manager for further information</li> <li>• Direct to website</li> </ul>	Direct mail          Presentation		Leon McLean Scott Green          Leon McLean, David Oxenham, Barry Longland, or Bill Tatchell
Completed June 2014	Cycling/walking groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Murwillumbah Cycle Club</li> <li>• Tweed BUG</li> <li>• Tweed Valley Triathletes</li> <li>• Tweed Valley Mountain Bike Club</li> <li>• Organised walking groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Direct mail</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct mail to each group</li> <li>• Provide with existing brochure</li> <li>• Invite to contact Project Manager for further information</li> <li>• Provide with testimonials/websites/promotional information from existing rail trails.</li> <li>• Direct to website</li> </ul>	Direct mail		Leon McLean Scott Green
Quarterly. Ongoing	Cycling/walking groups	<p><b>Meetings by invitation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular Council meetings with cycling group representatives</li> </ul>	Meeting by invitation		Leon McLean Scott Green

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Dates/Schedules	Target Audience	Communication Method	Distribution Methods	Budget	Action Officer and Additional Comments
Ongoing	Northern Rivers Rail Trails	<b>Meetings by invitation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular Council meetings with NRRT</li> </ul>	Meeting by invitation		Leon McLean David Oxenham Scott Green
Ongoing	Council staff	<b>InsideOut</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff progress in promoting Northern Rivers Rail Trail</li> </ul>	Council's intranet and delivered to Council field staff with payslips		Leon McLean Michael Patterson Scott Green
If requested	Councillors	<b>Personal briefing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop to outline project update</li> <li>Provide with existing brochure</li> <li>Direct to website</li> </ul>	Workshop		Leon McLean David Oxenham

# Engagement Matrix

	What to do?	When you are dealing with...			
	1 = every time 2 = in most circumstances 3 = on specific occasions 4 = on rare occasions	Shire-wide / High Impact	Shire-wide / Low Impact	Locality Based / High Impact	Locality Based / Low Impact
<b>INFORM</b>	Customer Contact Centre	1	1	1	1
	Tweed Shire Council website	1	1	1	3
	Tweed Link/Advertising/Features	1	1	2	3
	Media Release	1	1	2	3
	Publications/information material	1	2	2	4
	Councillors' community catch up	3	4	2	3
	Social Networking	2	2	3	3
	Council facilitated events	4	4	4	4
	Letterbox Drop	4	4	3	3
	Targeted Direct Mail	2	2	2	3
	Presentation/Public Speaking	2	3	3	4
	Community Notice Boards	3	3	3	3
	Site Specific Signage	3	3	3	3
<b>CONSULT</b>	Tweed Shire Council website (eg: On Exhibition)	2	3	3	4
	Community Conversation	3	3	2	3
	Public exhibitions/submissions	1	2	3	4
	Community displays/information sessions	2	2	3	4
	Surveys	3	4	4	4
	Site Meeting/Tour	2	3	2	4
	Personal briefing	1	1	2	2
	Tweed Shire Council website (moderated forums)	3	3	3	4
	Meetings by invitation	1	2	2	4
<b>INVOLVE / COLLABORATE</b>	Meetings with Council committees/advisory groups	1	3	3	4
	Large Group/Stakeholder Collaboration	2	2	3	4