FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 16 November 2018

FUNDING NEEDED FOR MURCHISON TO HEATHCOTE RAIL TRAIL

Campaspe Shire Council continues to lobby the state government for funding to support the Murchison to Heathcote Rail Trail, which incorporates the Waranga Rail Trail near Rushworth.

Mayor Cr Adrian Weston said the trail goes from Murchison, to Rushworth, to Heathcote, travelling through national parks and state forests. The project is a key priority of Campaspe Shire and project group, City of Greater Bendigo, Parks Victoria, Forest Fire Management Victoria, Heathcote Tourism and Development Inc and the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership.

Funding of $2.51 million is being asked from the state government to support the estimated $4 million project, with the project group, including Campaspe Shire, funding the balance.

“Funds are needed to complete the unfinished part of the Rushworth to Murchison section of the trail, along the former railway line. Funds will also be used to link existing tracks and trails through the forest from Rushworth to Heathcote,” Cr Weston said.

“Approaches for funding have been received positively to date, however no funding has been announced by the state government,” Cr Weston said.

“The Victorian Coalition has committed to the project, if successful come Election Day.”

The project group has completed a business case for the trail which clearly demonstrates its cost benefits, both financially and socially.

“Estimates suggest the trail is expected to attract thousands of visitors, providing an added attraction to the region, with people coming to enjoy the almost 70 kilometre trail travelling through a variety of landscapes including the Box Iron Bark Forest, pastoral land, historic towns and bushland,” Cr Weston said.

“Attractions along the way include historic landmarks from the gold rush era, historic buildings, Aboriginal history, wineries, water activities and bird watching.”

“An important part of the trail is the township of Rushworth which is set to benefit with cyclists stopping for refreshments or accommodation and nearby Waranga Basin and Whroo Forest are also great spots to stop and enjoy a picnic along the way.”

The trail offers a great tourism opportunity for the southern part of Campaspe Shire.

“Participation in cycle tourism is a growing trend as tourists increasingly seek environmentally sustainable tourism experiences and modes of transport,” the Mayor added.

“As well as offering something for tourists, the trail offers great health and wellbeing benefits to the local community.”

The project has been the subject of consideration by the community and council for ten plus years now.

“The business plan clearly demonstrates its need and we hope to have good news soon to see the project go ahead,” Cr Weston said.

To coordinate an interview or seek further information contact:

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