



# *The Riesling Trail*

*Every season, another reason*

## **Chairman's report**

### **Riesling Trail Management Committee AGM, 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2023**

I am pleased to present my report for the past twelve months. The number of trail users is remarkable consistent over the past three years - accommodation and bike hire businesses tell us that the Riesling Trail is one of the key reasons many people visit the Clare Valley. In fact, there are also a few that have shifted to this region because of the trail. So, the onus is on us to continue to maintain and improve the trail so it continues to be one of the best cycling, running and walking trails in the world.

#### **Riesling Trail developments**

During the past 12 months we have continued to improve the safety and amenities along the trail. This includes installing bollards all the way along Station Road in Clare to deter vehicles from turning across the trail. Thanks to staff from Clare & Gilberts Valley Council for digging most of the holes, and when they hit rock, to John Dickeson with his jack hammer...and to the volunteers that put in the bollards. This year we replaced the bridge just north of Tatkana Road as part of our on-going program to replace all bridges. This includes using steel rather than timber beams and side rails, so they will last for much longer. The next two on the list are at College Road and north of Jollys Way.

Heavy rainfall last spring caused some damage to the trail in a couple of sections. These have been temporarily repaired and will get a more permanent fix in the near future. This includes additional piping and earthworks to prevent water getting onto the trail from adjacent land.

You may think that we have enough seats & shelters along the trail, but we still continue to receive donations for additional seats and shelters. In a somewhat delayed project, we have at last installed a shelter and seat next to the bridge at Auburn. The seat has been donated by the U3A Coffee and Chat Group and the shelter by Stephanie Toole. We have also installed a seat donated by Kathy Woodrow in memory of her parents, Ferg & Vyv Mahon.

No doubt the highlight of the past 12 months was the opening of the sculpture, depicting Monica McInerney on the roof of the station master's house, by Monica in November last year. This very attractive artwork was designed and built by Paul Leditschke and adds to the attractions along the trail.

We recognise that the bushland setting of the Riesling Trail is one of its key attractions. So, we are continuing to improve biodiversity along the trail by removal of invasive plants (such as olives) to allow native species to regenerate. Removal of olives and replanting with native species is almost completed in the section next to the trail in the Watervale Station area. In all, approx. 28km of the 33km length of the trail is now free of olives or where Aleppo pines have been contained.

The situation with the future control and management of the Riesling Trail land has progressed after the address at our AGM last year by Renee Thompson from Crown Lands. As a result, the Council has now agreed that this land be dedicated from Crown Lands to them. This is likely to be a similar arrangement (with a long-term lease to the Riesling Trail Management Committee) as for the section from Auburn to the Horrocks Highway crossing. This will not be a quick process as there are many sections of land that need to be dealt with. This will give us greater security of this land for its intended purpose (that is, the Riesling Trail) and enable our trail structures, facilities and artwork to be insured through the Council.

Funding from these projects has come from many sources. The replacement bridge and the trail repairs were funded by the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing. The Northern and Yorke Landscapes Board provided funding for the removal of the remaining olives next to the trail at Watervale.

### **Maintaining the trail**

There always seems to be small, and sometimes not so small, jobs to be done to keep the trail in good condition. I am very grateful for those who are quick to report any issues along the trail and to all our volunteers who help with the clean-ups.

### **Supporting the Riesling Trail**

There are many supporters of the Riesling Trail, both financially and in other ways. These are:

- The Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing and the Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council for on-going financial support and help with trail maintenance.
- Our Business Partners and Friends who contribute significantly to improving facilities along the Riesling Trail.
- Other businesses and organisations who also contribute generously to developments and upkeep of the trail. I would especially like to thank Jason Gill for his work replacing the bridge at Tatkana Road and helping install the shelter and seat at Auburn. Other local businesses that do a great job with building shelters and maintaining the trail include Clare Metal Fabrications, Clare Quarry and Nyles Earthworks.
- Volunteers who help with the many projects to maintain and develop the trail.

Finally, I wish to thank members of the Management Committee and Monica Trengove for their great work in helping to improve the trail, so it continues to be enjoyed and valued by trail users and the wider community.

Allan Mayfield,  
Chairman, Riesling Trail Management Committee