



The Riesling Trail

Every season, another reason

Chairman's report

Riesling Trail Management Committee AGM, 10th October, 2024

I am pleased to present my report for the past twelve months. The number of trail users has dropped a little this winter but has noticeably increased since the start of school holidays last week.

It is now 30 years since the opening of the first section of the Riesling Trail, from Sevenhill to Watervale. This was a good opportunity to publicise the trail – thanks to Gabrielle Jones for her help with this.

On the 24th of October the Riesling Trail will feature on SBS Great Australia Walks, so this will also be great publicity for us. It was filmed during autumn so will have some great shots of the trail and surrounds as well as their mix of local stories and personalities.

I am sure that the on-going trail use and (free) publicity is a consequence of the way we look after the trail and continue to add worthwhile features.

Riesling Trail maintenance and developments

The Riesling Trail Business Plan has been updated for the next five years, with a list of future projects and costings. Part of this is the on-going program to replace the old bridges along the trail. During the past 12 months we have replaced two bridges – at College Road and Maynard Road. This includes using steel rather than timber beams and side rails, so they will last for much longer. We have also reduced the risk of washouts along the trail by adding more drainage pipes in the past 12 months. These are north of Wakefield Road, at College Road and just south of Barinia. Sealing short sections of the trail at four more crossings and line markings will be completed before the end of this year to improve safety to trail users at these crossings.

Our plans for the near future include adding greater access to drinking water along the trail. You may have spotted the new drinking fountain, donated by SAWater, at the southern end of Station Road in Clare. We are planning a simpler (and cheaper) design at several other places along the trail between Auburn and Clare, where we can access mains water.

We are also planning to install exercise equipment next to the trail in Clare, thanks to a generous donation from the Lions Club of Clare District. The Riesling Trail will also contribute \$2,000 to purchase a sit-up bench.

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 removing

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. 29km of the 33km length of the trail is now free of olives or where Aleppo pines have been contained. We also took out the mistletoe from a large gum tree just north of the Quarry Road bridge. When I say 'we' I mean this was done by tree climbing contractors! Even though the cost was significant (\$2,000) we considered this tree was certainly worth preserving.

The future transfer of control (or more specifically, 'custodianship') of the Riesling Trail land from Crown Lands to the Council is progressing behind the scenes. This transfer of control 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. It 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. This will not be a quick process as there are many sections of land that need to be dealt with. As part of this we have checked all listed easements and non-listed crossings over the trail for Crown Lands.

Supporting the Riesling Trail

There are many supporters of the Riesling Trail, both financially and in other ways. 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 where they can.

Funding for our projects has come from many sources. The Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing has provided on-going financial support, as well as a special allocation (of \$18,000) towards sealing intersections of the trail and main roads. The Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council also provides on-going financial support and help with trail maintenance if needed. The drinking fountain installed next to Station Road in Clare was provided by SA Water. We also recently received a contribution (of \$2,000) from Rail Trails Australia towards two more drinking fountains along the trail.

I especially want to thank all the local businesses and individuals who contribute generously to the Riesling Trail. These contributions are a great help to maintain and improve 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