

Warrumbungle Wheelers Inc
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Cycleway and Walking Path to Warrumbungle National Park

We strongly support the proposal for a cycleway and walking track that will link Coonabarabran to the Warrumbungle National Park and also extend to the west of the Park and link to the community of Tooraweenah.

A proposal is attached, as presented by Coonabarabran Landcare chairperson, Peter Thompson, at Council's community consultation meeting on 12 March 2018.

We request that Council support this proposal, investigate it seriously, bring Gilgandra Council on board and prepare a major submission ready to be lodged in March 2019 under the NSW Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund

Warrumbungle Wheelers Inc is our local bicycle users group and we can draw on the experience of the wider NSW bicycling community. We offer to assist Council in any way to develop this proposal and prepare the submission.

I look forward to a favourable response from Council.

Sincerely,

Max Estens
Chairperson

**Proposal for Cycleway and Walking Path:
Linking Communities to Warrumbungle National Park**

Community Proposal

This is a proposal for a cycleway and walking path that will link Warrumbungle National Park to the town of Coonabarabran in the east and towards Tooraweenah in the west. Funding is available for this type of project.

Several community groups have already expressed support for this project. Others in both Gilgandra and Warrumbungle Shires will discuss it soon.

Key Goals of this proposal are to:

- Improve the health and well-being of the community.
- Engage citizens with nature through outdoor recreation.
- Promote sustainable economic activities through increased low-impact tourism.
- Enhance the condition and appreciation of roadside native vegetation and scenery.

Description of the Project

- The proposal is to provide for safe cycling and walking by expanding the width of the road from Coonabarabran, through the Warrumbungle National Park and at least to Gumin Gumin, possibly to Tooraweenah.
- Options need to be assessed before final design, including: expanding one or both side of the road; staging construction based on safety priorities; base and surface options; identifying opportunities for the path take a more scenic route separate from the road edge; options of scenic side-tracks.
- Costing: initial rough estimate is 5 to 10 million dollars.
- The experience can be enhanced with cultural, natural and historical information.
- Protecting and enhancing roadside native vegetation, as well as controlling weeds, is part of this project.
- Work will include: reforming and extending the road; bitumen sealing; traffic control; weed control; native vegetation protection and enhancement; side track construction; signage design and installation; project design and management.
- Some specific challenges such as bridges and culverts could increase the cost significantly and so may need to be deferred until extra funding is available.

Economic Benefits

- The cycleway / walking path will open up new economic opportunities through cycle tourism and local guided tours. Local tourism officers estimate that 10% of cars that currently travel through Coonabarabran have bicycles on board. A proper safe cycleway and walking path to the National Heritage listed Warrumbungle National Park is highly likely to see an increase in person-night stays in the region.
- A safe cycleway and walking path can host cycle tours and charity events.

- Construction will create local employment. We want a specific commitment to Aboriginal employment and training as a core element of the project. The Councils have the capacity to build the project and there will be contracting and employment opportunities for local providers.
- This involvement in construction is likely to build capacity to start new small businesses involved in tourism and the environment.

Social and Environmental Benefits

- The cycleway and walking path will be open and free for all to use and share so will improve the lives of residents and add to the vibrancy of the region.
- Direct beneficiaries include: serious cyclists; casual walkers; nature lovers; joggers; cycle tourists; people with disabilities; family groups; sports teams; local cycle commuters; exercising walkers; and casual fun cyclists. It is likely that many hundreds of local residents will use the pathway. Visitors will also use it.
- Increased contact with nature.
- Enhancement and protection of native vegetation, as well as weed control, along the route.
- Aboriginal people can develop information packages about cultural values for the route and this can be complemented by information about nature and history.
- Significantly improving road safety for walkers and cyclists.
- Contribute to improving the health of all residents and visitors.
- Contribute to social inclusion, reconciliation and general well-being.

This proposed cycleway and walking path would undoubtedly make the region a more attractive and vibrant place to live, work and visit. By being open and free for all to share and by providing for healthy recreation in the natural environment, this project will help sustain the social bonds in the community.

Request to Warrumbungle and Gilgandra Shire Councils

Please support this concept and take this proposal as a unique joint project between Gilgandra Council and Warrumbungle Council. (Coonamble Council may also wish to be involved.)

Please seek formal cross-Council endorsement as a high priority project to be developed and submitted under the NSW *Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund* program.

Because this is a large project that involves more than one Council area and the economic benefits relate to tourism and the environment, it is ideally suited to the *Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund*.

Applications to this *Fund* close in early April 2018 and early April 2019.
