

A Statement from the Korumburra Round Table

With all of the views currently swirling around about trains, community hubs and bike paths, we thought it was time for the Korumburra Round Table to clearly state where we stand on all of the above.

First of all, on bringing back the trains, if there was even an inkling that the state or federal government were thinking of bringing back rail to this region, the KRT would be fully supportive. Rail is a cost-efficient, environmentally-friendly mode of transport that gets cars off the road and should be considered as a long-term option for Korumburra. We are pleased that we have residents who want to push the government in this direction. However, the Round Table was formed by Council as a leadership group in the community which would “provide a collective voice, representative of community groups, and serving the needs and aspirations of the Korumburra community”, and the clear picture we are getting as a group each month is that people are wanting to see some changes in this growing town of ours. The infrastructure, particularly at the town entrance and in our main street, is in need of a major upgrade, and with our growing population we also need a common community space. Our goal, therefore, is to support plans that provide these sorts of major changes now.

So what exactly *are* the plans we are talking about? Well the community plans for a revitalised main street and a community hub in Korumburra are known as the “Korumburra Revitalisation Project”, and they have been discussed in community forums since 2012. As well as various community workshops over the years, submissions have been sought and received by the Shire Council, there have been community engagement sessions, streetscape plans were pinned up in shops, cafes, at the library, and on our Facebook site, articles have appeared in the newspapers about the various options for a Hub, and finally in December last year Council announced that of the three sites proposed for the new Community Hub, the railway land was the preferred site.

Of particular significance in this decision was the proviso that any development of the railway precinct *must leave a 30-metre wide, 2-track rail corridor, on which no infrastructure is to be built*, as this VicTrack-owned land must remain clear for any future potential use. So all plans, including the works that have started towards the total refurbishment of our magnificent heritage-listed railway station - thanks to the hard working ‘The Station @ Korumburra’ Working Group - have been developed with those VicTrack guidelines in mind.

Public tenders for the Community Hub design were sought several months ago, and Council tells us the successful tender is about to be announced. This Korumburra Revitalisation Project will connect our revitalised, modern main street - via a redeveloped subway - with the Community Hub on the railway land. It will be a greened space with a magnificent Library, Community Neighbourhood House, a Men’s Shed, Skate Park, indoor and outdoor art installations, room for markets, performing arts – the possibilities are endless – but having that connectivity between the main street, linking the business centre and the railway precinct, linking the arts and community organisations, and being just a short walk from both primary schools and our beautiful new Children’s Centre will be incredible and, we think, most certainly fulfils the Round Table’s brief to ‘serve the needs and aspirations of the Korumburra community’.

More recently there has been a growing push for a rail trail between Korumburra and Leongatha, which would also have its starting point up at the Hub. Once again, this project can be up and running fairly soon and for a relatively small cost, brings enormous health and tourism benefits to

the region, and does not preclude the return of rail 20 years down the track if or when the politicians are actually talking about it. But in the meantime, we get the benefit of using this existing trail for a really great purpose, especially for families and tourists.

We feel we need to move on plans that have been carefully considered and detailed for years now, and not sit around for another 10 years until the government 'maybe' decides what it wants to do about rail in South Gippsland. So we hope this explains the thinking behind why we support what we support currently.

And on that final note, how about you come out for tea with us! On Wednesday the 14th of November we are opening the Borough Department Store at night especially for you – the people of Korumburra – and we are filling the place with posters and diagrams explaining just how our town will look when the revitalisation is finished. But we are also celebrating the exciting changes that are occurring *now*! Market stalls will be operating that night for you to buy from, as well as local wines, cheeses and the usual beautiful Department Store coffee. Local artists will be performing, and there will even be a few pollies for you to grill – so there's your chance to ask about the trains!

Mark it in your diaries now, more details will follow, and let's all continue to take Korumburra forward, together.

Pee-Wee Lewis
President
Korumburra Round Table