



NEWSLETTER

LAUNCESTON & NORTH EAST RAILWAY

PO Box 1039, Launceston, TAS, 7250

MAY 2020

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Picnic at Karoola hosted by John and Jan Best - 8 Oct 2017

Thank you from the Board

Hello to all our members, friends and supporters,

This time of isolation has given us time to 'catch our breath' and look back at what has been achieved during the last 3 years to enable a tourist and heritage railway opportunity on the North East Line.

This is a true 'community driven' project. Your continuing action, enthusiasm and belief in the restoration of the railway initiated further investigation by Government at the highest level.

The contribution from Brett Whelan, Yarra Valley Railway, the Tasmanian Association of Tourist Railways (TATrail) together with our Advisory Committee has gained us recognition from Government, business and industry. We are recognised as a professional organisation with members who have the experience and expertise to achieve our goals.

The commitment of time and energy by the many volunteers every weekend to work on the project without knowing the outcome has shown incredible dedication.





In particular we would like to thank John and Jan Best who have so generously allowed us to install railway tracks on their property at Karoola for the DP Railcar and Trailer. Their willingness to host a picnic to show the public our enthusiasm, as well as enabling access to the site for all our volunteers and visitors has been outstanding.

THANK YOU!

Lease Agreement Signed

On the 11 March 2020 Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Michael Ferguson officially notified LNER that the Deed of Agreement between the Crown and LNER had been signed.

"This provides a Crown Lease permitting LNER a range of services on the railway infrastructure between Turners Marsh and Lilydale.

The section from Turners Marsh to Coldwater Creek will be a matter for future consideration." stated the Minister.

* * * * *

This was achieved following a meeting with Minister Ferguson in December by the Advisory Group and many hours of negotiation by Wendy McLennan, Ralph Berry and Chris Martin with the Department of State Growth.

LNER has been required to hold a public liability insurance of \$20mill to enable works to take place around the railway corridor. There will be no operation of any motorised vehicle in the railway corridor until further negotiations have taken place with the Department of State Growth.

LNER will be responsible for any trespass on the railway and are placing notification signs along the corridor.

We appreciate that many of our members live along the corridor and we would like to ensure that we have a working relationship with all land owners.

If you would like further clarification of these matters please contact:

Ralph Berry 0418 638 261

Three Years Under the Microscope

The North East Rail Corridor runs for 64 kilometres between Coldwater Creek and Scottsdale. The last passenger train ran in 2003 and the line was closed to freight in 2005. The corridor has been the responsibility of TASrail.

Following Dorset Council's announcement of its proposal to develop a rail trail, in 2015, the community comprising residents and farmers (NERAF) and LNER presented an alternative proposal to develop a heritage tourist railway on the North East Rail Corridor.

LNER been involved in discussions with engineers, consultants, bureaucrats and Ministers. WE have prepared several business plans, written lengthy reports and conducted many assessments of the

corridor. This has been a challenging and often confrontational time for everyone. The sequence of events is as follows:

May 2017 Now Premier, Peter Gutwein recognised when he was the Treasurer and Bass member that the railway corridor was a divisive issue within the community. He wanted to ensure that the facts were on the table before a final decision was made. \$50k was allocated for an inquiry into the development.

May 2018 Infrastructure Tasmania, appointed Consultants Raylink and Linquage International. The outcome was that LNER had the expertise to make it happen.

The Government consequently tasked the Department of Treasury and Finance to conduct an assessment of the feasibility of both proposals. The outcome was that both proposals had the capacity to generate economic and employment benefits in the region.

July 2018 The Government announced that it wished for both projects to have the opportunity to proceed and would allocate sections of the line accordingly.

The Scottsdale to Lilydale Falls section of the north-east rail line be utilised for the purpose of establishing the rail trail project for cyclists.

The heritage rail proposal be offered a two stage pathway initially beginning on the 12.5 kilometre section of the north-east rail line, running from Turners Marsh to Lilydale for establishing the heritage rail project.

Subject to successful completion of this first stage a future corridor expansion to Coldwater Creek to access TasRails operational Launceston to Bell Bay line be considered as stage two.

Legislative Council Inquiry - House of Review - October 2018

The role of the Legislative Council - Upper House of Parliament in Tasmania is to examine the detail and merit of legislation from many points of view and provide checks and balances to the Government of the day to ensure accountability.

8 October 2018, the Legislative Council Government Administration Committee 'B' resolved to conduct an inquiry to inquire into and report upon potential tourism opportunities for the North East Rail Corridor.

The public were given the opportunity to present their views.

Over 70 submissions were received. The Committee conducted several days of hearings, visited Yarra Valley Railway and Central Otago Railway in New Zealand.

The selection of these two sites was interesting as they have already been through the shared railway with rail trail process.



TALKS: A Legislative Council inquiring the North-East Railway Corridor held its first public hearing in Launceston on Tuesday. Picture: Neil Richardson

Heritage rail supporters argued for the "big picture" of Tasmanian tourism in Launceston on Tuesday, during the first public hearing over the contentious North-East Railway Corridor.

The final report recommended that “where possible, the rail trail is co-located within the rail corridor and that rail infrastructure is not removed unless necessary for construction of the rail trail.”

The report further stated that a co-located (side-by-side) rail trail and heritage rail is not achievable for the entire length of the North East Rail Corridor.

“A heritage railway extending beyond Lilydale to Scottsdale would be challenging and expensive to develop due to the length of the line, bridge repairs, additional ancillary costs and the requirements to install level crossings, all to the required standards of the National Rail Safety Regulator.”



However, it has been recommended that where possible, any sections of the North East Railway, particularly between Lilydale and Wyena, that are not repurposed for a rail trail are retained so it could be restored in future should the heritage train become viable.

LNER recognised by Government as a Tourism Entity

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| 24 Sept 2018 | Launceston City Council ‘noted the recommendations of the Dept of Finance. The Council also had a preferred outcome for the heritage railway to extend the settlement at Wyena. This position was further supported at recent Council meetings. |
| 16 Oct 2019 | Corridor notices to consider the official managers for two sections of the non-operational line were tabled in parliament. The main legislation passed parliament without any opposition and have been approved by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Michael Ferguson. |
| 3 Mar 2020 | <p>The Premier gave his State of the State Address.</p> <p>‘A critical part of our tourism strategy is to encourage and drive visitation to our regions and last year we saw two thirds of all visitors dispersing into our regional areas.’</p> |
| 19 Mar 2020 | <p>Ivan Dean gave a reply speech to the Premier in which he addressed the North East Line.</p> <p>‘It not only provides an opportunity for the younger people and people who are able to ride bicycles, but there must also be an opportunity for those many mature people who do not ride bikes to get into those areas as well.</p> <p>Just as important, if you look at the tourists coming to this state, they would go into that area if they had the ability to do so - in other words, heritage rail.</p> <p>We cannot allow the destruction of the rail line between Lilydale Falls and Wyena. It is the greatest tourist attraction section of the North East Line by far. It includes the magnificent Denison Gorge and the tunnel at Tunnel. This is the reason the rail trail wants access to that area. As came out of the briefings in this Chamber, there ought to be an opening for heritage rail, Launceston and North East Railway - LNER - to get into that area.’</p> |

LNER Collaboration

Throughout the last three years during negotiations to get the railway our volunteers and supporters have been committed to restoration of the rail car at Karoola.



We have worked with TASrail for a line clean up out of Launceston.

We are part of the wider Tasmanian Association of Tourist Railways (TATrail). A major undertaking at the moment is the organisation of the 150th anniversary of rail in Tasmania which will commence in Feb 2021 with co-ordinated major activities finishing at the celebrated Sheffield SteamFest weekend.

Our members often assist with works prior to SteamFest. This year we had a fundraising stall where we had lots of cakes, badges and publicity.



Profile of one of our experienced volunteers - Wayne Venn

Wayne is one of LNER's volunteers who has already given several years of his time and knowledge to secure the North East line.

We are extremely honoured to have this personable, down-to-earth Tasmanian who is prepared to give the truth and 'tell it as it is' and to be part of our contingent to make this project a success.

Starting on the railway at 20, Wayne spent his working life as a Ganger, Assistant Ganger, Track Supervisor and Inspector.

He started with Ray Whelan's (1922-1978) special relaying gang working from:

- Relbia to Western Junction;
- Building the railyards and loops and crossings to service the Coal Mine at Fingal;
- Relaying track through the Denison Gorge and Wyena – this included thermit welding of rails.

Wayne then joined the Lebrina gang with Jack Brill (1910-2000) and relaid track from Lilydale to Scottsdale.

After retiring Wayne then worked with contractor Craig Webb (another LNER volunteer), re-sleepering the statewide network.

Wayne was then approached by Roger Smith to prepare the North East rails and sleepers for use on the Abt Railway. He was tasked with packing, building sets of points and crossings to lay them out to fit the former rail formation on the West Coast. This was a huge task and outlay of transport only to have the assigned contractor sell it and ship in 63lb rail they had previously purchased and pulled out from a railway line in Victoria.

Wayne stayed for the project. The contracting firm often asked for his expert advice and experience to rebuild this railway.

Prior to the trial run of a train from Queenstown to Rinadeena Saddle, Wayne's safety training as an Inspector came into practice and he decided

to walk the track to ensure that it was fit for purpose. He had some major concerns about



sections of the track with the possibility of potential accidents. After reporting the severity of the issues he identified, he was finally given the backing and respect for what he was saying. The Government appointed a new contracting firm and repairs were made. Wayne continued to work on the Apt Railway, (now West Coast Wilderness), even though he found that the engineers often challenged his credentials and his extensive knowledge of rail specifications.

On one particular occasion the engineers had pegged the track for laying and Wayne could see that there wasn't sufficient room for the train to come into the station without demolishing the newly built platform. On another occasion the curve was pegged too wide to fit into the area marked and would have ended up with the railway amongst the trees.

Wayne always sought advice from qualified railway engineers to clarify his decisions about rail requirements and was seen to be the practical 'go to' person on the railway.

When the Australian Rail Authority visited for their inspection, all queries were directed to Wayne for discussion and explanation based on his rail knowledge. The certification was granted by the Australian Rail Authority with only one minor change required.

Supporters - Doreen Rebbecchi and Gary Farrelly

Two ardent supporters who are trying to save the tunnel. Garry has been handing out brochures about the history of the Tunnel to thousands of people who have visited since 2017.

They have been part of the community that has thrown its support behind LNER. They have held banners and been involved in all fundraising. No job is too hard.

Doreen writes:

Our family moved to live at Tunnel in 1949. The station was always a hive of activity. The early train from Launceston bought the mail which was sorted by the Station master Postmistress who lived in the station house across the line.

The station had a post office room in one end and a goods division in the centre and a passenger waiting room and toilets at the other end.

A separate large goods shed was nearby. There were stock yards and several small rail sheds where the fettlers kept tools, the rail trolley and trike (a three wheeled manual trolley). There were many people employed on the railway.



This train would also carry passengers. The second train known as the goods train would arrive around 10.00am with – fertilizer, stock (sheep, cattle and pigs). Our mother used to have 3 week old chickens arrive at the station. There was pulp wood to go to the Burnie paper mill and cream cans for Legerwood. Everything went through the station.

The rail sleepers were also cut at the station and stored in the station yard ready for use.

The rail car came each day with passengers – Scottsdale to Launceston in the morning and return late afternoon stopping all along the way.

We were very excited one day when a train carrying the circus animals for Scottsdale came through. There were always lots of people travelling from Launceston to the Scottsdale Show and back for the Launceston Show

The train ride through the Tunnel was always a highlight and we had to close the windows because of the coal smoke from the steam engine.

Remembering



It was with great sadness that we heard of Bob Vanselow's sudden death in February 2019. Bob was a railway structural engineer who prepared detailed track reports on the railway line and bridges which we were able to utilise in our discussions. Millie, his wife, said she remembered him having piles of papers laid out and was really enthusiastic about our project and saving the line. Vale Bob we will not forget what you contributed.



Another recognised figure and loss to Tasmania's railway community was Neils Brun, General Manager, Don River Railway who died suddenly on 6 October, 2019. One of Neils key visions was to connect the heritage line at Don River with the main line so that there would be a connection to the North West. You can rest assured that the members of Don River together with the other tourist rail organisations in the state will continue to work towards that goal.

How LNER Evolved - Stay on board for the journey

In 2011 a group of rail fans with mechanical, electrical and train operation skills established Diesel Traction Tasmania Inc. (DTT) to save, restore and maintain diesel traction locomotives that were being disposed of by Tasrail.

The group was also keen to obtain any other rolling stock, railway equipment and buildings. TasRail donated two locomotives 2144 and 2122 which still remain at TasRails East Tamar complex. Tasrail have been very supportive of LNER and are continually making generous offers of equipment that is no longer required by the railway.



DTT investigated the possibility of a railway museum at the former Launceston Railway Roundhouse. When this was not supported due to future development of the Inveresk precinct, an alternative site for a heritage depot at Mowbray was identified.

In 2016 the North East Farmers and Residents met and discussed the possibility of DTT establishing a heritage rail operation on the North East Line from Scottsdale to Coldwater Creek. DTT then established a trading name of Launceston and North East Railway (LNER) which not only reflected the new direction of the organisation but meant that it could become an accredited operator.

Much water has flowed under the bridge since then, (see section 3 years under the microscope) and the organisation was given a lease on the

Turners Marsh to Lilydale section of the corridor. During this time volunteers continued to work on the rail car and trailer which were so generously secured by Paul Cabalazar.



LNER are very excited about this opportunity that they have secured. There are no illusions about the challenges that confront us, but we know that we have the experience and expertise as well as the mentorship to enable us to establish a successful business and a tourist icon for the North East.

Our lease on the corridor has given us access to the land around the railway. Once the insurance requirements and accreditation with the National Rail Safety Regulator are achieved we will be able to operate our railcar and locomotives on the rail.

Our focus will be to establish a rail hub with a station, entertainment area, museum and workshops at Turners Marsh as well as controlling the vegetation along the remainder of the line. LNER would like to keep the integrity and heritage of each area as well as working to create jobs and opportunities for the region.

The next stage will be to access the corridor from Turner's Marsh to Cold Water Creek and then access via the mainline to Launceston.

This is a community driven project and it is our volunteers and supporters who really believe in this project that has helped to make it happen.



LNER WILL SUCCEED WITH YOUR HELP - STAY ON BOARD FOR THE RIDE!!

Join us today - Membership and Donations

LNER will achieve a working tourist and heritage railway but we need your support!

Lets get this project moving so we can create jobs and a future for rail tourism.

**PEOPLE POWER PUT LNER OVER THE LINE - BY BECOMING A MEMBER OR GIVING A
DONATION YOU WILL BE CONTRIBUTING TO AN EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE.**

This will be the most exciting projects to be developed just outside Launceston.

LET'S PRESERVE WHAT WE HAVE AND MAKE THIS A LIVING TOURIST ICON

**Our Annual General Meeting will be held at the Lilydale Hall
Saturday July 4th 2020 from 11.00am to 2.00pm
(Subject to Covid-19 Restrictions)**

(Please contact David Payne 0407 934 423 for further details)

Become a member of LNER

You can become a full member for \$40.00 per year or an Associate Member for \$20.00.

Provide your details - Name, Address, Telephone, Email and skills for volunteering to Ralph Berry our Membership Officer. email: lner.members@outlook.com or PO Box 1039 Launceston, Tas. 7250

To make a donation:

Bank Account - Diesel Traction Tasmania BSB: 037-608 Account No. 533955

Message from the Chair - Wendy McLennan

Often over the last three years I compared LNER to *The Little Engine That Could*. This children's story was written in 1906 to teach children the value of optimism and hard work.

When the engine was asked if it could pull the train over the hill, it replied 'I think I can'. As it went up the steep incline it continued to repeat 'I think I can'. Passing over the hill it sang 'I thought I could'. When it reached its destination it happily stated - 'I knew I could'.

This has been the theme of LNER. We have transitioned from convincing that we could pull the train to accepting this exciting challenge of creating an outstanding tourist icon for the state.



We are indebted to our advisors for their continuing mentorship and advice. Paul Cabalzar, businessman and entrepreneur, Professor David Adams, Pro Vice Chancellor, University of Tasmania, Chris Martin, Structural and Civil Engineer, Owner, CSE Tasmania, Brett Whelan, Chair, Yarra Valley Railway, and Robert Ravens, Bridestowe Lavender Farm. Thank you all for your time, energy and support.

Together with our community and skilled volunteers we will reach our destination.

Please contact me at any time: Phone 0427 583 853 or email: bridportwendy@bigpond.com



TASMANIAN TRANSPORT MUSEUM

Glenorchy, Hobart. Train rides using a diesel railcar are run on the first Sunday each month and a vintage steam locomotive runs on the third.



DERWENT VALLEY RAILWAY

New Norfolk Station. The locomotives, carriages and other rolling stock in our collection have been undergoing refurbishment with an expectation of recommencing operations in the near future. Explore our New Norfolk yard and workshop facilities.



DON RIVER RAILWAY

Forth Road, Don. The 30min train trip travels on the eastern bank of the the Don River to our junction in Coles Beach. On your return, spend some time and visit our museum and workshop.



LAUNCESTON TRAMWAY MUSEUM

Launceston. Located in the historic Inveresk Precinct, within walking distance of the CBD, the Museum features a workshop, a large modern display gallery and access to rail track running through the precinct.



SHEFFIELD STEAM AND HERITAGE CENTRE

Spring Street, Sheffield, the town of Murals. Steam train rides are run on the 1st Saturday each month. Steamfest festival is held every March long weekend.



WEE GEORGIE WOOD STEAM RAILWAY

Tullah. The 1924 steam locomotive, is in operation on scheduled weekends over the summer season.



WEST COAST WILDERNESS RAILWAY

Strahan. A reconstruction of the Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company railway in Tasmania between Queenstown and Strahan. The railway is significant because of its Apt rack system.



RAIL TRACK RIDERS

Maydena. Rail Track Riders provide pedal powered tours along two and half kilometres of the Derwent Valley line from the old Maydena yard toward Florentine.