



Northern Rivers Rail Trail: Tweed Section

Economic Impact Assessment Report

April 2024

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Acknowledgement

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Muller Enterprise wishes to express its appreciation to the many contributors to this document. Without these people's generosity and candour, the material within this document would not be as insightful or informative.

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Executive Summary

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail (NRRT) has been a catalyst for economic growth in the Tweed.

The opening of the Tweed Section (March 2023) of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail (NRRT) has positively impacted the region's economy. This report combines quantitative economic analysis and insights from business operators to assess the early impacts of the NRRT and its future potential as a regional economic driver.

Key Findings

Strong Economic Impact: The Tweed Section has attracted significant visitor spending, driving a 15.7% average increase in monthly spend compared to the previous year. It has stimulated growth in unique visitors (+23% year-over-year) and visitor transactions (+19% year-over-year).

Benefits for Businesses: Businesses along the trail report increased visibility, foot traffic, and in many cases, higher revenues. The NRRT has boosted tourism in both Murwillumbah and less-frequented hinterland villages.

Challenges and Opportunities: Challenges include shifts in the competitive landscape, inadequate parking in some areas, and the need for more trail amenities. Opportunities lie in adapting business offerings to cater to diverse trail user preferences.

Contrast with Original Economic Assessment for Tweed NRRT: After considering the outcomes of the first year of operation, and assuming the first year of the rail trail remains representative, this analysis suggests that the local economy should expect an additional \$114.3m in visitor expenditure flowing into the Tweed LGA over the term of the rail corridor lease (30 years) – this represents a 54% increase over the originally anticipated boost to the local visitor economy attributable to the Tweed section of the NRRT.

Recommendations

Leverage the NRRT Business Connect Program: Businesses should actively engage with this program to access resources, marketing support, and collaborate with other stakeholders.

Tailor Offerings: Businesses should understand trail users' needs and preferences, customising their services and products accordingly.

Seek Support and Resources: Businesses should tap into government programs, regional tourism bodies, and business chambers for assistance and guidance.

Collaborate: Businesses should work together to maximise benefits and tackle challenges, fostering a vibrant business community along the trail.

Conclusion

The early success of the NRRT's Tweed Section demonstrates the power of recreational infrastructure to invigorate regional economies. By addressing challenges and capitalising on opportunities, the NRRT has the potential to become a major economic engine for the Tweed LGA within the Northern Rivers region, attracting visitors, supporting businesses, and enhancing the overall quality of life for regional communities.

Introduction

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail (NRRT) project aims to transform the entirety of the disused Casino to Murwillumbah railway corridor into a multi-use recreational trail.

It is anticipated that the completed trail will offer a scenic and accessible path for walkers, cyclists, and nature enthusiasts, connecting vibrant communities along its route.

The first section of the NRRT to open is the Tweed Section. The Tweed Section of the NRRT, running over 24km between Murwillumbah Station and Wooyung Road near Crabbes Creek, opened on 1st March 2023.

The anniversary of the opening of the Tweed Section from Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek Tweed Section marks a significant milestone in the NRRT's development. This section has seen a boost regional tourism, has promoted healthy lifestyles within the community, and has stimulated the local economy.

This report - intended for operators, policymakers, and businesses - focuses on assessing the early impact of the Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek Tweed Section of the NRRT. Combining stakeholder feedback with quantitative data analysis, the report aims to provide a clear picture of the economic benefits that the NRRT has brought, and how it the NRRT as a regionally significant visitation attraction might be further harnessed to increase business activity and the overall economic prosperity of the Northern Rivers region.

Methodology

The assessment undertaken to prepare this report incorporates 2 main research methods to provide a comprehensive evaluation:

Qualitative Stakeholder-sourced Insights

- **Survey of Businesses:** A targeted survey distributed to businesses in the proximity of the rail trail gathered initial insights into the perceived economic impacts. The survey target both [‘Business Connect’](#) program businesses and those not currently aligned with the program.
- **Interviews:** Based on the survey results, we selected a representative sample of businesses for interviews. These interviews delved into:
 - Specific benefits and economic opportunities related to the trail.
 - Challenges and areas for improvement.
 - Recommendations for maximising the trail's impacts.
 - Changes in key metrics (such as revenue or foot traffic) since the trail's opening.

Stakeholder Category Profile

The mix of businesses approach for the exercise was made up of various categories of providers. A total of 26 stakeholders were included in the exercise. The categories represented in this cohort are set out below:

Accommodation provider = 1

Arts and Leisure = 9 (includes 7 cycling related businesses)

Community organisation = 1

Food and Beverage = 13

General Retail = 4

Quantitative Economic Analysis

- **Commonwealth Bank Council IQ Data:** This platform provides rich insights into economic activity:
 - **Visitor and Local Spending:** Granular data on spending patterns, revealing how much visitors contribute to local businesses across different categories (e.g., food, accommodation, retail). This also shows spending changes over time in comparison to areas without a rail trail.
 - **Locality-Specific Insights:** The ability to focus on smaller localities along the trail reveal where the economic impacts are most pronounced, offering a nuanced picture of the trail's benefits. It also highlights spend arising from rail trail visitors across other areas of the Tweed Shire.

Methodological Constraints

- **Data availability:** The availability and quality of spending data within the Commonwealth Bank Council IQ reports varies depending on the level of merchant participation and data collection agreements. CommBank iQ banking transaction data is based on de-identified, privacy treated CBA retail banking transactions including credit card, debit card & EFTPOS. Data is normalised to be representative of the Australian 18+ population.
- **Timeframe:** Since the trail section opened relatively recently, the analysis will primarily focus on capturing early impacts. This means that the long-term economic benefits may not yet be fully realised.
- **Survey and interview reach:** The response rate of the business survey and the number of businesses willing to participate in in-depth interviews influence the richness of the qualitative data.
- **Causality or Attribution:** While the analysis demonstrates correlations between the trail's operation and economic data, proving direct causality can be challenging as other factors (like seasonality or general economic trends) also influence spending patterns. Notably, comparing the period of the NRRT Tweed Section from 1st March 2023 to 29th February 2024 with the 12 months preceding that will likely also reflect the re-establishment of tourism levels in the Tweed following COVID and also during a widely reported downturn in consumer spending on non-essential goods and services.

Attempts to addressing these methodological constraints in the report have included:

- **Transparency:** Clearly identifying the limitations of the data and methodologies used in the report.
- **Triangulation:** Use of multiple data sources (qualitative and quantitative) has helped offset some limitations and enhance confidence in the findings.
- **Framing:** Presenting the analysis as capturing early impacts of the trail, with the potential for longer-term benefits to be evaluated in future studies.
- **Recommendations for future research:** Consider suggesting additional studies to address limitations, such as longitudinal studies over an extended period or broader surveys for increased representation.

Quantitative Analysis

The following materials are a presentation of numerical data from CBA's [Council IQ](#) reporting.

Geographically, the CBA Council IQ data shown below addresses the area adjacent to the Tweed section of the NRRT – specifically from Murwillumbah Railway Station to Crabbes Creek.

The time period the data below addresses includes each month from March 2022 to Feb 2024. Each of the months are compared with the same month 1 year prior. The NRRT Tweed Section opened in March 2023. The data for the period from March 2022 to February 2023 – the period directly preceding the opening of the NRRT Tweed Section – is compared to the data from the period March 2023 and February 2024.

The data only reflects the spend of visitors to the area – this is defined as those people making transactions who have a residential postal code address located outside the study area.

The following data reflects:

- the total amount of spend in \$AUD,
- the change in spend compared to the spend 1-year prior in \$AUD,
- the change in spend compared to the spend 1-year prior expressed as a percentage.

Area:	Rail Trail			
Spend Type:	Visitors			
Month	Monthly Spend Prior to Rail Trail Operation	Monthly Spend Post Rail Trail Operation	\$ change	% change
March	\$1,715,000	\$ 3,110,000	\$ 1,395,000	81%
April	\$2,753,000	\$ 3,560,000	\$ 807,000	29%
May	\$2,537,000	\$ 3,236,000	\$ 699,000	28%
June	\$2,963,000	\$ 3,305,000	\$ 342,000	12%
July#	\$11,837,000	\$ 10,936,000	-\$ 901,000	-8%
August	\$2,994,000	\$ 3,365,000	\$ 371,000	12%
September	\$3,141,000	\$ 3,450,000	\$ 309,000	10%
October	\$2,955,000	\$ 3,383,000	\$ 428,000	14%
November	\$3,026,000	\$ 3,230,000	\$ 204,000	7%
December	\$3,649,000	\$ 3,790,000	\$ 141,000	4%
January	\$3,411,000	\$ 3,207,000	-\$ 204,000	-6%
February	\$2,587,000	\$ 2,713,000	\$ 126,000	5%
Total change in \$ spend across period & the average percentage change for each month across the period			\$ 3,717,000	15.7%

Note that during July of both 2022 and 2023, a music festival (Splendour in the Grass) was held in the vicinity of the places where this data was captured. Festival attendance for 2022 was approximately 42,500 people, whereas for 2023 it was approximately 35,000. The festival's occurrence in July and the variation in attendance numbers between the years has influenced the data shown here and below.

Monthly Transactions			
Area:	Rail Trail		
Spend Type:	Visitors		
Month	Monthly Transactions Prior to Rail Trail Operation	Monthly Transactions Post Rail Trail Operation	% Change on year prior
March	41,800	75,100	80%
April	66,100	86,900	31%
May	59,100	84,100	42%
June	67,600	77,700	15%
July	388,700	368,100	-5%
August	73,000	79,900	9%
September	70,300	85,100	21%
October	67,500	82,200	22%
November	71,400	78,800	10%
December	86,200	89,300	4%
January	83,200	78,500	-6%
February	65,200	67,300	3%
Average monthly change in number of transactions across period			19%

Unique Customers			
Area:	Rail Trail		
Spend Type:	Visitors		
Month	Monthly Unique Customers Prior to Rail Trail Operation	Monthly Unique Customers Post Rail Trail Operation	% Change on year prior
April	14,200	27,500	94%
May	25,300	34,500	36%
June	21,500	31,300	46%
July	23,800	29,800	25%
August	73,400	66,500	-9%
September	26,100	30,400	16%
October	25,700	32,600	27%
November	24,800	30,400	23%
December	25,600	28,900	13%
January	30,100	32,100	7%
February	31,400	29,100	-7%
April	23,300	24,600	6%
Average monthly change in the number of unique customers across the period			23%

The data above indicates that:

- a) there has been an increase in the number of unique visitors spending in the report study area – a 23% increase year on year.
- b) the total value of visitor spend has increased – by \$3.717m year on year.
- c) the number of visitor transactions have increased – 19% increase year on year.

These increases exceed the levels of related categories of expenditure more broadly across the economy where expenditure associated with outdoor recreation and tourist attractions were known to have increased at levels of 4% and 7% respectively year on year (to September 2023).

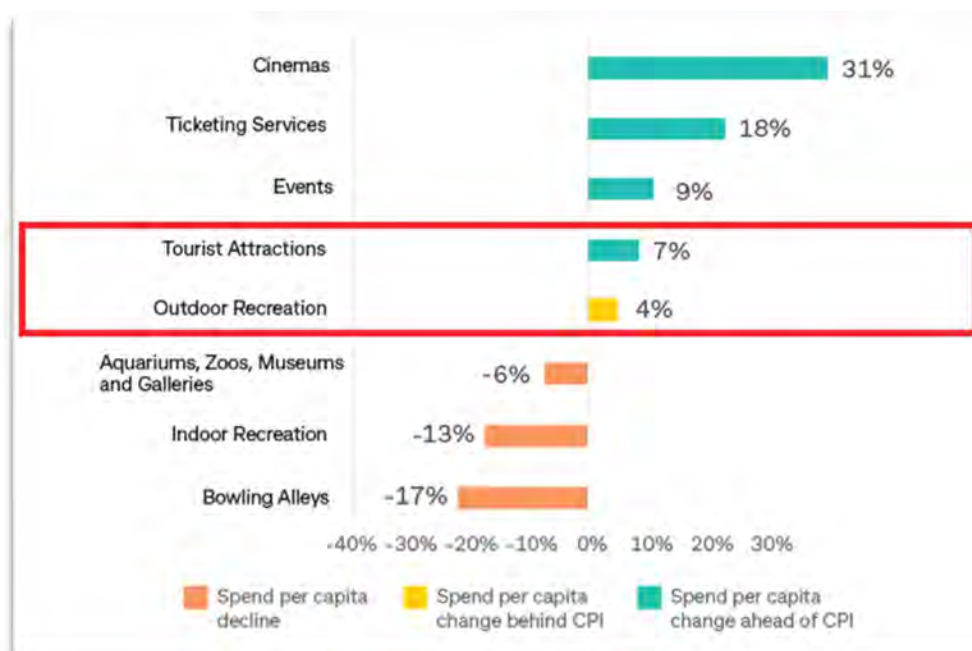


Table: *Spending on Experiences* - Year-on-year changes in spending on entertainment sub-categories, Sept 2023; Source: CBA, *Cost of Living Insights Report*, Nov 2023

The data analysis reveals significant economic impacts following the opening of the NRRT (Northern Rivers Rail Trail) Tweed Section in March 2023, demonstrating its positive influence on the Tweed Local Government Area (LGA). Here's an analytical commentary on the findings:

Increase in Unique Visitor Numbers (23% Year on Year):

The 23% increase in unique visitors to the Tweed LGA underscores the NRRT's role as a significant drawcard for tourists. This surge suggests the trail's appeal extends beyond local enthusiasts to attract interstate and potentially international visitors. The attraction likely stems from the unique experiences offered by the NRRT, such as scenic views, cultural heritage sites, and improved access to the region's natural landscapes. This influx of visitors contributes to the local economy not only through direct spending on the trail but also in surrounding areas as visitors explore local attractions, dine in restaurants, and shop in local stores.

Rise in Total Value of Visitor Spend (by \$3.717m Year on Year):

The substantial increase in visitor spending underscores the direct financial benefits accruing to the region from the NRRT. This boost in economic activity highlights the trail's capacity to significantly influence the local economy, impacting various sectors including hospitality, retail, and services. The additional revenue has encouraged new business ventures and expansions, enhancing the Tweed LGA's economic vitality and sustainability. Furthermore, this financial impact can have multiplier effects, leading to job creation and increased local government revenue through rates and fees, facilitating further public and community investments.

Growth in Number of Visitor Transactions (19% Increase Year on Year):

The rise in transaction volume by 19% year-on-year indicates not only an increase in the number of visitors but also an uplift in economic engagement per visitor. This metric suggests that the NRRT has stimulated more frequent spending among visitors, reflecting a vibrant and active economic environment. It may also point to a broadening of the economic base with more diverse spending across a range of sectors, from accommodation and food services to bike rentals and repair services, contributing to a more resilient local economy.

The NRRT's positive economic impacts extend beyond these quantitative measures. The trail enhances the Tweed LGA's attractiveness as a destination for active tourism, which can lead to long-term sustainable growth. It aligns with increasing consumer preference for outdoor and wellness-related activities, potentially positioning the Tweed LGA as a premier destination for these markets.

Moreover, the trail's success can act as a catalyst for further infrastructure and community development projects, leveraging the increased visitor numbers and spending to improve local amenities and services. This could include the expansion of existing businesses or the establishment of new ones, further diversifying the local economy.

In conclusion, the NRRT has contributed to the economic vitality of the Tweed LGA, demonstrating the value of investing in recreational infrastructure that leverages natural and cultural assets to attract visitors. For stakeholders, including local businesses and government agencies, this data provides a compelling argument for continued support and development of similar projects that enhance the region's appeal and drive economic growth.

Actual Economic Impacts and the Expected Benefits

In 2016, the Tweed Shire Council commissioned a [Business Case](#) and an [Economic Assessment](#) to determine the anticipated benefits arising from the development of the Tweed Section of the NRRT.

That material anticipated an increase in the number of visitors to the region of 1.9% or in number terms 27,100 additional visitors to the LGA. It was expected that those additional visitors would contribute approximately \$2.45m in expenditure to the local economy in the first year, and that this contribution from increased visitation would continue to grow at a rate of 5% annually for the first 10 years of the NRRT's operation, and then growth in visitors would slow to a 3% growth rate following that.

As we can see from the data above, there has been an actual increase in expenditure during the first year of the Tweed Section of the NRRT's operation that amounts to \$3.717m.

This analysis – assuming the first year of the rail trail remains representative – suggests that the local economy should expect an additional \$114.3m in visitor expenditure flowing into the Tweed LGA over the term of the rail corridor lease (30 years) – this represents a 54% increase over the originally anticipated boost to the local visitor economy attributable to the Tweed section of the NRRT.

It should be noted here that, whilst these figures are substantial, research indicates that longer rail trails, with more diversity of visitation product, are known to invoke higher levels of visitation and longer trips with higher levels of visitor spend (stemming, for example, from additional nights' accommodation and meals). Given that the Tweed Section represents only 24km (18.6%) of the proposed entire NRRT length of 128.8km, it is plausible that the level of visitation and the associated visitor expenditure could be increased further once the entire Murwillumbah to Casino rail corridor is available as a connected Rail Trail.

2018 Business Case Predictions			Yr1 Actual Data with Forecasts Derived From Yr1		Cummulative Additional Spend Difference
	Predicted Additional Visitors	Predicted Additional Visitor Spend	Forecast Additional Visitors	Forecast Additional Visitor Spend	
Year 1	27,100	\$ 2,450,000	102,200	\$ 3,717,000	\$ 1,267,000
Year 2	28,455	\$ 2,636,813	107,310	\$ 4,000,421	\$ 2,630,609
Year 3	29,878	\$ 2,837,869	112,676	\$ 4,305,453	\$ 4,098,193
Year 4	31,372	\$ 3,054,257	118,309	\$ 4,633,744	\$ 5,677,680
Year 5	32,940	\$ 3,287,144	124,225	\$ 4,987,067	\$ 7,377,603
Year 6	34,587	\$ 3,537,789	130,436	\$ 5,367,331	\$ 9,207,145
Year 7	36,317	\$ 3,807,545	136,958	\$ 5,776,590	\$ 11,176,190
Year 8	38,132	\$ 4,097,871	143,806	\$ 6,217,055	\$ 13,295,374
Year 9	40,039	\$ 4,410,333	150,996	\$ 6,691,105	\$ 15,576,147
Year 10	42,041	\$ 4,746,621	158,546	\$ 7,201,302	\$ 18,030,828
Year 11	43,302	\$ 5,011,245	166,473	\$ 7,750,402	\$ 20,769,984
Year 12	44,601	\$ 5,290,622	171,467	\$ 8,182,486	\$ 23,661,849
Year 13	45,939	\$ 5,585,574	176,611	\$ 8,638,660	\$ 26,714,934
Year 14	47,318	\$ 5,896,970	181,910	\$ 9,120,265	\$ 29,938,230
Year 15	48,737	\$ 6,225,726	187,367	\$ 9,628,720	\$ 33,341,224
Year 16	50,199	\$ 6,572,810	192,988	\$ 10,165,521	\$ 36,933,935
Year 17	51,705	\$ 6,939,245	198,778	\$ 10,732,249	\$ 40,726,939
Year 18	53,256	\$ 7,326,107	204,741	\$ 11,330,572	\$ 44,731,404
Year 19	54,854	\$ 7,734,538	210,883	\$ 11,962,251	\$ 48,959,117
Year 20	56,500	\$ 8,165,738	217,210	\$ 12,629,147	\$ 53,422,526
Year 21	58,195	\$ 8,620,978	223,726	\$ 13,333,222	\$ 58,134,769
Year 22	59,940	\$ 9,101,598	230,438	\$ 14,076,549	\$ 63,109,720
Year 23	61,739	\$ 9,609,012	237,351	\$ 14,861,317	\$ 68,362,025
Year 24	63,591	\$ 10,144,714	244,471	\$ 15,689,835	\$ 73,907,146
Year 25	65,498	\$ 10,710,282	251,805	\$ 16,564,543	\$ 79,761,407
Year 26	67,463	\$ 11,307,380	259,360	\$ 17,488,017	\$ 85,942,043
Year 27	69,487	\$ 11,937,767	267,140	\$ 18,462,974	\$ 92,467,249
Year 28	71,572	\$ 12,603,297	275,155	\$ 19,492,284	\$ 99,356,236
Year 29	73,719	\$ 13,305,931	283,409	\$ 20,578,979	\$ 106,629,284
Year 30	75,931	\$ 14,047,737	291,911	\$ 21,726,257	\$ 114,307,804
		\$ 211,003,517		\$ 325,311,321	

Table: 2018 Economic Assessment figures contrasted with Year 1 actual figures with forecasts derived from the Year 1 actual visitation and visitation expenditure figures. Assumed inflation rates of 2.5%, assumed growth in visitor numbers of 5% for the first 10yrs and 3% beyond that point.

Qualitative Analysis

Business operators in the vicinity of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail (NRRT) have shared diverse experiences post the trail's opening.

Key themes include increased visibility of hinterland villages, changes in foot traffic, and varied impacts on sales.

Some businesses have faced challenges related to safety, accessibility, and increased competition, particularly from bike hire operators and mobile businesses.

The weather has affected business operations, with hot and rainy conditions deterring trail use.

Additionally, issues such as parking adequacy, regulatory disparities for internet-based businesses versus traditional retailers, and concerns like weed management have been highlighted.

Benefits and Challenges

Benefits:

Increased Exposure and Visitor Numbers:

The NRRT has heightened awareness of the region, drawing visitors to both Murwillumbah and hinterland villages, and boosting foot traffic significantly in some areas. The NRRT has acted as a magnet, drawing both local and non-local visitors to the region, thus shining a spotlight on hinterland villages and businesses that might previously have received limited attention. This increased footfall translates directly into higher visibility for these businesses, allowing them to tap into a broader customer base. The trail effectively markets the region's unique attractions and services to a wider audience without significant investment from individual businesses.

Economic Uplift:

A notable increase in sales and visitor spending has been reported, with some businesses experiencing a direct correlation between the NRRT's presence and enhanced economic activity. The direct correlation between the NRRT's presence and enhanced economic activity for nearby businesses is substantial. With an uptick in visitor spending, local economies benefit from a diversified income stream. This financial injection supports not only the businesses directly catering to NRRT users, such as cafes and bike hire shops, but also indirectly benefits the broader local economy through increased demand for local products and services, stimulating overall economic growth.

Community Engagement:

The trail has created opportunities for businesses to engage with new customer segments and contribute to the regional tourism offering. The NRRT fosters a sense of community by encouraging engagement between businesses and trail users. This engagement is demonstrated in local businesses adapting their offerings to meet the needs of trail users. The trail becomes a conduit for strengthening community ties, promoting local pride, and enhancing the area's social fabric through increased interaction and cooperation among residents, businesses, and visitors.

Challenges:

Commercial Landscape Changes:

Given the Northern Rivers Rail Trail (NRRT) is a relatively new addition to the region, local businesses are in a phase of transition, grappling with the opportunities and challenges it presents. The emergence of the NRRT has injected competitive pressures and regulatory challenges into the local business environment, necessitating a period of adaptation as these businesses strive to align with the evolving market dynamics.

To thrive in this new landscape, established businesses must develop an understanding of the many factors - such as seasonal, macroeconomic conditions, and demographic factors - that influence the trail's use and their business' relationship to that. This comprehension is pivotal in devising strategies that cater to the nuanced demands of this fresh customer base in a way that is economically viable. For instance, seasonal fluctuations and adverse weather conditions can significantly impact visitor numbers, prompting businesses to adjust their operations, staffing, and inventory accordingly.

Moreover, grasping the diverse preferences of different demographic segments among NRRT users—from families seeking leisurely excursions to avid cyclists embarking on multi-day adventures—enables businesses to tailor their services and products more effectively. This might include offering bike-friendly facilities, outdoor equipment, or catering options that appeal to a wide range of tastes and needs.

Infrastructure and Amenities Issues:

The development and operation of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail (NRRT) have indeed been a boon to regional tourism and local economies. However, as with any major infrastructure project, it has brought with it a set of challenges, particularly in terms of infrastructure and environmental management. Here's a more detailed look at these issues:

Parking Shortages: The influx of visitors drawn by the NRRT has led to parking shortages in areas adjacent to the trail. This scarcity of parking spaces can deter visitors from stopping at local businesses or create congestion in nearby areas, impacting both residents and business owners. The situation underscores the need for parking strategy considerations that accommodates both the increased volume of trail users and the needs of local communities.

Trail Amenities: Adequate amenities along the trail, such as rest areas, water stations, toilets, and bike repair stations, are essential for enhancing the user experience and encouraging longer stays. The absence of such facilities can limit the trail's appeal and reduce the potential economic benefit to surrounding businesses – although it is also true that they can also induce visitors to use facilities and shop with local businesses, which connects to earlier points about how new/changing market segments are catered for by businesses.

Recommendations

Flowing from the benefits and challenges that have been identified in the qualitative analysis above, a range of recommendations are presented below for the business community, business affiliated entities, and government agencies to consider and adapt to their existing arrangements.

Leverage the NRRT Business Connect Program:

Businesses should engage with the NRRT Business Connect Program, the NRRT team and respective Councils. This initiative is designed to foster collaboration among businesses, tourism operators, and other stakeholders, aligning them with the trail's ethos and customer base. By participating in this program, businesses can tap into a network that promotes local experiences, exceptional products, and unforgettable events across the program's areas of focus, i.e. Taste, Stay, Move, Explore, and Enjoy (see more here: <https://www.northernriversrailtrail.com.au/support/connect-program>). Equally as the NRRT development, operating and governance models all evolve the Business Connect program will need to be refined regularly to ensure an understanding of the program's value proposition is readily identified and can be kept compelling to all party's mutually benefit.

To ensure the success and ongoing operational viability of the NRRT, it is crucial for business operators to actively participate in and support the NRRT Connect program. By obtaining the necessary licences to operate in and around the NRRT, businesses can contribute to the trail's long-term sustainability while benefiting from the increased visitation and economic opportunities it brings. Compliant businesses will receive valuable support and recognition from the Councils, enhancing their visibility and competitiveness in the market.

The success of the NRRT Business Connect program is paramount to the ongoing operational viability of the entire Northern Rivers Rail Trail (NRRT). To achieve this, Councils must prioritise the implementation of a comprehensive Business Connect program for businesses operating in and around the NRRT. This involves developing a clear and efficient onboarding process for businesses, while also providing ongoing support and incentives for compliant businesses. Councils should engage in activities that bring value to licensed operators, such as quality information flow, promotional opportunities, training, and networking events. Simultaneously, Councils must undertake strict enforcement measures against non-compliant businesses to maintain the integrity and quality of the NRRT experience. By striking a balance between rewarding compliant businesses and discouraging those that do not adhere to the program requirements, Councils can foster a thriving and sustainable business ecosystem along the NRRT.

Tailor Products and Services to NRRT Users:

As part of their own ongoing business strategy and growth plans, businesses should seek an understanding of the specific needs and preferences of NRRT users - and where they decide to cater for that market - adjust their offerings to appeal to segments like families, cyclists, and adventure enthusiasts. This might involve creating bike-friendly amenities, group/family-oriented dining options, or where they recognise that their business is in a position to cater for

clearly distinct markets such as visitors and locals, take steps to ensure any market segment can patronise their business without diminishing the experience for other market segments.

Seek Support and Resources:

Tap into the resources and support offered by Councils – particularly the teams with Councils responsible for the NRRT, but also Federal and State Governments, regional tourism destination organisations, business chambers, and the NRRT Business Connect Program. This can include accessing market research, financial assistance for business adjustments, and guidance on regulatory compliance to ensure a level playing field where many businesses can thrive.

Adopt a Collaborative Approach:

Engage in dialogue with and build relationships with the NRRT operators and the Councils operating the NRRT, and also with other businesses and stakeholders involved in the NRRT ecosystem. Sharing insights, challenges, and best practices can help in identifying collective opportunities for growth and addressing any emerging issues.