

June 2017

# Railway DIGEST™

**Rolling stock:**  
**Hi-Rail Rail Grinders**

**The return of the A2**  
**Aubin Grove opening**  
**Impressions of *The Ghan***  
**Taking Street Art to the Bush**  
**Gold Coast rail expansion on track for C'wealth Games**

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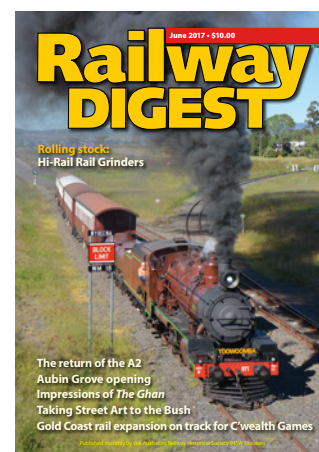
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 www.fullyloaded.com.au, www.levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/rail-projects/merndarail

**Cover:** Southern Downs Steam Railway C17 971 on a Warwick to Toowoomba special train to mark the 150th anniversary of rail to Toowoomba, heads north through Wyreema (junction of the line to Brookstead) on Saturday 29 April. John Scott

**Opposite:** At Aurizon locomotives 2194F and 1758 work Clermont to Dinmore 65C4 loaded cattle train on Saturday 15 April, approaches the Sunrise crossing loop. This train is a mix of old PCZY and new

# June 2017

## Volume 55, Number 6



## Features

### Taking Street Art to the Bush

25

Guido van Helten is one of Australia's most popular street artists, with a passion to capture people interacting with their local environment. He also combines human imagery with industrial spaces like silos, and in this case, railway wagons. Neville Pollard reports.

### Impressions of Aubin Grove and the Opening Ceremony

26

Aubin Grove Station, located between the Cockburn Central and Kwinana Stations on the Mandurah Line (24.3 kilometres south of Perth) was opened on Sunday 23 April by the new Western Australian Premier, Mark McGowan. *RD's* Perth correspondent, David Whiteford, was on hand to witness the event.

### Gold Coast rail expansion on track for C'wealth Games

28

The Commonwealth Games is scheduled to be held on the Gold Coast between 4 and 15 April 2018. As with all major sporting events the efficient transport of spectators, officials and participants is seen as essential. John Hoyle reports on the work currently underway on both heavy and light rail networks to ensure they are ready for the challenge.

### Impressions of The Ghan

32

Running across Australia, from Adelaide to Darwin and return, *The Ghan* is an interesting train with an interesting history. Ron Brown took a recent journey on the train, and recorded his impressions.

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AQYY wagons, all with new QGCU Cattle Crates fitted (see report, page 17). Ray Miller

**Back cover upper:** 2MP5 Melbourne to Perth intermodal freight races through Yorkeys Crossing, north of Port Augusta, behind Goninan/GE units NR105 and NR5, late afternoon Tuesday 28 March. Damien Butler

**Back cover lower:** The weekly Sydney to Broken Hill Xplorer service departs Condobolin Station on Monday afternoon 17 April. Alf Atkin

## National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy Launched

The TrackSAFE Foundation has welcomed the Tuesday 4 April launch of the *National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy 2017 – 2020* to guide national coordination and best practice for level crossing safety across all jurisdictions. The Strategy provides renewed key focus areas, actions and measures for level crossing safety Australia-wide and was endorsed by the Transport and Infrastructure Council's Senior Officials' Committee at their March 2017 meeting.

"The TrackSAFE Foundation welcomes the renewed National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy 2017 – 2020 designed to significantly improve level crossing safety via greater collaboration and investment. With so many variances in level crossing safety relating to risk, the application of technology and control systems between roads and rail networks, as well as jurisdictional governance and ownership, it's timely to release a revised strategy to provide a single source of coordination on the issue," said Naomi Frauenfelder, Executive Director of the TrackSAFE Foundation. "The Strategy lends itself to greater opportunities for knowledge-sharing, cooperation and engagement with key stakeholders which will in-turn lead to promising solutions and technologies being progressed on a national scale."

"Recognising the need for harnessing the potential of rapidly emerging technologies is a key part of the Strategy and is something the rail industry is very passionate about, as evidenced by the

attendance of 13 senior rail executives on TrackSAFE's International Level Crossing Safety Study Tour to the USA and UK last month. Understanding the innovations that are being trialled and utilised around the world is vital to advancing level crossing safety solutions domestically."

"With roughly 23,500 level crossings across our network level crossing collisions remain of serious concern for the rail industry. This Strategy is a welcome step for reducing the likelihood of serious incidents occurring at railway level crossings," said Ms Frauenfelder.

The Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator welcomed the release of the Strategy with Chief Executive, Sue McCarrey, confident it will play a part in driving continuous improvement in the safety of level crossings.

"As a regulator we are very strong in our view that the risk to human life and the significant financial costs of collisions can be reduced with ongoing investment, co-operation, and collaboration around level crossing safety. A revised national strategy is a really important step in facilitating the decisions and discussions that we want to see," said Ms McCarrey.

The National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy 2017 – 2020 can be downloaded at: <http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Safety/Rail-safety/Reference-material#strategy>.

## Federal Government funds two Parkes – Narromine line bridges – first physical inland railway work – but is it 'future proofing'?

The Federal Government announced on 20 April that it would provide \$1.3 million for the replacement of two timber bridges with concrete culverts on the Parkes – Narromine line in western New South Wales. The bridges are located at Tomingley West, north of Peak Hill, and Narwonah, south of Narromine. The bridges are significant in that they represent the first physical work directly associated with the Melbourne – Brisbane inland railway.

Federal Transport Minister Darren Chester said the bridges would be 'future proofed' to meet the inland railway 'standard' for longer, heavier and more efficient trains. The Australian Rail Track Corporation's 110 kilometre Parkes – Narromine line will form part of the inland railway alignment and the new bridges will be designed to the ARTC's standard of a 30 tonne axle load at 80 kilometres an hour.

However, informed engineering sources told *Railway Digest* that minimum future proofing for intermodal traffic should have all bridge structures designed to accommodate US Class 1 standards in future, i.e. 32.5 ton (approx. 30 tonnes) axle loads at 112 km/h. In addition, any railway that has the possibility of conveying major bulk commodities of medium to high density (including coal and grain) should aspire to eventually achieve higher axle loads of around 36 tonnes. Sources said the marginal cost of doing this during initial construction, at least for the sub-structures, was very small as superstructures can generally be replaced or strengthened at a later date if necessary at modest cost, but if the sub-structure is inadequate, then total replacement is usually required if its design is inadequate in the first place. National Trunk Rail, a private proponent of the inland railway concept, has laid down a minimum axle load standard of 32.5 tonnes for its proposal.

## ARA calls for adoption of Australian Rail Industry standards

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) is encouraging industry participants to adopt common standards for identifying materials used across the local rail industry. In a Thursday 27 April media release, the ARA Board confirmed their support for the adoption of GS1 open global standards for identifying and marking (barcoding and/or tagging) components used across the Australian Rail Industry.

This significant decision by the ARA Board is driven by the industry-wide Parts and Components Identification Project in rail that commenced in 2015, followed by the launch of the new Implementation Guideline for the Effective Management of Inventory in the Australian Rail Industry at AusRAIL 2016. The Australian Rail Industry is now being called to respond to a Call to Action to standardise the way materials are identified.

Mr Danny Broad, Chief Executive Officer, Australasian Railway Association said the announcement by the ARA Board to support the adoption of common standards is a significant milestone for the Australian Rail Industry.

"We invite the Australian Rail Industry to join us in embracing a Call to Action to reduce costs, improve safety, reliability and quality using GS1 standards. The adoption of GS1 standards will provide a common framework to support the current challenge of managing efficient Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) processes."

The objective of the Call to Action initiative is to implement GS1 standards across the Australian Rail Industry by 1 January 2019. This initiative is important from the perspective of quality assurance traceability and cost savings. The implementation of GS1 standards across the Australian Rail Industry is a critical foundation for the subsequent phase of full lifecycle tracking of components from acquisition to disposal; essential for the effective implementation of ISO55000 Asset Management Standards.

A copy of *Working together in rail to improve efficiency, lower costs and deliver better customer service* can be downloaded from the ARA website.



## Sydney Central Station hosts Rail RU OK? Day

Founded by Australian ad man Gavin Larkin in 2009, R U OK? is a not-for-profit suicide prevention organisation that works collaboratively with experts in suicide prevention and mental illness, as well as government departments, corporate leaders, teachers, universities, students and community groups.

In partnership with the TrackSAFE Foundation, the third annual Rail R U OK? Day was celebrated across Australia and New Zealand on Thursday 20 April, with over 10,500 participants from more than 30 organisations taking part. Sydney's main event kicked off at 9.00am on the main concourse at Central Station, with senior figures from Sydney Trains, TrackSAFE Foundation and R U OK? addressing the audience. During her speech, Naomi Frauenfelder, Executive Director, TrackSAFE Foundation, also read out a special message of support from the Prime Minister.

R U OK? CEO Brendan Maher said "The R U OK? ethos has really been embraced by rail networks around Australia, and more recently New Zealand. "It's testament to the fact that work places and rail workers have not only encouraged checking in with mates, but have whole heartedly embraced it."

R U OK? Ambassador and former NRL player, Brett Finch, speaking without notes, impressed the crowd with a heartfelt address explaining how he struggled with the loss of his football career, and how being honest and facing up to his demons was one of the hardest things he'd ever done. The positive reaction he received publicly and personally was the complete opposite to what he expected, and led to his decision to try and help others who might be struggling with similar issues to seek help.

After the obligatory photo ops, guests adjourned to the nearby Bradfield Room for an excellent morning tea. This was followed by a football passing competition, utilising two 'targets' set up on the concourse, that attracted plenty of willing participants.



At the close of proceedings, the participants pose for the obligatory group photograph. Clockwise, from lower left: **Mostapha Kourouche**, Advisor Health Programs Health Services People & Communications, Sydney Trains; **Howard Collins**, CE, Sydney Trains & NSW TrainLink; **Peter Allaway**, COO, NSW TrainLink; **Brendan Maher**, CEO, R U OK?; **Tim Reardon**, Secretary of Transport for NSW; **Brett Finch**, R U OK? Ambassador; **Naomi Frauenfelder**, Executive Director, TrackSAFE Foundation. Bruce Belbin



AUSTRALASIAN RAIL  
INDUSTRY AWARDS  
SYDNEY 2017

## TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW!

The Awards will again be the premier industry event recognising the outstanding achievements by individuals and organisations in the Australian and New Zealand rail industries. Celebrate and support the achievements of your industry colleagues across key fields such as engineering; sustainability; safety; innovation and much more.

### EVENT AND TICKETING DETAILS

**When:** Thursday 13 July 2017

**Time:** 6:30pm pre dinner drinks & 7:00pm doors open.

**Where:** The Grand Ballroom  
Hilton Sydney Hotel  
488 George Street, Sydney

**Cost:** Tickets are \$210 per person or \$2100 for a table of ten (prices include GST).

For further information or to purchase tickets visit [www.railindustryawards.com.au](http://www.railindustryawards.com.au) or call 02 6270 4527.

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## Rail and the Federal Budget – ARA and PN support rail spending

The Federal Government's \$20 billion investment in rail announced in the 2017-2018 Budget on Tuesday 9 May was enthusiastically supported by the Australasian Railway Association (ARA).

"The Government's renewed commitment to rail, including through its \$10 billion National Rail Program for urban and regional passenger rail, underscores its importance to Australia and is welcomed by the rail industry," said Danny Broad, Chief Executive Officer of the ARA.

"ARA congratulates the Government's strong funding commitment to rail in the 2017-2018 budget to boost economic activity and improve the liveability of our cities. "In particular, we applaud the Government's strong commitment to Inland Rail through its \$8.4 billion equity injection to the Australian Rail Track Corporation."

"The Government's \$8.4 billion commitment to Inland Rail is critical to supporting the delivery of this iconic national freight project. "Inland rail is fundamental to boosting rail freight efficiency in Australia, and given Australia's freight task will grow 26% by 2026, its delivery is important to all Australians. "The \$8.4 billion announced by the Government today provides renewed confidence to all parts of the rail industry this project will be delivered."

"Linking Victoria and regional NSW with Queensland will help get freight off the road and onto rail, address rising congestion in Sydney, and will deliver thousands of jobs; many in regional Australia. "This project will deliver a strong economic contribution to the nation and will enhance productivity and increase consumer freight options."

"We note the Government's intention for a public private partnership to progress the Toowoomba to Kagaru tunnel section, which is the most challenging aspect of this project. "Whilst this capital injection to the ARTC is welcomed, the fact remains that significant work needs to occur to ensure the Inland Rail project comes to fruition. "This includes maximising the economic benefits of this project by delivering efficient linkages that directly connect the railway line to the Port of Melbourne and Port Brisbane," Mr Broad said.

Mr Broad also welcomed the Federal Government's \$20 million 'Faster Rail' commitment to support the development of business cases to achieve faster rail connections between the major cities and regional centres. "The value of incremental improvements must not be underestimated – infrastructure upgrades that optimise efficiency will

vastly improve the service offering and rail's ability to compete with road."

"Industry is keen to partner with the Commonwealth to undertake further work on how Australia can benefit from building and operating faster rail, particularly in our high growth areas near our capital cities."

"ARA will continue to work with the Commonwealth to highlight the economic and social benefits of further investments in major new urban rail projects (both heavy and light rail) to reduce congestion in our major cities," Mr Broad said.

On the critical issue of skills in the rail industry, Mr Broad welcomed the Government's steps to address the nation's skills needs through the Commonwealth-State Skilling Australians Fund. "Developing the rail industry's skills base is an important issue for the future sustainability of our industry. "To prosper into the future, the rail industry requires a well skilled and trained workforce and the Skilling Australians Fund is critical in building these capabilities," he said.

Major freight operator Pacific National also issued a Media Statement in support of the Federal Government's commitment to fund the Inland Rail Project.

CEO David Irwin said "Australia has a growing problem that can't be ignored – we are trying to move too much freight on our increasingly congested road and rail networks along our Eastern seaboard," "Inland Rail is a true game-changer and we commend the Government for its commitment to such an important nation-building project."

"We look forward to working with the Government and all the communities along the route to see Inland Rail become a reality and ensure it's a huge success once operational."

Pacific National particularly commended the Government's commitment to commencement of construction in the FY17/18 year.

"We want a swift and smooth construction program and a clear path to the day the first freight trains can start using the route – and this will ensure potential investors and rail operators can plan for the future with greater certainty. Pacific National has an extensive network of rail freight operations across Australia, providing service to many of the country's biggest companies. A large proportion of both our customers and our employees are located in rural and regional communities."

"The prospect of Inland Rail and the opportunities it offers for growth and development in the regions is strongly supported by PN."

## Railway people

### Bombardier Transportation's Anne Koopman wins Young Manufacturer of the Year Award

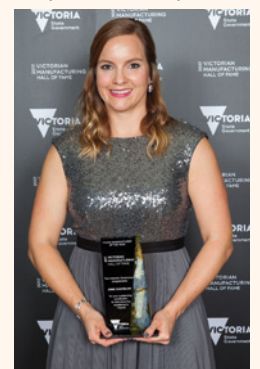
At the Victorian Manufacturing Hall of Fame Awards held on Tuesday 9 May, in Melbourne, Bombardier Transportation's Head of Quality and Lean Manufacturing for Australia, Anne Koopmann, won the Young Manufacturer of the Year Award, for her exceptional work in the fields of Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement in planning and production.

The annual awards are hosted by the Victorian Minister for Industry and Employment, and recognise outstanding achievements by local businesses and individuals across manufacturing and innovation in the Victoria region and beyond.

"The Hall of Fame Awards are a greatly anticipated event and we are thrilled that Anne has been recognised as this year's Young Manufacturer of the Year. This recognition showcases Bombardier's commitment to continuously improving both quality and lean manufacturing which host

ongoing macro-benefits across the value chain and product life cycle of our trains and trams in Victoria," said David Collomb, Head of Operations & Site General Manager at Bombardier's Dandenong Manufacturing facility in Victoria, Australia.

"These awards confirm the strength of our local manufacturing in Australia, as well as the determination of our people to provide seamless rail transportation experiences on our locally built vehicles for both customers and passengers alike," he said.



Anne Koopman with her award



## Canberra light rail stop names announced

Stage one of Canberra's light rail project has reached a landmark with the announcement of the 13 stops names along the 12-kilometre route from Civic (the Canberra CBD) and Gungahlin.

The stop names have been identified geographically in relation to major streets and intersections they will service. "Stop names are an important part of light rail design, connecting residents with local public transport and helping Canberrans move about the city," Minister for Transport Canberra and City Services, Meegan Fitzharris said. "From today, Canberrans can place themselves on the stage one map and identify their closest stop which will take them to and from where they need to be.

"These names will become a part of thousands of Canberrans daily lives and it is exciting to have reached this point in the project, which is on track to be delivered in 2018."

The light rail City to Gungahlin corridor will contain thirteen stops including a terminus at each end of the route.

The stop names are:

- Gungahlin Place (terminus)
- Manning Clark North
- Mapleton Avenue
- Nullarbor Avenue
- Well Station Drive
- EPIC and Racecourse
- Phillip Avenue
- Swinden Street
- Dickson Interchange
- Macarthur Avenue
- Ipima Street
- Elouera Street
- Alinga Street (terminus)

The names have been decided on a geographic basis to allow for ease of wayfinding through the stage one corridor.

As the corridor runs between many of Canberra's northern suburbs and sometimes contains more than one stop within a suburb, stops are primarily named after adjacent streets as well as prominent landmarks.

Stop locations were selected through criteria around projected patronage, potential to enhance the local area, as well as access and connectivity with buses, and improved walking and cycling infrastructure.



## ACT government signs light rail stage 2 contracts

The ACT government has signed a series of contracts with consultants to design the second stage of light rail from the city to the south western suburb of Woden, using many of the consultants it used on the first stage.

Ernst and Young has been appointed commercial adviser, including preparing the business case and economic analysis, market soundings, and advising on how to structure the contracts to deliver stage 2. The company also worked on the stage 1 business case, and was contracted for \$2.3 million of work on stage 1 in the three years to June 2016.

Arup has been appointed technical adviser for stage 2, its tasks include engineering design, traffic and access design, underground investigations, urban design, safety planning and planning approvals. Arup, also technical adviser for stage 1, is one of the most highly-paid light rail consultants to date, winning contracts worth \$7.6 million over the three years to June 2016.

ACT Transport Minister Meegan Fitzharris was unable to provide the final costs of the latest tranche of contracts when contacted by *The Canberra Times* on Thursday 27 April, as details were still being signed off, but in November 2016 she said the contracts were together worth about \$7 million, of a total \$25 million to prepare for stage 2.

The route is expected to be finalised this year, with contracts signed before the 2020 ACT election.

Turner and Townsend has been appointed to estimate costs for the 10-kilometre route to Woden, which is more complicated than the line from Gungahlin. The stage 2 project crosses the Commonwealth Avenue bridge over Lake Burley Griffin and must be wire-free over the bridge and through the parliamentary triangle.

Turner and Townsend, which also costed the Parramatta light rail line for the NSW government, appears to have been paid nearly \$2 million to date for cost estimation work, as "constructability advisor", and assessing the tenders for stage 1.

An audit report last year detailed some of the negotiations between cost-estimator Turner and Townsend and the ACT government when Turner and Townsend estimated the capital cost of stage 1 at \$1.01 billion in 2014. The figure prompted a "value-engineering workshop" to allow Turner and Townsend an opportunity to "clarify elements of the design for their costing assumptions" and to refine the design to reduce costs, the auditor reported. Soon after, Turner and Townsend revised down the cost to \$610 million, including scrapping \$100 million



of “owners’ costs” and a \$227 million contingency. Eventually, the construction contract was signed for \$710 million.

Elton Consulting has been appointed as communications and engagement advisor. Elton, also involved in Sydney light rail, was contracted to do Canberra planning work in 2015-16, worth \$220,000, according to annual reports. In 2015, Elton employed former deputy head of the ACT Land Development Agency Dan Stewart and its website boasts Mr Stewart’s experience in light rail.

Sydney rail engineering consultancy SNC Lavalin Rail and Transit has been appointed as operations advisor, including deciding on the light rail vehicles. SNC Lavalin Rail was also operations consultant on stage 1, with contracts worth \$2.2 million.

Veitch Lister Consulting will do transport modelling for the second stage, including calculating expected patronage. Veitch Lister worked

on demand forecasting for stage 1 and has been contracted for about \$400,000 of work to date.

Clayton Utz has been appointed as legal advisors and Sparke Helmore as probity advisor. Hudson Global, in charge of recruitment for stage 1, has also been given the recruitment task for stage 2.

Most of the contracts were tightly contested in the tender round, with the ACT government website listing nine separate bids for the cost-estimation contract won by Turner and Townsend. Four companies bid for the transport modelling contract, and four to be commercial advisor.

Six companies bid for the communications contract. Two companies bid to be technical advisor, but it appears SNC Lavalin Rail and Transit was the only formal bid for the operations management contract. Ten companies bid for the recruitment contract.

## Traditional smoking ceremony held to welcome light rail

The Canberra light rail corridor was the focus of a smoking ceremony by local Ngunnawal traditional custodians at a special gathering on Tuesday 11 April.

The smoking ceremony, held on Flemington Road near Exhibition Park in Canberra, involved the lighting of various native plants to produce smoke, to ward off bad spirits and cleanse the site.

ACT Minister for Transport and City Services, Meegan Fitzharris was pleased to have Canberra’s light rail project supported by the traditional custodians of this land.

“It was a wonderful occasion to witness Elder Uncle Carl Brown and daughter Tina Brown perform this significant ancient custom on a section of the light rail route,” Minister Fitzharris said. “The light rail project continues to take shape as an integral component of the ACT Government’s commitment to ensuring Canberra remains a viable

and sustainable city with an integrated transport network.”

As well as the lighting of native branches, the ceremony also included a performance by local Ngunnawal dance group, The Wedge Tailed Eagles. “I would like to thank the team at Canberra Metro for liaising with the local Ngunnawal traditional custodians in arranging for this important tradition to take place today,” Minister Fitzharris said.

The Minister commented that it is exciting to see the light rail project progressing quickly with the Northbourne Avenue median tree removal phase nearing completion, and the laying of track on schedule to begin midway through 2017.

“The first light rail vehicles are also expected to arrive later this year and once spring and summer arrives, landscaping works are planned to commence with the planting of new Eucalyptus mannifera trees set to revitalise the Northbourne Avenue boulevard”, Ms Fitzharris concluded.

The new storage sidings installed at Hamilton Station, viewed from the station footbridge, looking in the direction of Wickham and Newcastle on Tuesday 16 May.  
Robert Rouse







At East Maitland on Saturday 22 April, SSR empty grain train 4543N heads for Narrabri behind an eclectic quintet of motive power consisting of C506, 44206, S317, GM27 and C509, hauling a train of former PN Leigh Creek coal wagons converted for grain haulage by SSR. While on the Up track a loaded Genesee & Wyoming coal train hauled by XRN017, GWU001 and another XRN (out of frame) heads towards the Port of Newcastle. Four GWU Class units have been transferred from South Australia to assist the 30 XRN Class units following the takeover of the Glencore Rail coal haulage business by Genesee & Wyoming Inc and Macquarie Infrastructure & Real Assets late last year. Graeme Belbin

## Qube loses Toll Carrington to Port Botany service to Aurizon

Freight transport company Toll, who operate a terminal at Carrington (Newcastle) announced on 1 May that the intermodal service previously operated by Qube Logistics had been taken over by Aurizon. Toll said it had entered into a long term rail service agreement with Aurizon to take effect immediately. In a memo to customers Toll said Aurizon was selected because they offered a compelling operational model, which included taking advantage of their 'state of the art' rail facility at Enfield.

Other improvements included day loading of the service in Sydney to improve communication around train loading, overnight rail operations

at Carrington providing reduced site congestion, and morning delivery of freight and productivity improvements with exports by preparing and packing boxes during a day shift without train loading disruptions.

Toll said that over recent months the rail service provided to Toll at Carrington had not been at the level required, this being a direct result of a change in operating model by the former rail operator. Toll said this operational change had caused considerable delays in the movement of both export and import containers. Initial sightings indicated that a pair of G Class EMD units was providing motive power for this service.

# Uniting East to West

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Late in the afternoon of Thursday 6 April, QUBE's twin RLs, RL309 and RL310, are leading an Up ballast train at a farm access crossing near Murulla, between Murrurundi and Scone on the NSW Main North, as rain storms wash over the southern flanks of the Liverpool Range in the background. This train, which was dropping ballast between Blandford and Wingen, was operating as part of a full-day ARTC trackwork shutdown that wound up later that evening. Chris Walters

## Councillor proposes Wagga to Albury commuter service

A Wagga Wagga councillor's proposal to run a daily commuter train to Albury has generated significant interest from both cities. Councillor Vanessa Keenan believes a reliable rail link could help the cities share infrastructure, creating new opportunities for business and drawing people away from metropolitan areas.

Wagga mayor Greg Conkey said the concept had been raised at a regional cities meeting a few weeks ago where it generated interest from Albury and Griffith's leaders.

"We're going to pursue it further, get some more information about whether it should be a rail shuttle or a bus service, but it's certainly worth looking at and I congratulate Cr Keenan for doing it," Cr Conkey said. "Wagga and Albury are the two biggest cities in the region and they're growing, so it makes sense to have a reasonable public transport system for commuters travelling between them."

Under the proposal, a priority shuttle would allow commuters to live in one city and work normal hours in the other, with WiFi-enabled carriages letting commuters stay connected.

Smaller communities like The Rock, Henty and Culcairn could also benefit from a commuter service. Cheaper housing prices would likely see an influx of new residents while existing commuters could leave their cars at home.

Cr Conkey said the overnight XPT train was not ideal for commuters. "If a train left Albury at 8am you could get commuters to work here, or vice versa," he said. "It's worth looking outside the box and we

are getting some facts and figures from Albury as well. Griffith is also interested in being involved with a bus service."

The development of "hub and spoke" transport was a good idea, according to Griffith Business Chamber president Paul Pierotti, but he didn't think the western Riverina could be connected to the east without high-speed rail.

A survey in the *Wagga Daily Advertiser* on Monday 17 April asked readers; "How often would you use the commuter service?" 22.9 per cent of respondents said daily, 13.5% said once or twice a week, and a further 29.8 per cent said once or twice a month. A total of 33.8 per cent commented that they would rarely or never use the service.

Former deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer subsequently joined the debate calling for a daily commuter rail service between Griffith and Albury – saying it would boost Riverina tourism while helping students and pensioners. "It would be better for the train to originate in Griffith and take in Leeton, Narrandera and Junee on its way to Wagga and Albury," Mr Fischer, a long-time train aficionado, said.

Mr Fischer suggested the train could include high quality food boxes showcasing the MIA's fresh produce, and be marketed as the "Griffith Gourmet Express" as a means of attracting tourists.

"A service departing Griffith at 7am and returning from Albury at 4pm would be ideal for students, and those travelling for medical appointments. It would benefit everyone, we've got the stations and rail lines there, it wouldn't take a lot for this to go ahead," he said.





Clyde/EMD units 8201 and 8175 power an empty grain train out of Fish River, south of Goulburn, on Monday 20 February. Once devoted entirely to coal haulage, the 82 Class locomotives are now appearing on a variety of trains including NSW grain services. Peter Reading

The existing weekly service between Griffith and Sydney could be scrapped, as this new daily service would allow commuters to link up with express services to major cities when in Wagga, Mr Fischer said. "Griffith's mayor needs to think laterally and get out there and fight for such ideas."

Vanessa Keenan, the Wagga councillor behind the idea of a Wagga to Albury service, said "it's the same principles and merits as what I'm proposing, our roads are really overburdened." However, she said that her focus was on a Wagga service rather than other towns.

Paul Pierotti said, "a train from Griffith to Albury would be lovely but does not seem commercially viable".

Mr Fischer though thinks the service could be more viable than other routes if it were marketed well. He said the service, which could also be called "Riverina Regional Express", would meet the needs of regional towns to better connect with each other.

Peter Knox, president of Griffith's Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association, has been lobbying for better rail commuter services from Griffith. "It's difficult for seniors to take buses to big cities, it takes forever to get to Sydney."

He says the main priority should be a second weekly train service to Sydney, rather than a daily train to Albury.



**The Liverpool to Holdsworthy Military Railway Line is one of New South Wales' 'forgotten' military railway lines. Its significance lies as the only Australian military railway line partly constructed by WWI internees.**

It transported WWI ordnance, ammunition, stores, cavalry and artillery horses, military equipment and personnel - with part of the line still in service until the early 1970s.

This exhibition commemorates the centenary of the line's construction, the circumstances under which it was constructed and the changed relationships between the Australian, German, Austro-Hungarian and former Ottoman nations and peoples.

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## Around Sydney

### Government rules out Sydney light rail construction compensation

The NSW Government has acknowledged the construction of Sydney's light rail project may have forced some businesses to close, but says it is unrealistic for owners to expect compensation.

On Thursday 13 April business owners affected by the construction of the South East Light Rail project met with the state Opposition's Transport Spokeswoman Jodi McKay to discuss compensation for lost trade.

Marg Prendergast, CBD Coordinator General, Transport for NSW, accepts that construction has caused trading difficulties for some businesses. "We know there's been a couple of businesses that haven't renewed their lease because of the construction, but we continue to work with them," she said. "Businesses shut down all the time throughout the city."

Ms Prendergast dismissed calls for compensation. "If there was a compensation regime, we pay out for the disruption period which is short, do they pay us back for the benefit at the end?" Ms Prendergast said. "We wouldn't build anything if that was the case."

However, Labor's Transport Spokeswoman Jodi McKay disagreed. "These businesses, whether they're renting or owning the building, they're still paying the same rates, they're still paying rent and they're still paying land taxes," she said. "We believe there should be some form of compensation."

### Transport for NSW exhibit wins gold at Sydney Royal Easter Show

Rita Harding, Executive Director of Marketing and Campaigns at Transport for NSW says that winning the Gold Medal for Best Commercial Exhibitor at the Royal Easter Show proves that highlighting major public initiatives can be both engaging and informative.

"Living in an era of delivering unprecedented levels of infrastructure and service delivery doesn't mean much unless we take the public along for the ride," Ms Harding said. "That's why I am delighted that our exhibition at this year's (Sydney Royal) Easter Show has really resonated with visitors."

"Transport for NSW have won Show Awards in the past, so the bar was already set high, but this year's effort by almost 120 staff have worked tirelessly for months has really paid off in delivering our best exhibit yet."

The exhibit covered some of the state's biggest transport projects, including the CBD and South East Light Rail, the NorthConnex and WestConnex road projects, Parramatta Light Rail and Sydney Metro (including a complete Sydney Metro carriage).

The 2017 Royal Easter Show was open to the public between 6 and 19 April at the Sydney Showground in the Olympic Park precinct. It attracted 922,827 visitors.



An integral part of Sydney's North West Metro project is the provision of a maintenance facility for the initial fleet of 132 Alstom Metro cars (22 six-car trains) being manufactured in Andhra Pradesh, India for use on the new line linking Cudgong Road station with Chatswood. This 17 April view looking west from Tallawong Road, Rouse Hill reveals that much of the track work and 1,500 volt wiring has been completed at the new facility. On the right is the maintenance building and storage tracks can be seen on the left. The facility is being built in stages with capacity for the initial 22 trains when Sydney Metro Northwest opens in the first half of 2019. Later it will provide stabling for 46 trains and maintenance services for a fleet of 76 trains as part of Sydney's new metro network John Hoyle



## Audit Office report raises concerns for NSW trains after 2019

Rail agencies are well placed to manage the forecast increase in passengers up to 2019 – including joining the Sydney Metro Northwest to the existing suburban network at Chatswood – according to a report by NSW Auditor-General Margaret Crawford.

The Audit Office of NSW's Passenger Rail Punctuality report, issued on Tuesday 11 April, found that rail agency plans and strategies are evidence-based, and mechanisms to assure effective implementation are sound. However, based on forecast patronage increases, the rail agencies will find it hard to maintain punctuality after 2019 unless the capacity of the network to carry trains and people is increased significantly. If recent higher than forecast patronage growth continues, the network may struggle to maintain punctuality *before* 2019.

The NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan predicts there will be a 26 per cent increase in passengers between 2012 and 2031 and that passenger numbers may well overtake this figure. Forecasts have underestimated passenger numbers in the past, particularly in the morning peak. There has been an annual growth of 6.6 per cent since May 2014, twice as much as was predicted by the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan.

According to the report, Transport for NSW has undertaken considerable work on developing strategies to increase capacity and

maintain punctuality after 2019, but remains some way from putting a costed plan to the government. There is a significant risk that investments will not be made soon enough to handle future patronage levels. Ideally, planning and investment decisions should have been made already.

Passenger rail punctuality indicators adopted in NSW are best practice, and include measures of train punctuality and customer delay. Measurement of punctuality is reasonably accurate, but there is some room for improvement. More information could be published on punctuality performance, particularly the Customer Delay Measure.

The report found that the rail network around North Sydney creates punctuality problems for afternoon peak services heading to Western Sydney and to Hornsby via Strathfield. East Hills express services performed well below target during the afternoon peak, with rail agencies identifying train timetables and signalling that restricts how close trains can run behind each other into Campbelltown as contributing factors. The punctuality of intercity trains lags behind suburban trains, and there was an extended period of declining punctuality between 2011 and 2014.

A full copy of the report is on the Audit Office website at: <http://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/publications/latest-reports/rail-punctuality>



The light rail track laid in mass concrete at the very busy intersection of Anzac Parade and Barker Street, Kingsford, with the University of New South Wales occupying part of both sides of Anzac Parade at this point. This is only a kilometre short of the terminus, which is behind and south of the photographer, on this very sunny, late autumn day of Friday 5 May. University students make up the bulk of passengers along this route and the Route 393 bus in the image, will lose most of its passengers once the light rail commences operation.

Shane O'Neil

## Police crackdown on crime and anti-social behaviour on trains

NSW Police Transport Command officers conducted Operation Colossus on Thursday 13 April, a one-day high-visibility operation targeting crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport in South-west Sydney. Officers from the Police Transport Command – both uniformed and plain-clothed – with the assistance of bicycle operatives, Operations Support Group, and Sydney Trains Transport Officers, were involved in the operation.

Acting Assistant Commissioner Mark Walton of the Police Transport Command said the operation was about making the rail network safe for all people. "The aim of the operation is to ensure the safety and well-being

of all commuters on the rail network. The dedicated officers of the Police Transport Command will not stand for any criminal or anti-social behaviour on the network, and you will continue to see us around transport hubs".

During the operation 22 Police and 10 Sydney Trains Transit Officers patrolled 15 trains, 5 buses and 35 railway stations. Three people were arrested, five charges were laid and 102 infringements were issued for a variety of offences.

A 43-year-old man was arrested at Fairfield Railway Station (located 29 Kilometres from Central on the Main Southern line), after police located 5 small bags of heroin. He was taken to Fairfield Police Station where he was charged with possess prohibited drug and an outstanding warrant. The man was refused bail and subsequently appeared at Parramatta Local Court.





QR IMU Set 164 is on an Airtrain service at Brisbane Airport Domestic Terminal on Sunday 9 April. Scott Mitchell

## State-of-the-art simulator modernises driver training

The Queensland Government has commissioned a new train simulator, significantly improving Queensland Rail driver training by providing the most realistic learning environment for trainee drivers.

On Thursday 27 April Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport Jackie Trad said that improving driver training is one of the core components of the government's plan to restore full services following cuts resulting from on-going driver shortages experienced following the opening of the Redcliffe Peninsula line (see January 2017 *RD*, page 19).

"The new simulator provides a fully immersive experience for trainee drivers, allowing them to learn every route on the city network on any train from the Citytrain fleet", Ms Trad said. "This new technology will help streamline training, with instructors able to test trainees under a range of conditions in an ultra-realistic environment before they hit the tracks in the real world."

Queensland Rail CEO Nick Easy said that the innovative technology would deliver a more efficient training program. "It was purpose-built for Queensland Rail in France by CORYS, a global leader in train simulators, and the technology, graphics and materials are all cutting edge," he said.

In another major improvement to driver training, Queensland Rail had upskilled more than 50 drivers to mentor new trainees to streamline on-track training. "After trainees complete their initial on-track training with dedicated trainers, they will complete the remainder of their supervised hours with driver mentors," Ms Trad said. "This frees up dedicated driver trainers and means Queensland Rail can commence training new recruits earlier."

The driver mentors are part of a suite of initiatives, including increased class sizes and a review of train crew training process, that have been implemented to improve driver training in line with the findings of the Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Rail Train Crewing Practices.

Since October, more than 50 of our experienced drivers have been appointed as mentors," Mr Easy said. "Together, these initiatives will streamline driver training, deliver more drivers sooner, allowing us to improve service frequency across the City network."

At the end of April, 106 of the 200 driver positions to be filled had been recruited. In addition, more than 100 candidates were at various stages of the recruitment process. Included in this number are former Queensland Rail drivers who were invited to apply in March.

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## Nambour station upgrade completed

In early March, the refurbished island platforms 1 and 2 at Nambour station reopened. All trains now use these platforms, allowing for the closure and removal of a temporary platform 2. (Nambour Station is located on the North Coast line approximately 104 kilometres north of Brisbane Central station. It is the terminus for city network services.)

A refurbished subway and new lift opened to customers and pedestrians on Monday 13 March, providing access from the Price Street carpark to the station platform via the Civic Way concourse.

Upgrade works continued on the northern section of platform 1 and is understood to have been completed in late April.

The upgrading works were completed as part of the Queensland Rail Station Accessibility Upgrade Program which focuses on providing greater accessibility to rail services.

The station upgrade has allowed independent accessibility to all platforms via paths, ramps or lifts, without the need to use stairs.

Other improvements include:

- a lift from the subway to the station forecourt to allow easier access to the train
- a raised section of platform encompassing the core zone and assisted boarding point
- additional shelter
- new accessible toilet facilities, including baby change facilities
- upgraded hearing augmentation loop and tactile platform surfaces to assist people with hearing and vision impairments
- upgraded accessible parking spaces and drop-off area; and
- upgraded CCTV and lighting.

Construction commenced in early 2016. The station remained open throughout works.

## Overhaul of Gatton rail bridge complete

A \$1.4 million strengthening project on the Lockyer Creek rail bridge in Gatton was completed in mid-April, improving the safety and reliability of the century-old structure. (Gatton is located on the main line linking Brisbane and Toowoomba. It is approximately 97 kilometres west of Brisbane Central station.)

The works involved installing a new steel beam above Old College Road and replacing more than 3,500 bolts and connections to strengthen the bridge, which is more than 100 years old.

Queensland Assistant Minister for Transport Glenn Butcher said the project created 16 jobs for local construction workers; "This upgrade

utilised local labour, machinery and resources, including truck and crane hire, to support local businesses."

Mr Butcher said the bridge remained operational throughout the project, with work being completed during periodic scheduled track closures to minimise impact to rail traffic.

The bridge spans 110 metres across Lockyer Creek, just west of Gatton station, and provides a crucial link for cattle, coal and other freight services heading from Toowoomba through to the Port of Brisbane, as well as the *Westlander* passenger service, which connects communities between Brisbane and Charleville. On average, about 600 freight and passenger trains cross the Lockyer Creek bridge every month.

"These important works have ensured the bridge will remain safe and reliable, so we can continue to support these local industries in the future", Mr Butcher said.

## Vital public transport concessions for job seekers and asylum seekers

The Queensland Government will drastically reduce public transport fares for job seekers and asylum seekers, improving access to important community services and employment opportunities.

On Monday 3 April Queensland Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport Jackie Trad said the fare concessions would start immediately and provide eligible applicants with a 50 per cent discount.

"The Palaszczuk Government is committed to increasing job prospects for Queenslanders who are looking for work and new asylum seekers joining our community," Ms Trad said. "Affordable and easy travel is vital to achieve this, that's why these fare concessions will be provided from today.

"These fare concessions will encourage travel across the Queensland public transport network connecting job seekers with employment services and job interviews. "Asylum seekers who also rely on public transport to access important services like education and settlement support services will be able to apply. "We have a responsibility to help those in our community who are often doing it tough while they are looking for work and accessing community services. "By reducing the cost of public transport for job seekers and asylum seekers, we are delivering on a promise made under the Fairer Fares package."

Eligible applicants include job seekers on Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance and asylum seekers.

People will be able to apply via the Translink website and, if eligible, the concession will be applied to their go card within 14 days or a concession card will arrive by mail within 14 business days. Asylum seekers may also visit their local Status Resolution Support Service.

For further information visit: [www.translink.com.au](http://www.translink.com.au)



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**Above:** The regular lunchtime X401 Gympie North northbound service, worked by ICE Sets 152/157, departs Nambour over the Tuckers Creek Bridge to the north of the town. Ray Miller

**Below:** Queensland Rail's EMU 67 and a sister set are seen departing from Bowen Hills Station on a service to Springfield Central on Anzac Day, Tuesday 25 April. Anthony Evans







The Clyde/EMD 'one-and-a-half' combination of 1680kW unit 2390 and 745kW unit 1737 haul 6EC1 cattle train near Yandina on Sunday 19 March. The train is made up of new Queensland Transport-funded containers. John Scott

## New Queensland cattle containers now in service

As foreshadowed in the November 2016 *RD* (from page 14) the Queensland Government is funding the construction of up to 321 cattle '40 feet' containers that will be available for lease and use on cattle trains operated under contract to the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads. Aurizon currently holds the Cattle Train Transport Services contract which expires on 31 December this year. Transport and Main Roads Director-General, Neil Scales, said that the new containers are now being delivered with 139 in service by April (see photo, above).

The containers are being supplied by Adelaide-based SCF Group following a national tender process. Mr Scales said that the remaining containers were scheduled to come into service by the end of last month

depending upon demand from the cattle industry. They are expected to replace existing livestock containers and cattle wagons used in Queensland.

The containers (or 'crates') are designed to be carried on any flat wagon that can carry shipping containers. They are built from corrosion resistant steel alloy and have galvanised and polyurethane coatings to ensure a long operational life. The floors of the containers are covered in rubber non-slip matting designed specifically for cattle to improve their condition during transport. Mr Scales said the Department of Transport was working closely with industry during the implementation phase to monitor the in-field performance of the crates in operation and resolve any issues.

For the nostalgia of rail, don't miss...

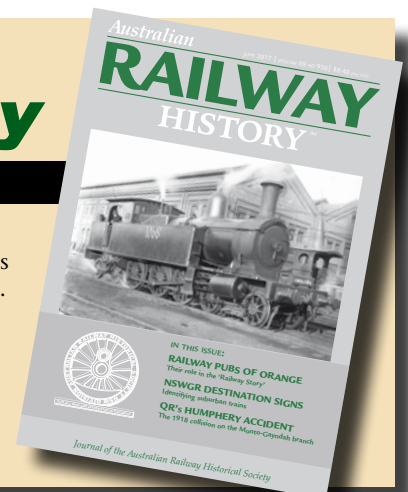
## **Australian Railway History**

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Railway pubs are a feature of many Australian towns and suburbs, but this subject has not been covered in detail by either the *ARHS Bulletin* or *Australian Railway History* over the years. The June issue of the magazine addresses this with a well-researched and illustrated account of railway hotels in the NSW city of Orange by Euan Greer and Ross Maroney.

Richard Mathews provides another new subject

with his article on the name boards and roller-blind destination signs carried by suburban trains in Sydney and Newcastle between 1891 and 1922. He covers the design and manufacture of these items in the railway workshops. Mike Quirk documents the Queensland Railways accident at Humphery west of Maryborough in 18 June 1918 in which five passengers were injured, one of whom died in hospital.





## Upgrade for Salisbury Railway Station to include ticket validation gates

The South Australian Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) has commenced works to improve security and install ticket validation gates at Salisbury Railway Station. (Salisbury station and bus interchange is located in the northern Adelaide suburb of Salisbury. It is situated on the Gawler Central line – 20.2 kilometres from Adelaide Station. The station adjoins a large bus interchange and park & ride carpark making it one of the busiest stations on the Adelaide suburban rail system.)

The ticket validation gates will be the same type as those installed at Adelaide Railway Station, which require passengers to have a valid ticket to travel.

The project will include:

- Installation of ticket validation gates, including wider gates for people with mobility aids or prams,
- Installation of additional disability car parks at the south-west car park of the Salisbury Railway Station,
- New platform fencing to modify access to the platforms from the car parks and bus interchange,
- New ticketing machine on platform 2,
- New footpath; and
- Improved CCTV and lighting.

The works form part of the \$2.1 million Fare Evasion Initiative to install ticket validation gates and increase safety measures at Salisbury Station in response to a commitment from the South Australian Government.

The proposed works at Salisbury Railway Station will:

- Improve safety for passengers by preventing people without tickets entering the platforms,
- Increase security for passengers with staff monitoring the station during peak times; and
- Reduce fare evasion.

The works, which commenced on Sunday 9 April, will be delivered in stages. The upgrade is expected to be completed by mid-2017, weather permitting. There will be no changes to passenger train services during the works.

## Train services resume after works completed at Torrens Junction

Train services on the Adelaide suburban Outer Harbor and Grange lines resumed on Tuesday 25 April after a 10-day closure in which almost 50,000 hours of construction work was undertaken.

Gawler line train services re-commenced on Friday 21 April following a 7-day closure as part of the same works on the \$238 million Torrens Rail Junction Project.

More than 375 people were employed during the closure for works that included:

- The construction of temporary rail lines for Gawler, Outer Harbor and Grange passenger services.
- Piling works from the River Torrens to Torrens Rail Junction in the Adelaide Park Lands.
- The construction of a new bridge at Park Terrace and Gibson Street which, later this year when the project is completed, will enable the rail line to pass underneath the roads.
- Piling works at the existing Bowden Station in preparation for construction of the new lowered station.

More than 400 tonnes of reinforcing steel was used during the closure – part of an estimated 6,000 tonnes expected for the project to be sourced from Arrium's Whyalla steelworks. Also during the closure approximately 250 piles were drilled and constructed.

The Torrens Rail Junction Project will increase the flow of freight by removing a major pinch-point in Adelaide's rail freight and road networks. The project will separate the interstate freight rail line from the Outer Harbor passenger line and build a rail underpass at Park Terrace removing the level crossing which holds up traffic for more than two hours every weekday (see February 2017 *RD*, page 5).

Full details of the Torrens Rail Junction project can be found at: <http://dpti.sa.gov.au/torrens-rail-junction>

**Below: 6M49 empty ballast train from Port Augusta to Whyalla approaches the Stuart Highway overbridge behind Clyde/EMD units GM43 and GM37 on Thursday 30 March. Damien Butler**







TR03 and TR10 with Train No.534, the Brighton to Bell Bay log train, catch the last rays of sunlight on the S-curve between Back Tea Tree Road and Tea Tree loop on Wednesday 19 April. Bruce Tilley

## Business group supports light rail for Hobart's northern suburbs

The Moonah and Glenorchy Business Association is the latest group to give support to the proposal for a light rail system in Hobart's northern suburbs. Association president Beres Taylor said the group would praise the virtues of the project to its 300 members.

"The rail project has been talked about for too long. Now the significant economic benefits have been quantified, its time has definitely come," he said. "Restoring rail is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for businesses in the city of Glenorchy."

Glenorchy District Football Club president John McCann said the King George V sporting precinct could benefit by becoming more access friendly as an events venue.

St Albi Bar and Eatery manager Lucy Baker, who features in a new online video produced by the Hobart Northern Suburbs Rail Action Group, is also a big fan of the plan. "If there was no infrastructure for the railway system, you could understand it'd be harder. But because it's just sitting there dormant, it seems crazy that it's not used," Ms Baker said.

The recent *Glenorchy to Hobart Public Transport Corridor Study*, October 2016 by consultant GHD outlined a \$200 million blueprint to transform urban development along the disused northern suburbs rail corridor (see April 2017 *RD*, page 24). The report, prepared for the Hobart and Glenorchy city councils, found the project would generate 500 to 1000 construction jobs every year for two decades while urban areas were being developed and the rail line modernised. In the longer term the report found that light rail has the potential to generate 1500 to 2500 ongoing jobs in tourism, retail and hospitality.

Tasmanian Infrastructure Minister Rene Hidding has previously said light rail wasn't feasible just yet.

"Our position on this has been consistent — 'not now' does not mean 'not ever'," he said. "As confirmed by a number of studies, while light rail is not feasible just now, its time will come."

State Opposition Leader Rebecca White said Labor supported the rail corridor being maintained for future use.

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## Mobile blackspots on state's busiest V/Line routes to be fixed

The Victorian Government is partnering with mobile carriers – Telstra, Optus and Vodafone – to fix mobile blackspots along the state's five busiest regional rail corridors.

On Wednesday 19 April the Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources announced that the \$18 million Regional Rail Connectivity Project will significantly improve mobile coverage and connectivity for commuters along the Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Traralgon and Seymour lines – which see more than 15.5 million passenger trips annually.

As part of the project, Victoria will be the first state in Australia to implement in-train technology that will boost the signal from mobile towers outside the rail carriage to devices used inside. Work has already begun to pilot the installation of mobile reception repeaters in VLocity trains, which are designed to help boost coverage from less than 50 per cent to almost the full V/Line passenger rail network. If successful, the repeaters will be rolled out on the entire VLocity fleet in 2018.

In-train technology is used in more than 30 rail networks across Europe including Germany, Italy and Switzerland to boost the mobile signal from repeaters inside carriages. Passengers will begin to experience improved mobile coverage from the end of this year with the construction of up to 35 new mobile phone towers commencing after the pilot process is complete. The entire project is set to be completed in 2018.

The Regional Rail Connectivity Project is expected to boost productivity for regional business commuters, delivering an estimated \$20 million per annum to the Victorian economy.

## PTUA welcomes Ballarat station bus interchange funding commitment

The Public Transport Users Association (PTUA) has welcomed the Victorian government's Friday 28 April announcement of \$5 million funding for the construction of a new bus interchange at Ballarat railway station. The interchange will be delivered as part of the Ballarat Station Precinct Redevelopment.

PTUA Ballarat Branch Convener Ben Lever praised the decision to bring the construction of the bus interchange forward.

"Ballarat railway station is a key transport hub, and must remain so. The highest priority for the station precinct has to be public transport enhancements like the bus interchange. While we still have questions about other aspects of the Ballarat Station Precinct plan, there can be no doubt that the funding of the bus interchange is a huge win for Ballarat commuters", Mr Lever said.

While the interchange had been included in draft plans during public consultation, it was not funded in Ballarat Station Precinct works announced in December 2016.

With funding now assured work on the new bus interchange has entered the next stage, with construction due to be completed in 2018, subject to planning and heritage approvals.

The interchange will bring local buses closer to the station, improving access to rail services and Ballarat more broadly.

The redevelopment of the Ballarat Station Precinct includes an upgrade to the heritage Goods Shed and will feature a state-of-the-art convention and events centre, a Quest Apartment Hotel, shops, restaurants and a new public plaza.



Set SN8, the first carriage set to be out-shopped in the new Public Transport Victoria livery, made its debut on the morning Down and midday Up Albury services on Thursday 13 April, hauled by Clyde/EMD unit N457 *City of Mildura* (the first locomotive to receive the new colours). Here, the train sprints across the Moonee Ponds Creek bridge on the return trip from Albury the following day. Steve Ban



## Premier commits to new rollingstock for Victorian North East line – with proviso

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews has guaranteed he will provide funds for new trains on the troubled North East line; providing the federal government makes a commitment to fix the track.

The strongest indication yet a deal will be brokered by the federal and state governments to remedy the long-standing issue were made by Mr Andrews in his home town of Wangaratta on Friday 21 April. The Premier said he would 'phone Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull the moment the federal government provided the cash for the track with confirmation the funding could be in the two upcoming budgets.

"This has gone on for a very long time," Mr Andrews said. "I'm the best-briefed Premier in the history of this state of the failings on the North East line." "Let's have the federal government provide the money for the track and my government will provide the money for the trains and we will get on with making this service much, much better."

The prospect the North East line could be fixed sooner than expected came recently when the federal government flagged a major rail announcement in its next budget.

The \$1 billion funding package linked to the Port of Melbourne sale would also see the Bairnsdale and Warrnambool lines also fixed.

Mr Andrews' latest visit to the North East coincided with another train fault which forced passengers to travel by bus.

The Premier said he had spoken to his transport minister Jacinta Allan about the North East line before arriving in Wangaratta and confirmed some "very productive discussions" had been held with the federal government in recent times.

"We stand ready once allocations are made to improve the track to fulfil our important obligations around trains," he said. "Residents across the North East are sick and tired of it."

## Rail operator misses 22 months of targets on Bendigo line

V/Line failed to meet its punctuality target on the Bendigo line for the 22nd consecutive month in March, prompting a call for action from public transport users.

Less than 82 per cent of Bendigo line trains were on time in March, more than 10 percentage points below V/Line's target of 92 per cent and down from 83 per cent in February. The organisation last met its punctuality target in May 2015, when 94.9 per cent of Bendigo trains ran on time.

Public Transport Users Association regional spokesman Paul Westcott said the figures were "not good enough", given any train that arrived within 5 minutes and 59 seconds of its schedule was considered "on time". "That's already an inbuilt leeway [so] I don't think it's overly ambitious and I don't think it should be reduced," he said.

V/Line chief executive officer James Pinder said on-time running on the line was affected by delays where V/Line shared sections of the track with Metro trains, as well as by train faults.

Mr Pinder noted service delivery showed an improvement of 4.6 percentage points to 95.9 per cent in March, despite an incident when a child avoided serious injury after being struck by a train at Kangaroo Flat.

But Mr Westcott said incidents like the near miss and another in which a train was derailed after striking a vehicle abandoned on the track in Kangaroo Flat in February did not account for the string of missed targets. "There are unfortunate one-offs with accidents caused by stupid behaviour of other people, but it's just not good enough," he said. "While it's unfortunate, it doesn't explain the total monthly figures by any means."

Mr Westcott stopped short of calling for a second track on the Bendigo line, which was removed as part of the Regional Fast Rail Project, to be restored, but said the idea was at least worth considering. "Restoring the duplication of the single track beyond Kyneton certainly needs to be one of the things that is looked at when trying to work out why targets aren't being met," he said.

## V/Line orders heat restriction review

V/Line has commissioned an independent review of heat restrictions which prevent freight services from running on days when the temperature rises above 36 degrees.

In late-April V/Line chief executive James Pinder told a Victorian parliamentary inquiry hearing that Monash University's Institute of Railway Technology had been asked to do the review.

"We have had lots of correspondence, about our heat speed restrictions, and we still feel – given the circumstances and what we have achieved – we have been doing the right things," Mr Pinder said after the hearing. "As with all reputable organisations, occasionally you will ask somebody in to carry out an independent review of where we have got to. We, off our own bat – nobody has asked us to do this – have asked Monash to come and do that."

Mr Pinder said the work was likely to be concluded within a few months and he hoped the review would vindicate V/Line's position. "Initially, we are hoping and expecting that Monash will say our response, in the broad context, was the right thing to do – we will have to let them reach that conclusion themselves – they certainly won't be told to reach that conclusion by me," he said. "If there are other suggestions contained within the review, as to how we can improve, we would welcome that too."

Rail Freight Alliance executive officer and former Buloke Shire mayor Reid Mather – whose organisation has written to Premier Daniel Andrews to warn an economic boom from record crops in Victoria has been "seriously undermined" by the restrictions – welcomed the review but called on V/Line to release its terms of reference.

"We're yet to see the terms of reference of that review but what the end game should be is that we want to have efficient transport in this state and if you want the regions to grow – a place like Buloke – then we need reliable transport links, road and rail," he said. "The reality is this is underinvestment by successive governments and at the Rail Alliance we're sick of the blame game and we want you to get on and do it."

Mr Mather also called on the government to appoint a dedicated minister and formulate a formal plan for dealing with issues on the rail network. "Our frustration is that we have no dedicated minister that we can talk to and no transport plan for Victoria," he said. "While we haven't got a transport plan and we haven't got a dedicated minister any road will do."

Public Transport Minister Jacinta Allan defended the heat restriction policy, pointing out last year was the first since 2009 when there wasn't a derailment on the V/Line freight network and saying she was happy to continue meeting with the councils, farmers and the freight lobby to discuss this issue. "Not only do derailments put lives at risk, they can cause extended closures of the line, meaning produce can be left stranded for weeks," she said.

To read *Railway Digest* on your PC, Mac, Mobile, Tablet and more, visit  
**www.pocketmags.com**



## Pacific National strike escalates into a lockout, services resumed on 8 May.

An ongoing dispute between Pacific National (PN) and the Victorian Branch of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) over a new Enterprise Agreement escalated into strike action during the first week of May with PN Rural and Bulk train drivers, who operate internal Victorian freight services, commencing a 48-hour strike. PN subsequently announced that it would lock workers out for the entire week. The RTBU estimated around 30 services would be halted by the strike and lockout during the week. (Interstate PN trains are not affected to any degree at this stage). As this issue went to press unconfirmed reports suggested that PN was investigating ways to get trains moving again by leasing out its locomotives and equipment to other operators such as Southern Shorthaul Railroad and TransVolution and using drivers from those operators. Melbourne-based TransVolution was granted accreditation by the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator in September 2015 to undertake rail operations in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia but it has not operated any train services directly under its accreditation to date.

The strike has hit Victorian rail freight services at a time when a record grain harvest is being hauled and regular intermodal services such as the thrice-weekly Mildura (Merbein) – Melbourne service operated for Wakefield Transport Group have been forced to use road transport. The Group's Managing Director, Ken Wakefield, told *The Weekly Times* he had to use 630 truck trips during the week and 50 per cent of that freight needed to be refrigerated. He said the situation was 'impossible' with difficulties in sourcing trucks and it was so upsetting for local people who spend 12 months growing produce they can't get to market. Mr Wakefield said his company was paying to store fresh produce such as table grapes while freight services were disrupted. *The Weekly Times* said that more than 1,400 extra B-double trips would be required on Victorian roads during the week of the dispute to ensure farmers' produce did not go to waste.

Grain marketers are also being affected by the industrial action with GrainCorp expecting 35,000 tonnes capacity would be lost during the week, with 100,000 tonnes of rail capacity out of action since early March. Emerald Grain Chief Executive David Johnson told *The Weekly Times* his company was losing millions of dollars because of the 'extremely frustrating' industrial action. He estimated seven trains carting 14,000 tonnes of grain for Emerald would be stranded this week. The dispute has hit grain services following action by V/Line to heavily speed-restrict or cancel trains because of concerns over heat-related issues associated with regional tracks earlier this year. The heat-related speed restrictions were heavily criticised by groups such as the Victorian Farmers Federation who said that the issue was badly handled by V/Line.

RTBU spokesman Marc Marotta apologised to freight forwarders caught up in the dispute and told ABC News the union had always taken the approach to try and avoid industrial action, but in this case PN had opened negotiations with a \$19,000 pay cut and it was trying to compel drivers to drive 120 km to sign on in their own time, in their own vehicle and with no recompense. Mr Marotta told ABC News the new Enterprise Agreement was 'ludicrous' and he could not see how any worker would vote for it. He said, "I've done this for a long time and I've never had this kind of approach from an organisation." The negotiations between Pacific National and its workers have been underway for 12 months. PN said it was negotiating with the RTBU in good faith. Victorian Transport Minister Jacinta Allan encouraged both parties to reach an agreement "for the sake of farmers, their families and our regional economy".

On 8 May PN and the RTBU agreed to resume services and suspend industrial action for eight weeks.



N452 on the 16:31 Down Melbourne to Shepparton passenger service crosses H1, XR559 and XR552 on No.9306 Up Tocumwal freight at Murchison East on Friday 3 March. John Scott



## Around Melbourne

### Construction begins on Mernda rail extension

Construction has begun on the new rail line to Mernda that will carry train services to the heart of one of Victoria's fastest growing areas. Victorian Minister for Public Transport Jacinta Allan joined Member for Yan Yean Danielle Green in Mernda on Tuesday 25 April to mark the start of works on the Andrews Labor Government's extension of the South Morang line to Mernda. Construction crews have established work areas, removing vegetation and preparing the long-abandoned rail corridor for major construction that gets underway later this year.

Mernda was once a station on the erstwhile Whittlesea Line, that was closed beyond Lalor in November 1959. However, as the population in the area has steadily grown, the line has seen a gradual revival; with reopening and electrification to Epping in 1964, to South Morang in 2012, and conversion of the whole route to double track.

Minister Allan said: "This massive project will change people's lives for the better, creating thousands of jobs and connecting one of Victoria's fastest growing areas to the public transport they deserve. The project is fully funded, construction is underway and we're not wasting a moment getting on with it."

The \$600 million Mernda Rail Extension will build eight kilometres of new, duplicated track and three stations; at Mernda, Hawkstowe and near Marymede Catholic College. The stations are expected to be used by around 8,000 passengers daily when they open in early 2019. The last time a Melbourne rail line was extended by more than two stations was in 1930, when the East Malvern line was extended to Glen Waverley.

The project includes a pedestrian overpass at Mernda Station, new walking and cycling paths, better bus connections, and train stabling north of Bridge Inn Road in Mernda. There will also be extensive bike storage and up to 2,000 new car spaces across the three stations.

The Mernda Rail Extension is being delivered by the Level Crossing Removal Authority.

For more information or to sign up for updates, visit: <http://levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/rail-projects/merndarail>

### Andrews government talks down Melbourne Airport rail

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has indicated support for a rail link to Melbourne Airport, but the Victorian Government has said the money should be spent on projects that are ready to go.

While Mr Turnbull refused to confirm reports that the funding for the project would be included in the May federal budget, he acknowledged on Fairfax Radio in early April that it was a plan that had been studied by previous Liberal governments. "The Napthine government took steps towards a rail line to Tullamarine and it's always been something that's been seen as an omission in Melbourne not to have a rail line out to the airport," he said.

While Victorian government has welcomed the Prime Minister's interest in building a rail link to Melbourne Airport it played down the project's urgency, arguing the best advice is it won't be needed for another 15 to 30 years.

Melbourne Airport rail was listed as a mid to long-term project in Infrastructure Victoria's recent 30-year planning blueprint for the state. The government has said it is happy to be guided by that independent advice and has made no commitment to build a rail line to the airport.

"The independent Infrastructure Victoria report that was released late last year indicated that an airport rail link is needed within the next 15 to 30 years and we certainly want to work towards achieving that," Victoria's Public Transport Minister Jacinta Allan Ms Allan told ABC Radio on Friday 7 April.

This is despite recent warnings from Melbourne Airport that its visitor numbers are growing so fast that it expects the Tullamarine Freeway will choke with traffic well before then.

The airport expects to welcome 64 million passengers a year 15 years from now, almost double the current volume.

**Below: NR117, NR6, NR91, NR121 and NR41 with WM2 Port Kembla—Melbourne steel train at Sunshine North on Friday 6 January roaring through the dipper under McIntyre Road. Dominiik Giemza**





## Aubin Grove Station opens to the public

Aubin Grove station, located between the Cockburn Central and Kwinana stations on the Mandurah Line (24.3 kilometres from Perth) was opened on Sunday 23 April by the new Western Australian Labor Government.

The first train, an all stations service to Perth, departed at 10.56am.

The \$72 million station, made from locally fabricated steel, also features 2,000 parking bays, bike facilities, six bus feeder services for local residents, a kiosk, toilets, lifts, stairs and escalators. The combined cost of the Aubin Grove road and rail project is \$125 million, including \$20 million in Federal funding for the Russell Road upgrade. The road and rail works were delivered by Georgiou Group, with the road component of the project completed in December 2016.

The Mandurah Line opened in 2007, having been built with provision for the extra station to be added as the population grew. The line runs 70.1 kilometres south from Perth to WA's second largest city Mandurah.

"The new station was built while the Mandurah Line was largely still operational", said WA Transport Minister Rita Saffioti at the opening.

"This project represents a feat of engineering, with the station largely constructed off-site and then sections craned into place over the last 18 months", she said.

Train replacement bus route 909 was operating from Aubin Grove to Cockburn Central (a distance of 3.5 kilometres) until regular services commenced after the opening ceremony. Local feeder bus services were already running to their new Sunday timetable, although those arriving before 10.56 am had no corresponding rail services to connect with.

The facilities at Aubin Grove straddle the Kwinana Freeway with the platforms between the north and south bound carriageways. On the eastern side there is a small amount of public car parking and taxi, kiss & ride, and bicycle facilities. There is medium density housing and a small shopping centre adjacent to the station.

The western side has the bus terminal and considerable car parking

## Rio Tinto autonomous train project advancing well

Rio Tinto has declared its long-delayed driverless rail system is back on track, saying it expected the system would be fully operational by the end of 2018.

On April 2016 Rio was forced to cut its 2017 export guidance and admit it was struggling to integrate the complex software systems into a package that would allow it to move to completely autonomous haulage over its rail network (see October 2016 *RD*, page 27).

However, in its 2017 First Quarter Operations Review – issued on 20 April, Rio announced that its AutoHaul project is advancing well with the commencement and ramp up of trains operating in automated mode; albeit with drivers still remaining on board until all safety and reliability systems are thoroughly demonstrated.

While speaking at the Annual Global Iron Ore and Steel Forecast Conference in Perth on Wednesday 29 March, Kellie Parker - Managing Director, Planning, Integration and Assets, Rio Tinto Iron Ore said; "We are already seeing the AutoHaul system deliver improvements to average train speeds. We expect to progressively expand the use of AutoHaul this year, with full implementation by the end of 2018."

and also has housing butting up to the station property. The western entry way houses:

- toilets (including dedicated baby change facilities),
- a kiosk (this wasn't operating on opening day and our correspondent is unsure if it was ready for opening as there was no signage),
- Transperth staff facilities; and
- Space for an ATM (including signage, but no actual ATM as yet).

'Next train' indicators began operating from about 9.30am. There are expected to be about 3,900 boardings each day at the new station.



In the afternoon of the opening day, a Perth-bound train slows to stop at Aubin Grove. Traffic on the adjacent north bound freeway carriageway was moving very slowly with homeward bound holiday traffic. The small eastern entry is visible to the right. David Whiteford





## Taking Street Art to the Bush

Text by Neville Pollard, Images by Genya Miller

**M**eet Guido van Helten from Brisbane; he's one of Australia's most popular street artists who has a passion to capture people interacting with their local environment. He also combines human imagery with industrial spaces like silos and in this case, railway wagons.

Manildra, a small farming town of 500 people, between Orange and Parkes in western NSW, was just the place to concentrate Guido's attention. He focused on a group of people underrepresented in Australian society and painted them on high-sided NGFH, flour wagons owned by the Manildra Group, who operate the largest flour mill in Australia in the town. These wagons were a perfect canvas to record Guido's work.

The Manildra Group's painted wagons travel through country New South Wales three times a week, transporting flour from Manildra to the company's starch and gluten plant at Bomaderry (Nowra) via Orange, Blue Mountains, Sydney and the south coast.

Seven wagons were painted to feature a similar number of local people. 'Fox' Bennett was one chosen; he's worked at the mill as a maintenance

guy for the previous 22 years. Guido concentrates on the eyes in his portraits in so doing uses the whole wagon side to its best advantage.

Manildra Flour Mills Manager, John Brunner commented, "Guido's work is a striking realistic portrayal of Manildra locals and as the train travels through country NSW it takes the stories of our Manildra community with them." "This watercolour style artwork has really captured the heart and spirit of the community of Manildra," he said.

"I think everybody is special and everybody has something to say," Mr van Helten commented.

Guido's story is available on ABC iView as Episode One in 'The Wanderers' series presented by Screen Australia. Each episode follows six Australian artists exploring six locations around the country. The 10-minute program is available at <http://iView.abc.net.au/programs/art-bites-the-wanderers/AC1528Q001S00>

*Acknowledgements to Kirsty Beavon, Corporate Affairs Manager, Manildra Group.*



**Top:** Guido van Helten at work.

**Left:** Three of the six NGFH flour wagons painted by Guido; note how he has focused on the eyes of his portraits.

**Above:** Ronald Bennett with his portrait





# Impressions of Aubin Grove and the Opening Ceremony

Text and images by David Whiteford

**O**n Sunday morning 23 April, my brother and I arrived very early and the station area was almost deserted. Eerie announcements could be heard from the closed-up station as the Transperth pre-recorded safety and service announcements went through their regular cycle. At least they were shut off for the opening ceremony. Train replacement bus route 909 was operating from Aubin Grove to Cockburn Central until regular services commenced after the ceremony. The local feeder bus services were already operating to their normal timetable from first services that morning.

Although there were few travellers to be seen, some were expecting to use the train straight away. We had the opportunity to explore the station before the opening. The facilities at Aubin Grove straddle the Kwinana Freeway with the platforms between the north and south bound carriageways. On the eastern side there is a small amount of public car parking and taxi, kiss & ride, and bicycle facilities. There is medium density housing and a small shopping centre adjacent to the station.

The western side has the bus terminal and considerable car parking and also has housing butting up to the station property. It is the western entryway that houses toilets (including dedicated baby change toilet), a kiosk (this wasn't open on the 23rd and I am unsure if it was ready for opening as there was no signage), Transperth staff facilities, and space for an ATM (there was a sign, but no actual ATM). As momentum gathered, the next train indicators began operating from about 9.30am and I noticed at 9.36 the next Perth train was due in 79 minutes, and to Mandurah in 83.

The opening ceremony started slightly late of the 10am schedule. Richard Sellers, CEO of the PTA, was the MC and, following a Welcome to Country (which could barely be heard over the freeway traffic noise), introduced Rita Saffioti, Minister for Transport, as the first speaker. She acknowledged the previous Liberal/National government's work on this project and the bi-partisan support given to it. Inaugurated by a Labor government, there was provision for a station on the Mandurah railway at Aubin Grove from the start. Premier Mark McGowan followed and he

**Above:** The first Perth-bound train to stop at Aubin Grove pulls in to the platform. There was still plenty of room on this regular service from Mandurah for the crowd to join and take seats.

**Right:** The overhead walkway contained a display of early plans and photographs of various construction stages of the Aubin Grove Station. This view looks towards the station platform entry from the western side.







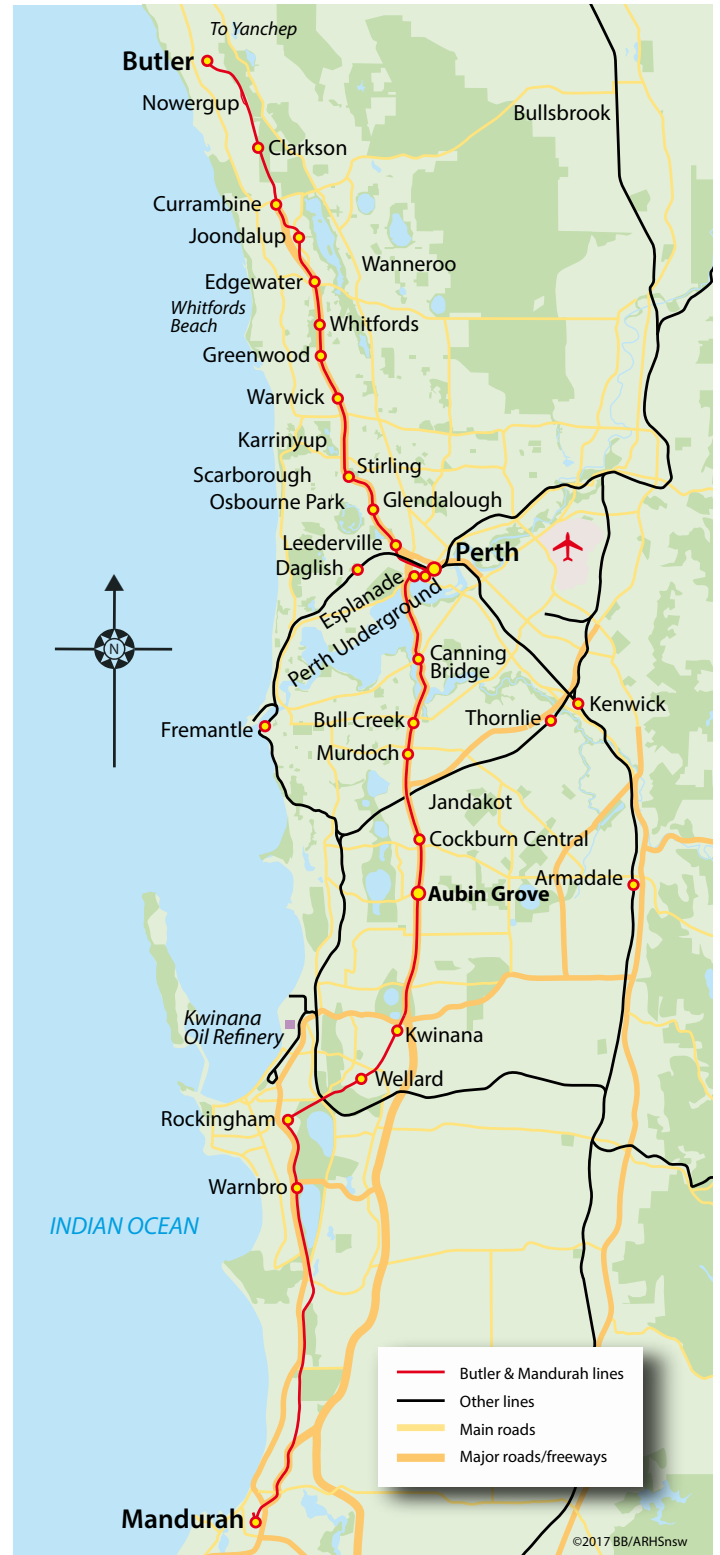
**Top:** Premier Mark McGowan and Transport Minister Rita Saffioti descend on the escalator to join the growing crowd of guests and general passengers to await the first train to Perth.

**Above:** The platform entry area prior to the amassing of the guests. The plaque is covered against the right wall and the green ribbons were to be cut to officially open the station. Note the 'next train' indicators showing that the next Perth train was in 80 minutes and to Mandurah in 84. Escalators and stairs are beyond the lift.

said that he catches the train from Rockingham to Perth, but the people he sits next to have their heads down to their 'phones, tablets, kindles, etc. and seem oblivious to the fact that they could have the Premier's ear for 32 minutes!

During the speeches, at 10.26, a Perth-bound train stopped at the station and at least one person got off. He seems to be the first passenger, though very much unofficial, to have used the station. Then, assisted by Ms Saffioti and two junior members of the Georgiou family (Georgiou being chief contracting company) Mr McGowan unveiled the plaque and cut the ribbons across the ticket barriers to officially open the station.

The first train to Perth was due to call at 10.56am but was a minute or so late. The cars on this train were 4058, 6058, 5058, 4060, 6060, 5060, and there was by then a considerable crowd on the platform.



The Premier, other officials and many of the invited guests boarded the first car (4058) for the short trip to Cockburn Central – and there was applause from those already on board the train. Guest lanyards housed a special smartrider ticket for use on the day. The official party returned by the next available train to Mandurah. For a short time there were Perth-bound trains at six-minute intervals but there was no crowd of people wanting to experience the new station after the first train had left.

Overall the opening was very low-key. There were no community activities, no hand-outs (even no information about the station) and not even a timetable display rack was evident. Only an ice cream van sat near the western entrance for a while but he was gone by the time the officials and guests had returned from Cockburn Central. There was good television coverage of the opening, but nothing in the daily *West Australian* newspaper or even the local *Cockburn Gazette* of 25 April.





# Gold Coast rail expansion on track for Commonwealth Games

John Hoyle

**T**he Commonwealth Games is scheduled to be held on the Gold Coast between 4 and 15 April 2018. As with all major sporting events the efficient transport of spectators, officials and participants is seen as essential if the event is to be judged a success. The emphasis on transport was illustrated by concerns raised by the UK-based Commonwealth Games Federation, which sent a letter last December to Commonwealth Games chair and former Queensland Premier, Peter Beattie, warning that inadequate transport and logistics could 'unravel the event'. The letter said that region did not have viable transport solutions to manage up to 1.2 million spectators and 50,000 contractors. The Federation expressed concerns about public transport and road capacity, especially on the M1 motorway linking Brisbane and the Gold Coast. In response to the Federation's concerns Mr Beattie said the letter had not taken into account planning that was already underway, including traffic management measures for the M1 such as reducing speed limits and confining large trucks to the two left hand lanes. He said Gold Coast train frequency would be increased and ticket holders to the Games would have free public transport. The Commonwealth Games Federation responded by saying it was now happy with the updated information relating to transport planning.

The publicity surrounding this discussion highlights the importance placed on transport to large events and indeed the Commonwealth Games has been the catalyst for two Gold Coast rail expansion projects – the duplication of Queensland Rail's Gold Coast line between Coomera and Helensvale and the extension of the Gold Coast light rail from its northern terminus at Gold Coast University Hospital to Helensvale railway station.

As outlined in the April *RD* (page 19) the Queensland Government is funding a \$163 million duplication of the remaining single track section of the Gold Coast line, the 8.2 kilometre section between

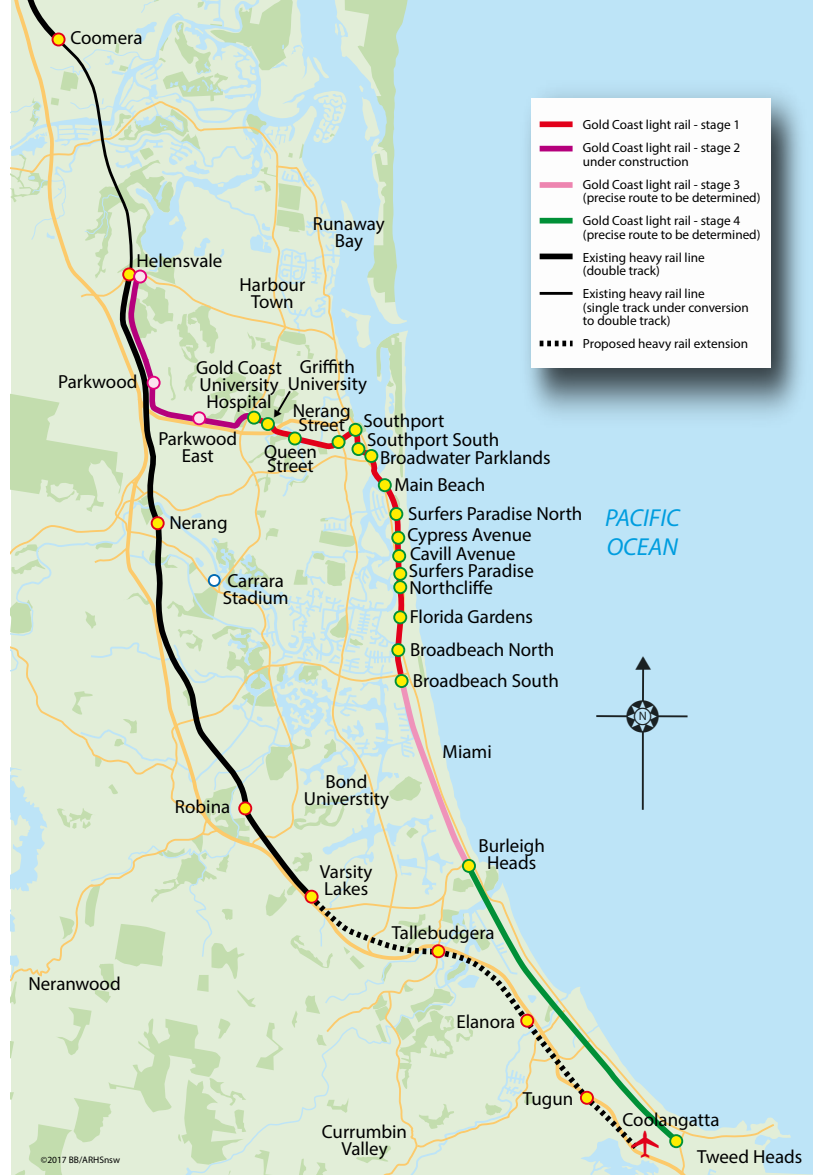
Coomera and Helensvale. The duplication will increase capacity from six to eight trains an hour in each direction which will be required during the Games. Currently a 30-minute off-peak frequency applies seven days a week on the Gold Coast line but in both morning and evening peak periods frequencies of seven and eight minutes apply during part of the peak. In the contra-peak direction the standard 30-minute frequency applies. However, during the Commonwealth Games it is expected that there will be a high passenger demand in the contra-peak direction as spectators travel towards the Gold Coast in the morning and return in the evening – hence the need to provide a much more frequent service against the peak traffic flow. The duplication will allow this high contra-peak frequency to occur plus accommodate a possible 15 minute frequency operating all day during the Games period. This improved level of service will be particularly useful for Games spectators travelling from Brisbane to the major venue of Carrara stadium which will be reached by train to Nerang and bus to the stadium.

The most significant part of the project is the construction of an 860 metre bridge to carry the second track across the Coomera River, Saltwater Creek and Hope Island Road. A 120-metre bridge over the Coomera River overflow plus three bridges between Helensvale Road and the Gold Coast Highway are also being provided. The additional track, located on the western side of the existing line, is currently being laid using concrete sleepers. Overhead wiring structures and signalling are also been positioned. Concrete sound barriers, replacing earlier timber barriers, are also been constructed. Some work is still outstanding on the Coomera River Bridge but, aided by a relatively dry summer, the project is currently on schedule for completion by late this year. Golding Contractors is responsible for the bridge and civil works while QR will provide track and overhead wiring.



**Left (page 28):** The Queensland Government is currently duplicating the remaining single track section of the Gold Coast line, the 8.2 kilometre section between Coomera and Helensvale. The project is scheduled to be completed late this year in time to handle additional traffic for the Commonwealth Games commencing in April next year. In this Saturday, 29 April view a Queensland Rail six-car Interurban Multiple Unit races north to its next stop at Coomera beside the under-construction new track and overhead masts. The cranes in the background mark the construction site for the second bridge over the Coomera River. John Hoyle

**Below:** The final section of the Gold Coast Light Rail extension from Gold Coast University Hospital to Helensvale Station will parallel Queensland Rail's Gold Coast line. In this Saturday, 29 April view, track and overhead pole construction is underway just south of Helensvale station as a six-car Interurban Multiple Unit train heads north to Brisbane in the background. Open ballasted track will be used on this section in contrast to the mass concrete-supported track used for stage one of the light rail line. John Hoyle





Currently rail passengers arriving at Helensvale from Brisbane and wishing to continue to important Gold Coast centres such as Southport and Surfers Paradise travel on Surfside buses from Helensvale. When the Gold Coast light rail stage one was opened on 20 July 2014 it was always planned to extend the line westwards to link with QR's line at Helensvale and southwards to eventually reach the Gold Coast airport via Burleigh Heads. In August 2015 the Queensland Government announced the preferred route for stage two to bring the light rail to Helensvale station. The 7.3 kilometre route travels via Olsen Avenue and beside the Smith Street motorway before heading north beside QR's line to reach Helensvale station.

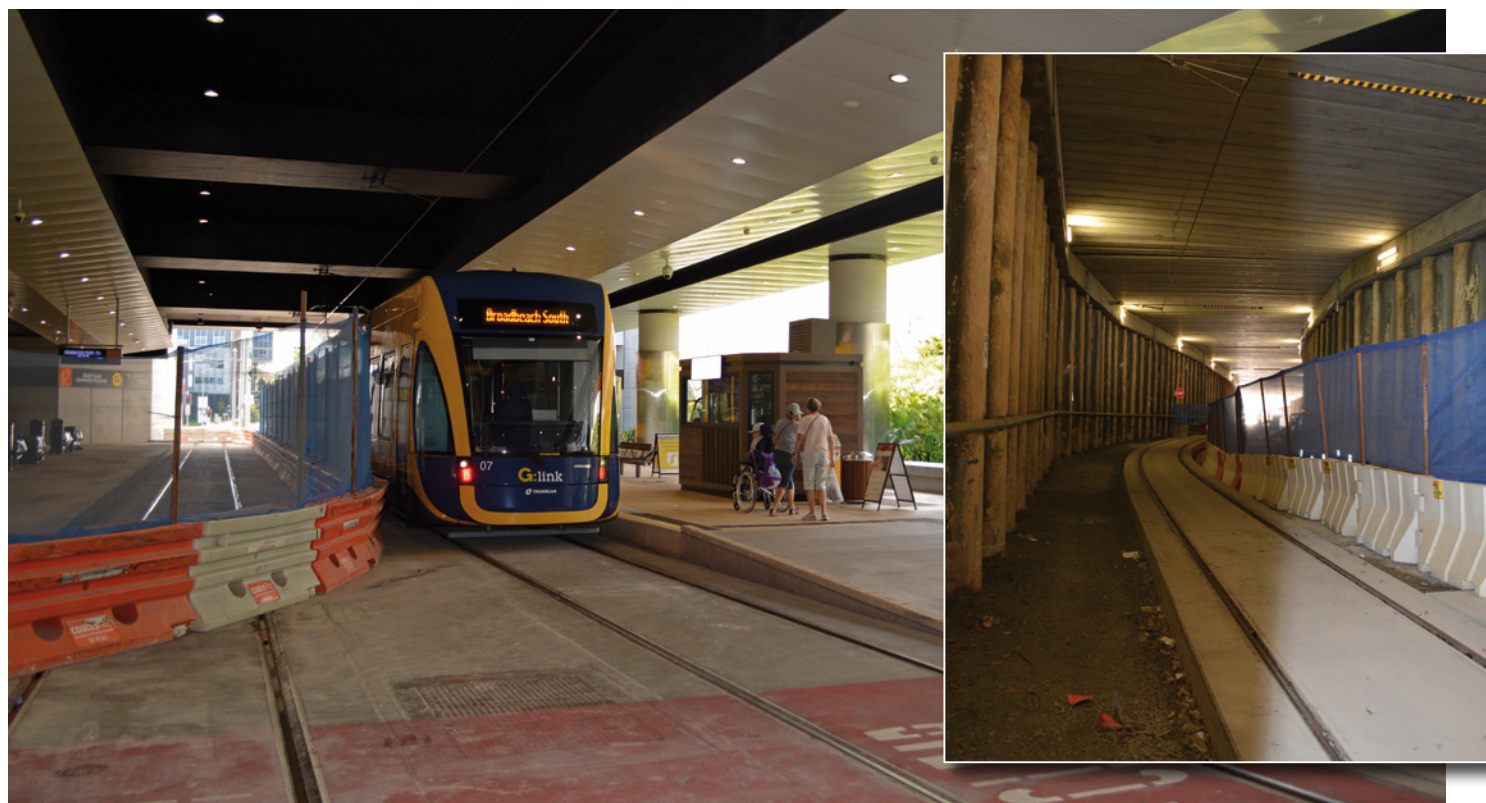
A stumbling block for the project was finance with the Abbott Federal Government refusing to provide funding as had been done by the Federal Government for stage one despite the Queensland Government 'selling' the project as an integral part of the Commonwealth Games. Following the elevation of Malcolm Turnbull to the Prime Ministership a changed policy towards public transport funding saw the Commonwealth announce on 12 October 2015 that it would provide \$95 million for the \$420 million project. The Queensland Government is contributing \$270 million and up to \$55 million is being provided by the Gold Coast City Council. GoldLinQ, the consortium responsible for the provision and operation of the Gold Coast light rail, selected CPB Contractors in March 2016 and construction commenced in July last year.

In addition to the new light rail station at Helensvale, two new intermediate stations are being provided on the extension – at Parkwood (where a 1,000 vehicle car park is being constructed) and Parkwood East. An additional 400 car parking spaces will be provided at Helensvale, adjacent to the light rail station. By the end of April basic earthworks along the extension were completed and some track had been laid, together with overhead wiring masts. The new line will travel from the below-surface Gold Coast University Hospital up a ramp before crossing diagonally across Olsen Avenue to join private right of way beside the Smith Street motorway and then QR's heavy rail line. The section alongside the Smith Street motorway encounters hilly country and significant earth removal was required to achieve an acceptable grade for the new line. The busy Olsen Avenue/Wintergreen

Drive/Parklands Drive intersection was scheduled for complete closure over the weekend of 6/8 May to allow tram tracks to be laid across the intersection. Four additional Bombardier *Flexity* 2 trams have been ordered from Germany and they are expected to arrive in October this year to join the existing 14 trams of the same type.

While the catalyst for constructing stage two at this time was the Commonwealth Games, the extension will also serve the rapidly growing residential areas near the new line. Illustrating the importance of the line house prices in the suburbs on the route of the second stage have jumped by up to seven per cent since construction of the system commenced. Buyers in developer Villawood Properties' \$500 million *The Surrounds* project will find themselves near the light rail/heavy rail station and adjacent shopping centre, with the first 100 of 2,000 homes in the trackside community due to settle shortly. Villawood CEO Tony Johnson said it aimed to be a less car-reliant, walkable community that was still well-connected to the wider city. Further south at Greenacre Drive in Arundel, Villa World is working on a 395-lot community called Arundel Springs. CEO Craig Treasure said his company would consider contributing to an extra light rail station close to the development in future. Mr Treasure said being on the light rail route had already translated to more sales at Arundel Springs. GoldLinQ CEO Phil Mumford said developers and investors had seen the economic benefits created by the first stage of the light rail, and have been keen to support the round two extension. Mr Mumford said, "Stage two has the benefit of building on the success of the established system, which now transports close to 640,000 passengers every month." He said, "Importantly, stage two will also provide current and future residents of Arundel, Parkwood and Helensvale with ready access to the Gold Coast's key economic centres."

While the clock is ticking towards the Commonwealth Games opening next April both Queensland Rail and GoldLinQ are confident their respective projects will be completed on time. The major concern has now shifted to the ability of QR to provide enough trains and crews for the event given the shortfall in crew recruitment in the last few years and the delays in getting the New Generation Rollingstock EMUs into service. These issues are currently the focus of much attention by the Queensland Government, QR and supplier Bombardier.



Having terminated at Gold Coast University Hospital Station on Thursday morning 23 February, G:Link tram 07 prepares to depart with a return service to Broadbeach South. To the left, the second track is already in place, in anticipation of through running from Helensvale. **Inset:** Behind the photographer (and behind a locked gate) the track continues for a short distance towards the Olsen Avenue exit. Bruce Belbin





At Helensvale Station the Gold Coast light rail stage two extension will terminate beside the existing railway station. The light rail station will be linked to the heavy rail station by an overbridge which can be seen partly constructed in this Saturday, 29 April view as Queensland Rail Suburban Multiple Units 285 and 276 depart for Varsity Lakes. The light rail station, to be located between the crane on the left and the overbridge, will have an island platform configuration. A new 400-space car park will also be constructed in the area to the left of this view. John Hoyle



The first section of the Gold Coast light rail extension from Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) to Helensvale involves constructing a ramp from the below-surface GCUH station up to street level at the Olsen Avenue/Parklands Drive intersection. In this Saturday, 29 April view work is underway on preparing the formation for track laying. John Hoyle



# Impressions of *The Ghan*

Ron Brown



**T**he *Ghan* is an interesting train with an interesting history. Camels were introduced in Australia circa 1840, being recognised as the ideal 'pack horse' for carrying equipment and supplies through desert areas. The first camels came from the Canary Islands, but soon they were being imported from elsewhere including, it would seem, from Afghanistan, along with their Afghan handlers. Prior to the building of the railway, strings of these camels were used as camel trains to support the various settlements that had sprung up along the route of the Overland Telegraph line and to elsewhere. The OTL, the Internet of its day, had been built to link Australia to the rest of the world. The route had been surveyed by a Scotsman, John McDouall Stuart. Stuart's primary concern was for reliable water, as staffed repeater stations had to be built every 200km or so. This was to have disastrous consequence for the subsequent railway as much of the route was across major flood plains.

In 1877 the SA government begun construction of a narrow gauge 3ft 6in (1067mm) gauge railway to Alice Springs and the route naturally followed the route of the OTL as this provided water for the steam locomotives. The line reached Oodnadatta in 1891 and there it stopped. In 1911 the Northern Territory of SA was transferred to the Federal Government with the promise that they would fund and extend the railway line to Darwin. This took a while. Meanwhile the SA government managed to gradually fund extending the line to Alice Springs, the line opening throughout in 1929. The story goes that before this, circa 1923, an Afghan was seen to leave the train at Quorn for evening prayer and some wag was heard saying that this must be the Afghan Express. Somehow the name stuck. Later, around 1957 after dieselisation and the introduction of better sleeping cars, the trains acquired the nickname '*The Flash Ghan*'.

Finally in 1980, after years of neglect, floods and washaways, a new standard-gauge line was built, to the west of the original line. The new line followed the Stuart Highway and was built to a high standard but it

still only went to Alice Springs! It took another 24 years (93 years since the politicians' original promise) before the line was extended and opened all the way to Darwin, in 2004.

Today's modern *Ghan* is actually not all that modern. The train typically consists of 38 cars, including Platinum and Gold Class sleepers and Red Class sitting cars. There are also baggage cars, crew cars, two Queen Adelaide dining cars, a bar/lounge car and a buffet-diner for the Red Class passengers. It takes two 3000kW NR Class diesel locomotives to haul this train, and usually the lead unit, at least, is liveried in *The Ghan* colours. (See photos this page and next.)

There are no raised platforms north of Port Augusta and from what I could see when walking the length of the train at ground level, the cars were mainly built by Commonwealth Engineering at Clyde in NSW, circa the late 1960s or early 1970s to an earlier Budd (USA) design. Readers familiar with the late lamented *Southern Aurora* and *Brisbane Limited* will be totally familiar with the style and construction of these cars. The Platinum class sleeping cars offer luxury accommodation in rooms with double beds and ensuites, similar to a modern caravan. Gold class sleepers have side corridors with compartments that contain two roomy bunk beds and a small ensuite. The upper berth is folded away

during the day and the lower berth converts into a roomy 3 seater. There are also single berth cars with showers at the the end of each car.

Travelling on *The Ghan* is a most enjoyable experience, harking back to the great days of the passenger trains in the 1920–1960 era, and the staff go out of their way to make it so. One can choose to sit and relax in one's compartment or can wander through the train to join fellow travellers in the bar/lounge car. Drinks, in the form of wine, beer and soft drink, are included in the fare. The very tasty three-course meals are also included and meal-time sittings are assigned when boarding the train. Sitting in the bar/lounge car or the dining car and meeting with fellow passengers is all part of the experience. You are, after all, on this train for the journey, not for the destination.

*You are, after  
all, on this train  
for the journey,  
not for the  
destination.*





*The Ghan* is not a service train. It is more of a land cruise experience. It takes almost three days and two nights for the Adelaide – Darwin journey, with Alice Springs being the half-way point. Not all the journey is aboard the train. The northbound *Ghan* stops for several hours at Marla (near Coober Pedy) for a desert sunrise, at Alice Springs, where tours of the town can be taken, and at Katherine – for a Katherine Gorge cruise – along the way. The off-train tours are included in the Platinum and Gold class fares. The whole operation is very slick, with air-conditioned road coaches meeting the train at each stop.

Having travelled on the *Southern Aurora* and *Brisbane Limited* in their heyday, *The Ghan* was to me more of a reminder than a revelation.

Relaxing in the bar/lounge and dining in the dining car was very pleasant and the off-train trip to Katherine (now Nitmiluk) Gorge a major highlight. Sleeping was comfortable, but I'm not sure whether it is the age of the carriages and bogie design or the state of the track (which reports I have read suggest was built 'on the cheap' between Alice Springs and Darwin) but I did seem to notice every jolt, and the train did appear to be thrown from side to side quite a bit. But then again, everything gets magnified when you are trying to sleep in an unfamiliar environment.

This, however, is a minor grumble and all in all *The Ghan* is a great way to travel – and, yes, I would do it again.

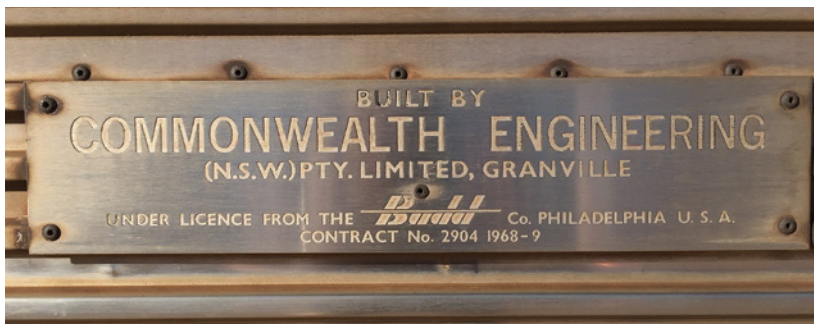
**Above left (page 36):** Train No.1AD8 The Adelaide to Darwin *Ghan*, led by NR74 and NR109, is at at Yorkeys Crossing just north of Port Augusta, on Sunday 2 November 2014. Bill Todd

**Above:** The interior of the Gold Class *Queen Adelaide* dining car. Ron Brown

**Right:** The northbound *Ghan* awaits the right of way, Alice Springs Station on the afternoon of Tuesday 22 November 2016. Lead unit NR75 is in *The Ghan* livery, while its sibling behind carries the Pacific National 'Stars' colour scheme. Ron Brown







**Top:** The front half of *The Ghan* seen during the stop at Alice Springs on Monday 24 October 2016. The rear portion is just as long!

**Above:** The interior of the Gold Class Twinette, made up for day use. The ensuite is out of view to the right.

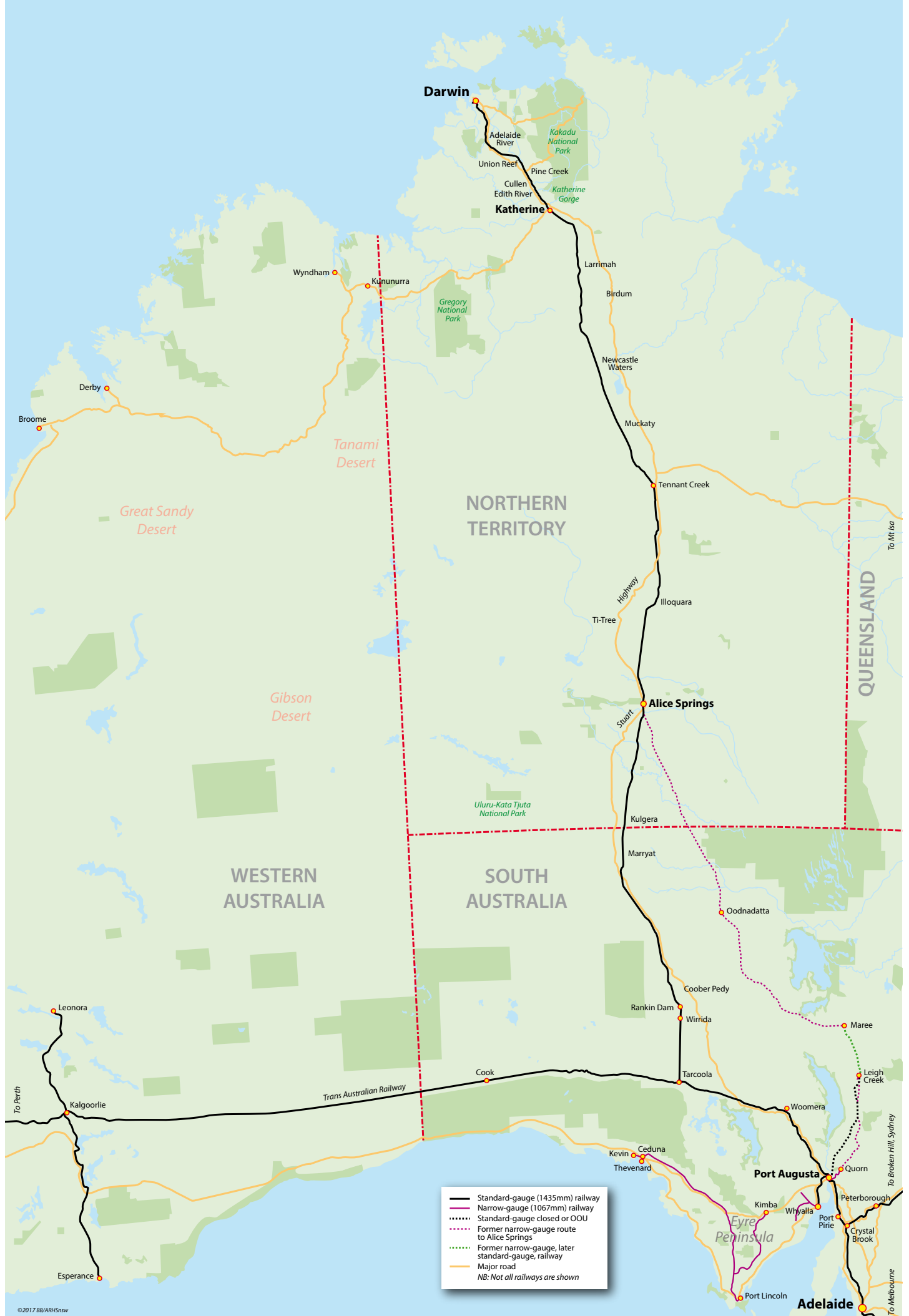
**Above right:** The builder's plate on one of the Comeng-built carriages. 1968/69 – built to last.

**Right:** The interior of *The Ghan* Gold Class Lounge, with the door leading to the passenger accommodation.

All Ron Brown











# (Another) broken coupling on the Main South

Text and images by Peter Clark

**O**n Saturday 18 March, there was another broken coupler on a southbound train on the main south. You will recall that I wrote an article (see *RD* Nov 2015) based on a previous failure in September 2015 just south of Gunning.

This time it was the same train, 6WM2 (PN Port Kembla-Melbourne steel train), but it occurred at a much more convenient spot for operations. The previous break occurred between Gunning and Oolong at the crest in the grade. This time the break occurred between Yass Junction and Bowning, again at the crest of the grade near Bowning.

This time the front coupler on the fourth wagon broke a knuckle (we think), rather than the rear coupler on the second wagon. The train was far less accessible this time, so I don't know the number or type of wagon, other than that it was a 45-foot flat with two loaded coil cradles.

Possibly coincidentally, there were six coils forward of the break in each of the two trains with broken couplers and four 3000kW NR Class locomotives hauling the train.

Three trains passed the failure, running wrong line:

- 9837 Manildra empty grain and flour (with two 81 Class units)
- SP41 Griffith Xplorer
- ST23 Melbourne XPT.

These all crossed to the Up line at Yass Junction and back at Cunningar. They all had to slow or stop short of the level crossing at Cunningar for the booms to be lowered since the track circuits were on the wrong side for Down trains on the Up line.

We followed 9837 to Illalong Creek, Linden Road near Cunningar and Demondrille. 9837 passed a late running 6MB7 (Aurizon Melbourne-Brisbane intermodal freight) at Nubba and we photographed that from the Wombat Road Bridge in Demondrille.

We then went back to Linden Road and got SP41 running wrong line. We were going to wait for ST23, but 6MW2 moved forward to Binalong, so we went there to check it, just missing ST23 as it passed through on the wrong line. The four NRs and the first three wagons only had pulled forward to Binalong. We think this was to pick up a fitter and probably a replacement knuckle, since Binalong was the first station with easy road access beyond the coupler break.

Having picked up what we assumed to be a fitter and a replacement knuckle, the four locomotives headed back to Bowning with the wagons leading. By this time ST23 was clear and 6MB7, which had waited in Harden, ran through. The failed train was (just) visible from the Freeway (but not from Bowning nor from the Boorowa Road bridge) so I

managed to get a distant photo.

We then followed 6MB7 to Goulburn. Goulburn looked a bit like Town Hall Station in the rush hour, with two PN loaded grain trains (3938 in the south refuge and 3928 in the north yard) waiting for the Moss Vale-Unanderra line to reopen, and 2114 Log Train, with 8030 and 8037, filling the track to the workshops.

We had a late lunch, and shot 1311 (QUBE Port Botany-Harefield 'Paper' Train) arriving and ST 24 departing, then went home.

*They all had to slow or stop short of the level crossing at Cunningar.*









**Above:** The Griffith train (EA 2501 and EC 2524) was the second train to pass the failed steel train on the wrong line, also seen at the Linden Road Bridge just east of Cunnigar.

**Below:** We followed the Aurizon container train 6MB7 with 6022 and 6025 from Demondrille to Goulburn. Here it is seen approaching the lower bridge on Cullerin Bank. The fine weather further west had deteriorated to overcast.







**Above:** Goulburn too, was overcast with rain having fallen earlier. 6MB7 passes between 2114 containerised log train (8030 and 8037) and loaded PN grain 3938 (8257 and 8130, out of view).

**Below:** The weather had deteriorated further to steady rain by the time that 1311 empty Harefield container train arrived, seen here at North Goulburn behind QBX006 and CM3313 at 17:27.







## Hi-Rail Rail Grinders

Text and images by John Beckhaus

**T**he December 2016 issue of *Railway Digest* highlighted the Aurizon Loram RG33 24 Stone Grinder (MMY 521). While this Grinder can grind points and crossings this and the other large Grinders working on Australia's railways tend to concentrate their work on open track. The grinding of the rails on complex junction and crossover track work has mainly become the area of Road-Rail Hi-rail trucks with a number of these vehicles now working in Australia.

Two examples of Hi-rail Rail Grinders were demonstrated at this year's Rail Track Association of Australia field day. These field days are usually held at the Sydney Trains Track Maintenance Depot at Clyde in Sydney. This year the RTAA ran this function on Wednesday and Thursday 1-2 March 2017.

The main reasons for regular rail grinding is to increase the service life of the rail with increased operating safety along with reduction in noise created from the wheels and the rail. When the track is to the correct standards with the correct rail and wheel profile there is a reduction in the wear on the wheel sets as well as an improved in ride comfort.

Rail grinding removes corrugations which are small undulations that form on the rail head and give rise to noise and rolling stock bogie component wear. The rail cross-section is also subject to undesired change following constant use as the gauge corner radius reduces resulting in a poorer ride and increased rail and flange wear in curves. Cracking of the railhead can also occur from defects in the case of heavily worn rails.

The companies working in this field have 'Rail Access Agreements' with each rail track owner. These agreements require the equipment supplier to maintain and operate according to strict Railway Regulations and Rail Safety Acts.

These Hi-rail vehicles have electric motor-driven grinding wheels and most can be fitted with vertical Disc grinding wheels. As a unit, the complete grinding of the running rails in turnouts can be achieved. Hi-rail grinders can correct the rail profile for corrugation and shelling faults on the rail head. They also have the ability to grind road level crossings without cutting into the road surface which surrounds the rails. The full grinding process is controlled by an onboard computer system.



**Above:** The grinder unit has been lowered onto the track ready to commence grinding.  
**Right:** The rear of the Autech Grinder with the engine ventilation and the safety equipment. The water hose is to extinguish any fires caused by the flying sparks created during grinding operations.





The photographs on these pages were all taken at the RTAA open day at Clyde in Sydney on Wednesday 1 March 2017.

**Left (page 40):** A front three-quarter view of the Autech Hirail Grinder.

**Right:** The Autech Grinder with the grinder unit raised.



## Autech VM8000

Autech AG was established at Ruppertswil in Switzerland during 1990 with Autech Rail Australia being registered during April 2016. The company has supplied a range of welding and grinding machines for track maintenance to railways and contractors in many countries. The VM8000 uses the RML 9000 system using laser measuring tools to control the grinding process for predictive maintenance of turnouts. On road the VM8000 has a maximum speed of 90 km/h and is limited to 45 km/h on rail.

## SPENO HRR8-4A

SPENO Rail Maintenance Australia Pty Ltd is a member of the SPENO International group of companies which specialise in the maintenance of rail. For Australian and New Zealand railways SPENO manufactures most of its equipment and machines in Perth, Western Australia. The company commenced operation in Australia during 1969 when the first 'grinding train' was placed in service on the Hamersley Iron railway in the Pilbara region in the North West. SPENO has developed its rail grinding activities to now include ultrasonic rail flaw testing and track geometry measuring. SPENO Australia now work on the railways in New Zealand and South Africa as well as on Australian railways.

The SPENO HRR8-4A uses an extensively modified Hino 500 Road truck with the engine compartment mounted in a more open area on the truck to improve ventilation and maintenance.

*This article has used information supplied by Autech CH and SPENO.*



**Left:** The SPENO HRR8-4A vehicle.

**Top:** The engine compartment on the SPENO grinder looking towards the rear grinding control cabin.

**Above:** The SPENO HRR8-4A demonstrating rail grinding.



Gauge mm	Qty	Class	Description	Builder/Location	Jan 17	Feb 17	Mar 17	Total
LOCOMOTIVES								
Asciano Pacific National								
1435	3	93	C44ACi 3246kW Locomotives 9318-9320	UGL Rail Broadmeadow	2	1	-	3
1067	3	PH	PH37AC 2600 kW Locomotives 001-003	UGL Rail Broadmeadow	-	-	-	-
Aurizon								
1435	2	6020	C44ACi 3246kW Locomotives 6041-6042	UGL Rail Broadmeadow	-	-	-	-
Progress Rail								
1435	3		GT46C-ACe Phase II 3200 kW locomotives	Muncie USA	-	-	-	-
Rio Tinto								
1435	51		ES44ACi 3280 kW locomotives #9115-9165	GE Erie PA USA	-	-	-	5
South Maitland Railways								
1435	2		Orenstein & Koppel 110kw Locomotive #32 (Plus 1 for spare parts)	Purchased from Abigroup	Completed			2
Sydney Metro (Transport for NSW)								
1435	2		Bo-Bo Electric/Battery Shunting Locomotive 400/300kw #1-2	CRRC Zhuzhou Electric Locomotive Co. PRC	Completed			2
Watco								
1435	2	FL/HL	J26C 1500 kW locomotives HL 203 and FL 220	Purchased from CFCLA	Completed			2
1435	1	G	JT26C-2SS 2240kW locomotive G 511	Purchased from CFCLA	1	-	-	1
INTERCITY PASSENGER CARS								
Great Southern Railway								
1435	1	SSA	Rebuilt Platinum Sleeper Lounge #260	UGL	Completed			1
1435	3	ARJ	Refurbish compts and rebuild Shower, now 16 Roomette berths #242 (?,?)	UGL	Completed			2
1435	4	BRJ	Crew Cars rebuild Shower compts, now 14 berths # 270,302 (?,?)	UGL	Completed			4
QueenslandRail								
1067	2		Refurbish four three-car EMU Tilt Trains sets 301-304	Downer - Rail Division Qld	-	-	-	1
INTERURBAN PASSENGER CARS								
Rail Connect (NSW TrainLink)								
1435	512		Double Deck Interurban EMU Cars	Hyundai Rotem ROK - UGL Rail	-	-	-	-
V/Line								
1600	14	DM(D)	V'locity DMU (a/c) # 1160-1175	Bombardier Transportation Vic	-	1	1	6
1600	14	TM	V'locity DMU (a/c) # 1360-1375	Bombardier Transportation Vic	-	1	1	6
1600	14	DM	V'locity DMU (a/c) # 1260-1275	Bombardier Transportation Vic	-	1	1	6
SUBURBAN PASSENGER CARS								
Adelaide Metro								
1435	3	J	Citadis 302 Trams (five unit) #207-209 (ex Madrid)	Alstom France (ex ML Madrid, built 2010)	-	-	-	-
QueenslandRail								
1067	75	DMA	MU Driving Motor Car #3701-3775	Bombardier Savli, India	-	-	-	-
1067	75	DMB	MU Driving Motor Car #8701-8775	Bombardier Savli, India	-	-	-	-
1067	75	MA	MU Intermediate Motor Car #5701-5775	Bombardier Savli, India	-	-	-	-
1067	75	MB	MU Intermediate Motor Car with toilet #6701-6775	Bombardier Savli, India	-	-	-	-
1067	75	TA	MU Trailer Car (Pantograph) #4701-4775	Bombardier Savli, India	-	-	-	-
1067	75	TB	MU Trailer Car (Pantograph) #7701-7775	Bombardier Savli, India	-	-	-	-
Canberra Metro								
1435	14		Urbos 3 Trams	Construcciones y Auxillar Ferrocarriles, Spain	-	-	-	-
GoldlinQ Gold Coast Rapid Transit								
1435	4		Flexity 2 Trams #015-019	Bombardier Transportation, Germany	-	-	-	-
KDR Yarra Trams (PTV)								
1435	50	E	Flexity Swift Trams # 6001-6050	Bombardier Transportation Vic	1	2	-	48
1435	20	E2	Flexity Swift Trams # 6051-6070	Bombardier Transportation Vic	-	-	-	-
1435	2	W8	Rebuilt W6 Trams #	Bendigo Tramway Workshop	-	-	-	-
Metro Trains Melbourne (PTV)								
1600	20	M	EMU X'trapolis Driving Motor (a/c) #213-232	Alstom Ltd ( Poland - Ballarat Vic)	-	-	-	8
1600	10	T	EMU X'trapolis Trailer (a/c) #1407-1416	Alstom Ltd ( Poland - Ballarat Vic)	-	-	-	4
1600	20	M	EMU X'trapolis Driving Motor (a/c) #233-252	Alstom Ltd ( Poland - Ballarat Vic)	-	-	-	-
1600	10	T	EMU X'trapolis Trailer (a/c) #1417-1426	Alstom Ltd ( Poland - Ballarat Vic)	-	-	-	-
1600	36	M	EMU X'trapolis Driving Motor (a/c) #253-288	Alstom Ltd ( Poland - Ballarat Vic)	-	-	-	-
1600	18	T	EMU X'trapolis Trailer (a/c) #1427-1444	Alstom Ltd ( Poland - Ballarat Vic)	-	-	-	-
Evolution Rail (PTV)								
1600	65		EMU Seven-Car Trains	Downer Rail - CRRC PRC	-	-	-	-
PTA Transperth								
1067	15	BEA	EMU Driving motor cars (a/c) # 4095-4099, 4100-4109	Downer- Rail Division -Bombardier JV Qld	-	-	-	14
1067	15	BEB	EMU Driving motor car (a/c) # 5095-5099, 5100-5109	Downer- Rail Division -Bombardier JV Qld	-	-	-	14
1067	15	BET	EMU Trailer car (a/c) # 6095-6099,6100-6109	Downer- Rail Division -Bombardier JV Qld	-	-	-	14
1067	10	BEA	EMU Driving motor cars (a/c) # 4117-4126	Downer- Rail Division -Bombardier JV Qld	-	-	-	-
1067	10	BEB	EMU Driving motor car (a/c) # 5117-5126	Downer- Rail Division -Bombardier JV Qld	-	-	-	-
1067	10	BET	EMU Trailer car (a/c) # 6117-6126	Downer- Rail Division -Bombardier JV Qld	-	-	-	-



Gauge mm	Qty	Class	Description	Builder/Location	Jan 17	Feb 17	Mar 17	Total
SUBURBAN PASSENGER CARS (continued)								
Sydney Trains (Transport for NSW)								
1435	96	N	EMU Motor(a/c) #5381-53104; 5481-54104; 5581-55104; 5681-56104	Hitachi-CRRC CNR Changchun RSW PRC	-	-	-	-
1435	48	T	EMU trailer (a/c) #6581-65104, 6681-66104	Hitachi-CRRC CNR Changchun RSW PRC	-	-	-	-
1435	48	D	EMU Driving Trailer (a/c) #6381-63105, 6481-64105	Hitachi-CRRC CNR Changchun RSW PRC	-	-	-	-
Sydney Metro (Transport for NSW)								
1435	44	DTC	Terminal trailers for driverless Metropolis EMU #0101-2201, 0102-2202	Alstom Sri City Andhra Pradesh Hindustan	-	-	-	-
1435	44	MPC	Inter pantograph motor cars for Metropolis EMU 0103-2203, 0104-2204	Alstom Sri City Andhra Pradesh Hindustan	-	-	-	-
1435	44	MC	Intermediate motor cars for Metropolis EMU #0105-2205, 0106-2206	Alstom Sri City Andhra Pradesh Hindustan	-	-	-	-
South East Light Rail (Transport for NSW)								
1435	60		Citadis X05 Trams #2125-2184	Alstom	-	-	-	-
Newcastle Light Rail								
1435	6		Urbos 3 Trams	Construcciones y Auxillar Ferrocarriles, Spain	-	-	-	-
FREIGHT WAGONS								
Adani								
1067	1360		Coal Hopper Wagons	CRRC CSR Yangtse PRC	-	-	-	-
Asciano Pacific National								
1435	8	NHIH	Coal Hopper Wagons #97601-97602 to 97631-97632 (Two unit ECP braking)	Bradken PRC	Completed			8
1435	48	NHHH	Coal Hopper Wagons #98491-98494-98601-98604 (Four unit ECP braking)	CRRC CSR Yangste PRC	Completed			48
Aurizon								
1435	28	AQYY	2 TEU Container Wagons 0001 - 0028	Bradken PRC	28	-	-	28
Chicago Freight Car Leasing Australia								
1435	1	CGGY	Two-unit grain wagon converted from CHBY, fabric roof #7083	CFCLA Goulburn			1	1
Freightliner								
1435	41	PGSY	Grain Hopper Wagon	CIMC – South Huiton, PRC	-	-	-	-
Specialised Container Transport								
1435	30	PBSY	Covered Van #0001-0030	CRRC Meishan PRC	Complete			30
RUNNING GEAR AND ANCILLARY EQUIPMENT								
Downer - Rail Division – Bombardier								
1067	18	-	Five-year contract for TransWA EMU Bogies and Wheelset Maintenance	GEMCO Rail WA	Ongoing			
PTA Transperth								
1435		-	Three-year contract for DMU Prospector Bogies overhaul	GEMCO Rail WA	Ongoing			
Queensland Rail								
1067	72	-	Overhaul Motor Bogies on IMU 160 and SMU 260 Sets	Downer- Rail Division Qld	Completed			72
1067	36	-	Overhaul Trailer Bogies on IMU 160 and SMU 260 Sets	Downer- Rail Division Qld	Completed			36
1067	86	-	Overhaul Motor Bogies on EMU Sets	Downer- Rail Division Qld	6	6	6	86
1067	64	-	Overhaul Trailer Bogies on EMU Sets	Downer- Rail Division Qld	6	6	6	64
1067		-	EMU cars High Voltage earth fault modification Programme	Downer- Rail Division Qld				-
1067		-	Overhaul Wheel Sets for EMU cars	Downer- Rail Division Qld	8	8	2	48
1067	19	IMU160/ SMU260	Miscellaneous Pneumatic Equipment Overhaul - 16 Sets + 3 Spares	Downer- Rail Division Qld	2	1	2	8
1067	19	160-260	Inverter Cooling Unit Overhaul - 16 Car Sets + 3 Spares	Downer- Rail Division Qld	2	-	2	16
1067	33	L	Overhaul Wheelset L series Car	Downer- Rail Division Qld	15	8	-	-
1067	55		Overhaul Wheelset Cairns- Kuranda Cars	Downer- Rail Division Qld	-	4	5	-
Ski Tube								
1435	11	-	Refurbish control and monitoring facilities	Stadler Switzerland	Ongoing			
Southern Shorthaul Railroad								
1435	64	BGKF	Fit roofs and loading hatches for grain traffic (former PN NHKF)1101-1164	Ecofab (Roofs fitted Lithgow and Goulburn)	Ongoing			-
TRACK MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT								
Aurizon Infrastructure Services Group								
1435	1	SLM	Track Layer # 4	Aurizon Workshops Redbank Qld	No advice			-
1067	2	MMA	Refurbish Ballast Tamper Mk III # 49	QR Workshops Maryborough Qld	No advice			-
1067	2		Gen III Scissor Lift ENP	Techniplan Qld	-	-	-	
1067	1	MMY	Ballast Cleaner RM 802 #520	Plasser Australia NSW	-	-	-	-
1067	1	MMY	Ballast Cleaner Unit FRM 802	Plasser Australia NSW	-	-	-	-
1067	1	MMY	Ballast Cleaner Hopper Wagons ( MFS 40)	Plasser Australia NSW	-	-	-	-
ENSCO Inc.								
1435	1		Track Geometry Vehicle	Harsco Rail Brendale Qld	No advice			-
John Holland								
Dual	20	JHAY	Ballast Hopper Wagons	CIMC – Tonglingshenwang PRC	No advice			-
KDR Yarra Trams								
1435	2		ACM 105SP Hi-rail Overhead Wiring vehicle	Aust Crane & Machine Vic	No advice			
MacMahon Rail								
1435	1		VMACAR K 355 Flash Butt Welder	VMACAR Italy	No advice			



Gauge mm	Qty	Class	Description	Builder/Location	Jan 17	Feb 17	Mar 17	Total
TRACK MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT (continued)								
Queensland Rail								
1067	2		Refurbish TR-10 Sleeper Inserter/Extractor	Harsco Rail Brendale Qld	No advice			-
1067	1	MMY	Track Recorder Vehicle VMB 2214 #	Geismer GEMCO WA (Donelli)	-	-	-	-
1067	6	MMD	Two-vehicle Track trolley set LEM 101-106, PEM 201-206	Engenco GEMCO WA	No advice			-
PTA Transperth								
1067	1		Track Recording Car	Mermec Italy	-	-	-	-
Sydney Trains								
1435		-	One-year contract for supply of Tamping tools.	Engenco WA	Ongoing			
1435	4	-	Hirail Overhead Wiring vehicles	France	No advice			
1435	2	NDZF	Track Carrier Wagon # 40051-40052	Bluebird Rail Operations SA	No advice			
E&OE								



**Left:** On Monday 27 March, brand new 6041 arrives at Maitland station, on its trial from from UGL at Broadmeadow. With CEY003 as assistant locomotive, and running as D473, 6041 trialed on the Down coal road from Waratah to Maitland, and returned on the Up Main to UGL. Four days later on Friday 31 March, 6042 also trialed to Maitland, again with CEY003 as assistant locomotive. Bruce Gehrig

**Below:** Just over a fortnight after completing its trials and being handed over to Pacific National, 9319 is still clean as it leads 9209 and TT110 on MR994 Up coal train from Moolarben to Kooragang on Sunday 29 January, one kilometre west of Maitland. Bruce Gehrig







## The Return of the A2

David Campbell

**I**t may be hard for people from outside Victoria to understand the importance of the A2 class steam locomotive. Built between 1907 and 1922 in the Victorian Railways own workshops, the class marked a significant shift in locomotive design, with Australian features and styling now in evidence rather than the traditional British designs, or for that matter the American.

Goodness knows what younger people would think of the A2; a strange looking machine; big wheels with small boiler, something old people would speak of in awe. Some legend, perhaps. A locomotive that had disappeared well before they were born, with just a few left in static preservation.

The first 125 members of the class were built with Stephenson's valve gear, while the final 60 introduced the Walschaert's valve gear into Victoria. The Stephenson's engines certainly looked nice, particularly in earlier days with flanged funnel and without the smoke deflectors that came in later years; sadly only one member of that group made it into preservation.

The Walschaert's engines were well known for their rough riding, but also their ability to pull a train. The Stephenson's engines were loved on the gentler tracks where higher speeds could be sustained, but it was the Walschaert's engines that were preferred for the hilly track to Ballarat.

During the 1930s, experiments were made with modified front ends (smokebox and funnel) and the work enhanced the power and steaming ability of the class considerably; sadly that flanged funnel was replaced by a bucket-like device, while large smoke deflectors did nothing for their appearance.

**Above:** In 1910, the early morning sun brightens a grey landscape as A2 Class leader No.572, in original condition and resplendent in 'Tait' Canadian Red livery, roars across the Broken River Bridge, Benalla, with a Melbourne Express of heavy 'E' type six-wheel bogie cars. Painting by Phil Belbin

Still, the drivers could see where they were going, while the firemen could maintain steam pressure against the increasing demands for steam. Coal and water consumption had been substantially reduced, so the work produced enormous financial savings.

They did try to introduce replacement locomotives over the years. The S class 3-cylinder pacifics were introduced from 1928, however their heavy weight kept them on the Albury line for their lives. H220 was introduced in 1941, designed as the first of three heavy 4-8-4s intended to run the *Overland* to Ararat instead of using double-headed A2s. Sadly, World War Two priorities caused planned track upgrades to be deferred. H220 became an orphan, joining the S on the Albury line, forcing the A2 Class to continue running virtually all of the passenger trains around the state.

The A2 were not that heavy, and found themselves running on all main lines, secondary main lines, basically anywhere apart from the lighter branch lines laid with 60lb rail. And not just on passenger trains; despite their relatively large driving wheel diameter (6ft  $\frac{7}{8}$  in) they would be regularly found slogging along working all sorts of goods trains as well. The C, and later X, Class steam locos were introduced to share the goods workings, but they tended to be concentrated on the heaviest work, leaving the A2 to haul many of the goods services.



The Great Depression wasn't all that kind to the class, and World War 2 saw them basically run into the ground. By 1946 the Victorian Railways had a fleet of worn out locomotives, forcing major investments in new motive power during the post-war years. However, that didn't help run trains there-and-then. The long-suffering workshops and loco depots had to make do, and the A2s just had to be kept running. There wasn't an alternative if trains were to run.

A couple of the worst A2s were scrapped at this time, while oil burning equipment was fitted to the remaining Walschaert's engines. The Stephenson's locos were patched up as best they could be, some actually managing to survive into the 1960s. 10 of the Walschaert's engines were given a heavy overhaul in the early 1950s in an effort to keep a reliable batch available for the *Overland* (the overnight Adelaide train), a premium task that saw pairs of A2s used between Melbourne and the South Australian border at Serviceton, the locos being changed over at Ararat. This program required six locomotives nightly, leaving little scope for maintenance or breakdowns, but even after over 40 years these locos did their work steadily.

On a foggy night in September 1951, the west and east-bound *Overlands* collided at Serviceton, sadly killing one fireman. All four A2s involved were promptly scrapped. In a moment, the Victorian Railways had lost four of the fleet's best locomotives.

The R Class 4-6-4 steam locos had by just then entered service, and immediately started working the *Overland*, still in pairs, until the introduction of the B Class diesel-electrics brought all that to an end.

By now, the A2 Class was being massacred. Through the 1950s, scores were scrapped. There was nothing fundamentally wrong with the design, but the arrival of diesel units and 180 new steam locos (built in the UK, but to Victorian designs based in large part on the A2) was always going to end the era of the A2, and the survivors were essentially well past their use-by dates.

Somehow, several dozen survived into the 1960s. In some cases now over 50 years old, they would still pop up on all sorts of trains. Maybe a shunting job somewhere, or a trip train; perhaps hauling a couple of

carriages on a Korumburra passenger train. Sometimes they achieved a main line trip, hauling an all-stations commuter train to Geelong; even in their final days they could be seen hauling these demanding jobs. They were shown no mercy, being flogged until withdrawal.

They survived as well. The newer and more powerful S were scrapped a decade before the A2 disappeared. The orphan H Class was withdrawn in 1957, while dozens of A2 remained. The heavy freight locos, the C and X Class, disappeared while those obstinate A2s soldiered on for several more years.

To Victorian citizens, the A2 was always part of their train. Whether hauling their goods trains, or bringing family members home, it always seemed to be an A2 in charge. People with no knowledge or interest in trains would recognise an A2. As far as the public was concerned, this was the standard Victorian locomotive, one they would be delighted to see on their train.

The railway enthusiast movement was gathering pace by this time. Special trains were chartered for the fans, and the surviving A2 members were regular performers on the earlier trains. But it was the Victorian Railways themselves who arguably gave the class their best farewell. In 1962, the final trip of the broad gauge *Spirit Of Progress* was stopped at Seymour, the B Class diesel-electric removed, and the old Wodonga big-wheel driver gleefully jumped onto 995, running it leading 996 over the last 100 kilometres into Melbourne, with the 10-wheelers providing an exhilarating show for the fans and staff watching the end of an era.

By now my father was taking me on some of these fan trips, and this included a couple of trips behind the A2. It was always 986, one of the few that had never been re-numbered (some of the class had worn four different numbers in their careers). I was a child, but the sound of the locos impressed. An impatient panting from the air compressor, the constant hissing of the oil-burning equipment, and the exhaust had an exciting sound. Not as crisp and clean a sound as the NSW 38 Class, but one remembered by those fortunate enough to hear that 'whoofie' roar. And like most Victorian locos, the whistles were distinctive to the class.



Oil-burning 986 outside Bendigo Loco Depot in April 1949. Ken Winney, ARHSnw Railway Resource Centre 105298





SteamRail ran an open day over the March 2014 Long Weekend, at their Newport site, opening to the public on Sunday and Monday. Eight locomotives were in steam: Y 112, K153, K160, D3 639, R707, R 711, R761, A2 986, plus J 541 on display. The A2 was in steam for the first time since the early 1960s. Stephen Buck

Old 986 had been one of the few given a thorough overhaul in the late 1940s—early 1950s. This included major frame repairs, conversion to oil burning, BoxPok driving wheels, and other upgrades. This work allowed it to remain in use well into the 1960s.

986 ran to Healesville on Sunday 1 December 1963, the official last run of the class. I was only five at the time, and Dad took me on that trip. The train stalled on the 1:40 hill near our family home at Ringwood East, but eventually the trip continued until the class was gone. I still recall watching the driver whistling as he started the loco on its final movement. Nothing fancy, just a business-like toot.

The loco ran to Newport the next day light engine for its session with the scrap men, and finally the last A2 Class went cold. But somehow it failed to keep its appointment. It languished in the weeds for several years before being sold into preservation at Warragul, a town around 100 kilometres east of Melbourne. It was placed into a park in 1971, facing the main line, so that it could watch the L Class electrics running the same trains that it had once hauled. It had run around two million kilometres in service.

So many locomotives in parks just quietly rust away, but there was something legendary about the A2 Class; sentimental drivers would give a quiet toot from their L Class electrics; people remembered; somehow people wanted to see the dead revived. SteamRail Victoria negotiated with Warragul, and exchanged a J Class 2-8-0 for the A2. It was brought back to Newport Workshops, the birthplace of the class, and now SteamRail's base. The locomotive was assessed, and restoration commenced.

The work progressed slowly. Major cracks in the frame, new tyres, the boiler. The locomotive, after all, really was worn out, having done more work with less tender loving care than its designers had ever expected. By 2015, a hundred years after it was built, the loco was under trial, firstly at the SteamRail depot, later on the main line. 986 was painted workshop grey at this stage, and lacked smoke deflectors. A comprehensive accreditation process had to be followed, testing equipment and training crews in what had to be considered as a new locomotive. Well, it was over 50 years since its last trip; the world had changed.

D3 893 and A2 986 in steam outside Newport Workshops on the Open Weekend of 12/13 March 2016. Geoff Allerton





Many of us had a chance to see it running at the SteamRail Open Days over the March 2016 Labour Day long weekend. The A2, now painted in unrelieved black but still without smoke deflectors, ran around the yard light engine, but also did some demonstration runs hauling several freight wagons, the load finally giving us a chance to hear an A2 working. And Oh! What memories were re-kindled! That same impatient pant of the compressor; that whistle, a sound I hadn't heard since my childhood but still familiar; the exhaust as the loco got into its stride, hauling that load through the yard. Some changes had been made since I last saw it running. The oil-burning equipment had (thankfully) been removed, and good Maitland coal is now provided (a luxury few of the class enjoyed in the past). A few other tweaks, but fundamentally this is still an A2. No other engine I've heard sounds like it.

The dead had come back to life. All that remained was to officially re-launch the loco, and the class, into service.

The first official trip, fittingly, ran to Warragul, the town that saved the locomotive. Saturday 13 May 2017 was the date, and the train rapidly sold out. Listen to that sound as the 986 attacked the Toorak Bank, later again the Longwarry Bank – magic! The loco was being shown no gentleness. No diesel assistance, despite hauling around 80% of a full goods load. In a modern railway finding slots between numerous passenger and several freight trains, all sharing a track with several single-line sections to complicate things. On this day there

would be no chance to dawdle along sedately, but the A2 seemed to thrive on the work, running early in several places.

The train paused at Warragul for around an hour, with the town recognised for its foresight in saving the locomotive, with a plaque attached to the cab sides. The crew on this launch trip included Kevin Johns, one of the few remaining drivers who had worked on the A2 Class in regular service all those years back, while the fireman was Keith Findlay, who had been one of the volunteers who worked on the restoration of this beautiful machine. The train continued on to Traralgon, braving the notorious Haunted Hills where that hard slogging sound echoed back. Oh, what memories for so many of us, and a new experience for many dozens more. Younger fans hearing for the first time that sound; unlike any other Victorian engine, different to a 38, but just as impressive. "Did you hear that" was the comments of several as the train roared up from the Morwell River, then under the old SEC railway bridge and up the steep pinch into Morwell.

The A2 swung around on the turntable at Traralgon, and headed back to Warragul, where the scheduled arrival time of 4:12 was clearly specified by a Victorian. Back to Melbourne thence Newport, and an important day of celebration ended.

*Railway Digest* congratulates SteamRail Victoria for their work in restoring the historic locomotive into service, and we hope you enjoy the photos on these pages.



**Above::** A2 986, sans smoke deflectors, in action hauling a demonstration freight train at the Open Day event at Newport Workshops on Saturday 12 March 2016. David Campbell

**Above right (page 49):** On Saturday 13 May, A2 986 ran its first official trip. Having paused at Warragul for about an hour, the train is seen charging along the straight between Trafalgar and Moe, with the Strezleki Ranges as a backdrop, as it heads east towards its final destination of Traralgon. Steve Ban

**Right (page 49):** After arrival, 986 is seen shunting to the turntable at Traralgon. The Boxpok driving wheels are clearly displayed. The plaque on the cab side recognises that the loco was initially saved by the people of Warragul. Cab side number plates came into Victoria on later locomotives. David Campbell









## Lone Pine planted at LVR Anzac Day ceremony

**T**he 2017 Anzac Day ceremony at the Lachlan Valley Railway's Heritage Centre, located at Cowra Locomotive Depot took on added significance with the planting of a Lone Pine tree in memory of two Cowra railwaymen who died on Gallipoli in 1915.

For over 20 years the Lachlan Valley Railway has hosted an Anzac Day ceremony at the memorial fountain located in the grounds of the Loco depot. The fountain, unveiled in 1926, was built by depot staff in memory of the five Cowra railwaymen who died while serving with the AIF in World War I. A further four names were added to the memorial in honour of local railway staff who died during WWII while serving in the Australian Army and Air Force.

The fountain includes parts from steam locomotives in service at Cowra at the time of its dedication, including a smokebox door, which forms the main collector dish. The fountain was restored to full working order and rededicated on Anzac Day 2015. At the same time, an interpretive sign telling the stories of the Cowra railway volunteers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country was unveiled, facing the fountain (see *RD* June 2015, page 38).

In addition to the usual wreath-laying ceremony, this year's commemoration focussed on the railway and military service of Sidney Bryant (Sid) Marsden and Matthew Michael (Matt) Mulcahy, two Cowra Locomotive Depot firemen who died at Gallipoli. Both men were members of the AIF 3rd Battalion, who went ashore at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915.

While Sid Marsden's story is accurately recorded on the fountain's interpretive sign, Matt Mulcahy is incorrectly listed on the fountain as J. Mulcahy. As a result, he has not been properly honoured until this year when the mistake was identified. This was rectified on Anzac Day when details of his railway and military service were read out, including the fact that he was mentioned in despatches for "various acts of conspicuous gallantry and valuable service during the period from 25th April to 5th May" while serving as a stretcher bearer. On 5 May 1915 he was seriously wounded while carrying a wounded officer from the firing line to the dressing station. Evacuated to Egypt he died three days later.

The Lone Pine in memory of Privates Marsden and Mulcahy was planted by Mayor of Cowra Cr. Bill West, assisted by Mrs Pam Lynch, using the silver spade that turned the first sod on the Blayney – Cowra rail line at Blayney in March 1885. On that occasion the spade was presented to the widow of the late Andrew Lynch MLA - who, as member for the state seat of Carcoar, lobbied for the completion of the cross-country Blayney – Demondrille rail line but died before

work began on the final section of the line. The spade is now a prized possession of the Lynch family.

Despite persistent and sometimes heavy rain the ceremony was well attended. The Cowra Cadet Unit formed a catafalque party and a flag party. They were assisted by members of the National Servicemen's Association – South West Slopes Branch.

A member of the crowd attending the commemorations complemented the LVR for continuing to honour the service and sacrifice of Cowra's railway soldiers.

*Lawrance Ryan*

**Top:** As the Last Post sounds, members of the Cowra Cadet Unit salute the service of Cowra's fallen railwaymen during the Lachlan Valley Railway's Anzac Day ceremony. Despite persistent rain the ceremony, focusing on Cowra Locomotive Depot's unique memorial fountain, was well attended. Robyn Ryan

**Below:** Mayor of Cowra Cr Bill West looks on as Mrs Pam Lynch plants a Lone Pine in memory of Private Sid Marsden and Private Matt Mulcahy, two Cowra Locomotive Depot firemen who died on Gallipoli in 1915. The tree was planted using the silver spade that turned the first sod on the Cowra – Blayney railway line in 1885. Robyn Ryan







## Orange celebrates rail's 140th anniversary

**T**he 140th anniversary of the arrival of rail to the NSW central western city of Orange was celebrated in April. In addition to a formal ceremony at Orange station on Wednesday 19 April, other events in the anniversary program included a photographic display in the Orange City Library, a movie screening of the classic 1953 British comedy *The Titfield Thunderbolt*, and a rail-themed symposium that attracted an audience of 80.

The actual 140th anniversary was celebrated at Orange station on Wednesday 19 April, and coincided with the arrival – albeit 20 minutes late – of WT27 Central West XPT from Sydney, led by power car XP 2001.

The City of Orange Brass band played while children clutching orange and white balloons and cardboard models of a modern train filled the platform and bounced on a jumping castle in the car park. Old and young alike took the opportunity to admire the collection of historic railway photographs on display on the platform.

After speeches by dignitaries and station officials, customer attendant Margaret Kennedy, who has worked at Orange Station for 17 years, had the honour of cutting the official 140th anniversary cake.

Speaking after the event Orange's senior customer attendant David Rome said the station staff were pleased with the response, which included many locals and some out-of-town visitors – including a Blayney contingent who arrived aboard the XPT.

The Orange Railway 140th Anniversary symposium was held at Kenna Hall on Sunday 23 April. Hosted by the Orange and District Historical Society (ODHS), the symposium drew a crowd that included visitors from as far afield as Victoria, the NSW North Coast and throughout the Central West.

Guest of honour was Orange's last Railway District Superintendent Tom Hetherington.

Five guest speakers were to address the audience on a variety of topics, including;

- **Euan Greer** (Vice President - ODHS): Thursday 19 April 1877 – Revisiting the opening day celebrations.
- **David Hill** (Historian, author and former CEO of the NSW State Rail Authority): The contribution of rail heritage to today's society.
- **Denny Ellis** (A railwayman who in a career spanning 43 years rose to the position of General Manager Passenger Services, and author): Railway operations at their height in Orange during the 1940s and 50s.
- **Bob McKillop** (Author and Editor - *Australian Railway History*): The influence of the railways on the economy and industrial development of the western districts of NSW.
- **John Bastick** (A career railwayman who became a traffic controller in the Orange area): Orange railways in the period leading to their decline.

Unfortunately, owing to complications following ankle surgery, David Hill was not able to travel to Orange for the symposium. Instead, members of the ODHS – including Society Vice President and former Chair of 3801 Limited Dr John Glastonbury AM – travelled to David's Sydney home and recorded an entertaining video interview that was played to the audience.

There was ample opportunity for questions after each speaker.

A photographic and memorabilia display, and refreshments provided by the ODHS 'refreshment room staff' kept the audience engaged between speakers.

While rail does not hold the pivotal place in society that it once did, the 140th anniversary celebrations surrounding its arrival in Orange showcased the important role that railways played in the development of rural Australia.

Lawrance Ryan

**Above:** An impressive photographic display showcasing rail history in the Orange area attracted plenty of attention during the symposium. Adrian Compton

**Right:** Four of the guest speakers featured at the Orange 140th Anniversary rail symposium: (l-r) Bob McKillop, Denny Ellis, John Bastick and Euan Greer. Denny and John both worked for the NSW railways in excess of 40 years, Bob is the current editor of the ARHS's *Australian Railway History* magazine, and Euan Greer is Vice President of the Orange and District Historical Society. Lawrance Ryan







## Walhalla Goldfields Railway

The Walhalla Goldfields Railway is a 762mm-gauge tourist line that operates on the outermost 3.2-kilometre portion of the former Moe to Walhalla Railway. The railway was the last of four narrow-gauge lines built between 1892 and 1910 by the Victorian Railways to support and encourage development in the more inaccessible or remote parts of the state.

After the last gold mine in Walhalla closed in 1914, the railway was used to transport timber from the extensive forests growing around the town of Erica to the interchange facilities at Moe. The line closed in 1954 and was not 're-opened' until the WGR commenced a tourist service in 1994.

At the present time, trains depart from Walhalla at 11:00, 13:00 and 15:00 on weekends and Wednesdays, behind one of a small fleet of diesel locomotives, including No.14 *Spirit of Yallourn*, a 1951-built Fowler 0-6-0DM that previously saw service with the State Electricity Commission of Victoria at Yallourn.

The return trip from Thomson to Walhalla starts with a spectacular crossing of the Thomson River before climbing the 1 in 30 gradient within the narrow confines of a spectacular gully carved by the adjacent Stringers Creek.

Whilst Walhalla might be a little off the beaten track, a stroll along the streets of this historic town and a ride on this equally historic railway is well worth the effort. *Philip Vergison*

**Above:** Fowler 0-6-0DM No.14, formerly with the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, crosses the Thomson River Bridge on the way to Walhalla on Sunday morning 2 April. This was an empty train movement prior to the first run of the day. Former Emu Bay Railway (Tasmania) Walkers B-B DH unit 1001 (re-gauged from 1067mm to 762mm gauge) can be seen in the background.

**Right:** Driver Dick Silby on the footplate of No.14 on Saturday 1 April.  
**Far Right (page 55):** Passengers board a three-car train at Thomson, bound for Walhalla, on Saturday morning 1 April.









# Shire of Merredin rejects tenders for rail museum development

Earlier this year the Shire of Merredin called tenders for the provision of cover (shelters) for the rollingstock at the Merredin Railway Station Museum. Council's budgeted spend for the project was \$220,000, which included a \$163,637 LotteryWest grant plus contributions from other organisations.

Tenders closed on 27 February with four responses being received, all considerably in excess of the proposed project budget.

After discussion with the Merredin Museum and Historical Society (the Museum), Council agreed to release funds to the museum who, as a community group, are not required to tender for the project and, as such can negotiate direct with contractors regarding the work to be undertaken. However, prior to the funds being released the museum has to register for Goods and Services Tax. The Museum is now going through the registration process.

The aim of the project is to help preserve the important collection of railway vehicles that are located in the Merredin Railway Museum. These vehicles play a significant part in the telling of the district's rail transport story. The railway vehicles, many of which are timber bodied, are currently on display without protection and are subject to the ravages of the weather.

The Merredin Railway Museum is part of the Merredin Railway Station Group which is listed in the State Register of Heritage Places. The Group is one of the most complete authentic groups of railway buildings in Western Australia as it is the only remaining example of a railway group comprising the water tower and tank, signal box, and three brick station buildings.

The railway vehicles at the Railway Museum, although not heritage listed, play an important part in showcasing the railway history of

Merredin as the junction of a major railway system and centre of Western Australian Government Railway's maintenance operations on the Eastern Goldfields Railway from 1904–1969.

Covering of these railway vehicles will ensure Merredin's rich cultural heritage is preserved as close to original condition as possible. Prominent railway items are steam locomotive G 117 and diesel shunter TA 1808. Rolling stock includes a JBB fuel tanker and other narrow-gauge items regularly used in the area. *David Whiteford*



1897-vintage Dubs 4-6-0 G117 and other items at the Merredin Railway Station Museum. Merredin Museum & Historical Society

# Sydney Trains scores in National Trust Heritage Awards

The annual National Trust Heritage Awards were held on Friday 28 April, Each year the awards recognise excellence in the heritage industry across NSW. Across eleven different categories, Sydney Trains took home four awards – plus a further 'highly commended' in another category.

Project	Award Category	Results	Sydney Trains project team and partnerships
<b>Canopy Design Guide</b> (How to design guide for new canopies at heritage stations)	Design	Highly Commended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Peta Margrie (Station Development, Customer Service)</li><li>Peter Phillips (Orwell &amp; Peter Phillips Architects)</li><li>Sydney Trains heritage team (Environment Division)</li></ul>
<b>Going Underground</b> (Commemoration event, tunnel tours and exhibition at St James)	Events & Exhibitions	Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Simon Ricketts and Garry Massoud (Special Events, Operations)</li><li>Keith Camage, Jen Anderson and Lynda Proude (Sydney Trains Comms)</li><li>John Snider (Fleet for F1 restoration, Engineering and Maintenance)</li><li>David Bennett and Christian Fielder (Transport Heritage NSW)</li><li>Bill Phippen (Australian Railway Historical Society)</li><li>Sydney Trains heritage team (Environment Division)</li></ul> <p>(Many others from across Sydney Trains were involved behind the scenes.)</p>
<b>Running on Time</b> (Online content, documentary, publications, tours and clock collection audit)	Tours and Multimedia	Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Beata Kade, Mark Dunn and team (Art of Multimedia)</li><li>Keith Camage and Jen Anderson (Sydney Trains Comms)</li><li>Bruce Nelson (Disposal Support Officer)</li><li>Doug Minty (clock restoration)</li><li>Sydney Trains heritage team (Environment Division)</li></ul>
<b>MacDonaltdown Gasometer</b> (Restoration)	Conservation	Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cameron Penny (Contaminated Lands, Environment Division)</li><li>Ventia</li></ul>
<b>Lives on the Line</b> (ANZAC Centenary commemoration project)	Education	Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ann Frederick (Transport Heritage NSW)</li><li>Celeste Coucke and Stephen Fearnley (Artists)</li><li>Susan Conroy (Cultural planning)</li><li>Sydney Trains heritage team (Environment Division)</li></ul>





**Above:** At the Cobdogla Irrigation Museum, in the Riverland region of South Australia, Bagnall 0-4-0ST B/N 1801 of 1906, that once ran on the Cobdogla–Loveday light railway, is seen in action on Sunday 16 April. Steve McNicol

**Below:** On Tasmania's Don River Railway, Walkers B-B DH 1002 departs Coles Beach with the return of the 2 pm service from Don Village on Sunday 2 April. The ex-Emu Bay Railway 10 Class unit was operating in place of steam locomotive M4, which was out of service undergoing a boiler inspection. Rowan Kinnane







**Above:** At Middleton, on South Australia's SteamRanger Heritage Railway, Redhen railcars 412/334 on a Goolwa-Victor Harbor service, meet 1913-vintage 4-6-0 Rx207 heading to Goolwa with the *Cockle Train*, on Sunday 16 April. John Scott

**Below:** The Milang Railway Museum is situated on the banks of Lake Alexandrina, 76km south-east of Adelaide. Among the many exhibits is South Australian Railways-built English Electric Bo-Bo DE 351, dating from 1949. Seen here on Saturday 15 April, the veteran diesel locomotive has been equipped with a locally-developed driving simulator in its cab. John Scott





## NSW request stops

I write in reference to the article on NSW Request Stops in *RD* April 2017. The article was an incredibly absorbing one, but a few points need to be made about the Kembla Grange request stop. The majority of race meetings are on weekends, not Tuesdays as the article claims, hence the weekend request stop in the timetable. When race meetings occur on a weekday, trains will regularly stop at the platform, even though this is not indicated in the current timetable.

*Anthony Smith  
Towradgi, NSW*

## Electrification

Following the precedence of truncation of the Newcastle Railway, the revelation that the Government had accepted the UGL/Hyundai consortium bid for the new Inter-City trains came as no surprise to me. Unfortunately, this news coincided with correspondence from the State Government, which stated that they had rejected my suggestion that a requirement of the new trains is that they should be designed with the capacity to be retro-fitted with dual-voltage 1500 Volt DC/25KV AC at a later stage. The present condition of the aging infrastructure suggests that it will need to be replaced within the next ten years. However, I was astonished on a recent journey to the Blue Mountains when I noticed that Sydney Trains had improvised by bracing some stanchions to give them greater support. This is the sort of behaviour that would be implemented on a rail system in a third-world nation! Although, I realise that rebuilding the electrification infrastructure would be highly expensive project, the project will need to be commenced in the near future to insure the reliability of Blue Mountains trains. Interestingly, it is probable that such a project would coincide with the introduction of the new Inter-City trains.

In contrast to 1500 Volt DC electrification, the infrastructure required for 25kv AC would

be lighter catenary wiring and a maximum of three feeder stations, instead of eight on the present network. Hence it may be cheaper to replace the existing infrastructure with 25kv AC than to rebuild the existing network. Some may suggest that the conversion of Blue Mountains line to 25kv AC is no longer necessary, because freight trains (which are the main beneficiaries of AC electrification) are no longer operating. However, it must be remembered that the 86 Class units were withdrawn barely 20 years after their commissioning and circumstances may sway economics in favour of electric locomotive haulage in the future, particularly if oil reserves are depleted. Others may be concerned that dual-voltage stock may cause operational difficulties, yet there are locomotives in Europe that are designed to operate on four different voltages that have a total mass of 80 tonnes.

Another benefit of introducing 25kv AC electrification in NSW is that it is reasonable to assume that electrification of the Southern Highlands route will be justified within the next ten years. The introduction of 25kv AC electrification to both Lithgow and Moss Vale would increase the service availability of any dual-voltage stock that is built. At a later stage the overhead could be extended to Canberra if the proposal to introduce the Swedish X2000 Tilt-train concept was resurrected.

Ironically, it is possible that failure to electrify the Southern Highlands may be a blessing in disguise. Hypothetically, if electrification was approved between Macarthur and Moss Vale by the present administration and an active open-access regime, it would be reasonable to assume that it would be constructed with 1500 Volt DC. This is not a huge problem if the only trains that use the overhead are commuter trains. However, imagine the ramifications if it became necessary to revive the Fraser Government's Sydney–Melbourne electrification proposal? It could create a major headache for freight

operators if 1500 Volt DC was installed, because trains may be reduced to walking pace in some locations to avoid overheating. Conversely, if 25kv AC was installed, electric traction would be capable of maintaining higher average speeds on the hills than diesels.

Andrew Constance, has a golden opportunity to become one of the most visionary transport ministers in the State's history. Sadly, I have learnt not to rely on the current administration for visionary leadership,

*Stephen Miller  
Rutherford, NSW*

## Intercity comfort

Ian Templeman's report (*Readers Write*, *RD* April 2017) on the response from the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport regarding seating in the new NSW Intercity trains clearly shows that those given the responsibility for acquiring these trains have scant regard for passenger comfort.

Rear-facing seating may just be acceptable for short suburban trips but for longer intercity journeys passengers surely are entitled to something better. Groups of facing seats leave people staring at one another and trying not to tangle legs and knees, hardly a pleasant way to travel.

The 2+2 turnover seating has served NSW intercity trains well for over 60 years, reverting to an unpopular fixed seating arrangement will simply make the trains themselves unpopular with travellers.

*David Brandt,  
Hervey Bay, Qld*

## NSW Intercity Trains

I refer to Alan Templeman's letter in April *Railway Digest* re-NSW intercity trains having fixed 2+2 seating. It is bad enough now having 'ferals' sitting in front or behind you with reversible seats. I certainly don't want them sitting opposite me.

Possibly, the 'bean counters' have worked out the weight and cost of reversible seating, the extra wear and tear on springs, air bags, etc. Then the extra cost

of electricity for the life of the trains over probably a 30-year life.

Alan is right, two toilets per eight car set is certainly not enough. Plumbing issues can arise and the hoon element can soon put toilets out of action. It is a shame that more new V Sets can't be built again.

*Robert Bruce  
Hornsby, NSW*

## NSW Intercity Trains, Sleeping Cars, Graffiti

Two letters in your April issue prompted me to reply. Firstly, I heartily agree with Alan Templeton's thoughts on the purchase of new trains from Korea. Obviously, they're cheaper than anything made in this country, but increase the numbers of unemployed. As we know from past experience, any fixtures, fittings and facilities on board for paying passengers will be designed and built by people who will never use them, therefore, those important details concerning passenger comfort and convenience will be ignored or at least compromised. Hence the inappropriate seating and insufficient toilets on each train set. Have we learned nothing from the XPT debacle of over thirty years ago? Obviously the likes of Mark Coure would never lower themselves to travel on public transport and so he and his ilk are inclined to utter meaningless statements such as 'reversible seating was not possible without compromising comfort and seating amenities'. I suggest he is the only one who grasps that particular train of thought.

John Coyle's proposal to reuse perfectly acceptable dining and sleeping cars on existing trains, rather than sell them off, would require the rehiring of appropriate on-board crew. What? Doesn't he realise, we can't be having passengers actually lying down to sleep, let alone sitting at a table, dining off china plates. What next? High speed trains, just because they have them in Africa and China?

Lastly, I have two cheap and painless solutions to dissuade future graffitiists. They are made to clean off all their destructive



handiwork/'art' from trains/ railway property under prison supervision, then have their hands immersed in indelible green paint. Yes, well, my dreams cost nothing.

Noel Robertson  
Nambucca Heads, NSW

### Graffiti

I refer to 'Gaol for Sydney graffiti vandal' on page 17 of April *Railway Digest*. The defence lawyers tried to argue 'the damage caused wasn't permanent and could be considered art'. If a graffiti vandal was to paint 'out' on their homes, legal offices or cars, would they still consider it art?

Now I hope that the NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance, will press for more gaol terms for graffiti vandals.

Robert Bruce  
Hornsby, NSW

### Grain Storage at Maimuru

Thank you very much for keeping readers up to date on the proposed reopening of the Demondrille to Maimuru portion of the cross country Harden – Blayney line (p11, April *Railway Digest*).

In the article reference is made to the grain facilities at Maimuru being disused. If this means that grain is no longer received at this site then the comment is incorrect. Considerable tonnages of grain were received into temporary storages opposite the silo adjacent to Grenfell Road last season. The site is also included as a receival centre on the GrainCorp network map that also includes Boorowa, Greenethorpe, Noonbinna and Cowra despite present absence of railway facilities in each of these locations.

Grain from Maimuru is destined for local consumption or transported by road to Port Kembla for export.

Neville Pollard  
Emu Plains, NSW

### Plans for Carlingford

Yet another plan for the Carlingford branch railway has emerged ('Proposed Parramatta

Light Rail route revealed', RD April 2017). I wonder if the original supporters of Simpson's railway, of which the Carlingford branch was stage 1, ever thought their railway could endure so many plans over the following 120 years or so.

Maybe the present planners will have enough foresight to finish the line at the main Carlingford shopping centre, rather than at the present station. More daringly, perhaps Carlingford Road could be widened to accommodate the light rail reaching both the main suburban railway network and the NW Metro at Epping. Bit of a dream I guess, but then thinking about Simpson's original plan, I ask myself 'What price a railway to Dural today?'.

David Brandt  
Hervey Bay, Qld.


### Sydney–Brisbane XPT

I traveled from Sydney to Brisbane by train, using a sleeping berth. I paid about \$179.00, which is not cheap, but at the same time, fairly reasonable, being half fare, using a seniors card. Whilst some people might laugh at my request for corn flakes rather than Muesli, and being given the muesli, anyhow, ignoring my simple request, I have raised this issue in the past, without success. Who cares, you may ask? Well, the answer is, the NSW TRAINLINK, certainly doesn't care, that's for sure.

However, on a far more serious matter, I was told by TRAINLINK in October 2015 that there would be a total revamp of the Sydney Brisbane train timetable in 2017. I suggested that the XPT that terminates in Casino, be extended to Brisbane, where it would arrive at about 9.00pm and depart for Brisbane at about 10.00pm. At present the train reaches Brisbane at 4.53am. Much worse, during Daylight Saving it arrives a 3.53am. Yes, you read that, correctly! There is an absurd claim that there are too many freight trains departing Brisbane at around 10.00pm, to fit in a passenger train. Those with a keen interest in railways, will know that is simply untrue.

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I have once again, complained to Trainlink about the XPT timetable, and I have asked what date the new Sydney Brisbane train timetable, is to be introduced? Have TRAINLINK mislead me or in fact, lied?

John Coyle  
Bundamba 4304.

### High Speed Rail

Recent grumbling within some sections of the media, including the ABC, which questioned the viability of the Inland Railway, illustrates why it is unlikely that high-speed rail will materialise in Australia during our lifetime. The general discourse amongst the community is that people are sceptical that Inland Rail would be effective, even though the project has widespread scientific and economic endorsement. It will not be due to economics, demographics, geology, safety, nor the capital cost that high-speed rail will not come to fruition, but because people are sceptical of it. Fast trains have never been part

of the Australian discourse and railways are treated as a joke. Only last week, I had a conversation with someone who believed that Australia doesn't have the population to warrant HSR. The USA has 300 million people and yet they are also sceptical of high-speed rail. Despite numerous proposals for HSR in the USA, name one of them that has materialised in the last 20 years? The only time that people are concerned about railways is if it relates to urban transport. I regularly hear comments from people who will refuse to use public transport. Notwithstanding, there are those who do not believe railways are a viable alternative to road transport.

Sadly, the rail industry in Australia has a real public relations problem. The only way that people will change their attitudes is if they witness the philosophy of high-speed rail in action for themselves.

Stephen Miller  
Rutherford, NSW

## Catchpoints

On page 12 of the May issue, the map of the South East Light Rail route omitted one of the proposed stops. 'Central Grand Concourse' would be located in Eddy Avenue, behind the main concourse and opposite Belmore Park, between the Haymarket and Central (Chalmers Street) stops. On page 54 of the May issue, the upper photo, credited to Robert Driver, was in fact taken by Peter Sansom, and at Warabrook not East Maitland. Our sincere apologies are extended to both photographers for the mix-up.



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RAILMOTOR JOURNEYS OVER LOST VR LINES	47'.....\$35	STEAM VIDEO #124 (TPV)	(Std&BluRay)145'.....\$32	SpHOTSPOTS 32 BAYVIEW JUNC.	(Highb)70(blueRay)...\$19
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SIGHT & SOUND OF STEAM (Belbin)	b&w 55'.....\$40	TALLYLYN RAILWAY 2014.(GWP)	79' (BluRay).....\$40	INTO THE FEATHER RIVER CANYON	(Idea) 110'.....\$28
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STEAM ACTION 3. AC Videos.	54/62'.....\$3	The VALE RHEIDOL RAILWAY BR	(BluRay) 95'.....\$55	MINNESOTA TRAIN ACTION V7	CVision DVD.....\$21
STEAM HIGHLIGHTS.(Belbin).	60'.....\$40	TRACKSIDE BRITAIN NorthEast	(Hball)120'BRay.....\$33	MINNESOTA TRAIN ACTION V9	CVision.DVD.....\$27
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STEAM IN NSW Parts 3/4/5	(Ross Rail) each \$40	TRACTION 2012 Pt 2	Locomaster 100'.....\$36	MRL MONTANA MAIN LINE Part 2	(7idea)124' \$36
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STEAM TIMES 5. Aust & Overseas	50s to 70s...\$38	WELSH HIGHLAND RLYWY.	Completejourney.103' \$44	NORTHEAST SAMPLER (Pentrex)	95'.....\$35
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SYDNEY'S COLORFUL TRAINS.	(Hball)(2004)105'.....\$38				
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THE GASLIGHT FILMS NORM WADSWORTH	Nic60'.....\$30				
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THE WAY IT WAS Vol 9. (Water Street)	53'.....\$44				
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TRAINS AROUND ADELAIDE. Redhens	V26 32'.....\$16				
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46, 85 & 86 CLASS ELECTRICS.	104'.....\$36	N ABERDEEN TO INVERNESS.	158' DVD.....\$34	N DIVERSE BAHNNLINIEN 1.	Fuhrerstandfilm 2DVDs...\$83
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ALCO'S DL500&541.NSW44/45	SAR930/600 02'.....\$36	C2C Shoeburyness Fenchurch	(DVD) 116'.....\$44	BT117 SUMMER 2013-BluRay	65'.....\$38
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