

# Detailed Rail Feasibility Study

Media Release – Shire of Donnybrook Balingup



On 14 July 2023, the State Government announced funding for a joint feasibility study into re-activation of the Greenbushes to Bunbury Railway Line, in partnership with Talison Lithium.

The Shire welcomes the joint feasibility study by the State Government and Talison Lithium, and keenly awaits further detail on how the study will be rolled-out, specifically around how local communities and stakeholders will be consulted through the process.

Presently, the Shire does not have a fixed view on the potential re-activation of the rail line, noting that there are many potential advantages and disadvantages either way. As more information is made available, and the study continues, the Shire and local communities will be in a more informed position. Shire representatives will be meeting with South West Development Commission and Talison representatives in the near future, and more information will be available following that meeting.

Ultimately, the decision to re-activate the rail line, or not, will not be made by the Shire. However, the Shire will be advocating for informed, meaningful engagement by the proponents with local communities and stakeholders. As the local government area most impacted by the rail line, the Shire will be taking a very close interest in the study to assist in achieving the best possible outcomes for our district and communities. With some 26 public level crossings of the rail line in our Shire, plus many more private level crossings and pedestrian crossings, the Shire of Donnybrook Balingup is the local government district with the most stake in this matter.

The Shire recognises that re-activation of the rail line is a complex matter, and has the potential for significant advantages, and disadvantages. Naturally, there are plenty of economic imperatives for a rapidly expanding Greenbushes mine site to aid in transporting heavy products more efficiently. Via the Balingup Progress Association, the Balingup Rail Group has been advocating for tourist rail opportunities on the line, and there would also be a lot of business-related opportunities for product transport, which could encourage agri-tourism focused economic development throughout the district. Conversely, careful consideration to local townsite traffic implications and existing community infrastructure on or nearby to the rail reserve will be required. Over the past 15 years or so, development of community infrastructure such as car parks, pedestrian bridges, footpaths, parks and gardens in various Shires (not just ours) have encroached on the disused rail reserve (with approvals from the rail lessor) and the future of this infrastructure will need to be closely considered.

The feasibility study is expected to be completed in the second half of 2024, which will assist the State Government and Talison Lithium in determining the short, medium and long term costs of the project, and ultimately, whether they proceed with the re-activation. The State Government media statement on this announcement can be found here - [Detailed feasibility study into recommissioning of Greenbushes to Bunbury Railway Line to begin | Western Australian Government \(www.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.wa.gov.au/government/media-releases/2023/07/14/detailed-feasibility-study-into-recommissioning-of-greenbushes-to-bunbury-railway-line-to-begin).

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