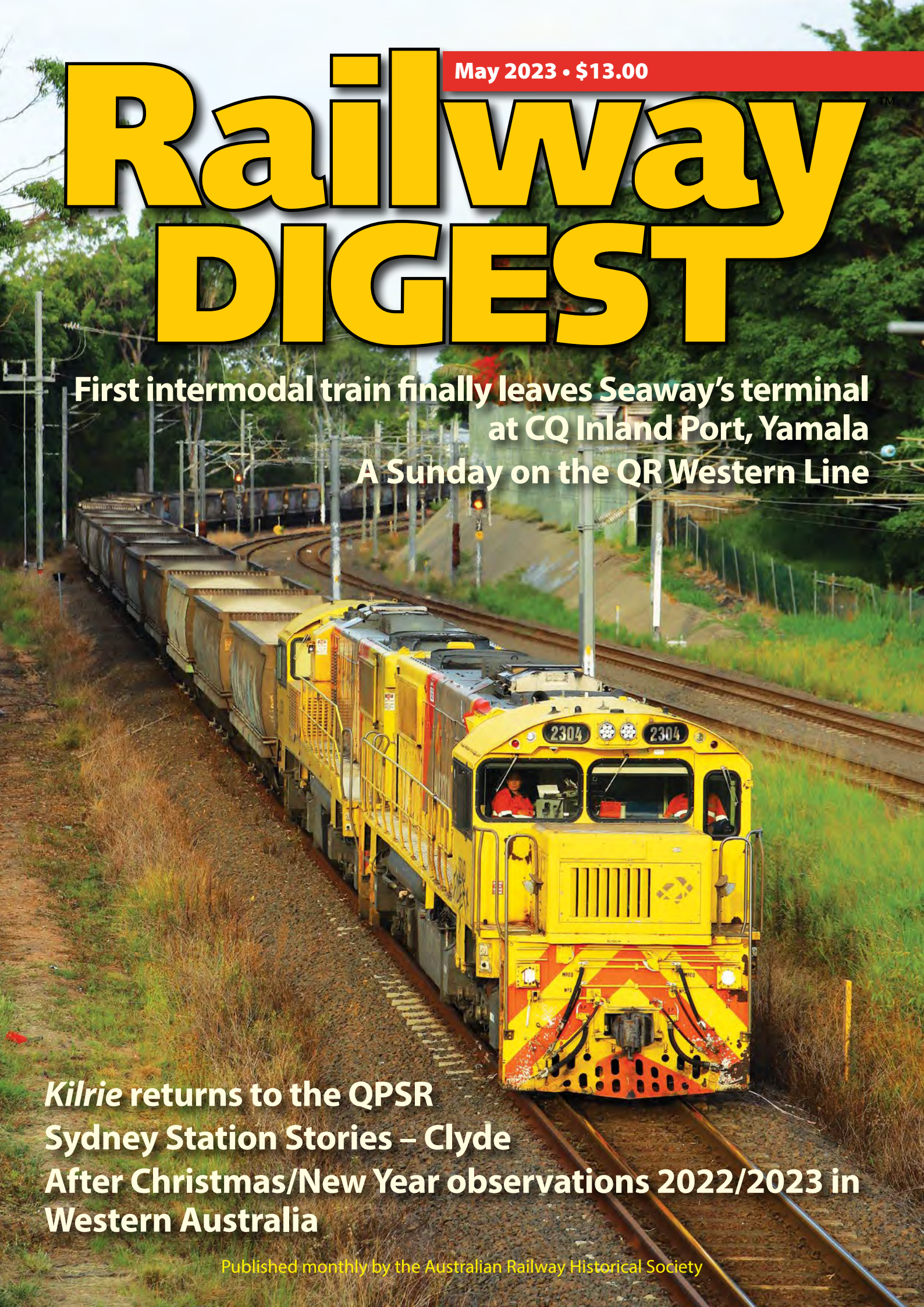
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Railway DIGEST

First intermodal train finally leaves Seaway's terminal at CQ Inland Port, Yamala

A Sunday on the QR Western Line



Kilrie returns to the QPSR

Sydney Station Stories – Clyde

After Christmas/New Year observations 2022/2023 in Western Australia

Published monthly by the Australian Railway Historical Society


8212
8212
pacific national
8212

Editor	Bruce Belbin
National Affairs	Lawrance Ryan
Features Editor	John Hoyle
Editorial Assistant	Darren Tulk
International	Ken Date
Subscriptions:	Ph: 02 9699 4595
Editorial Office:	Ph: 02 9699 4595
ARHS Bookshop:	Ph: 02 9699 4595
Mail:	PO Box 206, Alexandria NSW 1435
Publisher:	Australian Railway Historical Society NSW Division, ACN 000 538 803
Print Post Publication No.	100009942
Newsagent Distribution	Ovato Retail Distribution Pty Ltd
Mailing & Distribution	Ligare Pty Limited and Australia Post
Printing	Ligare Pty Limited
Website	www.railwaydigest.com.au
Facebook	www.facebook.com/railwaydigest

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Publication deadlines: *Railway Digest* is published on the last Wednesday of each month prior to the cover date. The deadline for advertisements and contributions is the 1st of the month prior to the cover date.

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Contact email addresses

Editorial	editor@railwaydigest.com.au
Photographic contributions	photos@railwaydigest.com.au
Subscription enquiries/change of address	mail@arhsnsw.com.au

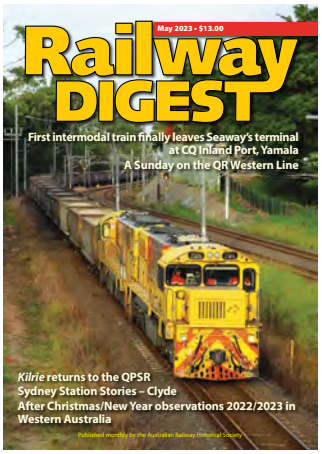
Contributors

Anthony Evans, Bob Gibson, John Griffin, Clancy Davies, Robert Duncombe, John Hoyle, Philip Jeeves, Phil Melling, Vaughn Moore, Grahame Swanson, Chris Walters.

ABC – ACT, ABC News, ACT Minster for Transport – Chris Steel MLA, Australian Rail Track Corporation, *Ballarat Times*, Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts - The Hon Catherine King, Grattan Institute, *The Hobart Mercury*, Keolis Downer, METRONET, Prime 7 News Central West, Office of the Hon Daniel Andrews MP – Premier of Victoria, Premier of Tasmania – Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP, Public Transport Authority of Western Australia, Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, Queensland Rail, South Australia Police, Swan Christian Education Association, *Sydney Morning Herald*, Tasmania Police, TasRail, *Tasmania Today*, TICRail, Western Australia Minister for Transport – Hon Rita Saffioti MLA, West Coast Wilderness Railway. www.brisbanetimes.com.au www.crossriverrail.qld.gov.au www.marketplace.felix.net www.infrastructuremagazine.com.au www.inlandrail.artc.com.au www.australianmanufacturing.com.au www.theguardian.com www.indaily.com.au www.inqld.com.au www.metrotunnel.vic.gov.au www.bigbuild.vic.gov.au www.watoday.com.au

May 2023

Volume 61, Number 5



Features

First intermodal train finally leaves Seaway's terminal at CQ Inland Port, Yamala **30**

Although it was originally planned for September 2022, the first intermodal train departure from CQ Inland Port's Yamala terminal (25 kilometres east of Emerald in Queensland's Central Highlands) on Sunday, 19 March was nevertheless a significant event for rail in Queensland given the miniscule market share rail commands in non-mineral export container business in the state. John Hoyle was there to witness the event.

Sydney Station Stories – Clyde **36**

In the second instalment of his Sydney Station Stories series, Chris Walters takes a look at Clyde, a station with quite a significant railway history, but which today gives the strong impression of time having stopped.

Regulars

Rail Industry	4
Railway people	8
News	9
Operations	40
– After Christmas/New Year observations 2022/2023 in Western Australia	40
– A Sunday on the QR Western Line	46
Further notes on the Australian Urban Passenger Train	50
Preservation and Tourist	50
– Coach Class – Luxury brand sets up shop in Heritage U Set	52
– TIC Rail are innovating Rail Training (on a Heritage Railway)	54
– *Kilrie* returns to the QPSR	56
Readers Write	60

Cover: On Tuesday 7 February, Aurizon Clyde/EMD units 2364D and 2366D work east through Lindum leading empty coal train 9636 back to Toowoomba and the Western coal fields. Jarrod Mitton

Opposite: Pacific National Clyde/EMD unit 8212 leaves Botany yard with 1157 Botany to St Marys intermodal transfer freight on Monday 12 December 2022. Scott Mitchell

Back cover (upper): On Thursday 16 February, Aurizon Clyde/EMD unit LZ3120 brings 5112 Merredin to Forrestfield wagon transfer through the cutting at Brigadoon. John Scott

Back cover (lower): A twin set of Alstom *Citadis 305* trams arrives at Circular Quay on a service from Kingsford on a sunny Australia Day, Thursday 26 January. Steve Munro

Agreement to improve Australia's rail interoperability

An historic agreement has been signed between Australian governments and rail industry stakeholders to bring the nation's rail network into the 21st century.

The Australian and Victorian Governments, as well as the Australasian Railway Association on behalf of senior rail industry leaders, have signed the ground-breaking Memorandum of Cooperation to make rail more competitive and interoperable across Australia.

This agreement will see rail play a bigger role in the national economy while delivering more freight and passenger services for Australians.

Since federation, rail has run as a series of independent rail networks, often receiving upgrades and new technologies at different times from different suppliers. This has led to a range of critical issues impacting national rail productivity and innovation, such as:

- the use of different rail gauges, signalling systems, rolling stock and safe working arrangements, which are an economic handbrake requiring costly work-arounds,
- differences in how we run trains, manage rail crew and invest in new rolling stock; and
- experienced rail workers being isolated to geographic areas based on these differing technologies, compounding rail skills shortages.

Improving national rail interoperability is also one of the National Cabinet's five priorities for collective action. Infrastructure and Transport Ministers agreed to a number of productivity and safety measures in December, including:

- setting a small number of critical national rail standards,
- aligning the different train control and signalling technologies used along the eastern seaboard; and
- reducing the burden that different rail approaches have on drivers, crew and maintenance workers.

The Memorandum of Cooperation commits rail operators, builders, manufacturers and transport ministers to work together to make rail more interoperable, particularly for any future major rail investments.

This builds on the Australian Government's commitment to delivering the National Rail Manufacturing Plan, to support a nationally coordinated approach that will grow the rail manufacturing sector and create skilled manufacturing jobs.

The government will shortly appoint a National Rail Advocate and Rail Industry Innovation Council to support the plan and drive genuine change in Australian rail manufacturing, including bolstering supply chains and building domestic capabilities.

On Friday 24 March Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Catherine King said that improving interoperability of the national rail network will mean more people will be employed, more manufacturing will be local, and more passenger and freight services will travel by rail.

"Today's first signatures on the historic Memorandum of Cooperation commits all governments and industry to work together to ensure rail can play a bigger role in our nation's future," Minister King said. "Working together will be the catalyst that delivers an Australian rail network that operates smoothly across state borders, by using compatible technologies and systems".



Victorian Transport Minister Jacinta Allan, Federal Transport Minister Catherine King and ARA Chair Danny Broad sign the Memorandum of Cooperation on Friday 24 March. Office of Catherine King



While many were enjoying some well deserved down time during the Easter period, Queensland Rail, Alstom and the Sequence Alliance were busy on the Shorncliffe line testing ETCS Level 2 with Queensland Rail unit SMU264 and, for the first time, NGR unit 709. On Saturday 8 April, NGR709 became the first NGR unit to be worked under full ETCS Level 2 systems, seen here at Boondall station after arriving on that first ETCS Level 2 run. Peter Reading

Inland Rail review reveals cost blow-out to $31 billion

The cost of delivering the Inland Rail project has blown out to $31.4 billion, according to a damning new report, which warns the price tag may climb even higher because it is still unclear where the line "will start or finish".

The 1,700-kilometre-long railway will connect Melbourne to Brisbane via central Victoria, western New South Wales and southern Queensland. The project will upgrade 1,100 kilometres of existing rail line and build 600 kilometres of new track to connect existing rail corridors. It is designed to deliver a 24-hour connection between the Victorian and Queensland capitals, attracting freight from the congested road network. It is forecast to cut carbon emissions by 750,000 tonnes a year and reduce annual truck movements by 200,000.

Released on Thursday 6 October "The Delivery of Inland Rail: An Independent Review", completed by Dr Kerry Schott AO takes into consideration the scope, schedule and cost of the Inland Rail program. It also assesses options for the new Inland Rail intermodal terminals to be built in Melbourne and Brisbane, and improved links to the ports of these cities.

The review found the project would cost at least $31.4 billion but had run so far off the rails it was not possible to speculate on an end date, a final cost, or whether it would generate a return.

"You can't do a benefit-cost ratio analysis until you know what the cost is," Dr Schott told media.

Further, it found that the board managing the project did "not have adequate skills" and there had not been a "substantive" chief executive in nearly two years. When advice was given to the former Coalition government to improve the skills mix on the board, Dr Schott said it was "not heeded".

"The cost of the project has increased by an astonishing amount when compared to 2020," she said in her review.

"Two years ago, the estimate was $16.4 billion, and now it is about $31 billion". "We all know infrastructure costs are going up but not like that".

A pet project of former Nationals leader Barnaby Joyce, the Inland Rail project was in what Dr Schott described as a "regrettable situation".

As well as governance issues, Dr Schott noted the route itself had yet to be finalised despite the fact construction began in 2018 and was slated to end in 2027. This had created "insufficient certainty" about the final cost and completion date, according to her report.

"Somewhat surprisingly, the project has commenced delivery without knowing where it will start or finish," Dr Schott said.

"I remain deeply worried about the level of scope-maturity across the project as a whole and, as a result, the future impact on project-cost and completion-time estimates remains difficult to ascertain".

Construction of the Inland Rail began in 2018 by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), but almost all the work to date has been to upgrade sections of existing lines that form part of the route.

The ARTC is an Australian Government-owned statutory corporation that operates one of the largest rail networks in the nation spanning 8,500 kilometres across five states. However, the review found that ARTC board appointments "did not reflect the skills required to govern either freight rail operations or a major infrastructure project".

"What they've never done before is a project of this size and they really didn't have the in-house capabilities to do it," Dr Schott said.

"ARTC has assured me that its desired skill mix was made known to the shareholder ministers of the former government who were responsible for the latest round of board appointments".

She said that advice was "not heeded" by the shareholder ministers and cabinet.

"It's not a bad project, it's just been managed really badly," she said.

Federal Infrastructure Minister Catherine King, who appointed Dr Schott on 7 October 2022, was equally blunt in her response to the findings. "This report is an indictment of the Liberal and National parties' approach to government," she said. "To leave a project without a start or end point, with a significant budget blow-out, and a board without the skills it required, is shameful".

Ms King said that just one section of the proposed 1,700-kilometre rail line – from Beveridge outside Melbourne to Parkes in Central West NSW – would be completed by 2027 as she warned of sweeping changes to the rest of the project.

Minister King said the Inland Rail remained an important project that the government aimed to complete. However, the Minister said more than $2 billion had already been sunk into the project and the government would commission an independent cost assessment before deciding the future of the remaining section from Parkes to Brisbane.

An inland rail freight line has been discussed for decades but the substantial funding of $8.4 billion for the project was only secured in 2017 by Mr Joyce, the Nationals leader at the time, through the Coalition agreement he signed with then-prime minister Malcolm Turnbull.

Responding to the review on ABC local radio, Mr Joyce said he was proud to have secured the initial funding for the big project. He defended the former government's role and blamed delays on state governments, farmers who opposed the track being laid on their land, and a series of long-run reviews into the scheme, most of which were commissioned by the Coalition government.

"One of the reasons this is blown out is because instead of moving dirt, they're moving paperwork," he said.

Australian Rail Track Corporation chairman Peter Duncan said his organisation would work with the government to implement recommendations made by the Schott review to rectify the scheme's shortcomings.

Grattan Institute's transport and cities program director, Marion Terrill, said the chief benefits of the Inland Rail would have been generated by the intercity connections, and removing that link left a question mark over the project.

"Presumably it still has some utility … but it started out in 2015 with a very skinny cost-benefit ratio and it is very hard to see how the project could do anything other than destroy value," Ms Terrill said.

"Trying to stem the flow has to be an important part of the response from the government".

Dr Schott's report outlines 19 recommendations to improve the delivery of Inland Rail including:

- strengthening the governance arrangements and establishing a subsidiary company to deliver Inland Rail;
- reviewing ARTC's risk management and reporting systems, with a view to addressing issues experienced with approval processes,
- a further assessment of the scope and cost of Inland Rail, conducted by an independent specialist in conjunction with a cost estimator/value engineer,
- a revised delivery that prioritises sections of Inland Rail that allow revenue to be generated earlier,
- deciding and developing intermodal terminals in Melbourne and Brisbane: and
- maximising regional opportunities available from Inland Rail, including through intermodal opportunities in Parkes and prioritising delivery of the enhanced rail capability to enable double stacking through to Beveridge.

The Independent Review of Inland Rail can be downloaded at: https://www.inlandrail.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Independent%20review%20of%20Inland%20Rail%20Report_0.pdf

Heavy Haul event well received

Philip Laird

The 2023 Heavy Haul Rail conference, was held 29 – 30 March at The Ritz-Carlton, Perth with over 400 persons in attendance. This included 17 from overseas, many from interstate, and just 9 persons on line. It was well organised by Informa Connect (www.informa.com.au) and gave much attention to decarbonisation. There was a diverse range of speakers and panel members.

After a welcome to Country, the first speaker in a keynote address was Ms Kari Gonzales, President and CEO of the newly formed MxV rail centre in Colorado, in person. This centre had recently took over much of the former Transportation Test Centre Inc at Pueblo. MxV Rail has some new test tracks and is a subsidiary of the Association of American Railroads and tests rail equipment along with consulting, training, standards and research. In her talk, Ms Gonzales noted the advances made by the rail industry in the United States since the Staggers Act was passed in 1980. This included an increase in rail freight fuel efficiency from an average of less than 350 revenue ton miles per gallon in 1990 to over 450 revenue ton miles per gallon in 2021.



Kari Gonzales, President and CEO of MxV Rail, spoke of the advances made by the rail industry in the United States since the Staggers Act was passed in 1980. Miles Noel Photography courtesy Informa Connect

Mr Dean Newburn of Wabtec (a US company, including Westinghouse Brakes and ex-GE locomotives; also the lead conference sponsor) then reminded the audience that each year rail moves billions of tonnes of freight and billions of passengers around the world, and that in moving freight, rail is four times more fuel efficient than trucking. He mentioned that his company can convert suitable legacy DC locomotives into AC locomotives, with a 25 per cent increase in fuel efficiency and a 40 per cent increase in reliability.

Pilbara perspectives

Mr Dino Otranto, COO Iron Ore of Fortescue noted that his company mines and moves to export over 185 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) of iron ore. This results in over 2 million tonnes of CO2 emissions a year, and how they are motivated to reduce this (with diesel and carbon credit prices likely to go up). To this end, they have purchased two new battery-operated locomotives from Progress Rail (a subsidiary of Caterpillar that makes Electro-Motive Diesel locomotives).

Mr Leland LeBreton of Rio Tinto noted his company had the largest private rail network in the world of some 2000 km now moving over 320 mtpa. Rio also has five gas fired power stations in the Pilbara region. About one third of their Scope 1 emissions are for gas and two thirds are for diesel – and of this, about equal shares for locomotives, haul trucks, and other vehicles. So, as well as investing in renewable power (using sunlight by day and wind by night), Rio is acquiring (this year) four Wabtec Battery Electric Locomotives with a view to "Proof of Concept" to reduce emissions. After noting valuable experience gained in Rio's AutoHaul development and operations (the world's largest robot), the talk noted three other options to reduce emissions: standard electrification, renewable fuels, and hydrogen.

Mr Warren Wellbeloved of BHP Iron Ore noted, in a recent fatal accident, the sad loss of a BHP Iron ore employee and the need to do more to keep our industry safe. He then outlined their "Rail Technology project" where after 50 years of operation a signalling system with 'fixed blocks' is being replaced by Communications Based Train Control (CBTC) system with 'moving blocks'. This is a challenging project in an operating railway that needs "expertise from around the world." The aim is to build a "safer, smarter, better railway".

Ms Lily Meneghel, Manager of Roy Hill's remote operations centre (at Perth airport), in a panel session addressed the need to increase rail technology skills and noted the assistance given here by the Institute of Railway Technology at Monash University.

Other speakers noted the importance of the Pilbara Iron ore exports, with its 'super-efficient rail', to the Australian economy.

Other Australian rail freight

The importance of rail freight to Western Australia was keenly felt in Perth when the TransAustralian railway was closed in early 2022 (for 24 days) due to flood impacts and supermarket shelves started to empty. WA Transport Minister Rita Saffioti noted a need for the federal government to invest in a more resilient railway. She also noted the role of rail in moving a record wheat and barley crop, and investments including siding upgrades and a lifting of axle loads from 16 to 19 tonnes on some track, and long term plans to move the WA container port from Fremantle to Kwinana. As well, WA have lifted rail's share of container movements to Fremantle port to 20 per cent and this is the highest in Australia.

The long-term planning for a new port at Kwinana, to be called Westport, was outlined by the Chair of Infrastructure Western Australia, Ms Nicole Lockwood. This megaproject will require not only a new port, but new rail and road links. In order to deliver it, 'social license' will be necessary – something that you cannot measure but you know when you have lost it.



Dino Otranto, COO, Iron Ore, of Fortescue spoke about his company's mines and rail operations, which move over 185 million tonnes of iron ore per annum. Miles Noel Photography courtesy Informa Connect

Ms Prue Newall, ESG Head of Pacific National noted safety as a top priority, and as a user of about 330m litres of diesel a year, their keen interest in decarbonising their activities (including working with railways in North America), and support for moving some freight to road. To this end, they have made significant investment in intermodal terminals and ordered 50 new locomotives (to be built locally by UGL and to be environmentally friendly). In addition, Pacific National has developed a "Carbon Emissions Forecasting Model".



A lively panel discussion on Day Two asked "What can be done at an industry level to increase rail technology personal skills in an ever-increasing level of technical complexity?". Moderator, Richard Cohen, Managing Director Port, Rail & Core Services, Rio Tinto Iron Ore, was joined by Sarah Dearman, Manager of Operational Readiness – Rail, Western Australia Iron Ore, BHP; Lily Meneghel, Manager Control, Remote Operations Centre, Roy Hill; Damien White, Chief Executive Officer, RISSB, and via videolink, Shubnum Nazeer, Managing Director, Untangled. Miles Noel Photography courtesy Informa Connect

An interesting outline of an incentive scheme in Australia to reduce emissions in transport was given by a Clean Energy Regulator official. This involves the use of Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) where one unit is gained when one tonne of CO2 is reduced; and at a 2022 auction this was worth $17-35). Transport activities that may gain ACCUs are: replacing (or modifying) an existing vehicle with (to make) a more fuel efficient one; changing energy sources; and, changing operational practices. Pacific National is involved in this scheme.



Global rail technology company Pandrol, best known for its rail fastening systems, was one of 10 rail industry exhibitors at the event. Miles Noel Photography courtesy Informa Connect

The scope for not only saving energy, but producing it, in haulage of coal from Blackwater to Gladstone, was outlined by Mr. Roger Buckley of Aurizon. Careful monitoring of electricity use and regeneration on a 57 km section (Bluff- Wallaroo) had two extremes for a coal train – the worst overall using 2 MWh of power with the best generating 0.5 MWh. Many factors contribute to such a variation, not only the way the train is driven, with the use (if any) of air brakes, but also pathing and temporary speed restrictions.

On electrification, Mr. Richard Wales of Andromeda Rail noted some impediments; not only does its installation take up 'track access' but also it often needs track upgrades, new signalling and communications resulting in much room for "Scope Creep". He quoted widely varying costs, from India at $0.25m per km (with much being done there) $1.5m per km in Scotland and up to $20m per km in England.

Other topics raised in speeches and panels included the need for more resilience in our interstate network (and hence some redundancy; also to 'build back better' after closures due to flood impacts), asset management of locomotives, rail regulation and safety. Also addressed were cyber attacks and how these could impact rail.

All in all, a most interesting conference. It was the 12th Heavy Haul conference to date, no doubt there will be more.

Dr Philip Laird OAM is a frequent contributor to Railway Digest.

ARTC Inland Rail and NSW Farmers release information pack

Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) Inland Rail and the NSW Farmers' Association (NSWFA) have worked together to develop a new information pack that acknowledges and addresses issues of concern to property owners in relation to the construction of the Inland Rail program of works.

In December 2021, the Senate's Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee report on Inland Rail recommended that an independent mediator be employed to facilitate an improved working relationship between ARTC Inland Rail and NSWFA.

In response to this recommendation, ARTC Inland Rail and NSWFA have been engaging in open and productive mediator-facilitated discussions, working through issues of mutual concern.

Following these productive discussions, ARTC Inland Rail and NSWFA have jointly produced an information pack that provides further details on how ARTC Inland Rail is addressing issues of concern to landowners including the property acquisition process, fencing standards and Inland Rail's complaint management process.

On Tuesday 14 Match Rebecca Pickering, Acting Chief Executive, Inland Rail, said that ARTC Inland Rail is delighted to have worked with NSWFA to produce the information pack for property owners on the Inland Rail route. "We have worked very closely with NSWFA to develop an improved understanding of how we can work more effectively together and deliver better outcomes for property owners", she said.

"We are confident that this information pack that we have developed with NSWFA will be a valuable resource for property owners and will help them better engage with Inland Rail".

The information pack can be downloaded at:
https://inlandrail.artc.com.au/working-with-artc-inland-rail/

Rail industry

R&D funding for eco-friendly plastic railway sleepers

The Victorian government and the Major Transport Infrastructure Authority (MTIA) have awarded a total of $500 million to Monash University engineers to support the development of an eco-friendly alternative to millions of railway sleepers across Australia.

Monash Institute of Railway Technology (Monash IRT), along with Victorian company Integrated Recycling, has been exploring the potential for transforming recycled plastics waste – such as shampoo bottles and plastic milk cartons – along with agricultural waste, into long-lasting composite plastic railway sleepers since 2015 (see January 2020 *RD*, page 9).

The result has been the successful development of Duratrack sleepers, which have replaced timber sleepers in low-speed railway yards and sidings as part of the upgrade of Victorian regional lines including Shepparton, Warrnambool and the Murray Basin. The sleepers have also been widely trialled by tourist and heritage railways, Metro Trains Melbourne, V/Line and Queensland Rail.

The latest Victorian Government investment builds on previous funding of $300,000 provided to Monash IRT and Integrated Recycling for the development of composite plastic railway sleepers in low-speed rail networks.

Monash IRT director, Professor Ravi Ravitharan, said the latest funding would help the Institute to develop the next generation of composite plastic sleepers, this time to be used across Victoria and Australia's mainline railway networks.

The Institute will work closely with industry partners Integrated Recycling, Advanced Circular Polymers, Pandrol Australia and the Australian Rail Track Corporation to develop the Australian-first NextGen sleepers, which would be a fit for purpose alternative to current concrete sleepers used in mainline railway networks in Victoria and Australia.

Professor Ravitharan said there are 52 million railway sleepers in Australia. Of those, about 32 million are concrete, 11 million timber and 8.7 million steel, with numbers set to increase in light of Victoria's $90 billion Big Build project.

He said through innovative projects such as the NextGen initiative, railways can play a significant role in meeting Australia's carbon reduction targets, along with modernising the industry.

"This is another opportunity to change the mindset of the railway industry, which has generally been quite conservative and slow to implement innovative products", he said.

"It's also exciting because if you show households that the contents of their recycling bin are being put to good use, they're much more likely to continue making the effort to recycle".

Professor Ravitharan said the recycled plastic sleepers offer many benefits. These include a lower carbon footprint and a reduction in noise and vibration, which makes for a smoother ride for passengers, and a more peaceful environment for those living near train lines.

Professor Ravitharan said the plastic sleepers have a lifespan of up to 50 years and can be recycled at the end of their life, while a timber sleeper generally lasts only about 20 years.

One kilometre of the plastic sleepers divert more than 100 tonnes of recyclable plastic from landfill, representing a saving of up to $3000 per kilometre in landfill costs.

Railway people

Jo Haylen new NSW Transport Minister

Following the NSW election on 25 March Jo Haylen is the new Transport Minister in the Labor Government led by Chris Minns. Ms Haylen is the Member for Summer Hill in the Legislative Assembly. She first entered parliament in March 2015 and held various positions including Shadow Minister for Seniors and Volunteers, Shadow Minister for Active Transport and Shadow Minister for Transport, the latter from June 2021 to 28 March 2023. She was previously Mayor of Marrickville Council from 2013 to 2014 and had previously worked as Deputy Chief of Staff for then Deputy Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. The electorate of Summer Hill lies in the inner west of Sydney and includes the suburbs of Haberfield, Ashfield, Summer Hill, Dulwich Hill and Marrickville. The Main Western railway line passes through the electorate between Summer Hill and Ashfield while the Bankstown line crosses the southern part of the electorate between Marrickville and Hurlstone Park. The Central station to Dulwich Hill light rail line (route L1) forms part of the eastern border of the electorate between Haberfield and Summer Hill.

Jenny Aitcheson is the new Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, a portfolio which encompasses regional rail. Ms Aitcheson was previously Shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and she has served in the Shadow Cabinet since 2016.

Prior to entering Parliament, she was a small business operator in tourism, the bus industry and hospitality. She is the Member for Maitland, a key Hunter Valley railway centre and junction for the Northern and North Coast Lines.



Jo Haylen

4Tel appoints new CEO in executive team restructure

4Tel has appointed Tony Crosby as the new CEO in a restructure of the executive team. Tony has been an integral part of 4Tel's growth since joining the company in 2013 as the General Manager of Services.

Tony has been responsible for the company's customer support contracts and ongoing local and international business development. He holds extensive industry experience, having worked within the rail industry since 2000.

Tony is formally recognised by Engineers Australia as a Chartered Professional Engineer, and holds a Bachelor of Engineering, Communications-Electronics with Honours, and an MBA in Technology.

"Tony has some great strategies lined up to keep our growth on an upwards trajectory and we look forward to seeing them come to fruition," said outgoing CEO, Joanne Wust.

Joanne has taken on a new hybrid role of Group CEO for 4Tel and subsidiary company, 4AI Systems, based from New York.

As part of the restructure, Jim Woltjer has been promoted to General Manager of Software. Jim has been a champion for change and has grown the largest team of staff within the company.

Matt Burger has been promoted to Systems Integration Team Leader. He will be forming and leading the newest team in 4Tel. Matt has been integral to delivering services to ARTC, Transdev Sydney Ferries, Transport for NSW, to name a few.



Tony Crosby

ACT public transport numbers bounce back

Canberrans are embracing public transport for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic with more than 1.207 million journeys taken across the city in February.

This is the highest number of journeys recorded in a month since the pandemic began and represents a return of 94.5 per cent of 2019 patronage in the same month.

Weekend numbers in February were particularly impressive, showing 26 per cent more weekend journeys taken compared to February 2019, averaging 18,177 daily weekend journeys.

"Our goal is for public transport to make a full recovery from the impacts of the pandemic and keep growing public transport patronage into the future," said Minister Steel.

"It's an exciting time for public transport in Canberra with 12 electric buses joining the fleet, 90 more electric buses being procured, light rail being extended south, and a new ticketing system being rolled out".

For more information on Canberra's public transport recovery, visit the public transport recovery plan refresh at: https://www.transport.act.gov.au/planning-for-the-future

Canberra Light Rail Stage 2A plans released for public consultation

The National Capital Authority (NCA) has begun taking feedback on the aesthetics, accessibility and conformity to Walter Burley Griffin's 1918 plan for the next stage of light rail from Canberra's city to Commonwealth Park.

Canberra Light Rail Stage 2A, the first step in extending the network south to Woden, will feature an additional 1.7 kilometres of wire-free track including three new stops at Edinburgh Avenue, City South and Commonwealth Park.

On Tuesday 28 March plans were made available for public feedback revealing more about how the next stage of the network will look, including details about tracks, public stops and associated landscaping.

The NCA has previously approved the raising of London Circuit, which is currently underway, and the ACT government indicated that work on stage 2A would begin soon afterwards, assuming planning approvals and procurement processes had been completed.

Stage 2A is also the first step in extending the network towards Woden in Canberra's south.

If approved as it is currently planned, stage 2A will see two new intersection traffic lights added on London Circuit at West Row and University Avenue to act as pedestrian and cyclist crossings.

Protected cycleways would also be built on the newly-designed intersections of London Circuit and Northbourne Avenue, as well as on Commonwealth Avenue and another London Circuit intersection.

The plans reveal there would also be in-ground pedestrian lights to alert people when they are crossing light rail tracks.

To differentiate from the road, there would be "a cobbled median" on London Circuit West, and a new inset bridge for the light rail constructed over Parkes Way between the two current Commonwealth Avenue bridges.

But the territory and federal governments say the historic character of Commonwealth Avenue will be preserved, with proposed pin oak plantings in the median to maintain "a wide tree-lined boulevard".

The plans also include grass track sections on parts of Northbourne Avenue, London Circuit and Commonwealth Avenue.

ACT Minister for Transport Chris Steel said stage 2A would "establish Canberra's north-south mass transit public transport spine".

A fly-through video of the Light Rail Stage 2A route is available at:

https://vimeo.com/811908171/8a14496f93



On Thursday 2 February, CAF *Urbos 3* tram 008 arrives at the McArthur Avenue Stop, on Northbourne Avenue Canberra, enroute to the 'Transport Interchange' at Gunghalin Place, around 12km from the city centre. Steve Munro



Supercar racing was held in Newcastle over the weekend of 11/12 March at the east end of the city, and as the route of the race blocked the tram line at Watt Street, trams from Newcastle Interchange had to terminate at Queens Wharf. On Saturday 11 March a tramway employee is changing the points of the crossover between Queens Wharf and Crown Street as CAF *Urbos 100* tram 52 waits to proceed. Peter Sansom

Inland Rail Stockinbingal to Parkes early works progress with rail delivery

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) Inland Rail Stockinbingal to Parkes project has taken a step forward with the delivery of over 277 tonnes of rail from Liberty Steel's Whyalla plant arriving at Daroobalgie in the first week of April for the new Daroobalgie crossing loop. Forty-two rail lengths were delivered to the site via a rail train led by Pacific National locomotive 8212 and were unloaded using plant machinery. The rail lengths, measuring 110 metres long and weighing 6.6 tonnes each, will lay over 2.3 kilometres of track. The former station at Daroobalgie was located seven kilometres north of Forbes. The Stockinbingal to Parkes area spans from just north of the rail junction in Stockinbingal to south of Goobang Junction in Parkes, New South Wales. Major construction on the Stockinbingal to Parkes section is expected to begin in late 2023 and involves enhancements or modifications to specific sites along the existing rail corridor to accommodate double-stacked freight trains. Other works planned for Stockinbingal to Parkes include increasing vertical clearance on the Lachlan River rail bridge and Wyndham Avenue Road bridge in Forbes, modifying Forbes Railway Station, and enhancing several existing crossing loops, structures, and utilities.

The crossing loop at Daroobalgie will feature 2.21 kilometres of new track built to the eastern side of the existing track and will include the replacement and extension of culverts to mitigate flooding on neighbouring land. Melvyn Maylin, Inland Rail Director Program Delivery, Albury to Parkes, said the Stockinbingal to Parkes project is now in the procurement and detailed design stage with the Corporation conducting various follow up environmental and technical investigations, engineering and design, hydrology studies and consulting with key stakeholders, communities, and landowners to finalise plans for this project. He said early works in and around Forbes will be ongoing, including the relocation of gas and water infrastructure. These works are required because they will enable major construction works to proceed more efficiently once a contractor is appointed.



On Tuesday morning 4 April, a fatality at Linden on the Blue Mountains line caused a suspension of services between Katoomba and Springwood with buses operating instead. One effect was that a four-car *Endeavour* train was stabled in the Up Loop at Lawson, with engines running and the crew on board. Reportedly an empty combination of the two Up Bathurst services, it was formed of Set 10 in the older livery and Set 1 in the new livery. Services resumed around 1130, and at 1258 the Up *Indian Pacific* passed Faulconbridge, running around four hours late. Basil Hancock



Lead unit CLF1 bore the brunt of the damage in the level crossing collision on Canola Way at Rockview, and is seen on its side on Monday 13 March, one week after the collision. It was subsequently loaded on road transport and taken to Bendigo North Railway Workshops for assessment, arriving there on Sunday 26 March. Peter Neve

Train derails after hitting truck trailer on level crossing

An empty grain train derailed after crashing into a truck's dog-trailer on the Canola Way open level crossing at Rockview, between Old Junee and Marrar, around 8.45am on Wednesday 8 March.

Southern Shorthaul Railroad Train No. 4MC5 Empty Grain behind CLF1, CLF4, 4910 and G514 struck the loaded trailer. All four locomotives derailed with the first three units ending on their sides. The leading 16 wagons of the train also derailed.

The driver of the truck and two train drivers were taken to Wagga Wagga Base Hospital with minor injuries.

NSW Ambulance Inspector Lindel Carey said the outcome could have been much worse.

"We arrived to find that a freight train had collided with the truck's trailer at a level crossing, causing the train to derail", she said in a statement.

"We assessed three men, including the driver of the truck and two train drivers. Their injuries were minor, and they were taken to hospital as a precaution. "It's always concerning when we're called to incidents involving heavy vehicles. Thankfully, no one was seriously injured in this instance".

The train was travelling to Coolamon to load.

Damage was substantial and the line did not re-open until Saturday 1 April.

UGL Regional Linx (UGLRL), the operator and maintainer of the Country Regional Network on behalf of Transport for NSW, completed the work to restore the track.

The track restoration included the reinstatement of 220 metres of damaged track with 270 new steel sleepers and 325 metres of new rail, applying 400 tonnes of ballast, and building 50 metres of track formation.

Wet weather delayed work on the line until the afternoon of Friday 17 March, with the muddy conditions making it difficult to bring in the heavy road cranes needed to remove the derailed locomotives and wagons. Extra stabilisation work also had to be carried out at the site.

Trains operated at a reduced speed through the restored sections of track until mid-April, when track resurfacing was completed.

The twice-weekly Sydney – Griffith *Xplorer* passenger service resumed running on the Saturday. Fortunately, freight services, particularly Pacific National's Melbourne- Griffith intermodal service (MC3/CM3) were able to be diverted via the Cootamundra – Temora – Griffith line. Electronic notice boards were put in place at the site advising motorists that trains were running again.

The damaged locomotives were conveyed by road to the Bendigo North Railway Workshops for assessment.

A spokesperson for Southern Shorthaul Railroad was quoted in *The Daily Advertiser* newspaper (Wagga Wagga) on 18 March that "the accident had cost his company about $16 million in repairs".

The derailment was the second level crossing collision in the Riverina in the month with a ute and train colliding near Griffith on Monday 6 March. On that occasion damage was minimal and no-one was hurt.

WANTED

NSWGR CAST IRON SIGNS

LEVEL CROSSING SIGNS – SIGNAL BOX NAMEBOARDS – RAIL CORRIDOR SIGNS

ALSO

LEVER PLATES / SIGNAL BOX DIAGRAM BOARDS (ILLUMINATED OR LINE DRAWING)

SIGNAL BOX DATE PLATE INSCRIBED AS FOLLOWS

NSWR SIGNAL BOX BROUGHT INTO USE 1937

CONTACT ANDREW 0411 445 940 or SYD_444@HOTMAIL.COM



Above: SSR Up loaded grain train 8448 from Southern NSW to Carrington climbs towards Armours Road bridge, Oolong behind RL306, C505, VL355 and VL354 on Friday 17 March. The two VLs had stalled on the grade at Coolalie earlier that morning and RL306 and C505 were despatched from Maldon to assist. Dennis Forbes

Below: Aurizon's 8458, a load of mineral concentrates from from Hermidale, on the Cobar line, behind ACDs 6050 and 6047, moves off from Gulgong station after a crew change, a little after noon on a hot Saturday 14 January. Wayne Eade





On Monday 16 January, 4911, 602, 4904 and GM27 roll across the long viaduct over the Peel River floodplain at Tamworth with 5M20 Up Armidale to Werris Creek ballast train. Other than infrastructure trains, no regular locomotive-hauled trains are seen north of Werris Creek. John Scott



Above: NR81 and NR31 leave Goulburn heading north with 6KT8 *The Great Southern* on Saturday 28 January. After the air conditioning unit had failed on NR31, PN-liveried NR81 was turned on the turntable at the Goulburn Roundhouse and put in the lead. Brendan Winkler
Below: Some of the port infrastructure looms above the treeline as ACD 6055 and ACD 6054 leave Port Waratah on Aurizon empty grain train 4557 to Walgett passing NR22 and LDP005 on PN intermodal freight 1435 from Port Botany to Port Waratah on Thursday 23 March. Evan Deacon



Around Sydney

Incoming NSW Transport Minister launches review of troubled Sydney rail network

An independent investigation into repeated failings on Sydney's rail network has been launched by the New South Wales government, but the state's new transport minister insists it will not be a "witch-hunt".

NSW Transport Minister Jo Haylen said the dire state of the state's heavy rail system had been laid bare in the urgent briefings she received in the days since being sworn in on Tuesday 28 March.

"What I have learned alarms me", she told reporters on Friday 31 March. "There are serious problems when it comes to our train network".

Sydney rail commuters have endured a year of delays, disruptions and widespread outages, including a digital radio system failure on Wednesday 8 March that left every train stationary for 90 minutes at the start of the afternoon peak.

Minister Haylen promised to get to the root cause of the city's rail issues as poor performance and repeated failures puts Sydney's status as a global city at risk.

She said an international city should be serviced by a competent transport network, and blamed the former Coalition government for neglecting the railway and ignoring its workers for more than a decade.

"After 12 years of neglect from the former Liberal government, passengers have faced shutdowns, cancellations and delays across the network and on-time running is the worst it has been since the pandemic; it's clear that our heavy rail network is facing significant issues", Ms Haylen said.

Former National Transport Commission chair Carolyn Walsh will oversee the external audit of Sydney Trains – despite the service's advice that an internal review would suffice.

The Minister said the investigation would look to work collaboratively with Sydney Trains management, who are in the firing line after Labor campaigned on slashing senior executive roles in the public sector by 15 per cent.

Ms Walsh will investigate the causes of repeated infrastructure issues and attempt to find "rapid and durable solutions" and reforms to reduce problems in the future. The terms of reference will include rail infrastructure and systems, the government said.

The review will report interim findings by 12 May, with the results of the full investigation to be handed down in October.

Ms Walsh said her first focus would be any immediate safety issues affecting the system, with an eye to implementing solutions straight away. While there was no indication of any safety risks in the system, Ms Walsh said there was a strong relationship between reliability and safety.

March was a particularly poor month for the city's rail network. Two days after the radio system crashed on 8 March, a live overhead wire landed on a train in Panania (located on the East Hills line approximately 23 kilometres from Central station), trapping 500 people onboard for 90 minutes, halting traffic on the T8 Airport line and causing delays across the broader network.

Multiple signal outages in the Strathfield area on election day Saturday 25 March caused delays across the network.

(Strathfield is located 11.8 kilometres from Central on the Main Suburban line. It is served by Sydney Trains T1 North Shore and western line, T9 Northern line and T2 Inner West and Leppington line services as well as NSW TrainLink Intercity and regional services.)



Sydney Trains' Tangara EMUs, maintained at Mortdale depot, provide the fleet that operates the Bondi Junction to Cronulla and Waterfall services (Line T4). They were built by A. Goninan & Co (now UGL) between 1987 and 1995. On Sunday, 27 February 2022 a Tangara (T) set arrives at Loftus on its journey from Waterfall to Bondi Junction. John Hoyle

Cross River Rail tunnel tracks complete, but costs increase and opening delayed

In a 31 March media release Queensland Transport Minister Mark Bailey announced that all tracks within Brisbane's Cross River Rail 9.4-kilometre tunnel had been laid. Mr Bailey said only the sections within the underground stations themselves and surface connections to the existing rail network are yet to be completed, which is due to take place this year to complete Cross River Rail's alignment. He said the focus in the tunnels is now on the electrical and mechanical fit out, including installing power and fire safety mechanisms.

However, the Transport Minister said that after flagging the project was subject to economy-wide cost pressures last year, the government has finalised an assessment of cost and supply chain pressures being experienced across the economy on the Cross River Rail project. He said considered analysis of the unprecedented external pressures impacting major projects globally has found Cross River Rail has weathered economy wide headwinds the best of any rail/road project in the nation. Mr Bailey said while most projects nationwide and in Brisbane have suffered overall cost increases of between 50% and 80%, the Cross River Rail project has limited project cost increases to 17.8 per cent, the lowest percentage increase of a mega transport project in the nation.

Recent reviews indicate cost increases include steel (around 42% increase), electrical (around 28%), concrete (around 15%) and precast concrete (around 8%). Examples of supply chain impacts include delays for delivery of signal relays (components produced in Ukraine) and concrete and steel fabrication supply issues, with alternative providers having to be sourced.

The Transport Minister said, "This is a complex mega project spanning 17 worksites involving new tunnels, new stations and a new signalling system, which all need to knit back into an existing rail network."

"Two project sites are already complete at Yeronga station and Mayne Yard North with many other sites very advanced".

Mr Bailey said the Brisbane "Metro" (bus) project cost has increased by more than 80 per cent and the Cross River Rail percentage increase has been less than a quarter of the increase of the Brisbane "Metro" cost in the same location.

Government funding to deliver Cross River Rail will be increased by $960 million and will include $112 million which was used towards additional land acquisition in the Roma Street station precinct, bringing the total project cost to $6.3 billion. Mr Bailey said these same pressures have also had a minor impact on the timing of the project, with the first revenue services originally expected to commence in 2025 to now start one quarter later in early 2026.

Boom gate arm smashes prompt urgent safety plea

Queensland Rail has released horrifying footage of erratic and irresponsible drivers smashing through boom gate arms at level crossings prompting a plea for caution around the tracks.

Queensland Rail Senior Manager Security and Emergency Preparedness Drew Brock said the footage painted a distressing picture of drivers blatantly ignoring safety signs and signals as they dashed across the train tracks.

"Boom arms are being dislodged and cars are hurtling through the level crossings, sometimes seconds from a collision with a train - it's hard to watch," Mr Brock said.

"It doesn't matter if it's inattention or indifference, if you ignore the warning signs, the result can be the same – catastrophic.

Mr Brock said, concerningly, boom gate arm strikes across South-East Queensland were on the rise with seven strikes in just one month in January.



On Monday 3 April Queensland Rail's 2901 operated the class's first passenger service when it ran the *Westlander* service out to Charleville. It is seen here on the return journey on Good Friday 7 April climbing up to Toowoomba from Gowrie. Five of these locomotives are being constructed from older locomotives by Progress Rail's Redbank Workshops and they are a follow on from the Aurizon 2700 class recently delivered (see photo top of next page). There will be a crew change at Toowoomba before the train reverses from the station to descend the Toowoomba Range. The train ran a day earlier than normal in order to fit in with an Easter maintenance shut down on the West Moreton System. At this time only 2901 and 2902 have been delivered (see April *RD* page 55). Neill Farmer



Rebuilt 2700 Class Clyde/EMD/Progress Rail unit 2702, sporting an indigenous livery, and seven container wagons form the twice-weekly Queensland Government-subsidised Linfox Rockhampton – Longreach/Winton freight service in the late afternoon at Yamala, 22 kilometres east of Emerald on Sunday, 19 March. John Hoyle

This follows-on from an alarming upward trend in 2022 when there were 85 boom strikes - up from 72 the previous year.

"Aside from the obvious danger to lives, damaging boom arm infrastructure is costly, leaves the level crossing exposed to traffic and causes service disruptions," Mr Brock said.

Mr Brock said the increase in year-on-year boom arm strikes prompted Queensland Rail to join forces with Queensland Police and refresh a targeted safety campaign. "Our message is simple, avoid harm, stop before the boom arm," he said. "There are flashing red lights that operate for at least eight seconds before boom gate arms start to lower, so drivers need to pay careful attention to these, and just like you stop at a red traffic light – stop at red flashing lights at level crossings".

Queensland Police Service Senior Constable Jason Goodwin said police would continue to patrol South-East Queensland level crossings.

"Drivers can expect to see us out in force at these bad behaviour hot spots," Senior Constable Goodwin said. "We'll have mobile message boards around the network, as an added reminder but we're pleading with motorists to do their part and make safe choices. "If you're doing the wrong thing, rest assured you'll be glad it's us catching you and not an oncoming train".

Drivers also risk heavy fines - disobeying warning lights at level crossings can result in a $431 infringement notice and three demerit points. Any damage to rail infrastructure (including boom gate arms) could earn $1,150 in fines and four demerit points.

More information regarding Queensland Rail's Avoid Harm, Stop Before the Boom Arm campaign can be found at: https://www.queenslandrail.com.au/about%20us/Media%20Centre/Media%20Releases/Pages/Shock-boom-arm-smashes-prompt-urgent-safety-plea.aspx

The site contains links to video of recent boom gate strike incidents.

Boom arm strikes at level crossings across SEQ					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	January, 2023
Total	59	70	72	85	7
Grand total					293

Sunshine Coast rail project delays denied

Concerns over the potential delay of a major Queensland rail project have been brushed off by the Queensland Government.

In a report by independent Queensland news provider *InQueensland* on Monday 27 March Queensland Minister for Transport and Main Roads Mark Bailey insisted there were no delays on the long-promised project to ease congestion on the Sunshine Coast, one of the state's fastest-growing regions and which will host four 2032 Olympics venues.

A $6 million scoping and costing study for the proposed 37-kilometre Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line project, a passenger rail corridor between Beerwah and Maroochydore, is due to be completed later this year.

The Queensland Government in partnership with the Australian Government are progressing investment planning for the project.

This builds upon planning completed in 2001 by the Caboolture to Maroochydore Corridor Study. The purpose of that study was to determine the need for a new public transport corridor with consideration for route, mode, station location(s), broader public transport integration and staging between Beerwah and the Sunshine Coast Airport (located in Marcoola – 10 kilometres north of Maroochydore).

The current project will review the preserved corridor and consider refinements to the alignment and station locations as well as potential staging plans to meet passenger demand and land use outcomes within the region. This planning will also include a review of key road/rail interfaces along the proposed rail corridor including the Kawana Motorway, Mooloolah River Interchange and Buderim Mooloolaba Road interchange.

The line will link the steadily growing Sunshine Coast to the Queensland North Coast rail line at Beerwah (approximately 76 kilometres from Brisbane Central station), and could provide a transport link between three 2032 Olympic venues three venues and an athletes' village precinct.

Sunshine Coast Mayor Mark Jamieson as well as federal and state opposition MPs have raised concerns as to whether the line will be completed within nine years, saying the government is running out of time to break ground.

The line would link the southeast with a planned Sunshine Coast Indoor Sports Centre, which is set to host the Olympic Basketball preliminary games. It could also provide transport to the upgraded Sunshine Coast Stadium, which is hosting the football preliminaries, the Sunshine Coast Mountain Bike Centre and a satellite village in Maroochydore that will host 1,400 athletes and officials.

Minister Bailey said the scoping study would be very seriously considered but the Queensland Government was not going to succumb to "hysteria from the LNP".

He said the opposition had raised the same concerns in the lead-up to the 2018 Commonwealth Games, saying Labor's transport plan wouldn't work. Transport during that event was "superb", the minister said, with light and heavy rail working seamlessly together and would be the same during the upcoming Olympics. "There's been no delays (on the Sunshine Coast rail) whatsoever", Mr Bailey said.

More information on the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line, planning can be found at:
https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/projects/direct-sunshine-coast-rail-line-planning

Nambour bridge damage closes North Coast Line for just over a week

The North Coast Line was closed at Nambour on Sunday, 26 March when damage was discovered on the rail bridge over Brockhurst Road just under two kilometres north of Nambour station, 102 kilometres north of Brisbane, following a routine inspection during a weekend maintenance closure. The steel plate web girder structure over Brockhurst Road is part of a longer bridge over adjacent Tuckers Creek. Queensland Rail (QR) said the damage was likely caused by an over-height road vehicle striking the bridge.

QR Head of South East Queensland, Scott Riedel, said QR crews and contractors commenced work immediately to repair the damage and the bridge would reopened to rail traffic at reduced speeds on Monday, 3 April. Brockhurst Road is expected to be closed for approximately three months to allow the bridge structure to be reinforced and rail traffic to resume normal speeds. The bridge is 4.7 metres in height and QR says strikes involving rail bridges about 4.6 metres are rare. QR launched an "Our Size Matters" campaign in 2020 to remind truck drivers to be aware of the height of their vehicles and loads when driving on routes traversed by rail bridges.

Buses operated between Nambour and Yandina station during the closure to convey rail passengers around the bridge. One SMU set was isolated north of Nambour and was able to operate a shuttle service between Yandina and Gympie. The closure has caused serious dislocation to Aurizon, Linfox, Pacific National and Watco freight services with road transport being used while the line was closed. One rail freight manager told *Railway Digest* that engineering and flood related closures in recent years had made it difficult to maintain reliability of rail freight services. Public transport lobby group Rail Back of Track spokesman Robert Dow said it was very unsatisfactory that this bridge did not have protective beams given that it is on the busy North Coast Line. He hoped the installation of such beams at the bridge would be brought forward as a priority.

Fractured axle a focus in ATSB Marmor derailment investigation

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau is continuing to undertake a detailed material analysis of rolling stock components after a fractured axle was at identified at the site of a freight train derailment south of Rockhampton, Queensland. An ATSB preliminary report from the on-going investigation details that, on the evening of 29 January 2023, a Pacific National freight train (82P7) was travelling west near Marmor at about 100 km/h, when the third bogie on its sixth wagon derailed. The emergency brake was applied, and the train stopped 1.1 km from the initial point of derailment. Several of its multi-pack wagons had derailed, significantly damaging points, crossings, level crossing equipment, and overhead wiring stanchions.



Early in the morning of Monday 6 March, Aurizon Clyde/EMD units 2705 and 2358 pass a field of sorghum just outside Cambooya, near Toowoomba, as they head for the Port of Brisbane with a full load of grain from the southwest. Lenn Bayliss



At about the same time, the crew of an Aurizon coal train (9F02), travelling on the parallel track in the opposite direction, noticed a cloud of dust emanating from the freight train, and began to apply their own emergency brake. "The coal train collided with a container from the freight train which was fouling the opposite track," ATSB Director Transport Safety Kerri Hughes said. "Fortunately, the coal train stopped before reaching the main portion of the freight train wreckage, at the Bills Road level crossing."

The coal train sustained impact damage to the driver's side of the cabin. No injuries were reported in the accident.

Investigators from the ATSB attended the accident site and found an axle from the sixth wagon had fractured. "This correlated with marks found on the rail head at the point of derailment," Ms Hughes noted.

Along with site inspections, investigators have so far interviewed the crew of both trains, received evidential material including recorded data, and conducted a detailed examination of rolling stock components.

"This preliminary report summarises information from the early evidence-gathering phase of its investigation into the derailment, and as such contains no analysis or findings, which will be presented in a final report," Ms Hughes explained.



Above: On Saturday 18 March Bowen Rail Company Abbot Point to Carmichael Mine empty coal train BC40 makes its way through the Leichhardt Range on the Carmichael Mine Network behind Progress Rail/ EMD units 4607, 4611 and 4612. A coal train can just be discerned in the background on Aurizon Network's line linking Newlands with Goonyella. Luke Horniblow
Right: Queensland Rail's heritage Comeng rail motor RM1901 runs through Redbank heading west to Gatton on driver training on Friday 31 March. Seeonee Trewern

SA government announces agreement to end Adelaide train and tram privatisation

The South Australian Government announced on Sunday 2 April that it had signed an agreement with train operator Keolis Downer Adelaide (KDA) and tram operator Torrens Connect to hand back operations to the government by 2025. The move fulfils a 2022 election promise by Labor to reverse the former Liberal government's privatisation of tram services in 2020 and of train services in 2021.

While the contracts were for an initial eight-year term, with an option to extend, the government earlier said it would not pay early termination fees of up to $94 million.

However, the government will pay about $36 million over the next two years to cover what Transport Minister Tom Koutsantonis described as "mobilisation costs, not compensation costs". "These are costs we would pay at the end of the contract anyway to bring it back into public hands".

Mr Koutsantonis said that amount would cover the costs of purchasing intellectual property, physical assets and retraining, accreditation and legal fees. "These are costs — like training, hiring, purchasing IP, management systems, ticketing issues, [and,] of course, scheduling systems — all the things you need to run a modern railway service on top of paying the contract, which we do each and every year".

In a statement, KDA said it would hand back operations to the government by 31 January 2025, but would continue to handle customer service and security management until June 2027. KDA also said it would manage the maintenance of fleet and infrastructure until 2035.

Mr Koutsantonis said KDA would receive a "good contract" for the maintenance of the train system, but said he did not have the exact cost to hand. "Like our buses, like our other public services, we don't run all of the maintenance for our hospitals and our schools. They're run privately," he said.

Mr Koutsantonis said about 130 public servants who were currently "unassigned" since the privatisation, would be "re-offered jobs back into our public sector". He said public transport was an "essential service" that "belongs in the public control". "We can take the profits of our rail and tram service and reinvest them back into a public good," he said.

Keolis Downer CEO, Julien Dehornoy, said: "As a public transport operator, our objective will always be to partner with governments to provide services that are safe, performant and deliver a positive passenger experience. Our people are at the heart of the successful delivery of transport services, and we will ensure they are supported as we enter this new partnership".

Under the new agreement Keolis Downer Adelaide will continue to provide expertise to government around future innovation opportunities for customer services and the broader rail network.



58 kilometres into its journey, 1AD8 Adelaide-Darwin *Ghan* behind NR 109 and NR 61 is about to enter the former Mallala station complex on Sunday 2 April. Apart from an old station crane there is nothing left of this once busy small country rail complex. Even the silo has been demolished. Noel Potter

Adelaide-Melbourne fast train service on Talgo wishlist

Talgo, the Spanish high-speed train manufacturer proposing a passenger rail trial between the Adelaide Hills and Adelaide city is also interested in running a service between Adelaide and Melbourne, South Australia's transport chief says.

South Australia Department for Infrastructure and Transport chief executive Jon Whelan told the SA state parliament's Budget and Finance committee on Monday 27 March that Madrid-based manufacturer Talgo had expressed interest in running a high-speed rail service between Adelaide and Melbourne.

A spokesperson for South Australian Transport Minister Tom Koutsantonis told South Australian news service *InDaily* that Talgo, through their local representative, had "raised the long-term possibility to examine the viability of running a fast train between Adelaide and Melbourne", but no formal approach had been made.

Mr Whelan and Minister Koutsantonis met with Talgo and the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism in Madrid in February.

The only passenger train service connecting Adelaide to Melbourne is *The Overland*. That service has been operating for over 130 years, with the 828-kilometre trip taking 10.5 hours. It currently operates just twice a week.

Talgo is currently in discussions with the state government to trial its railcar technology on the 55-kilometre standard gauge section between Mt Barker (Junction) and Adelaide. The company has estimated that its trains could complete the trip in around 45 to 50 minutes, making it a potentially attractive alternative to driving or buses, particularly in peak times.

Mr Whelan told the parliamentary committee that it was now up to Talgo to seek accreditation to run its trains on the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC)-owned rail line between Mt Barker and Adelaide – a process which could take longer than 12 months.

"We are fully supportive of Talgo to run a trial, but… they need to get the approval and the accreditation to run their equipment on a train line that is not in (SA) government hands," the department chief said.

Talgo has previously said that the trial would come at no cost to South Australian taxpayers, with the required $2.5 million to be obtained via a Spanish Government grant scheme.



Above: Although the Gawler line's electrification was commissioned on 12 June 2022 there are not sufficient EMUs to cover the entire service until completion of the current order for a further 12 three-car 4000 class Alstom EMUs to join the existing 22 three-car sets. As a result DEMUs continue to supplement the EMU fleet on the Gawler line. In this Thursday, 16 February 2023 view two 3000/3100 class three-car DEMU sets pass each other at Mawson Interchange, 15 kilometres north of Adelaide at the start of the afternoon peak period. John Hoyle

Below: On Saturday, 18 February, a very late running SCT 6MP5 Melbourne–Perth freight powered by SCT005, CSR008, CSR013 and CSR007 has just exited Eden Hills tunnel, 14km from Adelaide. Bob Grant





The looming Flinders Ranges keep Stirling North in shadow for ten minutes after nominal sunrise on Saturday 18 February. NR 60's driver was in no hurry navigating the left hand curve through the village and it's now 12 minutes after sunup, so the locos and rolling stock of intermodal service 6MP4 are bathed in lush bouncing rays. Malcolm Holdsworth

Federal Member for Grey questions Eyre Peninsula rail revival funding proposal

Further to last month's *RD* report (page six) covering the announcement by rail operator Aurizon and grain marketer Viterra to seek Federal Government funding to reinstate part of the closed Eyre Peninsula rail network, Rowan Ramsey, the Liberal Federal Member for Grey (which covers the Eyre Peninsula) has described the plan as a "brazen request" and called on the two proponents to fund the rail rehabilitation themselves. Some media reports suggest that $220 million is being sought for the project which would involve reopening the Port Lincoln to Wuddina and Cummins to Kimba sections.

Mr Ramsay said, "They are asking for taxpayers' dollars with no contribution from themselves." "Viterra is 100pc owned by Glencore. Glencore is in the top 500 companies in the world, and they are worth $79 billion and had a turnover of $87 billion last year".

"They could build this with their spare change, but they are asking for the tax-payer to totally fund a complete rebuild of a railway of which they will be the only customer. Five years ago, they were the only customer and they walked away."

US-owned Genessee & Wyoming, later known as One Rail Australia, held a 50-year lease agreement to operate the network, which is due to end in 2047. Aurizon finalised the purchase of One Rail in July 2022, becoming the new operator of the line. The Port Lincoln end of the system was closed in 2019.

Mr Ramsey argued that if there was a "maintain clause" in the lease, that would give the Federal Government ample grounds to reject the funding application. He said that if the proposal was financially viable, then there would be nothing stopping Viterra and Aurizon from funding the proposal.

"If it's not a good investment for private enterprise, you really seriously need to ask if it's a decent investment for the taxpayer. "This type of haulage on the rail line…has been superseded, but if someone thinks they can breathe life into it and invest their money into it, good on them.

Mr Ramsey said a new player, T-Ports, which has opened port facilities at Lucky Bay on the eastern Eyre Peninsula and at Wallaroo on Yorke Peninsula, offered growers a different route to export grain. Neither are rail-served and Mr Ramsey said they were successfully using road freight networks only. He said they had possibly picked up around 30 per cent of Eyre Peninsula grain this year.

Freight advocacy group, SA Freight Council, and grains industry body, Grain Producers SA (GPSA) , told *Grain Central* they are cautious about backing the proposal until more information is released. Both groups want to see a full business case to ensure the project is viable and does not put increased costs on growers.

"There will need to be some financial work done around what they are proposing, but we are broadly in favour of opportunities to move freight to port in the most efficient way," SA Freight Council chief executive officer Jonathan Wilson said.

"We are mode agnostic, whether it is road or rail."

GPSA CEO Brad Perry said any long-term freight solution for SA would include rail and road networks. "If we have a viable rail line working in with road infrastructure and that becomes the most efficient model, then we would certainly support it. "At the end of the day, we don't want to see grain producers stumping up more money for rail."

Mr Perry said he believed a rebooted EP rail network would have to freight a range of commodities to be financially viable. Mr Wilson and Mr Perry agreed that the recent focus on rail should not distract governments from investing more funds in the road network.

Train collides with abandoned vehicle left on tracks at Railton

Tasmania Police are calling on road users to be rail safe, after a crash involving a car and a train at Railton in the early hours of Monday 27 March. (Railton is located 108.8 kilometres from Western Junction – approximately 20 kilometres south-east of Devonport – on TasRail's Western line.)

Police and emergency services were notified about 3:20am, when a train collided with an empty vehicle on the track at Youngmans Road. The incident did not involve a level crossing, with a report in the *Hobart Mercury* stating that the motorists had left the road to use the railway tracks as a shortcut.

Devonport Police Inspector John King said initial investigations indicated that the driver of the car and their passenger had left the vehicle a short time earlier after it became stuck on the track.

"It appears the people have left their car to find a way out, and one of them has then fallen in bushland about 100 metres away and hurt their ankle", he said. "They were then taken to hospital after being located by emergency services".

TasRail CEO Steven Dietrich said that while the train driver involved in the incident was fortunately unharmed, situations like this were extremely traumatic.

"Our trains can't swerve, and they take a long time to stop. There is very little chance of avoiding a collision when there is something on the track", Mr Dietrich said. "Our driver stepped out of that train not knowing what they were going to find".

Mr Dietrich said that using the railway corridor as a shortcut, whether in a vehicle or on foot was a "foolish numbers game". "Don't do it. It's not worth it, no matter where you are. It is illegal. Our timetables change. Your vehicle could get stuck. You could be injured. You just don't know what is going to happen".

Mr Dietrich said that in the current financial year to date TasRail had already reported 67 incidents of trespass and 20 near hits at level crossings. "We will continue to work closely with Tasmania Police to curb unacceptable behaviour in the rail corridor", he said.

Further investigations are being undertaken by TasRail and a report will be completed for the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator.



The Boyer 'paper train' from Port of Burnie to Norske Skog's Boyer paper mill in the Derwent Valley crosses the Meander River at the scenic town of Deloraine with Progress Rail/Caterpillar units TR05, TR15 and TR03 in charge on Sunday 12 March. This bridge was constructed in 1885 as part of the second stage of the railway line to Devonport and was the first of four rivetted wrought iron web plate girder with semi through (pony truss) bridges of the former Tasmanian Government Railways. It was manufactured in England by Andrew Handyside's Britannia Iron Works in Derby, UK and assembled locally. James Chuang

Regional fare cap in effect from Friday 31 March

The Victorian government has introduced a regional daily fare cap statewide bringing the regional public transport network into line with the Melbourne metropolitan area.

On Friday, 31 March Victorian Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll joined the first passengers to benefit from the new regional fare cap, travelling by train from Southern Cross station to Woodend.

(Woodend is located 78 kilometres north-east of Melbourne on the Deniliquin line. It is served by Bendigo, Echuca and Swan Hill services.)

The cost of a daily ticket on the entire regional Victorian network is now capped at the same prices as metropolitan daily fares – currently $9.20 for a full fare or $4.60 for a concession. On a weekend or public holiday, daily fares are capped at $6.70 and currently $3.35 for concession.

For those who take long-distance V/Line journeys, the regional fare cap can save people more than $40 for each one-way journey on the regional public transport network.

The cap also applies to interstate travel within 60 kilometres of the Victorian border, as well as Albury, Merimbula, Deniliquin and Mt Gambier, to ensure those living in border communities in New South Wales and South Australia also benefit.

The fare cap applies to all Public Transport Victoria (PTV) regional buses, town buses and V/Line trains and coaches.

Level crossing upgrades for Bendigo and Eaglehawk

Ten level crossings between Bendigo and Eaglehawk stations (located 164.2 and 172.1 kilometres respectively from Southern Cross on the Swan Hill lines) have been upgraded with improved train detection technology.

Over 150 people worked around the clock for more than 6,000 hours during a three-week construction blitz in late February and early March. They installed, tested and made the level crossing upgrades ready for service, while road coaches replaced trains.

Automatic pedestrian gates and alarms have been installed at the Market Street pedestrian crossing at Eaglehawk, and trains have commenced using the full length of the platform at the historic station, which has been extended by 100 metres and provided with additional shelter.



On Sunday 26 March, 707 Operation's "Riverlander" tour train to Echuca, powered by Clyde/EMD units A66 and N459, waits at Taradale loop for the 1626 Bendigo to Southern Cross *Vlocity* service, worked by set VL30, to overtake. James Chuang



Above: Clyde/EMD unit G529 is at Sea Lake, with its colourful silos, at midday on Monday 16 January with 9146 loaded grain train. James Dalton
Below: A colourful SSR 'lash-up' on Saturday afternoon 18 February at Kilmore East with Down SSR (Southern Shorthaul Railway) empty grain train from Appleton Dock, Melbourne to Riverina of NSW. Locomotives were CLF1 (SSR), C501 (belonging to Seymour Railway Heritage Centre), CLP12 (SSR), and CLF4 (owned by Rail Power). A few weeks later, CLF1 and CLF4 came to grief at Rockview, NSW (see report on page 11 of this issue). Graham Crichton



Around Melbourne

Track laying complete in Melbourne Metro Tunnel

The final tracks have been laid in the Melbourne Metro Tunnel, paving the way for test trains to begin running in the second half of the year.

Workers laid the final lengths of Australian-made steel rail in the tunnels in March, the culmination of nine months of work along the twin nine-kilometre tunnels and stations.

The process began in mid-2022, when crews began installing 4,000 high-performance concrete panels to create an even base for the rail and ensure proper alignment. The panels were cast in 300 different shapes to match the curvature and elevation of the tunnels as they wind from Kensington, north-west of the Melbourne CBD to South Yarra, at some locations up to nearly 40 metres underground. A total of 236 lengths of steel rail have been laid.

With the track in place, the team is now preparing for the first test trains to run through the tunnels in the second half of this year, kicking off a sustained period of testing to ensure the Metro Tunnel is safe and ready for passengers in 2025 – a year ahead of schedule.

The testing will make sure the Metro Tunnel's systems are working together with the new High-Capacity Metro Trains, alongside the wider network's existing signalling system – an incredibly complex process.

Meanwhile, work will continue to fit out the five new stations with lifts, escalators, security systems, CCTV, passenger information displays and emergency phones.

Once complete, the Metro Tunnel Project will create capacity for more than half a million extra passengers each week during peak times and save passengers in the suburbs up to 50 minutes a day on a return trip.

Metro Tunnel services will run direct from Melbourne CBD to Melbourne Airport in around half an hour when the Airport line opens in 2029.

The project includes:

- twin 9km rail tunnels from the west of the city to the south east,
- five new underground stations at Arden, Parkville, State Library, Town Hall and Anzac,
- passenger connections to Flinders Street and Melbourne Central stations for easy interchange with the City Loop,
- Melbourne's first tram/train interchange at Anzac Station on St Kilda Road,
- high-capacity signalling to enable more frequent services; and
- safety features including platform screen doors.

Melbourne Suburban Rail Loop Expressions of Interest to open

On Melbourne's Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) project, Expressions of Interest are to open for the next major works package – the contract for design, construction and operation of all tunnel systems and infrastructure for SRL East.

The Expressions of Interest stage is for the design, construction, and 15-year operation and maintenance of all tunnel systems and infrastructure for SRL East. The new contracts will include the delivery of trains, tracks, signalling and communication systems as well as the maintenance depot and stabling facility. Expressions of Interest will open this year, with final selection expected in 2025.



A busy, all railcar, scene at Southern Cross station on Sunday 2 April, as on platform 6A, the 0906 service to Echuca awaits departure, as does the 0914 service to Wendoree waiting at 8A. Several *Sprinter* sets wait in platform 7A for their next assignments, while shunting *Vlocity* sets occupy the middle road and platform 8. James Chuang





Above: A Comeng set working a Sandringham service makes a stop at the heritage-listed Windsor station on Monday 10 April. Peter Sansom
Left: 'Pride' liveried Siemens D1 class tram 3531 turns left at St Kilda Junction with a number five service to Malvern via Dandenong Road, on Friday 7 April. Peter Sansom

In September 2022, three consortia were shortlisted to build the twin tunnels for SRL East (see November 2022 *RD*, page 6).

- CPB Contractors, Acciona Construction Australia and Ghella – This consortium has experience in Brisbane's Cross River Rail, Sydney Metro, Vancouvers' Broadway Millenium Subway and the Caulfield to Dandenong Level Crossing Removal in Melbourne.
- John Holland and Gamuda Berhad (trading as Gamuda (Australia) Branch) – These companies have experience building Melbourne's Metro Tunnel, Sydney Metro Northwest Tunnel and Malaysia's Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit, and both are currently constructing the MRT project in Singapore.
- Webuild S.p.A and GS Engineering and Construction Australia – Companies with experience in projects including the North East Link tunnels in Melbourne, the Forrestfield-Airport Link in Perth, and Copenhagen's Cityringen Metro, and projects in the Middle East and Asia.

Two bidders will be chosen for the tunnelling works.

The first contract will be for the Cheltenham to Glen Waverley section and the second will be for the Glen Waverley to Box Hill section. The contract for the Cheltenham to Glen Waverley section will be awarded in late 2023, with works expected to begin in 2026. The contract for the Glen Waverley to Box Hill section is set to be awarded in 2024.

All other major contracts for SRL East are anticipated to be awarded by 2025.

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Transperth records strongest public transport patronage since COVID

Patronage on the Transperth network during February 2023 was the highest monthly total for three years.

Buoyed by the opening late last year of the Airport Line, total boardings on Transperth's buses, trains and ferries reached 11.1 million.

Though February is a short month, this was the best patronage number since 12.2 million boardings were recorded in February 2020, just before COVID-19 slashed public transport use around the globe.

The introduction of the two-zone fare cap on 1 January 2022 has also underpinned the patronage rise, with longer journeys – especially between Perth and Mandurah – enjoying better-than-average increases.

Transperth's patronage was well on track for an annual increase in early 2020, before the impact of the pandemic with patronage bottoming out at 1.9 million in April 2020.

Based on daily SmartRider tags, Transperth's system-wide patronage has been running at 90-95 per cent of pre-COVID levels for most of 2023, firming to the high 90s during March.

The bounce back has also been aided by the recently opened Airport Line, with February total boardings on the line reaching 352,674 – the best per-day result since it opened for business on 10 October 2022.

New METRONET training facility open

Construction of the $5.4 million specialist METRONET Trade Training Centre is complete with Western Australian Training Minister Simone McGurk and Transport Minister Rita Saffioti officially opening the centre on Friday 31 March. It is the first dedicated public facility of its kind in Western Australia.

The new training centre, at North Metropolitan TAFE's Midland campus, was built to support training for jobs in the rail industry; including meeting the diverse training needs of the WA Government's METRONET program. The centre supports the delivery of a pipeline of workers to address skill shortages in highly technical roles that are critical to industry supply chains.

Developed in close consultation with industry, the facility includes rail signalling workshops, a dual-track level crossing, a maintenance track and crossover, and a signalling equipment room to enable hands-on training. A section of rail line is in place for training in maintenance of various gauges of rail.

Reflecting industry standards, the centre has been the beneficiary of donated specialised equipment from across the WA rail sector.

Several groups of rail signalling technicians from Rio Tinto, John Holland Group and Hitachi have already started using the facilities while obtaining their Certificate IV in Electrical Rail Signalling (see August 2022 *RD*, page 32).

From April, up to 15 secondary school students have also begun benefiting from the new facilities while completing the Certificate II in Rail Infrastructure through the Vocational Education and Training Delivered to Secondary Students (VETDSS) program.

Students will be supported with local training for a range of projects, creating job opportunities for local workers, pre-apprentices, and apprentices while upskilling workers for construction and maintenance of WA's wider rail network as well as METRONET.

For more information on courses available visit: http://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au

Underpass opens on Morley-Ellenbrook line

Members of the Ellenbrook Christian College school community can safely walk between the school buildings and oval through a new pedestrian underpass, built as part of the METRONET Morley-Ellenbrook line.

Located just south of the new Ellenbrook station site, the underpass was built to give students and staff a safe access point between school



On Friday 24 February, Aurizon 6601 Albany Plantation Export Company to Albany Port loaded export woodchip train arrives at its destination, behind Goninan/GE unit P2511, with Clyde/EMD unit DBZ2309 on the rear. John Scott



buildings and the oval that are located on opposite sides of the new rail line. The line is located within a transit corridor reserved for rail development since the early 1990s.

The Western Australian Government has worked closely with the College since the project's planning phase to ensure minimal disruption to the students and has provided funding towards a new $2.8 million sport and recreation pavilion on the school oval.

Tracklaying on the Morley-Ellenbrook line began in March with work on a 1.5-kilometre section north of Whiteman Park station to the Gnangara Underpass and along Drumpellier Drive.

The 21.3-kilometre Morley-Ellenbrook line leaves the Midland line near Bayswater station, travels in the centre of Tonkin Highway, through land north of Marshall Road, along the western side of Drumpellier Drive (formerly New Lord Street) and ends in Ellenbrook, south of The Parkway. Five new stations, Morley, Noranda, Malaga, Whiteman Park and Ellenbrook will begin operation when the line opens in late 2024. A potential future station is planned for Bennett Springs East, between Malaga and Whiteman Park.

The $1.1 billion project is jointly funded by the Federal and Western Australian governments. It is the longest of Perth's METRONET projects. Once complete the journey from Ellenbrook to the Perth CBD will take approximately 30 minutes.



Above: Qube's much-travelled 'one-off' Clyde/EMD unit GML10 crosses the Swan River at Fremantle with a Forrestfield to Fremantle intermodal freight service on Valentines' Day, Tuesday 14 February. John Scott

Left: Bayswater, on the Perth – Midland suburban railway closed from the last service Thursday 30 March for major trackwork to link in the new Bayswater platforms and connections to the future Ellenbrook railway. The whole Midland line was closed from 30 March to 25 April inclusive, but Bayswater will remain closed until September, with a shuttle bus to and from Meltham station. The photo shows a Perth-bound 'A' set on Monday 27 March, and the existing platform with the new line towering above. Framework for platform shelters and lifts is visible. The new station is partly over the Bayswater Subway (King William Street) with the old bridge removed during the month-long line closure. There was a Bayswater Community Day on 30 April to commemorate the removal of the old, "truck catching" road underpass. Donald Whiteford



First intermodal train finally leaves Seaway's terminal at CQ Inland Port, Yamala

Text and images by John Hoyle

Although it was originally planned for September 2022, the first intermodal train departure from CQ Inland Port's (CQIP) Yamala terminal (25 kilometres east of Emerald in Queensland's Central Highlands) on Sunday, 19 March was nevertheless a significant event for rail in Queensland given the miniscule market share rail commands in non-mineral export container business in the state. Seaway, the company leasing terminal space from CQIP to build their intermodal facility, experienced COVID-related shortages of labour and building materials to construct their facility.

Aurizon was selected as Seaway's rail operator but further delays were encountered when contract negotiations took longer than expected and, like all rail freight operators, Aurizon has experienced chronic driver shortages. In early January this year the delays had become so serious that some of Seaway's customers commenced using road transport in the form of B-doubles to transport export containers from Yamala to the Port of Brisbane, a distance of around 900 kilometres. Seaway Regional Manager Jamie Kennedy told *Railway Digest* this arrangement was much more expensive than rail but the delays in getting the rail operations started had prompted this interim solution.

Prior to the first revenue train a "trial run" was operated from Yamala to the Port of Brisbane and return using two 2800 class Goninan/GE locomotives hauling the 37 PJCY and PCZY container wagons to be used on the service. Wulguru Engineering in Townsville played a role in reconditioning some of the wagons for the new service.

Following the trial run the wagons were stored at Nogoa, on the eastern side of the Nogoa River at Emerald. Nogoa marks the transition point from Aurizon Network metals to Queensland Rail trackage. The latter leads to Emerald and on to Longreach and Winton. On Saturday, 18 March 2818 and 2848 ran light engine from Rockhampton to Nogoa in preparation for the first revenue service. The following morning (Sunday, 19 March) a crew at Emerald signed on at 7.00 am, prepared the train which ran to Yamala where it reversed into the dead-end siding serving Seaway's terminal and GrainCorp's adjacent storage and rail loading facility. A total of 34 of the 37 wagons on the initial train were loaded with 68 twenty-foot containers (two per wagon). The loading comprised wheat, sorghum and chickpeas. Most of the loading was destined for Pakistan. Total train weight was 2,473.2 tonnes. Aurizon says two 2800 class units will be the normal motive power. Seaway has indicated that around 90 per cent of the containers employed will be of the 20-foot type, as these are more suitable for grain haulage than 40 foot boxes. The company has obtained some back loading in the form of agricultural chemicals and hopes to carry other "reverse" loading such as salt.

Loading was completed at around 4.00 pm and the trailblazing train departed at 5.15 pm and made the journey to nearby Yamala crossing loop where it exchanged its Emerald crew with a Rockhampton crew that had conveniently arrived on rebuilt Clyde/EMD/Progress Rail unit 2702 powering the bi-weekly Linfox government-subsidised freight service from Rockhampton to Longreach and Winton. Both trains then departed in opposite directions just on sunset. The Seaway train undertook a locomotive change at Rocklands (junction for the North Coast and Central Lines near Rockhampton) with 2829 and 2850 taking over for the overnight journey as train No. Y888 to the Port of Brisbane. The total rail distance from Yamala to the Port of Brisbane is around 905 kilometres.

Seaway says that initially the train will operate on an ad hoc basis but the company aims to build it up to two return services a week and hopes to move around 2,000 twenty foot equivalent (TEU) containers in the first year of operation. Seaway is looking at other commodities for its service such as cotton (there are two cotton gins in the area – Louis Dreyfus Commodities which is in the CQ Inland Port precinct and Queensland Cotton at Emerald) as well as commodities like citrus fruit and oilseed.



Aurizon Network track access fee increase threatens CQIP viability

Aside from the delays in commencing the Yamala intermodal train a potential threat to the viability of the service and the entire CQIP emerged in July 2022 when Aurizon Network notified stakeholders of a proposed increase in track access fees between Emerald and Burngrove,13 kilometres west of Blackwater and the junction for the "cross-country" line to Coppabella on the Goonyella coal network. The only coal mine west of Burngrove was Japanese company Sojitz's Minerva mine, near Springsure. This closed in late 2021 resulting in Aurizon Network receiving no coal train access fees for the section between Minerva, Emerald (Nogoa) and Burngrove. The Yamala terminal is located between Nogoa and Burngrove. Faced with a significant drop in access fee revenue Aurizon Network applied to the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) to raise access fees for the remaining users between Nogoa and Burngrove to meet its requirement to recover the cost of maintaining the line.

The reaction to this proposed fee increase from stakeholders was, as expected, highly critical. GrainCorp, who use Watco to rail bulk sorghum, chickpeas, wheat and barley from Yamala to Gladstone, said fees would rise by around 500 per cent or by around $27 a tonne.

Left: Aurizon's Goninan/GE units 2818 and 2848 and 37 PCZY and PJZY wagons comprise the first revenue container train to serve Seaway's Yamala intermodal terminal at the CQ Inland Port near Emerald in Queensland's Central Highlands on Sunday, 19 March. In the background Seaway's grain silos are on the left, their reach stacker is loading 20-foot containers in the centre background while GrainCorp's silos and rail loader are on the right. The loaded train, weighing in at 2,473 tonnes, departed late that day for the overnight journey to the Port of Brisbane.

Below: Seaway's Konecranes reach stacker is hard at work loading containers from the stack on the left on to Aurizon PCZY and PJZY wagons comprising the first revenue train at Seaway's intermodal terminal at the CQ Inland Port, Yamala on Sunday, 19 March. By the end of the day 68 twenty-foot containers will have been loaded on to 34 of the 37-wagon train. GrainCorp's office building and equipment sheds can be seen in the right background.





A feature of Seaway's Yamala intermodal terminal is a grain container packing facility seen here in action on Saturday, 18 March. Grain is moved from the company's storage facility to the Aust-Mech "Tubeveyor" seen in this view which drops grain on to a conveyor which transports it in to the horizontal container behind a bulkhead seen here at the end of the container, adjacent to the open right-hand door. Some grain container packing facilities load with containers in the vertical position. A 20-foot container can accommodate 24 to 26 tonnes of grain.

GrainCorp corporate affairs manager Jessica Simons told ABC News the price rise would make rail transport uneconomic and could force freight from rail to road. Agforce Grains president Brendan Taylor said using road transport would be "unfeasible". Mr Taylor said that with road freight fuel costs steadily increasing there would be effectively a doubling of freight rates using road instead of rail and the trucking industry was dealing with driver shortages. Central Highlands Development Corporation CEO Peter Dowling said the proposed price hike would have flow on effects through the whole supply chain and even impact outside of the region if there was no rail access. He said the whole investment in the inland port would now come into question.

In a submission to the QCA Seaway said any significant increase in access charges from an already proportionately high level when compared with the remaining 94 per cent of the rail corridor to be used by the rail service would render rail services from Yamala uncompetitive against road options. Seaway's Jamie Kennedy said the rail service would utilise only a 55-kilometre section of Aurizon Network's Nogoa to Blackwater railway but while this section represented just six per cent of the rail journey to the Port of Brisbane, the existing access charge (before any proposed increase) represented 46 per cent of the total access charge for the service to Brisbane. Mr Kennedy said use of rail is widely supported by government and other stakeholders, demonstrated in government co-investment into the Yamala facility. He also said more use of regional rail was required to bring environmental benefits and reach future emission targets.

Watco Australia told the QCA the charges which Aurizon Network were proposing involved very substantial increases to the access charges for non-coal services, to the point that Watco believed that continuing railing would be uneconomic and therefore likely to result in a significant loss of non-coal freight volumes to road haulage. In its submission to the QCA, Aurizon Network said they had advocated that Queensland's Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) examine subsidising non-coal rail customers for expensive access fees. However, a TMR spokesperson told the ABC it was a commercial matter between Aurizon Network and its customers to achieve an agreeable outcome. An Aurizon Network spokesperson said while the proposed tariff was initially scheduled to start from January 1, 2023 it had been deferred until March 2023.

In a 16 February 2023 announcement the QCA decided to approve Aurizon Network's draft amending access undertaking relating to the closure of the Minerva mine and its seeking to revise the Blackwater coal system reference tariffs and propose amendments to the undertaking as a consequence of the Minerva mine cessation. The QCA said that it had taken into account the information Aurizon Network provided, stakeholders' comments and the relevant provisions in the QCA Act. In responding to this decision Seaway told *Railway Digest* the outcome was relatively satisfactory at the present time but if any further access charge increases occurred (of say around 50 per cent) it could spell the end of rail services to CQ Inland Port.

The rail and wider transport and logistics players in Queensland as well as those who were opposed to the privatisation of Queensland's coal-dominated rail infrastructure under the rail freight privatisation framework implemented by the Bligh government in 2009 will be watching this development with great interest. One rail insider told *Railway Digest* this situation could eventually arise again as further central Queensland coal mines close in the decades ahead, especially with respect to the North Coast Line between Gladstone and Rockhampton which carries general freight and passenger services but is Aurizon Network trackage.

CQIP background – from cattle paddocks to freight terminal

CQIP is a 240-hectare industrial estate developed on a cattle property owned by Alan Stent-Smith. He said that as a local landowner he felt that an inland port development would reduce transport costs through improved efficiencies in the supply chain and provide opportunities for agribusiness and industry to develop a purpose-built industrial estate that would benefit both importers and exporters in Queensland's Central Highlands region. Mr Stent-Smith is now CQIP managing director.

CQIP construction commenced in 2019 initially to provide a 1.47-kilometre $9.5 million dead-end rail siding and earthworks for its foundation customer, GrainCorp, who constructed an $18.5 million grain storage and handling facility on the site. The Queensland Government provided $4.4 million and the Emerald-based Central Highlands Regional Council $600,000 towards the construction of rail and road facilities associated with CQIP.

In September 2020 a load of chickpeas was the first commodity to be stored at the GrainCorp site. At that time GrainCorp Queensland regional operations manager Brad Foster told ABC News growers would get better money for their grain at the site due to decreased supply chain costs with a reduction of between $5 to $10 a tonne and around an $8 a tonne reduction on average. Mr Foster said that from the Yamala site it was possible to obtain a 24-hour cycle for trains to Gladstone, enabling a train a day to load if required. This compared with a 36-hour turnround from GrainCorp's Emerald site which resulted in three and a half trains a week compared with a possible seven from Yamala.

As reported in *Railway Digest* (August 2021 issue) the first train departed the terminal on 24 June 2021 when Watco hauled a load of just under 2,000 tonnes of bulk sorghum to Gladstone for export using WRA class locomotives 007 and 004 hauling 42 DGWY wagons. GrainCorp's facility comprises bunker storage feeding two 1,000 tonne and two 100 tonne overline bins capable of loading just over 500 tonnes an hour. GrainCorp's Yamala facility received more than 140,000 tonnes of winter crop during the 2022 harvest, the biggest crop local grain growers had produced in over 10 years.

CQIP's plans always included a container terminal as well as GrainCorp's facility and with Seaway selected to operate the terminal, construction commenced in 2022. It includes eight silos, manufactured by Dennys at Allora in southern Queensland and accommodating 2,500 tonnes of grain, a grain bunker storage area, a container grain packing shed, an unsealed hard stand area adjacent to the rail siding and an office/equipment storage building. Seaway's Jamie Kennedy said chickpeas were



A "model" container and wagon outside Seaway's Yamala office, seen on Saturday,18 March.

previously taken by road from the Central Highlands to sites in southern Queensland for packing but the Yamala facility will allow chickpeas to be packed much closer to their origin and railed direct to the Port of Brisbane. A key piece of equipment at the terminal is a Konecranes reach stacker used for rail loading/unloading. A Caterpillar forklift is also on the site. Initially four staff are being employed by the company at Yamala but this number is expected to grow as the terminal develops.

The grain container packing plant, provided by Aust-Mech of the Darling Downs town of Dalby, can handle two 20-foot containers simultaneously, using a horizontal loading arrangement. A 20-foot container can accommodate 24 to 26 tonnes of grain. The container packer was completed by August 2022 with chickpeas the initial commodity stored in readiness for railing to Brisbane.



Seaway staff and the Aurizon train crew pose for a photo with the reach stacker and a container at Yamala beside 2818 and 2848 to commemorate the loading of the first revenue container train from the CQ Inland Port on Sunday, 19 March.

CQIP has indicated that there is a firm proposal to convert the current dead-end siding into a balloon loop if rail business levels warrant its construction. This would eliminate the necessity for locomotives to run around their train at Yamala crossing loop and then propel the wagons into the siding.

Headquartered in Melbourne and commencing as a shipping agent in 1999, Seaway has expanded into the wider logistics area including air freight, intermodal and warehousing facilities throughout Australia and New Zealand. Seaway owns and operates the intermodal terminal at Merbein (Mildura) in Victoria where Pacific National trains to the Port of Melbourne are loaded. It will operate the InterLink SQ facility that is under construction at Charlton, west of Toowoomba, which will be adjacent to Queensland Rail's Western Line and the future Inland Railway.

Yamala service a welcome arrival at Port of Brisbane

The Yamala to Port of Brisbane service will be significant in that it will join just one other rail container service to the port, Aurizon's service from Rockhampton, often referred to as the "meat train" given the number of refrigerated containers it moves. There had been containerised cotton trains from the Darling Downs but these were all lost to road transport following the cessation of the last such service, from Namoi Cotton at Goondiwindi to Brisbane. One reason given for that service ceasing was the inability of the Little Liverpool and Toowoomba Range tunnels to accommodate nine feet six-inch-high containers favoured by exporters. The tunnel floors have since being lowered but there has been no resumption of container services from the Darling Downs.

The Port of Brisbane (POB) has expressed its concern at this situation and says that the underutilisation of freight rail remains a significant challenge to the Port and its customers as well as the broader South East Queensland community in terms of its liveability and environmental impacts. In FY22, just 1.1 per cent of containers moved through the Port on rail (the Rockhampton train) – a further decline on the previous year (approximately 1.7 per cent in FY21 and approximately two per cent in FY20) and well below global standards of around 20-30 per cent.



Above right: The route of the Yamala to Port of Brisbane intermodal service (marked in red).
Below: The stack of loaded containers is gradually diminishing as Seaway's reach stacker moves the boxes across to the first revenue container train from the CQ Inland Port. Containers are loaded on to each wagon with the doors facing inwards.





The POB 2021/22 sustainability report says it aims to increase rail modal share to 12 per cent. POB says around 40 per cent of export containers are packed within 40 km of the port, highlighting the need for rail-served terminals in the Brisbane region. However, the POB suggests that developments such as Seaways' new Charlton terminal and eventual completion of Brisbane – Moree section of the Inland Rail are also expected to assist increasing rail's share.

By comparison the Port of Sydney's (Botany Bay) long term goal is to move three million TEUs per year by rail, about 40 per cent of future forecast container volumes. Currently Port Botany handles 2.8 million TEUs annually and has the highest volume of containers transported by rail of all Australian ports, at 440,000 TEUs per year. Latest available figures reveal that in January 2023 rail moved 27,562 TEUs or 13 per cent of total container business for that month to and from Port Botany. The Port of Sydney says intermodal terminals are a critical part of the freight logistics supply chain. With 80 per cent of containers moving through Port Botany travelling no further than 40 kilometres from the port, the Port says metropolitan intermodal terminals provide the greatest opportunity to help facilitate an increase in rail growth. Port-related terminals in the Sydney region include those at Enfield, Moorebank, Minto, and St Marys.

Seaway's Yamala terminal and Aurizon's rail service to Brisbane are seen as a welcome development for rail in Queensland and for the Port of Brisbane and in the view of CQIP proponents they will also play a part in the eventual diversification of the Central Highlands economy which is currently dominated by coal mining. The service is also another step in Aurizon's plan to reduce its dependence on coal haulage. The fortunes of CQIP and its rail services will be followed with much interest by those observing rail transport and logistics against a backdrop of a changing world.

Special thanks to Jamie Kennedy, Seaway Regional Manager – Toowoomba, the Seaway team at Yamala led by Peter Cunningham and Aurizon train crew for their generous assistance in compiling this article.



Above: Seaway's Konecranes reach stacker is nearing the end of its task as it loads 68 twenty-foot containers on to the first revenue train from the company's Yamala terminal on Sunday, 19 March while Aurizon's 2818 and 2848 wait patiently in the background. Later in the afternoon the train will depart for the Port of Brisbane. Seaway's grain container packing facility and silos can be seen in the right background. **Right:** The first revenue train to serve Seaway's Yamala terminal, comprising Aurizon's 2818 and 2848 and 37 wagons, arrives empty from Nogoa (Emerald) on Sunday, 19 March. The locomotives are passing the junction to the siding which can be seen curving to the left to the CQ Inland Port. The train will then reverse in to the siding. The 25 kV AC overhead is not used between Burngrove (junction for the cross-country coal line to Coppabella and 40 kilometres east of Yamala) and Emerald.

SYDNEY STATION

CLYDE

STORIES

Text and Images by Chris Walters



The Sydney Station Stories *article series looks at active railway stations around the Sydney region – their history, placement, design, precincts and current services.*

Step off a train at Clyde, should you be able to find reason, and you could be forgiven for feeling that the world has forgotten this little backwater station in the effective middle of everywhere. Clyde Station is surrounded by much higher profile locations and infrastructure on almost all sides, and it does have quite the railway history, but the station itself today gives the strong impression of time having stopped. For while there are no lack of trains passing through Clyde, and certainly several of them do stop, there are no longer many reasons for the station's being. In fact, at the 2021 census, only nine residents were identified as living in Clyde, this likely because the locality itself is almost entirely industrial, and those residential areas adjacent the station are technically in Granville. Of interest the locality photos for Clyde on Google maps show the railway station and nothing else!

The original station was opened in 1882 and named Rosehill Junction ahead of the opening of what would become the Carlingford line three years later, branching off on the Up or northern side of the original Sydney to Parramatta railway. This branch itself received a spur in 1888, in the form of the Sandown line. Both of these lines were privately owned and operated until June 1900. Meanwhile, the name of the mainline junction was changed to Clyde in 1883, then to Clyde Junction in 1901 and then back to Clyde in 1904 – all named for the Clyde River in Scotland.

During 1898, the Clyde Engineering Company was established in the existing Hudson Factory in Factory Street, Granville, adjacent Clyde station. During 1937, the Smith and Waddingtons (later Commonwealth Engineering) Factory was established on the opposite side of Clyde station, while a third major firm, A E Goodwin, was established a little to the north-east, along Parramatta Road, albeit technically in Auburn. An impressive amount of steam, diesel and electric trains, locomotives, trams and rolling stock was built for the Australian rail industry by these three firms before all were gradually closed, taken over by other organisations or moved elsewhere during the between the late 1960s and 1989, when Comeng closed. And of course, Clyde Station was the commuter connection for these plants.

Additionally, rail yards were established by the NSW Government Railways on both sides of the by then four-track mainline, just east of Clyde Station. The Clyde marshalling yard on the north or Up side of the line is still in daily use in 2023 and is a key location for the movement of waste to Veolia's Crisps Creek facility near Tarago on the Canberra line and the railing of Boral cement from Berrima/Maldon to Newcastle and Grafton. Pacific National maintains a locomotive servicing facility in the yard. The yard on the south or Down side of the features, at its eastern end, the former Clyde Wagon Works, which has been redeveloped as the now UGL- managed Maintrain workshop servicing some of Sydney's EMU fleet. The old Clyde Down Yard was used for storing withdrawn rolling stock for many years before the site was redeveloped as the Auburn Maintenance Centre (also undertaking EMU maintenance) which opened in mid-2010, around the same time that the Sandown line was closing. However, the end of train manufacturing in the area took with it a sizeable percentage of the passengers using Clyde Station, and in more recent years – despite hosting six tracks and three island platforms – the station's main claim to fame was its ongoing role as the junction station for the Carlingford Line.



Left (page 36): The up end of the station buildings feature public toilets, although the facilities on platforms 1 and 2 are usually locked off these days – ever since the closure of the Carlingford line in 2020 took platform 1 out of use. Saturday 17 December 2022.
Above: The building on the now largely unused platform 1/2 island at Clyde, Saturday 17 December 2022. The former Waddingtons/Comeng factory was once in the direct background of this shot, while the A E Goodwin plant was also in that direction, albeit a little more distant, over on Parramatta Road.
Below: Waratah set B30 eases through platform 5 non-stop on Saturday 17 December 2022. Although there is a platform 6 hidden behind the white gated fence along the platform, it is not publicly accessible and is used only for shunting movements associated with the nearby Auburn Maintenance Centre. Clyde Engineering's Granville plant was previously situated in the right background of this view.



Bottom: Looking west along platforms 3 and 4, with the island for platforms 5 and 6 on the left and 1 and 2 on the right. Platforms 4 and 5 are the most commonly used by stopping services. Saturday 17 December 2022.

Below and Right: The 'old school' station entrance and footbridge has a few modern flourishes, notably the indicator displays and Opal readers, but for the most part this architecture is positively heritage. Both views from Saturday 17 December 2022.





RIght (page 39): Clyde can be an interesting place to see the passing traffic in action. In addition to the Old Main Southern (via Fairfield), Main Western suburban services, intercity and a handful of long-distance passenger services (including the Wednesdays-only *Indian Pacific*) can be seen here. All freight services to and from the Blue Mountains line pass through here, as do a number of southern freight trains. This one is not so 'regular' – X54 and 42101 operating as train WL12, haul three four-car V Sets (V50, V41 and V17) through Clyde on 17 December 2022. The trio had been stranded west of the derailment damage inflicted between Lawson and Linden on 9 December, and were being transferred to Flemington Maintenance Centre for servicing and a return to operation. X54 was built at Clyde Engineering's Rosewater plant, but 42101 (another Clyde Engineering product) and the three V Sets (Comeng-built) were all built within a few minutes' walk of where this photograph was taken.





When that branch was closed on 4 January 2020 for conversion to light rail (as part of the larger Parramatta Light Rail project), this left only the small industrial area on the north side of the station and those Granville residents on the south side of the line for whom Clyde Station is marginally more convenient than Granville Station itself – which, it should be noted, is not even six hundred metres to the west, and the beneficiary of a far more frequent stopping rail service and better passenger facilities.

To visit Clyde today, you might be surprised at just how frozen in time it is. The buildings and infrastructure are largely 'original' to when the station was last seriously rebuilt in 1959. As it happens, Clyde was one of the last stations to use rollover wooden indicator boards. Many trains through the station pass non-stop, but despite its limited passenger use, a surprisingly high number of T1 (Western Line) and T4 (Parramatta/Leppington) services pause to pick up and drop off, and almost all of these use platforms 4 and 5. Since the Carlingford Line closure, platform 1 is no longer used and a portable barricade on the footbridge prevents anyone wandering over there (since the coincident platform 2 sees no regular stopping services). The Sandown line closed back in 2010 and had been a freight-only branch since 1991.

Although the Carlingford line trackage along platform 1 remains, it used now only by the Mechanised Track Patrol Vehicles (MTPV1 and 2), which are based in a small depot off the branch, between Clyde Station and the nearby Duck River. The former Carlingford/Sandown line tracks beyond the depot, across Parramatta Road and on up through Rosehill to what is now Rosehill Gardens light rail stop have been lifted and most evidence of the former branch's existence between Clyde and Rosehill Gardens has been removed.

Meanwhile, the track along Clyde's platform 6 is also not used by passenger services but is a Down Relief line between Auburn and Granville and is used as a turn-back/shunting neck for trains entering or leaving the nearby Auburn Maintenance Centre.

It will not surprise readers to learn that there are no direct connecting bus services at Clyde Station itself, however, a number of bus routes work along nearby Parramatta Road and also along Clyde Street (south of the station), so with a bit of a stroll, connection is certainly doable. Although this all means that Clyde Station can be a little lonely for all the history and movement that has now bypassed it, it is still an interesting place to visit, if just to be reminded of how stations used to look and feel, and to watch the busy parade of trains (including long distance passenger and freight) whizzing by to and from points south and west.

Clyde is also one of a handful of regular metropolitan destinations (Rhodes and Hurstville being others) that are used as turn-backs for heritage train shuttles that operate out of Sydney Central during events such as the annual Transport Heritage Expo.

With thanks to Ben Barnes and John Hoyle for their assistance.
Next: Kiama

Quick facts

Distance from Sydney Central	20.66 kilometres
Elevation	10 metres above sea level
Opened	1882
Platform lengths	Standard eight-car suburban
Departures	• Up: 130 (weekday), 70 (weekend) • Down: 135 (weekday), 78 (weekend)

After Christmas/New Year observations 2022/2023 in Western Australia

Text and images by Phil Melling



In past years the Christmas/New Year period in Western Australia could be a quiet time for train operations, except of course for the ongoing haulage of minerals to Kwinana, Geraldton, and Bunbury Ports (that run throughout the holiday period). A visit from Geraldton to Perth and return changed that observation with several workings seen during that time.

As background there were several contributing factors that changed the frequency of train operations during that time:

- Western Australia grain handler CBH had a record harvest to store as a result of the 2021/2022 season, with over 21 million tonnes received. There was some carryover from that harvest but the 2022/2023 season passed that record on 5 January 2023 with harvesting still underway in a couple of CBH zones. What this meant for rail was that grain trains by necessity ran every day except Christmas Day.
- Flooding and derailments interstate in the lead up to Christmas created disruptions to train operations into Western Australia which led to businesses having low stock levels. To supply WA businesses meant the demand for interstate freight was higher than normal.
- Mineral related operations continued their normal schedules adding to the mix of train operations.

To assist in understanding WA freight workings each observation given will generally give some background on those services.

Thursday 29 December 2022

Our first sighting was P2505 and P2515 on 5G50 empty grain heading towards Mingenew CBH and seen near the non-crossing station of Strawberry (there is no crossing loop at these locations, but they assist in breaking up the safe working section). The current location of Strawberry is nearly 6km from the former siding originally known as Strawberry.

5G50 was a mix of the last grain wagons constructed in WA, the XT type and ex Queensland VGHM/VGKM grain wagons.

The other Geraldton Zone grain set (consisting of a block train of XT wagons and two P class) had been cancelled and was stabled at Narngulu.

Further south at Three Springs Watco's DR1564 and DR1565 were stabled on a ballast train, the set having been stabled there following a derailment near Coorow in late October 2022. No more trains were running on the former Midland Railway on this day as the Avon based grain trains were running to CBH bins in other areas.

On arrival in the Perth metro area, we made a visit to Bushmead Road, Hazelmere, (the southern leg of the Woodbridge triangle where the dual-gauge line to Forrestfield/Kwinana takes off from the Perth to Midland suburban rail line). Here we saw Aurizon operated CBH002 and CBH006 on 5K24 loaded grain to Kwinana CBH from McLevie CBH located north of Dalwallinu. A few minutes later an empty three-car *Prospector* set passed by, going to the Public Transport Authority (PTA) depot (which sits beside Pacific National's Kewdale terminal).

Friday 30 December 2022

A visit was made to the dual gauge/double track railway that runs from Kewdale through to Cockburn Junction in the south-eastern Perth suburb of Thornlie. Alongside the freight lines is the single-track PTA electrified branch to Thornlie Railway Station.

Extensive earthworks are underway to facilitate the relocation of the freight lines onto the northern side of the rail corridor to allow the construction of a new double-track electrified suburban rail line that will link the Mandurah Railway at Cockburn Railway Station via Thornlie and then joining the Armadale line at Kenwick. Note: Cockburn Railway Station and Cockburn Junction are two different locations.

The aim was to see Watco's 6351 freight which runs from the Kwinana Industrial area to the Hampton Intermodal Terminal near Kalgoorlie.

Left (page 40): Aurizon Goninan/GE units P2515 and P2510 have just finished loading a grain train at Carnamah CBH on Monday 2 January 2023.
Right: A three-car *Prospector* set runs empty through Woodbridge Jct on its way to the PTA depot at Kewdale on Thursday 29 December 2022.
Below: The silos at Three Springs tower over Watco Clyde/EMD locomotives DR1564 and DR1565 stabled on an empty ballast train on Monday 2 January 2023.



6351 was being hauled by C503 and GL110. I had been wanting to get C503 running on a train since it had come to Western Australia, it had evaded me interstate, apart from seeing it stored in Junee Roundhouse in 1998.

6351 shunted at Forrestfield where more wagons were added, this allowed me to get a second set of photos at Millendon Junction, the train consisted of containers and the acid tankers for BHP's nickel operations. Millendon Junction is where the narrow-gauge Midland Railway to Geraldton branches off the dual gauge Avon Valley line.

Saturday 31 December 2022

The last day of the year was greeted with a cloudy start but was shaping up as a good day for seeing trains. The day started with observations in the suburb of Middle Swan (north of Midland), the first train was CBH015 running solo on 7K01 empty grain heading towards Avon where it would then head south to Brookton CBH.

Aurizon's Q4017 then came through on 6430 empty sulphur train to Kwinana, the train originates from Malcolm on the Kalgoorlie to Leonora railway. Q4017 was still carrying its Westrail yellow colours and badged with ARG logos.





The next train was Aurizon's CBH024 and CBH007 on 7K44 loaded grain from Kalannie CBH to Kwinana. Kalannie is located at the end of a short branch that runs from the junction location of Burakin situated on the former Bonnie Rock (now terminating at Beacon) railway.

Next up was Pacific National's NR99 and NR43 on a slightly delayed 7PS6 heading to Kalgoorlie (and ultimately Sydney, although of course the floods would impact on its normal journey). SCT's 4MP9 was next, it had a number of Perth based railfans out as SCT004 and CSR014 were towing Aurizon's LZ3120 back to Western Australia from New South Wales. The L class have not run in WA since being stored early in 2018. Another photo was taken of the SCT train and LZ3120 when the train went under the Kalamunda Road overbridge north of Forrestfield.

Moving to the south end of Forrestfield Yard saw AC4301 arriving with an empty fuel train from Kwinana. The train has a mix of fuel wagons including ATDY, ATFY, WTEY etc. The loco would run round and head to the fuel sidings at Kewdale. A change of location to Bushmead Road saw CBH014, CBH004 and CBH003 on 7K64 loaded grain from the Mukinbudin line to Kwinana pass by. Twenty minutes later SCT's CSR014 and CSR018 led 7PM9 as it started its long journey interstate.

The final train seen was C502 and C508 on 7351 Watco freight to Hampton Intermodal Terminal. It is interesting to note that Watco utilises a number of ex Victorian Railway locomotives including C502, C503 and C508 along with G511 on various freights, and several T class locos are used to shunt at Kewdale and Kalgoorlie. Watco also runs two ex NSW 422 class and a number of GL's. Also getting into the VR theme in WA is SCT, utilising X47 and X51 to shunt the SCT Forrestfield Terminal.



Above: RailFirst locomotives C503 and GL110 provide the motive power for 6351 Watco Freight to Hampton Intermodal Terminal, near Kalgoorlie, passing through Millendon Junction on Friday 30 December 2022.
Right: Narrow-gauge MotivePower/Cummins unit CBH015 is on 7K02 loaded grain from Brookton CBH to Kwinana at Kalamunda Road, South Guildford on Sunday 1 January, the return working of 7K01, seen at Middle Swan the previous day.



Above: On Saturday 31 December, Aurizon's Clyde/EMD unit Q4017 rolls through Middle Swan on 6430 empty sulphur train to Kwinana. The train originates from Malcolm on the Kalgoorlie to Leonora railway.
Below: The same day, EDI/EMD unit SCT004 and CRRC/MTU unit CSR019 are seen at Kalamunda Road, South Guildford towing Aurizon Clyde/EMD unit LZ3120 on 4MP9 Melbourne–Perth freight to Forrestfield Terminal.





Sunday 1 January 2023

The first train seen at the Kalamunda Road location was inbound CBH015 on 7K02 loaded grain from Brookton CBH to Kwinana. It was then the turn of P2501 and P2514 on the empty working of 1K01 empty grain to Brookton. The Avon/Kwinana grain trains use a mix of CBH class and Aurizon P classes with five P's allocated to the zone (P's 2501, 2507, 2509, 2513 and 2514), five P classes are also based in the Geraldton zone (P's 2503, 2504, 2505, 2510 and 2515).

The Picton depot has seen a reduction in P class use and at this time hosted five P class (P's 2502, 2506, 2511, 2512 and 2517}. The final two P class locomotives (2508 and 2516) are receiving overhauls/repairs at Forrestfield.

The final train seen was Pacific National's NR38 and NR53 on 6MP1 intermodal heading to Kewdale.

Monday 2 January 2023.

The journey back to Geraldton began with SCT's CSR013 and SCT002 on 6MP9 to Forrestfield passing through Herne Hill with a mix of SCT vans, intermodal double stacks and loaded steel wagons. Next was P2507 and P2513 loading a grain train at Moora CBH on the former Midland Railway.

Further north at Carnamah CBH P2515 and P2510 had finished loading 2G51 grain, whilst DR1564 and DR1565 were still stabled at Three Springs. The final train seen was at Mingenew (after loading) where P2504 and P2505 were on loaded 2G53 grain.

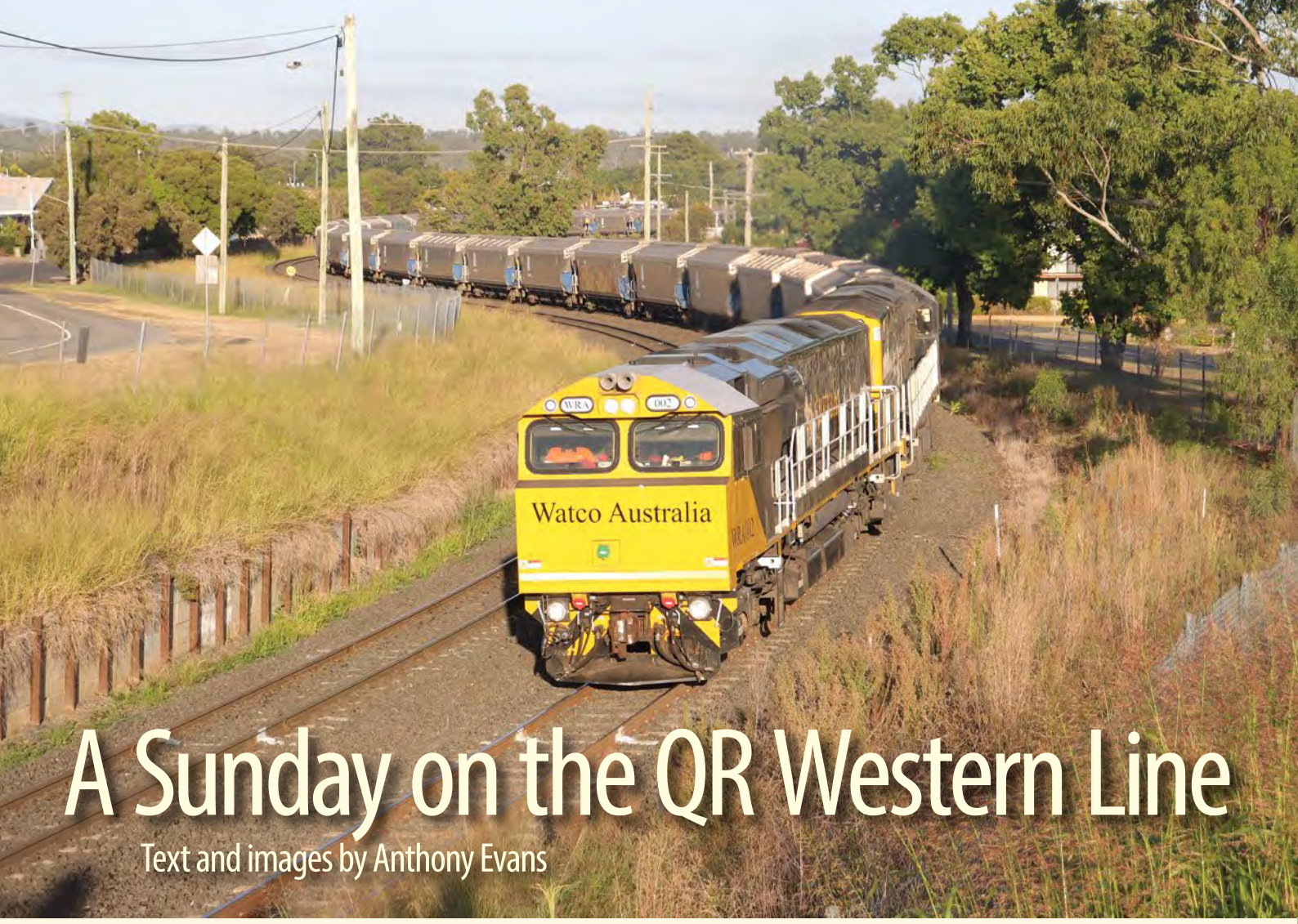
Above: P2501 and P2514 are on 1K01 empty grain to Brookton at Kalamunda Road, South Guildford on Sunday 1 January 2023.
Right: P2507 and P2513 load a grain train at Moora CBH on Monday 2 January 2023. Moora is soon to be upgraded with a new siding and a fast loader.





Above: Nearing the end of their long journey, CSR013 and SCT002 are at Middle Swan heading to Forrestfield Terminal on SCT 6MP9 Melbourne–Perth freight on Monday 2 January 2023.





A Sunday on the QR Western Line

Text and images by Anthony Evans

After awaking at 2:30am on Sunday 5 March at my friend's place in the Ipswich suburb of Goodna it was time to decide where to begin our coverage of Queensland Rail's Western Line operations. We decided to head to the western Brisbane suburb of Wacol to get 9608 Up empty Aurizon coal train. While waiting there we managed to photograph the QR large rail grinder MMY031 (No. ZF31). It waited for 9608 to pass then it shuffled into the eastern side of the Wacol yard before a late-night passenger train comprising two 220 series SMUs called at Wacol station on its way to Ipswich, As the rail grinder was shut down a light engine movement arrived from Brisbane in the form of Queensland Rail's Clyde/EMD units 2410 and 2474. They picked up a rail set at Wacol to haul to Toowoomba.

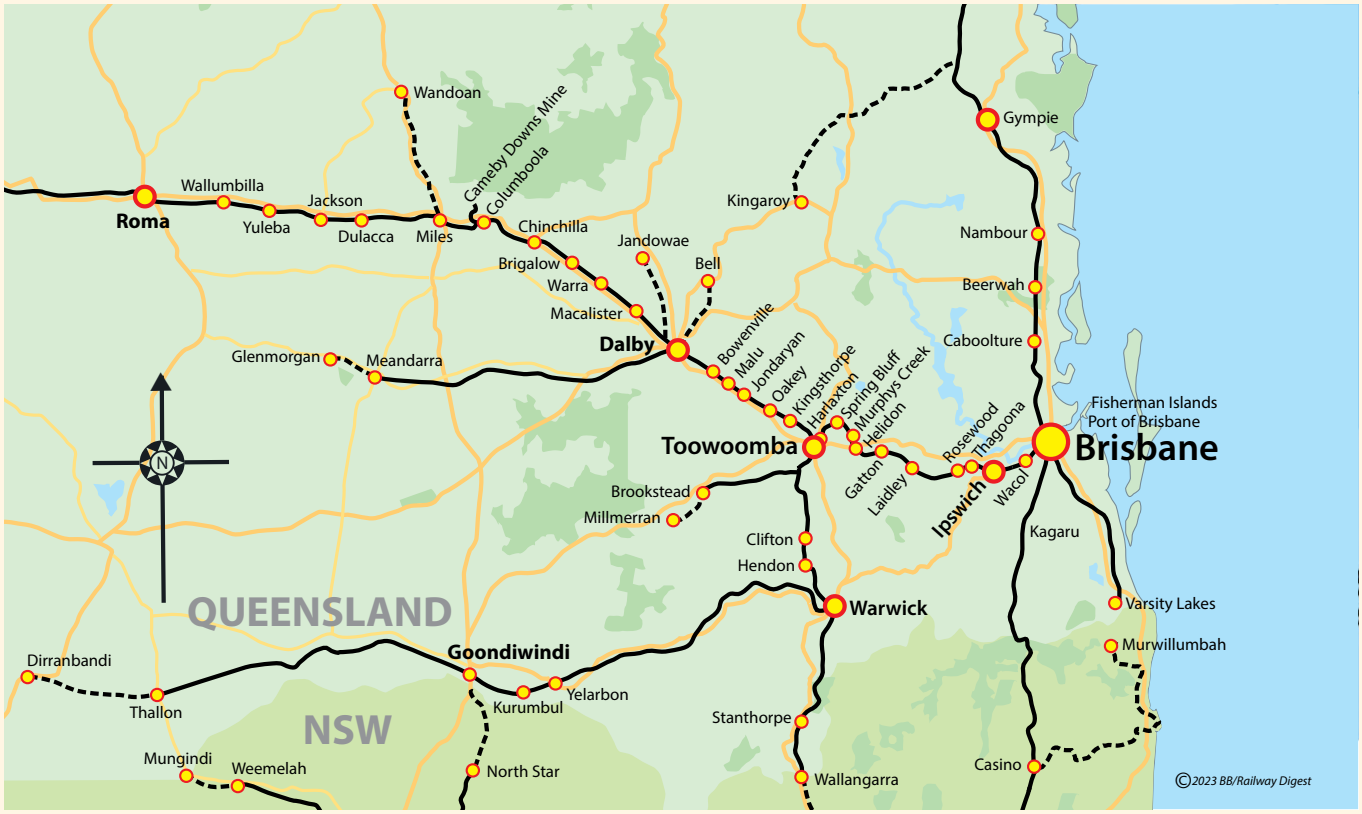
Next was a dash to Thagoona, between Ipswich and Rosewood, to get a photo of the rail set train. While waiting for it I heard a coal train coming from Rosewood so I went to the Up (towards Toowoomba) platform to shoot it. It was No.9813 with 2322D and 2320D (with a recruitment advertisement) and a rake of loaded coal from Cameby Downs. Then around five minutes later the railset train (No. 06R2) came in to view. Our next photographic position was the Lockyer Valley town of Laidley and the well-known overbridge. While waiting there for the railset train I heard the horn for Watco grain train (No,6835) with WRA Class locomotives 002 and 004 on a loaded grain service to Fisherman Islands as seen above.

After "bagging" the Watco grain train, I went to Ballard, on the climb up the Toowoomba Range, to try snap 9608 again. That was achieved at the road overbridge and then the railset train appeared and was able to be photographed between the bridge and tunnel six. Then it was on to Toowoomba to watch the railset train undertake a complicated movement. It proceeded around the triangular junction to face west then reversed towards the station before moving forward up the line on which it had just arrived (that is towards Harlaxton and to Brisbane) as seen in the photo opposite, to clear signal TA 31. It then reversed into "7 Road" in Toowoomba Yard where the ballast wagons seen in the background of the photo were attached by the locomotives ready for a next day (Monday 6 March) run to Malu, west of Oakey, for loading at the quarry there, before heading to Roma.

After watching the manoeuvrings of 06R2 and fortified by lunch it was time to continue west towards Oakey where 9819 Cameby Downs Mine (near Miles) to Port of Brisbane Aurizon coal train was just missed. However, we sighted 9821 (another loaded coal train from Cameby Downs Mine), which had Aurizon's 2332D and 2350D *Wayne Robeck*, just west of Oakey at the Devon Park Road level crossing. This is the site of an experimental low-cost level crossing protection system developed by Rail Safety Systems as described in the August 2022 *RD*.

Then it was back to the small town of Kingsthorpe (which has its station building preserved in the park next to the line) and on to the Toowoomba suburb of Harlaxton, the summit for the Western Line on the Toowoomba Range. At Jones Street we photographed No.9821 as it powered up the climb to the summit, near Harlaxton quarry which was once serviced by rail.

After that we were told that there was a break in train movements so there would be time to head west to Dalby where we photograph No.9811 Cameby Downs Mine loaded coal train with locos 2313D and 2306D, both in the "eagle' colour scheme. We caught up with this train at Bowenville. It had been flagged with a 40 km/h speed restriction which we assumed was heat-related. There was then time to head east again and I thought time to go and get the other train that was coming – 9622 empty Aurizon coal train – that had 2322D and 2320D at the front. We saw it at Spring Bluff and at Harlaxton. Our thoughts turned to heading home but we detoured into Helidon to check the signals and heard the sound of WRA class locomotives. It happened to be the same pair sighted in the morning – WRAs 002 and 004 now running on No.6H34 empty grain train to Goondiwindi East. I decided to follow it up the Toowoomba range. After seeing the crew change for 6H34 and the departure out of Toowoomba, it was finally time to call it a day. It was a big day and although we missed out on an Aurizon grain train and a Watco cattle train it was a successful outing.



Left (page 46): Watco Australia's NREC/EMD units WRA002 and WRA004 lead a loaded grain train through the S bends out of Laidley heading for Fisherman Islands.
Below: Queensland Rail's Clyde/EMD units 2410 and 2474 bring the 12-wagon rail set towards Harlaxton then shunt back into "7 Road" at Toowoomba yard as train No. 06R2. The curve on the right is part of Toowoomba's triangular junction, which allows Western Line trains to bypass Toowoomba station and yard.





Above: Aurizon's 2313D and 2306D pass through Bowenville on 9811 Cameby Downs to Fisherman Islands loaded coal train.
Below: Watco Australia's WRA002 and WRA004 attract the attention of some young adults in the car park, as they pass through Spring Bluff on 6H34 empty grain train to Goondiwindi East.





As the smoke would suggest, 2410 and 2474 are working hard as they climb the Toowoomba Range at Ballard, between Spring Bluff and Harlaxton, with loaded rail train 06R2 heading for Toowoomba yard.

Further Notes on the Australian Urban Passenger Train

Further to his article The Australian Urban Passenger Train – An unrecognised success?, *that appeared in the Rolling Stock pages of the April issue, author Peter Clark has uncovered some further information on the subject, as follows:*

Firstly, I have to correct one entry in the article tabulation. The height of the narrow gauge intermediate cars was 3.61 m, the same as the driving cars, not 3.93 m.

Secondly, I have found better details of the Perth AEA and AEB cars. These are 23 375 mm long over the body, 325 mm longer than the AUPT design. They are 2900 mm wide, 80 mm narrower than the standard gauge AUPT car, and 3920 mm high, 290 mm taller than the standard gauge AUPT design. The AEA/AEB height includes the roof mounted air conditioner, so the actual roof height would be close to the AUPT figure. The bogie centres are longer, 17000 mm compared to 16150 mm, but the centres of the sliding doors remain at the AUPT figure of 10500 mm. But the cars are clearly much closer in dimensions to the standard gauge AUPT than the narrow gauge version.

More recent Perth cars retain the greater width compared to Queensland cars.

Peter Clark





Above: On Friday 24 March, after turning on the Telarah triangle, The Rail Motor Society's CPH3 (100 years old in December) is seen waiting at Telarah for its path to return to the Society depot at Paterson, as the morning passenger service from Dungog approaches the platform. The CPH had turned on the triangle so that its radiator was facing the same way as Nos 1 and 7. Bruce Gehrig

Right: Built in 1871 by Pheonix Foundry, Ballarat, for the Western Australian Timber Company, *Ballaarat* was the first steam locomotive to operate in WA. It is now on display at the Busselton Visitor Centre, where John Scott photographed the historic machine on Tuesday 21 February.



Above: On Sunday 5 February, Steamrail operated the vintage Tait EMU Set on six shuttle trips between Brighton Beach and Flinders Street, with turnbacks at Sandringham. The event attracted large crowds and all six return trips sold out the day before. The train is seen here at Brighton Beach station. James Chuang

Below: On Saturday 18 March, Don River Railway organised a special triple header event for its 3pm train service, worked by former Tasmanian Government Railways 4-6-2 steam locomotive M4 (Robert Stephenson and Hawthorn 1952), former Tasmanian Government Railway Y6 (English Electric 1961) and former Emu Bay Railway diesel locomotive 1002 (Walkers Ltd 1963), seen here at Don Junction on the former Don to Melrose railway. With three locomotives, it took a while to reverse with the steam loco run around first, followed by the two diesels.The train is seeing here departing from the platform at Don Junction heading back to Don. The Tasrail Western line is in the foreground. 17 days later, the railway's workshops were badly damaged by fire (see report on page 57). James Chuang



COACH CLASS

Luxury brand sets up shop in Heritage U Set

Chris Walters

During late March and early April, New York based luxury brand Coach, specialising in leather handbags, luggage and accessories, established a 'pop up' store within the former railway Paint Shop building adjacent to Sydney's Carriageworks precinct, near Redfern Station. Centred on a trio of specially fitted-out Transport Heritage electric multiple unit (EMU) U Set single-deck interurban cars – specifically power car CF5015 and trailers TF6013 and ETB6029 – Coach established a display area incorporating a section of the Paint Shop to market its line of Tabby handbags. Working with the custodians, Heritage Electric Traction (HET), who manage Transport Heritage's EMU carriage fleet at Redfern, the three late 1950s Comeng-built cars were temporarily transformed internally to the show off the line of Tabby products. While CF5015 was largely left 'as is' for the display, the interiors of the two trailer cars were completely reworked to provide visitors an immersive experience with product and audio-visual displays, as well as Coach artists hand crafting leather gifts for potential shoppers. Once through the cars, visitors were also treated to a free ice cream in a temporary café setting surrounded by heritage rolling stock. Three other heritage single-deck cars parked adjacent, Sputnik trailer T4790, Tulloch power car C7485 and wooden trailer T4279, were fitted out with temporary interior pink lighting so they could take a visual part in the promotion. Although managed through an online booking system, Coach's 'Tabby shop' also welcomed walk-up visitors during its opening hours, which were:

- Thursday 23 March, 6.30pm-9pm (opened with a launch party that included runway models and musical performances)
- Friday 24 March, 12pm-4pm and 5.30pm-9pm
- Saturday 25 March, 12pm-4pm and 5.30pm-9pm
- Friday 31 March, 12pm-4pm and 5.30pm-9pm
- Saturday 1 April, 12pm-4pm and 5.30pm-9pm
- Sunday 2 April, 12pm-5pm.



Following the Sunday session, which was mildly affected by heavy rain, the temporary shop was closed and dismantled over the following days. The cars, part of the five-car fleet that will form HET's set U2 when restored, are currently undergoing overhaul with HET's team of volunteers having commenced on the electrical restoration on the three power cars (CF5015, CF5017 and CF5035), with work currently focussed on CF5015. Meanwhile, the two trailers had all their seats removed prior to their own overhaul, thus enabling Coach to fit-out both cars' interiors with ease. This collaboration with Coach will hopefully give HET's U2 restoration project a welcome profile and funding boost. For more information check out https://het.org.au/

Special thanks to Roy Howarth and John Hoyle for their assistance in preparing this article.



Left: To greet visitors walking up from the Carriageworks precinct, Coach applied branding to one of the Paint Shop roller doors. Chris Walters

Above: Walking inside, visitors were greeted by the Coach brand in lights over CF5015 alongside a temporary walkway leading into the carriage. Chris Walters









Top Left: Stepping aboard CF5014, visitors are greeted with a replica baseball glove that tells of Coach's 1941 beginnings as a Manhattan leather goods supplier. Roy Howarth
Above: The interior of CF5015 had been decked out with Coach decals and display Tabby bags, but the interior is otherwise original. Roy Howarth
Far Left: Continuing into trailer TF6013, visitors become immersed in a more modern, stylised Coach experience. Chris Walters
Left: Several of the company's Tabby line of bags were on display through the first two cars. Chris Walters
Below Left: Once emerging from the train, visitors were treated to free ice cream in a pop-up café setting. Chris Walters
Below: Adjacent heritage cars, fitted out with interior lighting, were used to add to the atmosphere, including wooden trailer car T4279 seen here. Roy Howarth





TICRail are innovating Rail Training with their new partnership



The Instruction Company (TICRail) (RTO ID 20298) has launched an innovative partnership with Lake Macquarie Light Rail (LMLR) a narrow-gauge heritage railway at Toronto, NSW to provide the current and next generation of rail safety workers access to the most compliant and immersive training and assessment opportunities in industry.

The partnership will provide for an 'on-site' training experience. TICRail General Manager Mark Haigh is thrilled to launch this partnership. "The LMLR site and TICRail's current and compliant rail trainers are creating a learning experience that exposes students to the rail environment in a controlled, safe but realistic environment. We are very grateful to LMLR Owner/Operator Grahame Swanson for the opportunity to use his site for this training".

Grahame Swanson has been the Owner/Operator of LMLR for 21 years and is proud to see his site used to train the next generation of rail professionals. "The facility here will provide students with valuable exposure to rail infrastructure, rolling stock and plant and equipment which will give learners an insight into the industry which offers many career paths. I look forward to welcoming TICRail students to our wonderful facility."

The blend of theory and practical rail training can be facilitated on the LMLR site, providing students unique learning experiences.

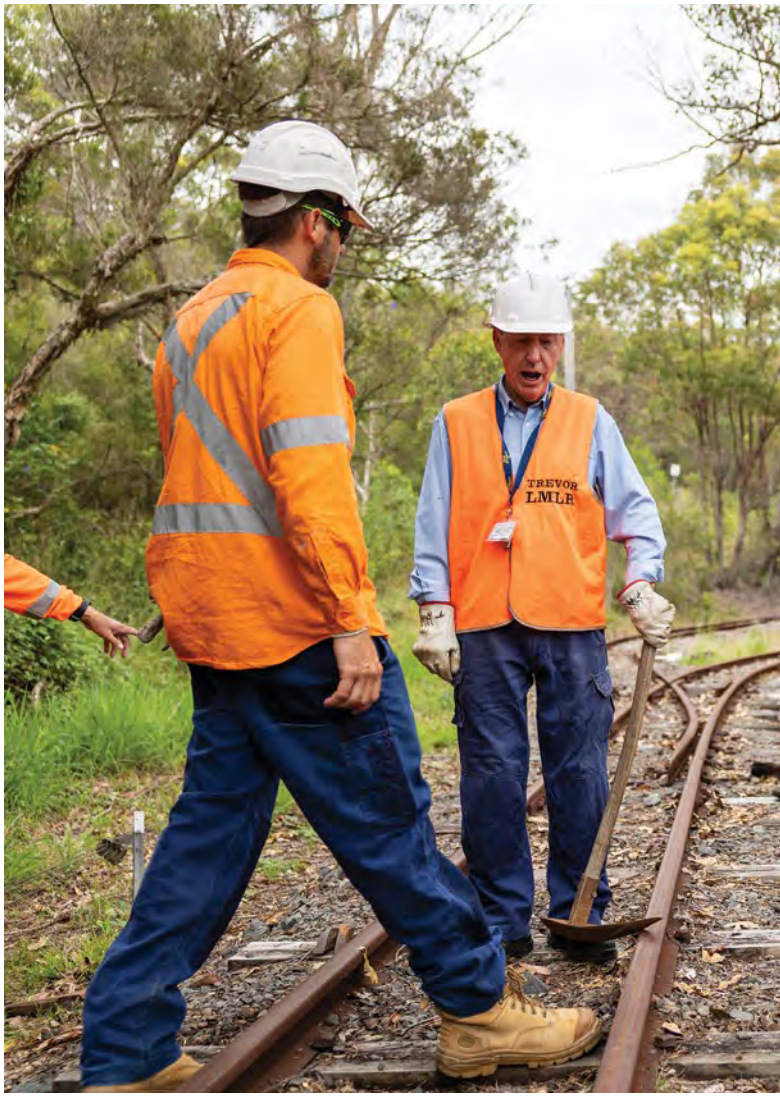
Training in numerous disciplines of the rail industry has been, in the past, restrictive in the integration of the theory and practical aspects during a course due to limited access to track and distances required to access relevant assets. This partnership bridges this gap.

The following training courses offered and provided by TICRail trainers and assessor's using LMLR facilities will ensure a high standard of competence and safety of all participants:

- Safely access the Rail Corridor (SARC)
- Protection Officer Training
- Work on track
- Clip and secure points
- Safeworking
- Shunting
- Train Driver - basics
- Handsignalling
- Using Frames and points
- Adjusting rail and sleeper replacement
- Ballasting track
- 7 core units
- Track measuring, Track Geometry and alignment
- Aluminothermic welding

To learn more about TICRail, visit www.ticrail.com.au and check out some of the videos of the LMLR site on TICRail's social media channels..

Left: TICRail Trainer providing the theoretical component of the rail training course. TICRail







Above: LMLR volunteers showcasing the fully functional locomotive and carriage used to provide practical rail training. DL12 *Mourilyan* was built by Baguley in 1954 for Queensland Railways' Innisfail Tramway, and when that closed in 1977 it went to South Johnstone sugar mill. After many years out of use, it was completely restored by LMLR. TICRail **Left:** LMLR students provided with practical training immediately after in-class theory component. TICRail **Below:** Protection officer raising a red flag to signal incoming locomotive. TICRail





Kilrie returns to the QPSR

Text and image by Clancy Davies

The morning of Saturday, 18 March 2023 saw the official re-launch of 0-4-2T steam locomotive *Kilrie* at the Queensland Pioneer Steam Railway (QPSR), at Swanbank, near Ipswich, Queensland, having been out of service for over 10 years.

Kilrie was built by Perry Engineering in Gawler, South Australia in 1924 (B/N 265) as an 0-4-0T, one of eight examples purchased by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission of Victoria to assist the construction of the Hume Weir on the Murray River. After completion of the Weir in 1935, it was stored until sold to Mt Morgan Mines Ltd, in Central Queensland, in 1939. 10 years later it was sold again, this time to the Pioneer Sugar Mill at Brandon in Far North Queensland. At this point it received its long-standing name, *Kilrie*, being the second loco at Pioneer Mill to carry the name.

Around 1960 the locomotive received a major overhaul, including a conversion from coal burning to oil burning, as well as the addition of a single-axle trailing truck, giving it a wheel arrangement of 0-4-2T.

After several years spent as a 'stand-by' locomotive at the mill, *Kilrie* ended its service in the cane fields in 1978 and was donated to the Australian Narrow Gauge Preservation Society at Woodford, but as it didn't fit their 2ft (610mm) gauge collection very well it was placed on long term lease to the Queensland Pioneer Steam Railway. The locomotive remained on lease until 2008, when it was purchased outright by the QPSR, and has since been converted back to coal firing.

For the past decade the locomotive has been out of service undergoing an overhaul conducted in part by DownsSteam, Toowoomba. Having completed all mechanical aspects of the overhaul in late 2022, the locomotive began tests at QPSR between Box Flat and Swanbank.

Above: ***Kilrie*** **and 5802 are about to cross Patrick Street and pass by Box Flat Depot on the first northbound run of the day.**

Saturday 18 March saw the official first use of *Kilrie* in passenger service in over a decade. A small ceremony took place at Swanbank Station with speeches from members of the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Employees, the QPSR board and the Mayor of Ipswich, not long before the 99-year-old *Kilrie,* along with Comeng 0-6-0DH 5802 *Buba*, departed Swanbank for the first of three sold out runs on the day. However, due to the small capacity of its water tanks and problems with its boiler tubes clogging up, *Kilrie* would only operate the first and third trains of the day.

Kilrie is expected to operate a number of the QPSR trains for the remainder of the year and in future years whilst celebrating its 100th birthday in November 2024. With *Kilrie* now back in service, engineers can start focusing on the overhaul of QPSR's PB15 4-6-0 No. 448, which was withdrawn from traffic in 2020 following the expiry of its boiler certificate.

Sources:

- https://www.qpsr.org/about-us/
- http://www.australiansteam.com/Kilrie.htm
- Info from re-launch ceremony.
- 'Industrial locomotives built by the Perry Engineering Company', John L Buckland, ARHS *Bulletin*, June 1986
- Australasian Locomotive Builders Lists, Perry Engineering Company Ltd, The Light Railway Research Society of Australia, September 1987.

Don River Railway devastated by fire

Premier Jeremy Rockliff has promised to help Tasmania's Don River Railway get back on track after the carpenters' workshop and adjacent buildings were destroyed by fire early Tuesday morning 4 April.

Brigades from across the north of the state arrived to find three buildings well alight. Personnel on site evacuated safely before raising the alarm.

Don River Railway General Manager Eamon Seddon believes it was an unfortunate accident. "Some work was being done on the coaches yesterday. They were burning some paint off and we think unfortunately some of those paint embers ended up inside in between a partition and started a fire in what was a hundred year old King Billy coach," he said.

Two carriages undergoing restoration have been lost but fire crews managed to save the Royal Carriage, to the relief of Don River Railway President Lynn Laycock.

"Thankfully the Royal Carriage is safe, because that can't be replaced," Ms Laycock said, "And neither can the thousands of hours that our volunteers have put in. I just feel so much for them, what they've done."

Devonport Mayor Alison Jarman said the Council and state government will work together to support the heritage group.

"It's still just so awful," said Mayor Jarman. "80 volunteers worked down there, and it's a wonderful, wonderful place, and a great organisation, and I can't really put it into words."

Options revealed for display of historic Ballarat rail gates

Community feedback has been sought on options to return elements of the heritage-listed Lydiard Street swing gates to the Ballarat station precinct.

Two of the gates at the Lydiard Street North level crossing, located adjacent to the western end of Ballarat station, were destroyed by a V/Line train that was unable to stop at the station platform (see July 2020 *RD*, page 22.)

Following the collision, the level crossing was closed for almost 18 months before Heritage Victoria granted a heritage permit to allow a temporary solution that saw mechanical, half boom barriers connected to the older manual signalling system and the road re-opened.

During April 2023 the Victorian Department of Planning and Transport asked for public input for two possible long-term ways of displaying the replica swing gates. The two options are placing the replicas near the level crossing or placing them somewhere else in the station precinct.

Five solutions were initially considered, but after assessment by specialists three were deemed to not be suitable due to safety and maintenance concerns. They included returning the swing gates to a functional state or closing the level crossing permanently and putting the gates on display across the street.

"The Victorian Department of Transport and Planning and V/Line are dedicated to providing a public transport network that is safe, efficient and accessible, meeting the expectations of the growing population in Ballarat", said Michael Bailey, regional director Grampians, Department of Transport and Planning. "The replica heritage gates are an important piece of Victoria's rail history and there is a shared commitment to respecting and honouring their future".

The public feedback gathered will be presented to Heritage Victoria later this year.

The two undamaged original Lydiard Street gates were put into storage when the boom gates were installed in late 2021.

Over $10.5 million was allocated in the 2022 Victorian State budget to find a long-term solution to this issue.

West Coast Wilderness Railway's winter shutdown

Major upgrade work is underway and will continue over Winter at Tasmania's West Coast Wilderness Railway (WCWR), which operates regular passenger services on a 35 kilometre section of line between the towns of Strathan and Queenstown.

On Friday 17 March Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Michael Ferguson, said the upgrades would improve the reliability and resilience of the operation, following a recent incident which prompted a review of the operations.

That incident, which is under investigation by the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator, saw the leading wheels of one of the railway's diesel locomotives derail as it was travelling back to Strahan from Dubbil Barril station with a train conveying about 90 passengers on Tuesday 28 February.

No one was injured with the Railway's Acting General Manager Ian Robertson describing the incident as fairly minor, with the train travelling "no more than 10 to 15 kilometres an hour". All the carriages remained on the tracks. However, the train derailed in the middle of the rainforest, which Mr Robertson said made getting the passengers back to Strahan "a huge exercise".

"First we needed to get food into them, which is what we did because they were going to be there for a few hours," Mr Robertson said. "Then we needed to get another train from Queenstown up the rack, over the top and down the other side, then reverse back in and hook on to those carriages and bring them back to Queenstown".

From there, the passengers were taken by bus back to Strahan, about 45 minutes away. "All in all, it would've been about eight hours," he said.

Following the incident all services departing from Strahan were suspended. Half-day return services from the line's western terminus at Queenstown to the mid-way point at Dubbil Barril were unaffected.

On Friday 17 March it was announced that services from Strahan would remain suspended and services from Queenstown would cease from Monday 5 June to allow earth and bridge works to be carried out along the length of the line to ensure its readiness for the influx of visitors in Spring and Summer.

Mr Robertson, said that while smaller or partial closures were already planned for the Railway, the most recent assessments showed a single bigger response would be far more effective in the longer-term.

During the shutdown the WCWR cafes, retail and museums will operate as normal and rail division staff will continue to complete other maintenance and project work. All staff are being maintained throughout this works period as they would normally expect throughout the winter season. Operations are expected to recommence gradually in time for the peak summer tourism season.

Anyone with tickets booked on services affected by the shutdowns will be contacted directly and provided a full refund. Passengers booked on services out of Queenstown up to 5 June are not affected by this decision.

Further information on the upgrade program will be made available on the WCWR website in due course, with further updates to be advised on the support package, including the travel voucher and grant program.



Above: Former NSWGR Baldwin 2-8-2 5917 crosses the floodplain section of the 3000m long Murrumbidgee River bridge at North Wagga on Saturday 4 March with a southbound empty cars move from Junee to Wagga Wagga for the first day of shuttles operated by 'The Picnic Train' between Wagga and Uranquinty. Scott Gould

Below: On the weekend of 4/5 March, Seymour Railway Heritage Centre operated a charter train from Warrnambool to Waurn Ponds specifically with a "1954 royal tour train like" consist. Although Seymour Railway Heritage Centre owns almost all of the 1954 royal tour train carriages, this "royal train" consist didn't quite follow the 1954 example, and consisted of locomotives A66 and X31 with carriages *Yarra*, 2AE, 30AE, *Mitta Mitta*, Dining, 3BCE, 16ABE, 5ABE and State 4. The train set arrived at Warrnambool early on Saturday 4 March, and managed to do several local shuttle services between Warrnambool and Boorac (about half way between Terang and Camperdown). Though not advertised widely, the trains still managed to attract a large crowd, and sold out one of the return shuttle services. The recent Warrnambool line infrastructure upgrade helped schedule the royal train shuttles easily between the several regular V/line Warrnambool services. X31 and A66 are seen taking the train out of Warrnambool, passing Flume Beach, on Saturday 4 March. James Chuang

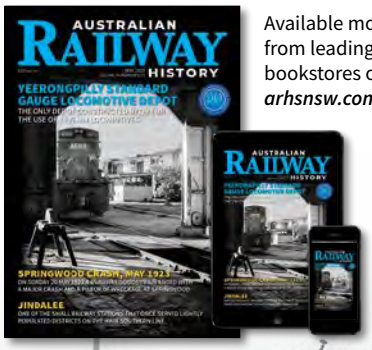




AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY HISTORY

This month includes:

Yeerongpilly Standard Gauge Locomotive Depot
Springwood Crash, May 1923
Jindalee, A country station



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Above left: Last month we reported on the return to service of ex-NSWGR Beyer Peacock 4-6-0 3001 at Thirlmere, NSW. In Canberra its sibling, 3016, is also being restored, and when photographed on Thursday 2 February, it had just had its boiler lagging removed and the super heater elements taken out, and was soon to receive its official "visual" inspection. Steve Munro
Below: NSW Rail Museum locomotives 3526 and 3801 arrive at Bowral with 'The Southern Highlander' on a wet Saturday 1 April. John Balson





Express passenger steam power from two states. Victorian R Class 4-6-4 R 766 and New South Wales 38 Class 4-6-2 3801 are double-heading at the front, while New South Wales 36 Class 4-6-0 3642 is on the rear. The train is returning to Thirlmere from Picton as the last service of the Thirlmere Festival of Steam, Sunday 19 March. David Matheson

Enfield to Port Waratah

David Shield's excellent two-part article (March and April 2023 issues) provides a wonderful insight into the rigorous requirements that must be met by loco drivers.

Operating a train such as this is certainly not a "set and forget" process.

David demonstrated in his description the experience, and subsequent professional and intuitive judgment, that he brings to this critical role.

The article was enhanced by his personal reflections from the period of steam operations and provides an amazing account of what to many may seem a simple and everyday task. When in fact it is a task requiring incredible judgment in balancing track requirements with train braking, momentum and velocity.

David documents a seemingly common event, such that it provides a wonderful historic record and was a great read.

Thank you, David.

Stephen May
Orange, NSW

Various Rail Matters

I'm just perusing the April 2023 issue of *RD* and was surprised by Noel Robertson's highly negative take on the 'Slow TV' series pertaining to the *Indian Pacific*.

"Series" is the operative word as they made perhaps five fairly itemised and detailed episodes plus a 3-hour capsulated overview, the latter obviously being what Mr Robertson saw. They did the same with the *Ghan*, Norwegian *Arctic Express*, New Zealand (not all rail) Kennet and Avon Canal (by barge), The Country Bus (Yorkshire) and an ocean cruise from Broome to Darwin (take or leave that one!) and possibly others.

I find those sorts of programs enormously satisfying owing to their complete absence of hard-sell and drivelling inanities from presenters with agendas who are primarily about persuading us to part with our hard-earned, and for their total reality in the true sense of the word.

The conventional programs are a "take" in that presenters are allowed to partake of journey breaks and extra-curricular activities, which would provoke raucous laughter were you or I to propose them. Some of Michael Portillo's war-time and engineering docos are great but his rail programs are full of cardboard and tinsel. "Bums on Seats" I suppose. To break even they have to engage with the "donkey vote". Still, there's the odd gem.

On another matter, in the same issue, Robert E Duncombe advocates routing the Inland Rail to Gladstone rather than the Port of Brisbane. Whilst acknowledging its improbability, I'd support that. I was highly supportive of IR initially, but I naively believed that Federal and State governments were holistically working together on it. I doubt that Queensland has a stance on Inland Rail as yet.

I also didn't realise that double-stacking was an ingredient. That would kibosh using the present rail link from Acacia Ridge. They're alleviating one problem to exacerbate another.

A few issues back, Stephen Miller advocated re-routing the IR via the old New England route. That would have worked, in NSW, but Mr Miller seems not to have taken into account the topography north of the border. Any gains in speed or conversely, cost, would have been blown away by the need to hugely rehabilitate the track and/or the impact on speed.

Graeme Baker
Kingston, Qld

Catchpoint

On page 35 of our April issue was a photo of a large flock of birds attracted by a grain train at Port Waratah. Though the birds were identified as Cockatiels, they are actually Shortbill Corellas, also known as Little Corellas (Cacatua sanguinea).

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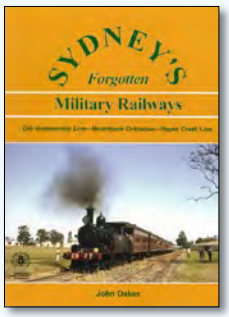
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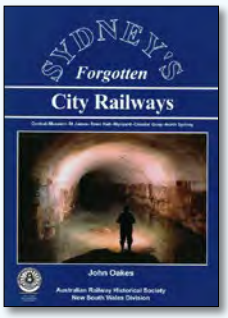
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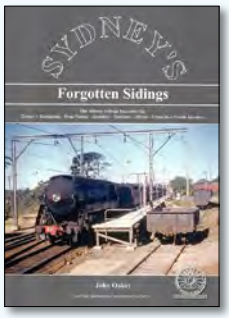
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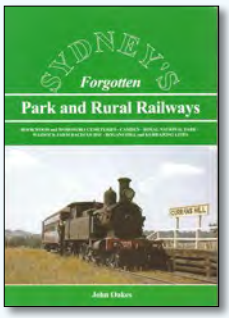
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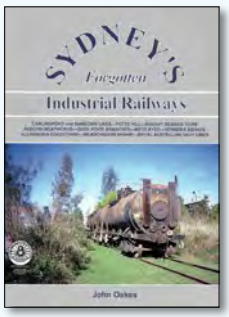


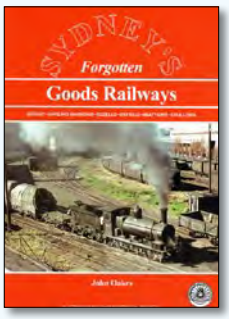












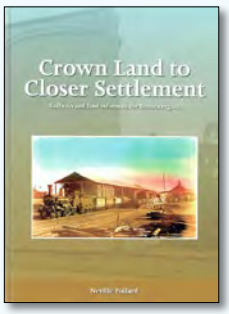


RAILWAY TO CUDGEWA

The spectacular mountain railway from Wodonga to Cudgewa in north eastern Victoria was one of Australia's truly fascinating branch lines, and the most challenging to operate on the Victorian Railways. This lavishly illustrated publication includes over 100 colour and B&W photographs, and tells the story of the railway through the memories of Cudgewa railway enginemen, station masters, bridge gangers, cattle drovers and local residents. Crucial aspects of the line's history are also covered, including 'Tallangatta - The Town that Moved', the Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre, the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme, and harrowing accounts of the two 1964 runaway train wrecks.

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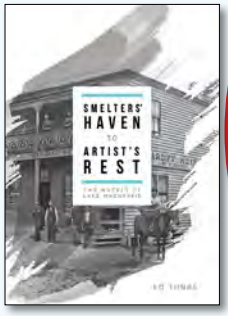
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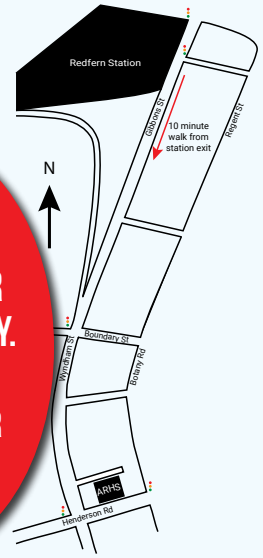
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The case for change

May 2023 marks 90 years of the ARHS. This is a remarkable achievement and reflects both the influence and dominance of railways in our community, both as a transport mode and an employer, and the enduring interest it generates. The ARHS has been around since the oldest railways in Australia were less than 80 years old.

90 years is a long time and we can be proud of the many millions of words written, thousands of members and subscribers, hundreds of books published, and several premises purchased and occupied, all with the aim of recording and sharing of railway history.

But as they say in sporting circles, you're only as good as your last game and with that proud past in mind we must turn our attention to the future.

As a not-for-profit, the ARHS is driven by its *purpose*. Profit (or surplus) is still vital though because it enables the Society to fulfil its purpose. In this respect, it is a business like any other. However, unlike a for-profit business, surplus funds are retained or invested back into the Society, rather than distributed as dividends to shareholders.

For decades the Society has achieved its purpose through meetings, outings, the gathering and sharing of information, and the publication of historical research in books and magazines. The value of membership was (and still is) in the fellowship with like-minded individuals and the sharing of experiences and information.

As we all know, in the last 25 years there has been an "information revolution"; information is much easier to access and share via the internet, eroding the traditional value the Society offered. At the same time, other technological and societal changes have changed the landscape in which the Society operates:

- Greater competition for our attention through a fragmented, deregulated media and the advent of social media
- Greater competition for the railfan dollar
- A decline in community causes and volunteering
- Access to a greater range of products at affordable prices from around the world, 24/7
- Print media is in decline and many newsagents have closed

Changes in the railway environment have also whittled-away our competitive advantage.

These changes have had a measurable impact on our income, on the number of members and subscribers, and the number of volunteers who are willing to make a regular commitment, particularly those of working age. Comparable organisations are feeling the same pressures and some in our sector have already succumbed.

Until recently, the core activities of the organisation showed a small but steady annual surplus. Income is heavily dependent on magazines – roughly 40% is from subscriptions and magazine sales. Another 35% is from book sales and the remaining 25% is derived from other sources such as archive income, tours and donations. Surplus revenue provides the means to do more next year or accumulate savings as insurance against economic shocks or to invest in larger initiatives.

With an operating surplus, we could choose to produce a new book or run another tour; but if we are to survive and grow, we need to invest in longer-term projects which improve productivity, such as better systems and technology; and projects which increase capacity and growth, such as initiatives to grow membership or establish new sources of income.

These longer-term projects are particularly important and urgent given that, within five to ten years, the trends in our operating environment will continue to put downward pressure on magazine and book sales. The move to online shopping has been accelerated by the pandemic and the concept of buying online from the cheapest supplier has become regularised.

Changes are not limited to book sales. Tours have been affected by increasing regulation, competition and higher customer expectations. In the age of smart-devices, more people are avoiding the need to ever buy or read a book. Book publishing is sometimes problematic at low volumes and there is an increasing expectation that businesses, even not-for-profit businesses, will be more professional, quicker to respond to changing circumstances, provide higher quality and more consistent service. This is particularly evident among younger members of the community.

The impact of these changes on ARHS has been fundamental and means that the traditional way of doing business for the Society with its capacity to deliver ongoing modest surpluses is no longer viable. Unless the Society finds news ways of doing business, including finding new revenue sources to fund traditional activities, the society will inevitably go out of business.

However, we also recognise that many current members would prefer things to stay much as they have been. We could call this "business as usual". This is recognised and respected and we must continue to provide magazines and books in the current format for as long as it's practically possible to do so.

This dichotomy means that we must work on achieving growth and building capacity in parallel to operating business-as-usual. This will be a strain on finances and resources and will from time-to-time cause tension and conflict. The board has worked very hard to improve financial reporting and accountability which is essential for navigating these future challenges. We will need to continue to be disciplined in how we spend Society funds. It is important that all members recognise the circumstances in which we operate and understand the motivation behind any changes.

What needs to be done?

There is no shortage of interested people who have no association with the ARHS at all. Some do not even know what we offer or that we exist. Most are active on social media and share information with their friends or networks using their phone. To increase the recognition and appeal of the ARHS we need to increase our social media presence to access the majority of the public that regularly use these channels. This will also increase awareness of our resources and expertise, and promote unique experiences and opportunities to participate or contribute online.

Improving our systems, which is already underway, will improve the customer relationship by providing more targeted and regular communication, and making purchasing easier.

By partnering with other organisations and groups we can offer more products and experiences to a wider group without necessarily increasing our costs.

It is recognised that corporate memberships and services are an important and growing component of our income. We need to pursue opportunities to boost income from professional services and look at new income sources. This can be achieved by formalising relationships with Transport for NSW, ARTC, Sydney Metro and others. We are planning an "industry day" to build on the client base of heritage professionals we regularly work with.

We plan to make greater use of our site given its proximity to Alexandria's planned entertainment district and the Waterloo Metro station, which opens in 2024.

The Society needs you!

Success depends on the participation and support of members. Please consider how you might continue or commence your participation, which could be in an active way - volunteering in the office or in the archives, writing articles or researching, editing or cataloguing images; or in a passive way, such as signing-up an interested relative or friend, contributing financially or making occasional purchases at the bookshop; these all help the Society function and survive.

In particular, please be an advocate, not a critic. Support the board and staff who are working for members and the future of the Society.

Thank you for being a part of the 90 years of the ARHS. With your continued support we'll continue to be "for all who are interested in railways" and make it to 100 and beyond!

Your membership helps us to fund research and development in Australia's Railways and every membership includes a print subscription to Australian Railway History magazine. **TO SUBSCRIBE GO TO *ARHSNSW.COM.AU/MEMBERSHIP* OR SCAN THE QR CODE ➔**

ISSN 0157 243-1
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