

Brisbane Valley Rail Trail – Australia's Longest Trail

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The Brisbane Valley Rail Trail (BVRT), a 157km long, off-road recreational trail is finished, with the final 27km recently completed by Somerset Regional Council. It is the longest trail in Australia and follows the disused Brisbane Valley rail corridor. Walkers, cyclists and horse riders now have a unique opportunity to experience the diverse rural landscape of the breath-taking Brisbane Valley.

The project is so much more than a successful engineering outcome – it has recycled a dormant rail corridor into an iconic recreational trail that is attracting visitors and new businesses to the Somerset region. The final 27km section, Toogoolawah to Moore (T2M), was completed in June 2018, after numerous rounds of unsuccessful funding election commitments, and finally realised through a collaborative funding push by the community, local and state governments.

Council prepared a business case to secure funding from the Australian Government's Better Building Regions Fund. Community support was evident, and the cost/benefit ratio confirmed the project's benefits would clearly outweigh the delivery cost. Council successfully secured funding totaling \$3.35M. Council delivered a landmark project for Somerset and broader South-East Queensland community - the following overarching objectives were achieved:

- The region is benefitting from the delivery of world-class recreational trail with increased visitation to the region
- It's recycled a dormant corridor with long-term community and economic benefits
- Residents have easy access to a recreational trail delivering health, social and cultural experiences
- Employment growth was achieved during construction, and jobs in rail trail operations and tourism are now created
- The visual outlook of the corridor has been enhanced
- The community's profile is vibrant from increased public exposure
- And Queensland's reputation as a cycling tourism destination has been strengthened.

The BVRT T2M received the 2018 IPWEA Queensland Engineering Excellence Award for projects between \$2-5M.