WELCOME to the 24th newsletter of NSW HRSI. The objective of this newsletter is to inform, educate and provide insights about the latest updates, plans and heritage news relating to Heritage Railway Stations and Infrastructure (HRSI) across NSW. The news is separated into 4 core NSW regions – Northern, Western and Southern NSW and Sydney.

MAIN NEWS

Phil Buckley, NSW HRSI Editor

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PERWAY IN FLOODS – NSW INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGED 1940-1950s

Right is an extract from the now disused NSWGR General Appendix Part 1 Regulation 17) indicating the maximum flood water level that various classes of steam and early generations of diesel locomotives and rollingstock were permitted to travel through.

When comparing diesel locomotives to steam locomotives, it is very clear that the steam locomotives were much more useful and could traverse up to nearly 5 times the flood water heights than diesels. Rail staff in the old days were experienced and turned off the air conditioning on the daylight air-conditioned expresses. They would then plastic wrap the equipment beneath the cars so they were again usable once they had safely passed the flooded areas.

Below are some scenes of NSW under water and NSWGR operations affected by the resulting flooding.

Maitland 1949 flood

![Image](image-url)
This is taken from the NSWGR Annual report and shows what the 1950 flood did to the track infrastructure at Kempsey.

Maitland flood 1950 NSWGR Annual report
1951 Maitland flood
In the 1952 flood eventually operations ceased as flood level increased and rail staff took to their alternative mode of transport.

**FLOOD WATER ADVICE** - Never drive through any flood waters. Hidden objects can easily hit, injure or kill people. Flood water can damage infrastructure and also create huge holes in the ground. These can easily swallow up cars, trucks, trains and people.
NARRABRI TO WALGETT – A BRANCH LINE REVIEW

History is sometimes created out of order. The normal sequence of the evolution in the use of transport was not followed for the North West NSW to the town of Walgett. Strangely, the car arrived first in this town in the early 1900s. With the technology of the day rapidly evolving, the still primitive car arrived even before the railways came to town. Indeed even more strange…was that people had flown in aircraft in Australia long before Walgett had a train service. So how did Walgett eventually get a railway line and when did it happen?

Let’s find out a quick overview and then delve into its protracted history. The Walgett railway branch line is located in northwestern New South Wales. The line branched off the Main North railway line at Narrabri West and was opened in five stages, Narrabri South Junction to Narrabri West 1882, Narrabri West to Burren 1903, Burren to Cryon 1905, Cryon - Walgett Wheat Terminal 1908 and finally Walgett Wheat Terminal to Walgett in 1908. The line passes through the key towns of Wee Waa and Burren before terminating to the east of Walgett. The line is still used for the occasional wheat hauls with the section between the Walgett wheat terminal and the former Walgett station closed.

HISTORY

In the 1870s the NSWGR rail network (or as we know it these days under the privatisation of public transport asset management... as the CRN ) was expanding north, west and south. In January 1879 the town of Walgett had a public meeting to bring to Government notice their claims of district railway needs. The rails were heading north west and by 1882 the railway line reached Narrabri West and the town flourished as a terminus for 15 years before the line finally reached to the north just a few kms away at the Narrabri township. From 1884 onwards, the people of Walgett again made periodic efforts to obtain a railway connection with the existing NSWGR railway branch lines. The ongoing battle to obtain the direct line went back and forth with various routes being discussed and MPs pushing for influence. In 1887, The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertise wrote “The nearest railway terminus is Narrabri, 110 miles from Walgett. The next is Nevertire, 150 miles. The only way of reaching this district than from these railways is by coach, which is too expensive for men of small means, so that general settlement cannot set in until the line is carried onto this place”. In 1888 The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser said “The Narrabri Walgett Railway League has issued Narrabri-Walgett railway pamphlets of statistics for public information. Names of several gentlemen have also been submitted to give evidence before the Railway Commissioners. The statistics enumerated in the pamphlets make out a strong case in favour of the railway to Walgett”. 
In 1899 The Stock and Station Journal published this opinion of a reader “TO THE EDITOR ' STOCK AND STATION JOURNAL.

Sir,—On Saturday, November 18, the Railway Commissioners, Messrs. Oliver, Fehoh and Kirkcaldie, accompanied by the Chief Traffic Manager, Mr Harper, visited Walgett for the ostensible purpose of ascertaining for themselves whether the traffic of Walgett and district would justify them in recommending the construction of a railway to that place. The residents of Walgett held a meeting in the evening. The Commissioners were present and the residents were requested to furnish them with information. The fact that Mr. Usher, Inspector Railway Department, had on the previous Saturday obtained from the Secretary of the Walgett Railway League and other residents all necessary statistics, really converted the public gathering into a prayer meeting; as a matter of course, the only prayer was, 'Give us this day, or as quickly as possible, our Walgett railway.'

Everyone present wanted a railway, and so long as they got it they did not care from what direction. After the speakers were finished a vote of thanks was accorded the Commissioners for taking everything so easy, and the real business of the evening began. Mr. Oliver, in reply, stated that the Commissioners' visit was one of business, and it had been done in a pleasant manner (he's a very nice man is Mr. Oliver). He thanked them all for playing into his hands so nicely by leaving the question of route out of the discussion. He said the Commissioners had recently taken an exceptional (I call it unconstitutional) course of recommending, that before the railway from Dubbo to Coonamble was passed, a line from Mudgee should be enquired into, as it would be shorter and better paying; and the same thing applied to Walgett. He said they were satisfied that Walgett was entitled to a railway, that they would recommend one, but as to what route it would take he was not prepared to say. Sir, 18 years ago it was conceded that Walgett was justly entitled to a railway, and it was thought that it could only go from Narrabri late in 1884 or early in 1885.

The then Secretary for Public Works, Mr. F. A. Wright, ignored the opinions of his colleagues, and introduced a line from Mudgee. The people of Walgett, and rightly so, most emphatically refused to have it from Mudgee, and went strongly for Narrabri. From 1887 to 1895 this subject, of so much vital interest to the small settlers of this district, was not heard of; then someone reopened the Narrabri route. A public meeting was held the following year in Walgett, and the Mudgee route was urged by a few enterprising citizens on broad national lines. The real sufferers, from want of railway communication, feeling that their leg was being pulled, took no notice of this agitation, and it petered out. In June, 1897, a big meeting was held in Walgett. The Narrabri route was affirmed, with but one dissentient, and a big petition was sent to the Minister for Works advocating the Narrabri route, and the Narrabri only.

To show you that it is the desire of the great majority of this district to join on to Narrabri, in April, 1898, at a public meeting held in Walgett the Secretary of the Railway League was deputed to go to Coonamble and tell the sectional committee on Warren - Coonamble proposal that Walgett did not want to join on to Coonamble, but with Narrabri, and in proof of earnestness £15 was subscribed in a few hours to defray the expenses of the representative. A perusal of the foregoing will convince the most skeptical that - the residents of this great and wealthy district, the real sufferers from want of railway communication, and the only persons whose desires and necessities should be taken into consideration, are not only in favor of the Narrabri route, but desire no other. We are promised a line from Narrabri through Eurie Eurie to Walgett. This line will answer all our requirements, and being the only line at present under consideration by the Government the servants of the Government should enquire into the prospects of that line paying and no other.

I contend that the meeting last Saturday night was simply a game of bluff, played by four servants of the Government of New South Wales, who, not content with disregarding the report and recommendation of two parties of disinterested gentlemen, who had been paid to do certain work, and (as the sequel shows) had done it well; but they must take the most exceptional course (exceptional from an officer, cheek from a private) of dictating to their employers, the representatives of the people, and asking them to ignore the report of their
peers, the Public Works Committee, chosen by them for the sole purpose of making enquiries into these proposals, consider a line from another point. No sooner do they take this most exceptional course than they bob up in Walgett, and, without actually receiving any information as to the real prospects of traffic debate that Walgett was justly entitled to a railway.

This is in reality telling the people that their leaving the choice of routes to the Government was materially assisting them in the scheme of blocking the Coonamble line, and also our only hope, the north side of the Namoi. To prove the insincerity of the Commissioners’ promise let me quote from report Narrabri-Pilliga railway proposal, page 38, sworn evidence of Mr. J. Harper, replies to questions 977, 978: ‘I do not think anything entitles Walgett to a railway.’

‘Circumstances do not warrant the construction of a line to Walgett.’ This evidence was given on November 5 (Gunpowder Plot!), 1897. Had the traffic grown so much in two years, one of which was an almost ruinous drought, as to justify the Commissioners’ promises or were the Commissioners grovelling to the people of Walgett in order to entice them to desert their true love Narrabri, and take up with this coquette Mudgee, and propose a union about the year 1920? The Railway Commissioners, in addition to their policy of centralisation, have always shown a very pronounced antagonism to a line to Walgett, which fact can be proved by anyone who will read the Narrabri - Pilliga report, and it is about time the Parliament of this country ignored a great deal of what these people say. The Commissioners and a few residents of Walgett ask us to go for this Mudgee extension on the patriotic principle of studying the national welfare. Is it studying the national welfare to build a line through the heart of the city to Circular Quay? Think of London, with it’s five millions, and the drive to Victoria, Paddington and Euston! Is it for the national welfare to build a bridge from Sydney to North Shore?

Was it on the broad patriotic principle of giving the greatest benefit to the greatest number to construct a line from Newcastle to Sydney? Were the people, who were interested in these great national boons, these vast projects, which must be national blessings costing many millions, requested to hesitate in the public interest? No! Yet we poor unfortunates, almost cub off from communication with our fellows, and topping on the brink of insolvency, when we ask, ‘on bended knee and bated breath,’ for a railway (promised for over 18 years), costing a quarter of a million, less than one half of the amount actually lost to the colony through the want of this line, we are told to sink our personal interests, and shriek ourselves hoarse for a railway in the sweet by and bye, built on broad national lines, as they tell us this Mudgee myth is.

It is time the small landholder emerged from the obscurity in which he loves to dwell, and, taking up his true position as the base of a nation’s greatness, stand each shoulder to shoulder and demand this boom which others enjoy, but denied to him, the only absolute safeguard from the fear of insolvency, which is continually dangling before his eyes”.

By September 1900, the NSW Parliament agreed to construct the branch line from Narrabri to Walgett and onto Collarenebri. The start of the work was a positive sign for the region but voters could not know how unpredictable this work was to become over the next few years. The work was pushed along in spurts ... a lot of work and then quiet periods. In these quiet periods of no construction, the end of the line became temporary terminuses and new worker villages would grow. Farmers also used the locations to move livestock onto the trains, while passengers were transferred to other road coach transport to continue their journeys onto the towns or Walgett. (Sound familiar to many in the 2020 era ... trains then buses?)

As the branch line was extended west, rail services were slowly extended. In 1901 from Narrabri to Walgett, passing through the now formed towns. In 1901 a meeting of the Wee Waa branch of the Farmers and Settlers’ Association saw a resolution unanimously carried urging the construction of a bridge across the Namoi River, about 2.5 miles from Wee Waa. This was to enable a large number of settlers access to the Wee
Waa railway station which was being constructed. A petition for presentation to the Minister for Works was signed by the interested settlers.

In 1902 during an extension of the railway line from Narrabri west towards Walgett, the settlement of Burren Junction came into being turned into a large railway camp.

By August 1902 construction on the Wee Waa railway station building started with expectations of completion within a few weeks. However it took until December 1903 before it was officially opened. Further west Cryon was also a temporary railway terminus for a short time. A 1904 Daily Telegraph news story stated “TENDER ACCEPTED. J. Allibone is the lowest tenderer for the erection of station buildings at Cryon railway station, on the Narrabri-Walgett railway, the price being £1223.” With the railhead at Cryon an accommodation house was built. It was claimed to have eleven rooms for travellers and catered for people changing from rail to coach transport. Eventually Cryon had a small settlement which had a hotel, general store, fruit shop, post office, school and railway building.

Where the railway line branched off to serve Collarenebri, the Burren Junction was proclaimed a village on 26 September 1903.

In 1904 the Muswellbrook Chronicle story discussed the Walgett Railway line.

“A series of questions relating for the construction of the Narrabri to Walgett - Collarendabri railway were submitted to the Minister for Works in the Legislative Assembly by Mr. Collins, M.L A. Mr. Lee replied: -The earthworks- in formation were completed last year, with the exception of a short length near Collarendabri. The earthworks for all station yards between Cryon and Walgett, and Burren Junction and Collarendabri, have not yet been commenced. The rails are laid to Cryon on the Walgett section, and for six miles from Burren Junction, on the Collarendabri section. The remainder of the earthworks are covered with grass and other herbage common to the district. Teams have cut up the formation in several places and some expenditure will be required to put the earthworks in proper order. The estimated cost to complete this line to Walgett is £72,547 ; and to complete to Collarendabri, £172.273.II cannot say, until the amount required for loans generally is being considered by Cabinet, what provision will be made for continuing tho work.”

A 1905 Sydney Morning Herald story discussed the lines in the north west with “PROPOSED NEW RAILWAY LINES.

The desire of the Government to construct four short railways on the piecework system is approved by the circumstances of the respective cases, but it is backed up by some curious arguments. We have, it is stated, £310,000 worth of railway material lying idle. It was bought by the State Government, presumably in its spend thrifty days. At any rate, there does not seem to have been any use found for it, though we should not be surprised to learn that by some more or less intricate calculation it could be shown that the purchase was a clear bargain to the State. The public is accustomed to that sort of explanation. It would need to have been a good bargain in the present instance—a very good bargain indeed, for we have to pay interest at the rate of £12,400 per annum on it since the transaction was completed. The problem that commended itself to the Works Department was to so work this idle material in with new railways as to minimise this tribute in some way. If we did not know something of the need for railways in the districts about to be served, this might be quoted as an example of the art of reasoning backwards on reconstructive lines, like the evolution of the figure of Hercules from the foot, or that ingenious demonstration by Abner Dean of Angel's, which led to the break-up of the Scientific Society on the
Stanislow. "Given some waste material, to construct a railway," the problem might run; and it is so worked out that three of the proposed lines can be made to use up £196,000 worth of it, which would save £7840 a year in interest, and £600, the cost of looking after it. The balance would have to look after itself, but in the meanwhile the difference between the interest thus saved and the expected loss on three of the lines would amount to only £3290. The difference between one loss and another represents the annual cost of these lines to the department, whereas if the purchase of this idle material had not been made in the first instance the loss would have been £11,130. It is an ingenious argument, and might be made to prove anything.

But though we are not precisely infatuated with this reasoning, there are good arguments why the people along the proposed lines from Bogan Gate to Trundle, Manilla to Barraba, Temora to Barrellan, and Burren Junction to Merrywinebone on the way to Collarendabri should have their railway services. The case for the last named was made out once more by the reports we published of a recent Ministerial visit, and as to the others the justification is that they tap the wheat belt and assist primary production in a fertile district. Then we have the public spirited movement of the farmers along the proposed Bogan Gate to Trundle line, who are ready to take up funded stock at 3½ per cent. to cover the cost, and also to guarantee the expected loss on the working-cost of their line during five years. This sturdy self-help is creditable to the farmers, and the example may well be imitated so long as political pressure is not allowed to make this part of the bargain a dead letter.

Then there is the question of piecework. We have seen in the past that the butty-gang system requires careful watching. In this instance we have an estimate of piecework cost, and tenderers are to be asked to quote contract prices. If on a comparison of the two it is seen that the local people of these self reliant and self-helpful districts, who are so ready to share the burden of cost, are able to do the work by their town labour at a reasonable cost, it would certainly be fair to give them every possible consideration”.

The 1906 Coolgardie Miner story told of a RAILWAY ACCIDENT.

"G. L. Herring and his wife were dreadfully injured at the Burren Junction Station today. They were crossing the line in a buggy, which was run into and smashed by a train. Both were carried a long distance along the line before they were thrown clear. Mrs. Herring is not expected to live."

A 1906 Daily Telegraph story stated “DAY LABOR ON RAILWAY’S. Replying to Mr. Fegan, Mr. Lee said that construction work on the Cryon-Walgett railway was to be carried out by day labor, it was no reversal to the policy of the Government, for the simple reason that since he had been in office whenever day labor could be profitably employed it had been so employed. (Hear, hear.)”

A Sydney Morning Herald 1908 story “A BLEAK, DRY PLAIN COLLARENEBRI, Thursday.

Great dissatisfaction is expressed at no provision being made on the estimates completing the railway from Collarenebri East to Collarenebri, a distance of nine miles. The Minister, for Works, on his last visit to Collarenebri, promised that this work would receive immediate attention, but that was about two years ago, and no attempt has yet been made to carry out the work. The line to Collarenebri was sanctioned nearly 10 years ago, and the earthworks subsequently constructed right into the town. They are now used as a roadway for vehicles where not too high (some places they are 25 foot in height). After many years the line was completed to the present terminus, which is on a bleak, dry plain. Water required for the railway employees has to be brought by train from Burren Junction. Thora has been more stock trucked from Collarenebri East during the past two years than from any other station in the north-west; but still no provision has been made for water for the stock. The stock-owners complain greatly at not being able to give their sheep water under 12 or 18 hours before putting them in the trucks, which, in summer time, is absolute cruelty,”

The branch line finally reached Walgett and the first train steamed in on 7 November 1908 to a big local welcome. The establishment of the much needed rail connection created a building boom in Walgett. At the
same time the arrival of the railway was met with good farming returns for the district. With this initial good regional outcome, the railway helped to boost the locals' predictions of the growing prosperity of the Walgett area.

Construction of the railway also created a new line of small villages. The right of way of the railway ran further south than the traditional routes through the area, which were situated closer to the Namoi. Budding centres such as Old Burren and Bugilbone, anchored around an existing hotel or store withered and died, sometimes leaving a building or two but often only the site remains.

In the end the proposed works saw the branch line not even reach the town of Collarenebri as had been promise. The line was terminated 13 km south east at Pokataroo. This reduced line was due to the Railway Department trying to avoid the building of a number of costly bridges between Pokataroo and Collarenebri.

There were once plans for a Dubbo to Walgett branch line - https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/123162431?searchTerm=burren%20junction%20railway%20station&searchLimits=sortby

In 1909 the Sydney Morning Herald reported “RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS TOUR DEPUTATION AT WEE WAA. , Thursday The Railway Commissioners passed through here last night for Sydney. , A deputation consisting of “ Councillors Coppleson and Cameron, Messrs. Boyle and Brunsden waited upon them at the station, and asked that the railway platform be lengthened, the office accommodation increased, and a junior operator appointed, that the two hours’ wait at Narrabri ho cut out by running a train through on this branch; that a wool dump be repaired, trucking yards accommodation increased, and that favourable consideration be given to a line from Wee Waa to Coonamble, to open up the resources of Pilliga scrub. The Chief Railway Commissioner was courteous, and favourably replied regarding the platform and office. The matter of dealing with running an accelerated service was difficult, he said, but promised to look into it again, and see it some better arrangement could be made. He had already dealt with the matter of trucking yards here and at Merah, and the wool dump would’ be reported upon. Regarding the Wee Waa-Coonamble railway, he said, it had never been submitted to his department”.

In 1911 a plan to build from Coonabarbran to Burren Junction would open up 2million acres - https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/115283585?searchTerm=burren%20junction%20railway%20station&searchLimits=sortby

In 1913 SMH story, said “a washway on the line at near Merah North on Tuesday, the mail train was delayed some time till repairs had been effected. The washaway was caused by flood waters. The flood reached the 20ft mark on Sunday at noon, but has been falling fast ever since. Many of the low-lying lands were under water, and stock had to be shifted in some places on Boolcarrol station. Another three feet rise would have put the flood into the town”.

There was a proposal in 1913 to connect the Gwabegar line to the Walgett line at Burren Junction, and although approved, this connection line was never constructed.

In 1914 “The Land” reported that “In 1914, The Railway Commissioners advised that the request of the Association for water to be laid on to the Wee Waa trucking yards had had consideration, but it was regretted that the request could not be complied with.”

In 1916 plans were underway for more rail in the north west with the 1916 Daily Telegraph reporting, “RAILWAY STATION SITES.

With a view of preventing, chaos and waste In connection with the choice of sites for new railway routes, a special election hoard, . consisting of representatives of the Land, Works, mid Railway Departments, were
recently appointed, at, the instance of the Minister for Lands. This board has just made its first tour, and has chosen number of station sites on the Dubbo to Werris Creek line and Coonbarabran to Burren Junction line”.

In 1916 a war memorial honour board was constructed at placed at Narrabri West railway station. [https://www.warmemorialsregister.nsw.gov.au/content/narrabri-west-railway-honour-roll](https://www.warmemorialsregister.nsw.gov.au/content/narrabri-west-railway-honour-roll)

In 1918 Wee Waa railway yard saw 28,697 bushells moved to the city.

A 1920 story saw The Maitland Daily Mercury “Repairing railway bridge - Thursday 8th of July the Naomi (River) rose 5 feet during the night. The current is still very Swift flowing through the big five chain break on the east side of the bridge and the games are sandbagging and pigstying across the gap. Will be made on the gap in the approach on the Wee Waa side despite the strong tone so that repair work can be commenced on the long length of line to Walgett and Collarenbri. Passenger service to Wee Waa will probably be resumed on Saturday and Monday but it may be another week before the Walgett and Collarenbri, services are resumed. The station master and his family, able to return home today and most of the families have now left the hotel and public buildings heavy reports of stock losses continue to arrive pastoralists estimate flood losses of very high figures”. No trains were expected for another 10days.

In 1925 Merah North station and yard featured in the North Western Courier with “Realising that public exposure is the best methods of public grievances, and that just criticism through 'Courier' has been recognised by as many as a satisfactory system I desire to state some particulars of a much discussed subject. ' During the. dry period a great number of stock have been trucked here and in fact trucking is now almost a daily job, but- the grade of the loop running to the trucking yards Is very far from satisfactory as the following information will prove. It takes four men to push a loaded truck and as two men are employed — a station master and' porter— It is necessary, for the loaders, to leave the trucking and assist in pushing trucks. Naturally this causes a good deal of inconvenience. This criticism of loaders and agents, etc, is not only confided to each other, as complaints have been forwarded to the proper quarter, but all have because I think I being disregarded. I think I am correct instating; ‘that Merah North is one of the most important .trucking centres in the North-west, and to see the disgraceful grade In question gives one tho impression that the Railway authorities do not consider the interests of the general public. The S.M. and porter are exceedingly obliging and do all in their power to look after things and it is only right that some attention should be given to the matter under discussion. I am not conversant enough- with railway .matters to know whether tho S.M. is expected to give reasonable attention to the clerical work of the station, but it is an impossibility -for two men to attend to the wool loading, trucking, and general work, especially under such unsatisfactory conditions.

If it is considered Impossible to improve this loop the it is up to the Departments send an engine to assist in pushing the trucks. No doubt the Department will state that it would involve extra' expense but considering .the great quantity, of trucking a little extra expense should not be spared. If the Department desires to prove that it caters for the public; it should not disregard these complaints but should immediately inspect the loop and have it properly graded or decide on another method to lessen the Inconvenience of loading. [This matter has been referred to the local' Assistant District Superintendent and he states that the siding at the stock yards at Merah North received attention as recent as two weeks ago and the road was lowered so that the trucks after being loaded could be dropped down from the race and the empty ones placed ready for loading. He understands that the road is now in a satisfactory condition. It is understood that the Railway Area Commissioner will be passing through Merah North this week and would advise the writer to interview that gentleman and place his case before him”

In 1925 a plan to extend the Gwabegar to Burren Junction was still developing.
“The longer the delay in completing the railway from Gwabegar to Burren Junction, the more inexplicable becomes the attitude of those who have the power to sanction this work. The finalising of the project is, in the first place, an affair of honour. It would be the fulfilment of a clear and definite promise — a promise which has been trusted by settlers who have made homes in the country stretching between the present terminus and Burren Junction, which is the rightful and reasonable terminus. Money has been granted for the construction of the line on the district understanding that it would link up with Burren Junction, and any delay in the work or any alteration in the plans involves a most serious breach of faith. As the ‘Guardian’ has frequently emphasised, the few miles that remain to be traversed are admirably adapted for economic construction. In no other part of the State could any railway be built at a lower minimum cost. And the benefits that must accrue if the line is linked with the North and North-west are so obvious and urgent that it is difficult to justify the persistent apathy of the authorities. Apart, from supplying a vital need to vast and important stock areas: in time of drought, the railway will assist the development of the Pilliga Scrub and give speedier access to markets. The route has been surveyed, and prospective stations have even been marked on maps. There has been the fullest intention on the part of the authorities originally to connect the line with its natural terminus, and the policy of leaving the terminus indefinitely in a barren and sandy spot is as wasteful and as uneconomical as it is unreasonable. What is lacking is organisation. It seems as if only pressure, and constant pressure at that, will ensure the carrying out of an honourable and highly essential agreement. The ‘Guardian’ suggests that towns along the line, should make specific representations regarding the matter, and continue to make them until the line is completed. This paper has incurred a great deal of hostility in the past, even in Mudgee, by pressing the claims of outside centres and the need to extend the railway system to them. Most citizens wanted Mudgee to remain a terminus. Railway policies lend themselves to a display of prejudice and selfishness, and the result is reflected in many non-paying lines in the State, to-day. There has been in some instances either a singular lack of vision or an attempt to serve sectional interests. The extension of the line to Burren Junction is simply a commonsense policy. It is sound morally and materially. Surely railway leagues in towns on the route can exercise influence in seeing that the line is completed without further delays. Other strings are being pulled, and it is now essential for prompt and persuasive representations to be made by all who I have the welfare of the State and district at heart.”

In 1927 Evening News story stated:

“RAILWAY WANTED LINE FROM GWABEGAR The agitation for the construction of a railway from Gwabegar to Burren Junction will be revived on the occasion of the Railway Commissioners’ visit to Gwabegar on August 15. The Pilliga Graziers’ Association has appointed a deputation to interview Mr. Fraser and his colleagues, and will draw their attention to a promise said to have been made by the Public Works Department to have money placed on the 1927-28 Estimates for the construction of this line. A previous Government made preliminary arrangements in connection with the undertaking, and surveyors elected and planned various station sites, but nothing has since been done”.

In 1934 the North Western Courier mentioned that the Merah North rail yard “men are at present improving the dump at the railway station and it is understood that improvements to the cattle race are also to be carried out. Merah North is an important trucking and loading centre so these improvements will be an acquisition”.

SERVICES

The first steam train traversed the full line and arrived in Walgett in 1908 with the first rail motor on 2 December 1924. Train services sustained the towns and greater district for many years, but the Walgett route was a long and circuitous one. This had negative aspects By the 1950s with the increased availability of car, bus and truck transport being used and with aviation services to the town, the railway services grew unreliable.

A 1974 railmotor service heading to Walgett. Weston Langford collection
Rail services became less frequent and slower and this led to the abandonment of scheduled railway passenger services by 1974, as happened to other NSW railway branch lines and the towns. The last passenger train ran to Walgett during December 1983.

The branch line did have at one point great rail services and this was reflected in stories like at Wee Waa railway station when it gained a new staff member in 1938:

“RAILWAY OFFICER FAREWELLED

Mr M. Mills, who has been on the Singleton railway station staff, was farewelled prior to his departure for Wee Waa, where he been appointed station master. In presenting a fountain pen to Mr Mills, on behalf of the staff, Mr H. Thwaite congratulated him on his promotion, and wished him and members of his family every happiness in his new sphere. Several other members of the staff referred to Mr Mills' worths an officer and friend in Singleton, and wished him every success. Mr Mills, who suitably responded, was the organiser of the mouth organ band, which had arranged many functions to assist deserving charitable bodies in Singleton”

A Scone Advocate 1940 story on Rail Refreshment Rooms mentions the Walgett line.

“Railway Refreshment Rooms Service given by the Department”

In the early days of railways the task of getting the passenger to their destination appears to have dominated the minds of railwaymen. Apparently there was no thought of providing amenities; heating facilities were unheard of; and, if the traveller wanted a light in his carriage, he was obliged to supply his own candle. One of the facilities that we now take for granted, but which did not exist in those days, is the refreshment room. Then the railway passenger had to take his sustenance with him or fast until his journey’s end. The railway premises were as devoid of places for buying food and drinks as the camel tracks across the Sahara Desert. After some time, the railway undertakings allowed private food caterers to lease a portion of their premises. At a still later period the tendency all over the world was for progressive railway enterprises to organise their own catering services for the convenience of their passengers.

Then New South Wales followed the general trend, the Department adopting a policy of terminating the arrangements with private caterers and establishing its own refreshment rooms in 1916. In consequence, by 1918 the lessee system had ceased to exist. Since that year a much more uniform and efficient service has been offered to the travelling public, with the result that the value of the annual turnover has increased from approximately £100,000 to £650,000. At present there are 55 railway refreshment rooms throughout the system, 28 of them being meal rooms, 11 being grill rooms, one is a cafeteria, and 15 are light refreshment rooms. The meal rooms are located at Central, Wynyard, Moss Vale, Goulburn, Yass Junction, Cootamundra, Temora, Junee, Albury, Mt. Victoria, Bathurst, Mudgee, Cowra, Parkes, Wellington, Dubbo, Nyngan, Newcastle, Singleton, Muswellbrook,
Werris Creek, Tamworth, Burren, Moree Kempsey, Coffs Harbor, South Grafton, and Casino; the grill rooms are located at Central, Wynyard, Sydenham, Cooma, Harden, Orange, Gosford, Narrabri, Armidale, Glen Innes, and Byron Bay; the cafeteria (which is open every hour of the day or night) is at Central; the light refreshment rooms are to be found at Strathfield, Granville, Wollongong, Queanbeyan, Wagga Wagga, Narrandra, Jerilderie, Parramatta, Penrith, Wallerawang, Blayney, Molong, Hornsby, Gloucester, and Taree.

Of these 55 refreshment rooms, 43 have a full liquor license and seven have colonial wine licenses. Accommodation for persons who desire to stay overnight is provided at Moss Vale, Yass Junction, Junee, Wellington, Newcastle, Muswellbrook, and Werris Creek, most of the rooms having a hot and cold water service installed. At Central, in addition to dining and grill rooms and a cafeteria, there are milk bars, a wine bar, a pastry shop, buffet waggons, and kiosks and stalls for the sale of tobacco, confectionery and fruit.

Besides the air-conditioned dining and grill rooms, with their all-electric kitchen equipment; the facilities at Wynyard include a banqueting hall with a lounge annexe for dancing, soda fountains and milk bars, a wine kiosk, a confectionery and fruit shop, and confectionery and tobacco kiosks. At all country refreshment rooms also it is possible to have light refreshments, including tea or coffee, with sandwiches, pies, cakes and biscuits. A one-course entree service is also obtainable at the counter. To meet the convenience of the passenger who does not want to walk to the refreshment rooms, basket boys patrol platforms with a variety of confectionery, tobacco goods, ice cream and fruit. On certain trains running between Sydney, Moss Vale, Canberra, Mt. Victoria, Gosford, Newcastle and Brisbane, buffet services are provided to serve morning and afternoon teas, and on the Diesel trains running between Sydney and Canberra, and Parkes and Broken Hill, buffets are attached in order that cold collations, sweets, fruit, tea, coffee, cordials, and ice cream may be served to passengers at their seats on tables especially fitted for the purpose. Miscellaneous services of the Railway Refreshment Rooms include the preparation of hampers which may be ordered for delivery to any train at any station, and the provision of refreshments for the staff at workshops, such as Eveleigh, Clyde and Cardiff, where difficulty has been experienced by the employees in obtaining satisfactory service from privately owned catering establishments.

The organisation that controls this widespread catering service is centred at Sydney Station, where a vast store is located in the basement of the Central Refreshment Rooms. From this source meat, poultry, fish, fruit, vegetables, bread, groceries, confectionery, crockery, glassware, cutlery and kitchen utensils are despatched throughout the State. In certain circumstances, however, country refreshment rooms obtain some supplies of foodstuffs locally. On these premises at Central Station over a million pies and most of the one and a half million bread rolls sold in a year, are made. In addition, all the ice required by the Department for refreshment rooms and carriages is manufactured there. The food supplies purchased in a year cost about £400,000; they include 440 tons of meat, 500 tons of potatoes, 47,000 dozen eggs, 150,000 4lb. loaves of bread, 20,000 packets of almonds and raisins, 60,000 cases of fruit, 25,000 packets of confectionery, 76 tons of butter, 40,0001b of tea, 30,0001b of coffee, and 250,000 gallons of milk.

With these supplies the Railway Refreshment Room organisation serves annually nearly 2,000,000 meals and over 2,000,000 light refreshments. Thus if we regard two light refreshments as being equal, to one meal, it can be claimed that over the period of a year one meal is served for every person in the State, or, looked at from another angle, the undertaking performs a catering service equivalent to providing nearly 3000 people with three meals a day all the year round. The Commissioner for Railways, Mr. T. J. Hartigan, takes a keen personal interest in seeing that the refreshment rooms are kept to a high standard of cleanliness, and an inspection of the rooms will show that they compare more than favourably with any similar privately owned catering establishment in the State."
A 1950 story spoke of a staff member leaving Wee Waa station for Bourke, ” New Station Master Mr. D. W. McCusker who has been in charge of the Wee Waa section of the Department of Rail ways for about five years, is going to follow advice given by one of our poets : Go West, young man. He is being transferred to Bourke. Mac has been a most popular; officer during his stay here and we are in part sorry to have him go from us, although we realise that the move shows that he has the approbation of his superiors. In addition to keeping the trains running on time as far as possible, he has found time to fit into a number of local niches. He has been secretary of the Golf Club since its re-formation, and his energy has kept members on their toes. He is also secretary of the provisional committee of the Bowling Club, and one regrets that the tasks has not been further advanced before he hands over. However much ground work has been done and the business may now be pushed on. He has been active in the, Show Society, and made his presence felt on the entertainment side. He and the family will be accompanied by many good wishes when they set out. The move will probably not take effect for nearly two months, so tame enough. ’Namoi Valley Echo.”

The Thu 23 Sep 1954 newspaper, The North Western Courier discussed the unreliable Walgett branch line operations

“The Far North West Group of the C.W.A. has submitted a strong protest to the Railway Department about the poor service on branch lines from Narrabri to Pokataroo and Walgett. Delegates at Walgett last week said this applied particularly to schoolchildren the existing service. It was also decided to ask P.P. Boards to take steps to prevent the unwarranted destruction of trees on stock routes in outback areas and to consider the planting of trees in those districts. The meeting passed a resolution seeking: to have the State Handicraft annual meeting held during the general conference, instead of prior to conference, as at present. The conference was officially opened by the State Vice President (Mrs. J. M. Gordon). Another Vice-president, Miss M. Hall, was guest speaker.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The majority of the stations and platforms were opened in 1903 to 1908 timeframe but some were opened as late as 1926 and 1941.

Narrabri North Junction - In Use

Narrabri West railway station 565.770km Opened 1 October 1882 Demolished 1981

On 1 Oct 1882 the original station building, a type 12 design opened as Narrabri as the line reached the location of Narrabri West. The site flourished as a terminus for 15 years before the line finally reached the nearby Narrabri township. By 1 April 1897 Narrabri was renamed as Narrabri West. In 1908 the later station building design, a type 18, was constructed.

Noel Dowden view, right, of Narrabri West railway station in 1981 just before it was sadly demolished.

See some rare photos of the station and yard at this link - https://www.nswrail.net/locations/show.php?name=NSW:Narrabri+West, click on the photo tab next to description to see the Narrabri West station

Noel Dowden view of the locomotive depot in 1980.

The depot being demolished in 1980.

Kiandool railway station 576.450km Opened 4 November 1926 Closed 20 February 1975

In March 1935 a platform was added to the location. No building erected here.

Culgoora railway station 583.441km Opened 9 December 1903 Closed Unknown

The station building type 8, was opened 9 December 1903 as Round Swamp and by 28 September 1913 it was renamed as Culgoora.

Wee Waa railway station 598.959km Opened 9 December 1903 Still present but unused
A type 8 station design was built. The yard originally had a 50ft manual turntable. In 1951 a question by the Member for Barwon was put to NSW Parliament discussing why Wee Waa station has no station lighting. The question was answered by the Minister for Transport and said they would investigate what had to be overcome to provide such a service.

Right, an undated view of Wee Waa railway station. This is very different to the station we know it as today.

A view of Wee Waa yard 1982 - https://www.flickr.com/photos/ajat18/8568579076


**Merah North railway station 613.803km Opened 9 December 1903 Closed 27 May 1976**

A type 8 railway station was built. Possibly the only view of the station, seen in 1919.

![Merah North railway station](image)

**Carbeen Platform 621.023km Opened 9 December 1903 Closed 20 February 1975**

No building was erected.

**Cubbaroo railway station 630.761km Opened 2 December 1903 Closed 20 February 1975**

No building was erected.

**Burren railway station 647.966km Opened 9 December 1903 Closed Unknown**

A type 20 railway station was built in 1903. The station was opened as Burren Junction and by April 1940 had been renamed to just Burren.

In May 1917 Mr. W. H. Rochester, railway station master at Burren was been promoted
to Forbes and left on to take up duties at Forbes. In Sept 1919, station master J. Mylchroost left Burren Junction after 2 years to take up a role at Gundagai railway station.

Right, Southbound special stock train hauled from Walgett by locomotive 2702, Burren Junction, New South Wales, 3 June 1947, J.L. Buckland

Burren Junction railway station, 58 miles from Collarenebri, New South Wales, 1951 [picture] / Francis Reiss

Burren station seen in 1983 https://www.flickr.com/photos/ajat18/9200485738

Bugilbone Platform 672.710km Opened 3 July 1905 Closed 20 February 1975

A type 8 station was built here. A 1927 North West Courier story relayed that at Bugilbone "Mr. A. C. L. - Abbott M. H. R. has been advised that approval has been given to establish a receiving office, adjacent to Bugilbone Railway Station under the name of 'Bugilbone Railway. Mails will be exchanged daily (each way), with the T.P.O Narrabri — Burren Junction. The office will be opened for business from 9 to 11 a.m., and noon to 2 p.m. daily as from 1/8/27".
Right a rare view, *perhaps the only view*, of the station. Bryan Ayling collection.

**Cryon railway station 684.771km Opened 3 July 1905  Closed 15 May 1986**

A type 8 station was built here. Cryon began as a railway town, shortly before the railway line reached Cryon in 1905 and was for some time a staging post for rail passengers to be transported the rest of the way to Walgett. In August 1905 local wool was rolling in to Cryon railway station with 400 bales arriving there in just one week.

The Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate reported on in November 1911 that a massive tornado hit Cryon. “TOWN OF CRYON ALMOST WIPEOUT. A violent storm struck the town of Cryon, in the Walgett district, on Tuesday night, and did great damage. Many buildings were laid in ruins. The roof of the station master's residence was torn off, and deposited in a paddock a quarter or a mile distant. Chimneys crumbled to dust, bricks fell through the roofs of the houses, destroying furniture and fittings. The massive good shed was smashed to atoms, and not a single post of its line structure remains. The railway office adjoining was laid in ruins. A large storeroom on the platform was lifted bodily from its foundation and deposited on the railway line. It contained many tons of stores and produce, which are strewn along the line. Two gangs of men are clearing away the damage to make way for the resumption of train traffic. The damage was estimated at £20,000. One lady was injured.”

Left, Cryon seen 1970s from Robert Paterson collection, right undated view of a virtually demolished Cryon. Unknown date and photographer.

**Inverness platform 696.263km Opened May 1922 Closed 20 February 1975**

Opened originally as Merkadool Tank and in June 1930 it was renamed as Inverness. No building was erected here.

**Koothney platform 699.665km Opened January 1941 Closed 20 February 1975**

No building was erected here.

**Beanbri railway station 706.600km Opened 7 November 1908 Closed 20 February 1975**

Type station was built. No info

**Kiel Kiel platform 711.134km Opened February 1952 Closed 20 February 1975**
No building was erected here.

**Waminda platform 714.367km Opened October 1932 Closed 20 July 1976**

Opening late in 1932, no building was erected here.

**Eurie Eurie railway station 722.187km Opened 7 November 1908 Closed 20 February 1975**

A type 8 station was built. A C1950s era photo of the single building station on the platform.

![Eurie Eurie railway station](image)

**Walgett Wheat Terminal 731.980km In Use**

**Walgett railway bridge**

The Walgett Underbridge located at Two-mile Creek is a rare example of a timber through truss from the post-Whitton era. This timber bridge was constructed by the NSW Public Works Department railway construction branch in the early 1900s. It was built as a 3 span Howe through truss bridge with 62 feet spans, placed on timber trestles. The bridge has on each side timber deck approaches of the trussed bridge sections. Interesting facts is that only 3 examples of a timber through truss bridge survive in NSW after over 120 years – the one at Walgett, one on the Mudgee to Gulgong branch line at Cudgegong River and one on the former Cowra to Eugowra branch line over the Belubula River.

**Walgett railway station 736.039km Opened 7 November 1908 Closed 20 February 1975**

The type 8 station was built in 1908. Below are views of the first CPH railmotor service into Walgett on 12 December 1924. Credit NSW State Library Collection
A steam locomotive ran through the buffers and derailed at Walgett in 1927.

In 1963 the Western Herald reported “Walgett 300 Sheep Killed - When a stock train arriving at Walgett at 4 a.m. on Friday, 8th February, failed to stop at the correct position it careered past the Railway Station and collided with an empty petrol tanker parked against the dead end buffers at the end of the line. The collision caused the diesel engine to leave the rails and become slewed down the embankment and three loaded sheep trucks were telescoped and thrown off the permanent way. The sheep trucks were carrying sheep consigned to Mr. W. Hall, of 'Woodstock,' Walgett and it is understood some 300 were killed in the accident. We understand that the dead sheep were skinned on the spot as they were dragged from the wreckage by a team of workers, the injured sheep being killed at once for humanitarian reasons”.

REMAINS

In reviewing the Walgett railway branch line, at this time it can be found that technically all stations on the line, except for Wee Waa, have been demolished or removed from the station site.

Walgett railway station remains. Note how this platform is very different to the one seen in the station review earlier on. Phil Buckley collection.
Maybe some people, council and history society members in Wee Waa might find it possible to get funding to restore the decaying railway station. Wee Waa wants more tourism I suspect and if they examine what has happened over at Girilambone, they might be keen to get together and do something. Girilambone now has state government funding which is being used to restore and reuse their decaying heritage railway station. It is hoped this restoration will hopefully bring more inbound rail heritage tourism.

Until 1994 the decaying Walgett railway station building remained at the station site. It was then removed off site. Council notes below show what took place with Walgett railway station after 1994. In 2008 plans were commenced to work out what to do with the former Walgett railway station building.

"10. FORMER WALGETT RAILWAY STATION BUILDING

Summary:

Recently Walgett Shire Council advertised an intention to dispose of the former Walgett railway station building and sought expressions of interest for reusing or demolishing the building. This report recommends that Council accept a proposal to reuse it as part of a home extension. Discussion (including issues and background):
A detailed report on the former Walgett railway station building was submitted to a meeting of Walgett Shire Council which was held on 15 July 2008. In summary that report indicated:

The State Rail Authority donated the Walgett Railway Station building to the Walgett Shire Council in 1994 because it was no longer in use and surplus to its needs. About 1994 the building was moved from the inactive railway line site to a nearby private property by Council. The apparent intention was for it to be temporarily stored at this site pending a viable use being found. No maintenance appears to have been undertaken on the wooden building since 1994 and it is progressively decaying. Several tentative proposals for reusing the building have arisen, but no significant funding sources have been identified.

No business case has been put forward for an alternative use. Council's Health and Building Surveyor, Len Smyth, has inspected the building and provided an estimate of $100,000 to relocate and renovate the building (not including any fit out costs). Council's Health and Building Surveyor indicated that it would be more cost effective to construct a new purpose designed building than to reuse this building (See Attachment D).

Council already owns a number of relatively old buildings that require ongoing maintenance expenditure. Examples include the former Council Chambers, the old Masonic Hall and several town/village halls. Public buildings under Council management incur significant regulatory and duty of care obligations. The building has not been proposed for listing as an item of local heritage at this stage because it is not ‘fixed’ on a site. As a result the local heritage fund cannot be used to assist with funding relocation and renovation.

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It is desirable for Council to make progress toward having the building removed from the private land where it is presently located. In the above context, Walgett Shire Council resolved at a meeting held on 15 July 2008 as follows:

Newspaper advertisements seeking expressions of interest were published as follows:

The Walgett Spectator, Wednesday 23-7-2008    The Ridge News, Thursday 24-7-2008
The Ridge News, Thursday 31-7-2008    The Walgett Spectator, Wednesday 6-8-2008
The Ridge News, Thursday 18-9-2008

Three expressions of interest were received, which are reproduced as attachments A, B and C.

The key aspects of each are:

Mrs and Mrs Scott Wickman - Proposed to relocate building to the "Kiel Kiel" property and use it as an extension to an existing home. No cost to Walgett Shire Council.

Walgett District Historical Society Inc - Various tentative proposals offered with no indication of cost implications for Council.
Lightning Ridge Calweld Drill Hire - Offered to demolish and remove the building if Walgett Shire Council pays $2,500.

When considering the expressions of interest it should be noted that the building is quite old and in poor condition. As a result it does not have significant commercial value, either for reuse, or for demolition salvage. As a result, any offer to reuse or demolish the building that incurs no cost for Council is worthy of consideration.

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The most practical options available to Council, as prioritised by the author, are:

(a) Accepting the Wickman offer, which incurs no direct cost for Council.

(b) Accepting the Lightning Ridge Calweld Drill Hire offer to demolish the building for $2,500.

This could be funded from an existing budget for demolition works.

(c) Deferring a decision with a view to identifying a viable use for the building. Potential uses should be evaluated in light of detailed cost estimates, a business case and the need to allocate, or divert, funds by Council.

Walgett Shire Council's recently appointed Heritage Advisor, Ray Christison, has considered the report submitted to the Council meeting held on 15 July 2008 and a draft of this report which contained a recommendation that Council should accept the Wickman offer. In that context he has made certain heritage related recommendations based on the Wickman offer being accepted (see Attachment E).

Relevant Reference Documents:

Nil.


Financial Implications: Nil, if recommendation is accepted.

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Recommendations: That Walgett Shire Council resolve to:

1) Write to Mrs and Mrs Scott Wickman to:

(a) State that Walgett Shire Council has accepted their offer to takeover ownership of the former Walgett Railway Station building, as proposed in their letter dated 1st September 2008. Council's acceptance is based on the building being reused to extend their house on the "Kiel Kiel" property and that there will be no cost to Council.

(b) Request that they:

(i) Confirm in writing that they accept ownership of the building.
(ii) Indicate a date by which the building will be moved to the "Kiel Kiel" property, while noting that Walgett Shire Council prefers that the building be moved as soon as possible.

(iii) Confer with Walgett Shire Council's Heritage Advisor, Ray Christison, regarding the adaptation of the building and the conservation of materials.

(iv) Create a full photographic record of the building's relocation and adaptation, and provide a copy of this record to Walgett Shire Council.

(c) Note that prior to using the building to extend the existing house, Council approval will be required via a Complying Development Certificate application to ensure the extension complies with the Building Code of Australia.

2) Write to the Walgett District Historical Society Inc and Lightning Ridge Calweld Drill Hire thanking them for their expressions of interest regarding the former Walgett Railway Station Building and informing them of the above resolution.”

Looking back maybe if the local Walgett History Society had been given the building, it could have been restored and be still standing today as a publicly accessible building for the town.

Walgett yard and platform railway remains as seen back in 2015, Phil Buckley collection. It is such a pity the station wasn’t preserved intact at the precinct and turned into a tourist attraction or even better, a passenger service remained.
KNOW YE STATIONS?

During the 1970-80s it is understood that many NSW country stations were repaired/upgraded for passenger railway use. Upgrades to buildings and repainting took place to enhance the functionality and look. But how many of you know of the curse of the “painted stations”….. which saw the efforts of many people wasted as the NSW Government decided to proceed with demolition of the stations soon after?

The most shocking example shared by former railway workers is the upgrade to Yerong Creek railway station, in southern NSW, in that it was upgraded around the early 1980s. The upgrade work was completed one week
on a Friday…………… and mere days later on the Monday, the entire railway station had been bulldozed and demolished. This work and then demolition is seen these days as an absolute waste of taxpayer’s money, besides losing an important station for local people to use for transport services – but this was the NSW Government thinking, remove passenger rail services and force people to the roads.

Another station building that also defies logic is Gundagai railway station, which had effectively shut down in 1984 as trains were not running anymore on the line conveniently due to flooding and fire damage. Luckily unlike above at Yerong Creek, Gundagai was not demolished straight away thankfully but left to decay and rot by the NSW Government. The station was repainted in 1986 for around $30,000 it is understood, despite no more railway services at the time. After vandalism and decaying for years in 1992, a local Gundagai community group started efforts to save the historic Gundagai railway station that saw it saved and preserved. The restoration was completed by early 2000s with most of the work ironically coming from people at Tumut rather than from within Gundagai itself. Sadly Gundagai station is currently “managed” by a pro rail trail (anti rail) organisation and isn’t looking well maintained by recent photos seen online.

A RAIL CAREER – WHAT NEXT? Part 1 by Mark Brady

I wrote this story a few years ago to show people what I have done in my extensive railway career. I worked 36 years in the rail industry in Sydney. How could I condense thirty six years in an industry in an interview and persuade a prospective employer to take me on?

I worked in the rail industry in Sydney and due to a restructure I was forced out of the industry I loved. It was not my fault. Technological change meant that fewer people were required to perform my role. How I wished to be working for another 15 to 20 years to retire if and when I wanted on my own choosing. Technological change in the rail industry and for many other industries, will mean that fewer people will be needed to work in the future. Tighter company budgets will require a much larger amount of diversification of an employee’s skills into multiple areas.

So let’s look back and see how did my career start and what made me choose the direction it took?

BEGINNING OF A WORKING LIFE

I left High School in 1977 after completing my Higher School Certificate in Sydney. The day I left Granville Boys High in 1977 I was a young 18 year old adolescent male, immature and I wanted to change the world with no life skills or experience to guide me. In Australia, the 1970s were a period of change. There was no military conscription anymore as that ended in 1972. Ironically we had a democratic federal government dismissed by a non-elected Queen’s representative in 1975. There was a movement on should we mine and export uranium and what we would do with the waste. Our parents grew up in the depression and our grandparents lived through two world wars. We had all those influences but really being a radical young generation, what could we achieve with that hard fought change? Despite this
outlook, the 70s were a period of hope where books like Future Shock by Alvin Toffler were written, diseases were going to be cured and finally we had something to look forward to.

We still had the Cold War looming large over us but at 18 all out nuclear war between the superpowers was far from our young untamed minds. My biggest handicap was my school reference. Why employ someone with high ideals but could not apply himself academically? I had to find a way forward to use my ideals in the future. My path to the railways was partially due to this school reference – let me slightly delve off and explain. This school reference got me somewhat me angry, not because it was wrong but because it was the opposite in fact. When I look at it in 2020, I still want to prove those comments wrong. I wanted to and still want to be seen as doing better than this. I recently put this reference on a facebook page and the feedback a great deal of students from this school and other schools in my area got similar if not, in a lot of cases worse school references. They did not turn out to be failures. They succeeded in their careers. A great majority exceeded their own personal expectations. This shows that references aren’t the way to frame a student at the end of year 12.

My first job was in a company called Indelab at Ferndell Street, Granville in 1978 after a period of looking for work for a while. My job at as a Junior Clerk only lasted three and a half weeks. I was dismissed as I answered back to the boss. I was told to pack up, leave and collect my pay check on the Friday. At the time there was a gas leakage at the plant which caused my watch to stop and caused my clothes to smell of rotten egg gas for weeks. At the time I was a member of the local Park Hill sub branch of the Labor Party but after a few years I quit the Labor Party. A person with high ideals usually has a mind of his own. I could not accept having my opinions and thoughts knocked back by a majority and having to fight for those things I do not believe in as passionately as if they were my own. (This applies to any political party or movement). A lesson that I learnt early on was to never let anyone, especially an employer know your political views or affiliations in the workplace.

CHANGING MINDS

My brief experience at Indelab taught me something…..it taught me what to expect in an office environment and the right way to handle myself. Companies employing any new employee do not like dismissing a person because it shows that they have failed in the interview process. In another few years Indelab, which made industrial epoxy resins, would be absorbed into another company and would cease to exist. As I began looking for a new job one thing I kept doing at interviews was to ask if I was required to be a member of a trade union? I found this tended to put prospective employers on the defensive. In those days before the laws were changed some areas were known as union shops. What the youths of the 2020s may not realise is that in the 1970s, without being a member of a union, it was very hard to get employed at certain workplaces. If an industrial dispute were to occur and strike action undertaken, as a non-union member you were still required to work and were referred to as “scab labour” by union members, who would be standing down for their rights. The 1970s were a time of when job advertisements were broken down in newspapers as Men and Boys, Women and Girls. It was very segregated.

In changing my approach to work, the school reference I used at interviews was dropped and I got two character references from the local Federal Member of Parliament (Tom Uren, Federal member for Reid, survivor of Changi POW camp during WW2. Tom was an all round nice bloke and mentor. He was also a Justice of the Peace whose house I looked after in Lavinia Street, South Granville with the gardens. Tom later
inspired me to become a Justice of the Peace. One month later I started working at Mote Ladders in Rydalmere. I was a Sales and Dispatch Clerk under the reins of an experienced supervisor. My role there taught me a lot about people. There were doctors, teachers and all other occupations working under that tin roof, fibro clad building helping to build and dispatch wooden ladders. All nationalities, all religions, cultures and immigrants who for some could barely understand a word of English. Some of these people were doctors and teachers in their home country but their own qualifications were not recognised in Australia. Their hard work was putting them through school or university, getting qualifications so they could get a better life for themselves and their family. I often believe that factory work is a great leveller. Working in a factory was nothing to be ashamed about. About two months later I had applied for work with the railways and was successful. As a result I left Mote Ladders... finishing up on the Friday and started work on the railways the following Monday. It was a wise career choice. Mote Ladders is no longer in Sydney. I was planning to gain experience and be there for only 6 to 12 months then go for another role. I did not realise at the time what a fantastic and exciting career change I had started and what was ahead for me on the railways.

THE RAILWAY CAREER BEGINS

On the morning of Monday December 4, 1978 I rose and attended my first day on the job where I was required to go to Central Railway Station. I was to go to the old Rail institute to attend the physical, chest, hearing, sight examinations - the lot. After passing this test I was assigned to work at Cabramatta railway station.

Right the Institute, Phil Buckley 2016.

I was there at Cabramatta for two weeks of initial training. My role was to learn how to become a Booking Clerk on the Railways. At this time of the 1970s, Cabramatta was becoming a mix of Vietnamese and Australian culture. Large numbers of Vietnamese refugees settled into Cabramatta after the Vietnam War. Two weeks later I continued my training at Liverpool railway station under the watchful eye of a few staff - a Coaching Clerk, who was a former Vietnam Veteran, other Booking Clerks and a Station Master. They were a fantastic bunch of people to be with and taught me the basics on how to work in a team environment.

Right Cabramatta railway station seen early 1900s.

My railway duties included working under supervision as I learnt how to sell tickets, deal with passenger enquiries, undertake country and interstate rail bookings, complete station accounts, handle money, undertake remittances and prepare daily and end of month accounts. During this period I was introduced to
shift-work around the clock and a roster that guaranteed I would have few weekends off. Being a bit of a shy person and an introvert, I suddenly began to realise that with this work, I was a “people person” who liked the customer service aspects of the role. This role taught me a lot about people, their body language, their needs and expectations. At this time of the 1970s, Cabramatta was becoming a mix of Vietnamese and Australian culture. Large numbers of Vietnamese refugees settled into Cabramatta after the Vietnam War.

Two weeks later I continued my training at Liverpool railway station under the watchful eye of a few staff - a Coaching Clerk, who was a former Vietnam Veteran, other Booking Clerks and a Station Master. They were a fantastic bunch of people to be with and taught me the basics on how to work in a team environment.

Liverpool railway station seen 1979, James Whitfield collection

My railway duties included working under supervision as I learnt how to sell tickets, deal with passenger enquiries, undertake country and interstate rail bookings, complete station accounts, handle money, undertake remittances and prepare daily and end of month accounts. During this period I was introduced to shift-work around the clock and a roster that guaranteed I would have few weekends off. Being a bit of a shy person and an introvert, I suddenly began to realise that with this work, I was a “people person” who liked the customer service aspects of the role. This role taught me a lot about people, their body language, their needs and expectations. Six months later I completed my training, was judged as competent to go out on my own and became a Clerk General Scale, Sydney Relief, Home Station based at Petersham railway station in inner
western Sydney. Over the next few years I would see the vast array of the stations within the Sydney metro network.

Left, Liverpool 1980s view, courtesy Liverpool railway station visit Phil Buckley 2018, Right 2018 view of Petersham railway station island platform building. Phil Buckley

As part of my career progression I was asked to report in June 1979 at 6.00am one morning at Town Hall railway station to work a shift. Doing this railway work meant I would work around the clock at multiple locations in the Sydney Metropolitan area. Highlight of this period was when the new Eastern Suburbs Railway (ESR) was opened up on June 23 1979 by the Premier of New South Wales, Neville Wran. I was sent there on relief and worked at Edgecliff railway station in September 1979, as well as Martin Place and Bondi Junction railway stations up to January 1980. It was a higher grade role and I took a bit of stick for not being qualified for the area. With this work I lost count of the stations I worked at, the long hours with very little sleep between shifts and the constant travel between locations. In those days I did not have a car and was at the mercy of public transport.

Passengers used to buy their tickets from the window at stations and these days Booking Clerk positions have ceased to exist nearly except in Trainlink NSW operations. Over the past few years ticket machines replaced the staff as well as the advent of the Opal card in Sydney Trains meant people did not need to go to the local railway station to purchase a rail ticket. Coaching Clerk positions went with the loss of country booking of rail tickets at your local rail station, freight and parcels.

Looking back with self reflection, what did I learn in this period? I learnt to adapt at short notice various ways of doing things at different locations. I carried with me a series of basic skills which I used to adapt to changing situations. I carried with me a copy of the Passenger Fares and Coaching Rates book to handle the different locations fare structures, a box of matches, a teapot, tea and a tube of long life milk. It was a period I learnt how to become resilient in the workplace. I was constantly tired and was very glad proper fatigue management guidelines were implemented a few years later.

So for a break I went on holidays, ended up in Western Australia and then came back to Sydney. I took driving lessons and my last relief station worked was at West Ryde. I would spend the next four and a half years at Riverwood railway station as a Grade 1 Booking Clerk.
RIVERWOOD STATION DAYS

Theory is good. Learning from a course is good but seeing it in a real life situation out in the field is the best form of education an employee could get. It was necessary for my Riverwood work that to do a morning shift I would need some way to get to Granville Railway Station, take the train to Redfern, and take the train to Sydenham and another train change to Riverwood.

Left, Mark is seen, right, at Riverwood station booking office, right, Riverwood railway station 2012 view, Phil Buckley

I would be waiting on rail platforms for up to half an hour between trains and would leave around 2.30am in the morning to start work at 5.30am. A few months later I managed to get my car licence and buy a new car with a bank loan and the savings from my relief work. My new car, which I would clear over eighty thousand kilometres in little over three years, till it was written off, meant that it was only a thirty to forty minute journey each way to work.

Riverwood was a location with a small signal box panel. You learnt to cover for everyone and every-one knew each other’s roles. Being a small station it gave me an opportunity to finally complete my Coaching and Accounts qualifications along with my Goods Accounts Qualifications. In those days if you worked morning shift you could go for afternoon instruction or if you undertook nightshift or afternoon shift you could go for instruction at St Martins Towers Sydney. During one period I over studied and just could not pass a certain goods accounts test. While at Riverwood I drove to Goulburn Freight Centre to see their Freight Operations in person on my days off. I would spend the next four days over there driving to and from home each day from Merrylands in Sydney. When I returned from Goulburn I sat for the tests and passed them with no problems. I just had to see their operations and ways of doing things in person.

Right, Goulburn yard former freight centre area. Phil Buckley 2012.

I see my time visiting Goulburn Freight Centre as a period where my knowledge of
Passenger and Freight operations started. Goulburn had everything - yard working, shunting, safe working and different types of rolling stock. As well as the accounts procedures, amalgamation and division of sets, crew and train rostering.

While I was at Riverwood railway station I got a lesson in life. Has anyone ever seen the movie with Henry Fonda and James Cagney as the captain called Mr Roberts? Well here I was qualified but I had a stationmaster who would not put his signature on my application for promotion. It was a bit like the role Henry Fonda played trying to get off the old cargo ship to see some action before the war passed him by. In my case if he was to approve my transfer other staff would follow. This is how I left Riverwood. My stationmaster would not approve my transfer. I wanted to leave but there were no suitable positions to apply for. One year my stationmaster went on leave and the staff acting for him finally put their signature on my application. Great - progress had finally come!

I then had a car accident.

On November 30 1984 I rolled my car off after a tyre blowout, an embankment on the Great Western Highway, near Mount Lambie, 164km west of Sydney while on the way to Bathurst. When I rolled the car the following truckie alerted every one of my predicament. I was in communication with him by CB radio about road conditions ahead just before my car problem. There was not one straight panel left in the car as a result of the crash. All glass was broken and the tail-shaft was through the floor. The sump guard I fitted to the car prevented the engine and gearbox from joining me in the lap. Seatbelt meant that I could get out of the car and wait till help arrived. The car was written off. It gave me a broken sternum, (only hurt if I laughed), a fractured vertebrae or two in my back around T5 and T6, a dodgy knee where it hit the dashboard and most of me was covered in bruises. Injury wise it was not that serious and the only slight problem that is still around today was where the lower part of the seatbelt restrained me below the rib cage. I spent the following five weeks off work and was never the same again.

I eventually got back to work and bought a new car. Funny things go through your head, I call them “what ifs”. You have no control so why worry. This proactive focus was to follow me the rest of my working career on the railways. The “what ifs” were how would I handle things when confronted with a situation I previously had at Mount Lambie again. I was told once by a doctor the “what ifs” were a form of Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. My interpretation of Post-Traumatic Stress is when a person suppresses their emotions in order to get a job done. Handling issues head on was part of the behaviours taught to me on the railways. Working within a team with learned reflex behaviours was a way to get a job done. To the credit of the people, the railways is a very safety orientated environment. Emotions, religion or sex do not play into it and it is important that all your colleagues know their tasks, work together and proceed in the same direction on an issue.
NEW JOB

Around Easter the following year my application for promotion was approved. I was the new 2nd Grade Statistics Officer at Central Railway Station. I finally left Riverwood and shift work for good. The old car crash left me with a few lingering problems for another six months.

Right A late 1970s view of Central railway station which by the early 1980s, when Mark Brady worked in hadn’t changed that much ... yet. Bob Richardson collection.

There was still the dreaded “what ifs” that occasionally plagued my mind. My body clock after nearly a decade needed to be adapted for the new daytime, fixed shift hours. It took a while. My role in Statistics was Monthly Reports for Country Passenger Operations Manager such as On Time Running of XPT s and Passenger Loading Summaries and passenger loading for all Country Passenger Rolling Stock, Interstate, Country link XPT and Mail Services.

ALL CHANGE......

During this period lines such as Tarana to Oberon, Fassifern to Toronto were closed. Mail Services for the country regions were cancelled. XPT Intercity services replaced Loco hauled services between major locations. There were insufficient passengers to justify rail and the NSW Government moved ahead replaced Rail services with Road Coaches. Less than Car Load and Full Car Load freight were offered out and run by private companies. Freight centres such as Goulburn were closed, workshops were closed. Diesel operations meant that locomotives did not need the regular servicing of Steam locomotives that no longer serviced the network.

Certain signal boxes had their hours changed or were taken over by bigger signaling complexes as signaling and infrastructure requirements also changed. Train Order working was starting to be introduced in the New South Wales Country Rail Network. There was major change and staff numbers started to drop. Passenger numbers were down. Losses in rail were putting a strain on the New South Wales government budget. Costs had to be reduced. Stations lost staff as they did not handle parcels traffic any more.

NSW passenger and freight services were being decimated around the state by Government budget cuts.

This was the change of the job during the period I worked until the day I left Sydney Trains. There was little I could do about it. At the time I thought I was safe as I was in Train Planning. I saw costs and technological change more and more and this impacted on my roles and eventually lead to a restructure, which ended my job.

During this period I was “borrowed” and seconded to Timetables Country Section acting Grade 4 Clerk for creation of Special Train Notices pertaining to testing and transferring of all rolling stock including Special Trains within the State of New South Wales. It was a good way to learn the New South Wales and Sydney Suburban Rail Network.
The money was good and it was two grades higher than my current grade. In this period I started in my own time completing my qualifications for the area such as Basic Safe working, Principles and Diagramming. We had no computer aids. I created train control graphs with nothing more than a ruler, pen and pencil. Typists in the section manually typed and sent out any timetables we created for publication. Our work was printed by the Government Printers on letterpress for publication and sending to Dispatch. A few years later the Government Printers at Sydney closed as technological change meant other means could be used such as Graphic Support Unit for the printing and distribution of rail timetables. In my time in Train Planning my section moved from Central to Foveaux St to 509 Pitt Street and then to Sydney Terminal. After I left Train Planning the section again was moved to 477 Pitt St Sydney.

Over the next few years I was appointed into other roles. During this period I went to Miller TAFE College obtained a Statement of Attainment in Word Processing and DOS. I also spent one and half years obtaining a College Statement in Fisheries Equipment and Practises. I undertook short courses in Book keeping, Marketing and Small Business at Parramatta Evening College. At Train Planning I completed short courses at North Sydney and Petersham Railway College in assorted word processing and computer databases. I completed a Time management short course for Train Planners and an Introduction to Corel Draw 5.0 at Network Logic Computer Training.

In Part 2 in November 2020 newsletter NSWHRSI examined the rest of Mark’s rail career and see where further work took him.

LIVERPOOL RAILWAY STATION MODEL by Ben Ryan

Being born in the late 1970’s I missed the steam era but was always fascinated with the locomotives, the infrastructure and the interaction with electric and diesel services that took place in the 1960’s. In the 1980’s I started catching the train to school, a short one stop ride between Casula and Liverpool each day. The afternoon wait leaning on the fence at the Sydney end of Liverpool platform two would have me trying to see how the yard would have been used in its heyday not knowing that half of the yard had long been removed and made into a bus terminal and car park and that the other half was soon to be history itself. Further going back in time, my grandfather worked as a plumber on Walsh Island dockyard and also as a navvy and as a plumber for the railways. This flowed into a more general interest in railways for my father, who started modelling long before Australian prototype models were what we have these days. He was brought up around a keen modeller and this has rubbed off on my brother and myself and we’ve each taken on our own projects over the years.

LAYOUT

My current layout has been heavily inspired by my childhood home, perched up on a hill overlooking Casula railway station with a view of the main south stretching from the Glenfield creek bridge nearly to the M5 overpass, an open view that any rail enthusiast could enjoy. These days larger trees block this once ideal situation. My layout in HO fills a purpose built shed about the size of a single car garage. Liverpool station was to be the bulk of the layout with a simple double track main to make a loop, as I started to do some scenic work I decided to make a backdrop of the power station that is alongside Casula railway station.
As I researched the building I found drawings of proposed sidings that were planned but never built for fuel oil and or coal which is the way I built my version. The more time went on it became bigger and bigger. What was to be one foot wide became nearly three feet wide, I decided to stop about halfway through the building complex to make it manageable. There are many scratch built buildings, some kit and a few purchased, I’ll focus on the 3 station buildings.

LIVERPOOL

Platform one Liverpool a still surviving brick building dating back to 1880, Liverpool platform 1 (brick building) is made from wills plastic brick sheet and wills plastic slate sheet, the corner stones are also a wills product. Ridge capping on roof is bbq tray as mentioned before, the windows are from Titchy train group and Grandt line products surrounded by layers of evergreen styrene to make the whole cast concrete shape. There are many types and sizes of windows but many need to be modified cut shorter or have window panes removed to suit the prototype which is much easier than I first anticipated. The doors on this building I couldn’t find pre made and had to have them laser cut, the double doors in that size and with a pattern even close were impossible to make look right, also the detailed timber and decorative surrounds to holes in bricks were laser cut.
The posts on the platform side are round toothpicks, on the street side small square section scale timber, filling in the details around the building is a German 77mm artillery cannon as was brought back to Australia as a trophy post war built from kit and finally a monument of captain cook which is a 3D print. The layout is very much a work in progress but given the building process is fun it’s no chore, it’s given some challenges and frustration. Working to scale and using standard Peco track occasionally gives track geometry issues and often a little artistic license is employed to make things work. The location had many slight variations of track plan and rather than stick strictly to the plan I’ve tried to represent it as best I could with the space available. The detailed parts surrounding the structure like the platform seating and destination boards are unique products. The advertising is simply made on my computer from photos and then laminated.

Liverpool Platform two/three (green building) is an older timber building replaced in the late 70’s with station redevelopment. It was again sheeted with evergreen. The windows are from Titchy train group with detailed parts like the awning ends and support brackets cut with a laser cutter, the awning is a thin sheet of aluminum sheet metal from Bunnings for strength, it’s covered in aluminum cooking foil pressed into shape using a tool from ‘micro mark’ to make your own corrugated iron, the actual roof structure was an early attempt at 3D printing for shape and strength that was later clad in purchased aluminum corrugated iron, across the ridge capping is aluminum from a bbq tray cut and folded to suit shape.
Liverpool’s good shed building recreated and still stands in 2020 on the site.

CASULA, Platform 1 has been built as a small simple building constructed with evergreen plastic sheets and angle section, a section of scale aluminum corrugated ‘iron’ and a small premade white metal chimney parts all bought from Casula hobbies in Liverpool. It was constructed from photos from local history books, the ARHS, the memories of friends and family. Casula, a small timber structure, was replaced by a brick building with the extension of the platforms to get ready for electrification of the line from Liverpool to Campbelltown in the late 1960’s. The brick replacement was also demolished in the early 1980’s.

I’m always on the lookout for older photos and other information on this area particularly the buildings to the north of Liverpool railway station. I feel I’ve searched the internet to its absolute limit but if you know of sites, blogs, Facebook groups/pages or best of all photos that haven’t seen the light of day please share!

Benjamin.awesome.ryan@gmail.com

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NSW NEWS

In July 2020, MPs were to vote on closing the Murwillumbah railway line for good with a legislation change to be undertaken

Surprising news in July 2020 that excited people in many country towns across was that a heritage railway station developer publicly announcing very ambitious plans to personally lead and manage the restoration of 10-20+ decaying heritage railway stations located across NSW.
NORTHERN NSW NEWS

CASINO RAILWAY STATION

Plans to improve the station has seen planning commenced for accessibility upgrade at Casino railway station. As part of the planning process, initial investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Casino railway station fully accessible.

CASINO TO MURWILLUMBAH BRANCH LINE

In May 2020 the Gold Coast news released this update on the line. However it still has not been officially converted under legislation to a rail trail despite funding assigned. The NSW Government claimed it was held up by Covid or... was it? See more at http://www.mygc.com.au/world-class-rail-trail-locked-in-for-northern-nsw/. In July 2020 NSW MPs in Parliament House, Sydney were expected to be voting on the legislation. Many angry people want the rail services brought back and expanded due to the massive road traffic and congestion being experienced in an area of rising population, holiday traffic and huge road haulage congestion.

NSWHSRI has had a reply back from the NSW Government, in late July 2020, which seems to indicate they have no interest in bringing back or retaining any form of public rail service in the region but want buses instead. See below for details.
Mr Phil Buckley
heritagerailway@bigpond.com

Dear Mr Buckley

Thank you for your correspondence which was referred to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads about the disused Casino to Murwillumbah rail line. I have been asked to respond to you.

While the NSW Government is always open to new ideas and suggestions for improving transport services and infrastructure in Northern NSW, there are no current plans to restore passenger rail services between Casino and Murwillumbah.

In April 2013, the NSW Government released a detailed study, focusing on the transport needs of the community along the disused Casino to Murwillumbah rail line. The study examined the feasibility, benefits and costs of reinstating passenger services on the 130 kilometre rail line. It was prepared in consultation with the Northern Rivers community, local councils, representative groups, service providers and government agencies.

This study found that the rail line would not meet current or future transport needs and there was no commercial demand for it to be reinstated to carry freight. It recommends that a quality bus network will provide more people with frequent, cost effective public transport to key destinations rather than reinstating the rail line.

The findings of the study assisted in the development of the Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan, which was released in December 2013. The Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan outlines specific actions to address the unique transport challenges of the region. More information is available through the Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan website at www.transport.nsw.gov.au/newsroom-and-events/reports-and-publications/northern-rivers-regional-transport-plan.

*Future Transport 2056* is the vision for the next 40 years of transport in NSW and its Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan identifies a number of accessibility improvements for further investigation, including improvements to the Bruxner Highway between Ballina, Casino and Tenterfield. More information is available from the Future Transport website at www.future.transport.nsw.gov.au.
The NSW Government is rolling out the 16 Regional Cities Program which is a commitment to improving public transport services throughout regional NSW. Improvements to regional bus services, including for Lismore, aim to provide better connections to where customers need to go for work, schools, health, and social and recreational activities. More information about 16 Regional Cities Program is available at www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/programs/16regional-cities-program.

Meanwhile, Transport for NSW looks forward to implementing the actions in the Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan and is working closely with council to discuss strategic projects in the Byron Shire.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely

31/07/2020

Terry McSweeney
Principal Manager
Ministerial Correspondence
DENMAN GOODS CRANE

Recently NSWHRSI went on a night time photo shoot and in doing so spotted what seems to be likely the reused former Denman goods crane located in a driveway.

GLENREAGH RAILWAY STATION

4 years after launching the idea to save Glenreagh railway station, project there is no news on the proposed restoration. GRASPS is pinning their hopes on the station building obtaining Heritage Status via local council representations to Heritage NSW. In news just as we go to publication, it is understood that in early August 2020, an attempt to try to get the station heritage listed with the NSW State Heritage Committee is now to be tried. This attempt is supported by the Clarence Council via listing the station in their Ulmura Nymbooydia heritage report, along with several other reports being utilised to push for heritage protection. Interestingly a GRASPS committee member has been recently meeting local MPs from both the State and Federal levels. What is questionable is that one of these MPs has very clearly stated in the past he isn’t very keen on saving the Glenreagh railway station. With such an attitude, it seems they are not aware that local jobs can be sustained by inbound rail heritage tourism. The heritage station has also faced delays with NSW Government and ARTC seemingly choosing to not work with the local council and residents on options that are more suitable in retaining the station in its current location.

GUNNEDAH RAILWAY STATION

Plans to improve the station has seen planning commenced for accessibility upgrade at Gunnedah railway station. As part of the planning process, initial investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Gunnedah railway station fully accessible.
HAWKESBURY RIVER RAILWAY STATION

Accessibility upgrade construction is underway at Hawkesbury River railway station.

KEMPSEY RAILWAY STATION

Refresh works at Kempsey over the last few years has seen much work done to the main heritage building. These supplied photos below are of the former residence - kitchen, down stairs and the living quarters upstairs and of the former refreshment room. A lot of time and effort went into restoring these areas. Phil Buckley 2020 view at right shows the building section mentioned.
MERRIWA RAILWAY STATION

After 10 years of working under a lease, the Merriwa railway station platform appears to still be unsafe. The majority of the station's platform wall edge has needed work for some years but no work has been done to fix it. It appears to create a significant safety and legal problem for the volunteer group and local council, if someone falls from the platform. Many other stations across NSW have had their platform walls fixed. Merriwa has not. The goods shed painting commenced many years ago but still needs to be finished. Reports are that a TRC refrigerator wagon and an Oil tanker are coming to the Merriwa rail site maybe in 2nd half of 2020. Hopefully before they arrive funding will be available to repair the platform so that visitor safety is not compromised.
MOREE RAILWAY STATION

Plans to improve the station has seen planning commenced for accessibility upgrade at Moree railway station. As part of the planning process, initial investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Moree railway station fully accessible.

NARRABRI RAILWAY STATION

Plans to improve the station has seen planning commenced for accessibility upgrade at Narrabri railway station. As part of the planning process, initial investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Narrabri railway station fully accessible.

OURIMBAH RAILWAY STATION

Plans to improve the station has seen planning commenced for accessibility upgrade at Ourimbah railway station. As part of the planning process, initial investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Ourimbah railway station fully accessible.

The local community newspaper, the Coast Community Chronicle in July 2020 has covered the upgrades with local concerns about impact on a war memorial next to the station. See below for more details on their local news coverage.
TAREE RAILWAY STATION

Plans to improve the station has seen planning commenced for accessibility upgrade at Taree railway station. As part of the planning process, initial investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Taree railway station fully accessible.

WAUCHOPE RAILWAY STATION

The original timber Wauchope railway station was dismantled in the early 1990s and moved to a private property. It is now up for sale and the buildings still remain on the site as part of the houses. See the platform building in this image - https://i2.au.reastatic.net/1323x863-resize,extend,r=33,q=40,b=46/77c6cb478fab7acf1fa7950dd5ca32e731822c9bb836d2879dd4073bf2e09/image.jpg

See more at https://www.realestate.com.au/property-lifestyle-nsw-upper+rollands+plains-700094938?fbclid=IwAR3iZXYnWol2NgOlmev595lR7v-TIPIzLFx7z226-dAYcZX1jaFfXZNiRJJs and click on the main photo to view all the other images.
TENTERFIELD RAILWAY STATION

Volunteers in May 2020 finished works on the barrack building overhaul. See more at https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2879706685475978&id=473880752725262&sfnsn=mo

WESTERN NSW NEWS

MAIN WESTERN LINE / BLUE MOUNTAINS STATIONS

In July 2020 Transport NSW announced the modification of all stations on the line from Springwood to Lithgow had taken place so the new Intercity trains can run through the platforms at all the stations. Majority of the work required changes to platform widths. See more information at https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/new-intercity-fleet-springwood-to-lithgow-rail-corridor-modifications

BORENORE RAILWAY STATION

In July 2020 the station has been observed to have all doors and windows boarded up with timber panels sadly. The exact reason is not known at this time.

BROKEN HILL RAILWAY STATION NSWGR 1919

The latest news on trying to save, restore and reuse the 1919 era station building is one of no change. It is understood that ARTC submitted to the Department of Heritage NSW an application for modification to allow removal of the failing asbestos roof .... replacing it with Colorbond roofing. The Heritage office response is that Colorbond roofing is not acceptable for restoration uses. This change has caused delays for the proposed restoration, as the companies that provided the quotes to the local volunteers, have reportedly now moved out of Broken Hill and the town people are having to now seek out new quotes.
BLAYNEY RAILWAY STATION

Plans to improve the station has seen planning commenced for accessibility upgrade at Blayney railway station. As part of the planning process, initial investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Blayney railway station fully accessible.

BLAYNEY TO DEMONDRILLE BRANCH LINE

In May 2020 NSWHRSI learned that a possibly long overdue, major breakthrough had occurred with progress made on the reopening of the line. The long drawn out feasibility study has been recently completed - much to everyone's surprise - and is currently with the NSW Government for review. We understand there have been some paperwork delays in releasing the executive summary for the feasibility study.

We are not informed when the report will be released or if it will be ever released to the public. Some might think that “delays” might now occur, given that the long delayed proposed plans for reopening of the Narrandera to Tocumwal line are now "hidden" away from public eyes and the Queanbeyan to Bombala branch line study is more than 8 months overdue. With these issues.... many people in the National Party seats covering the Central West of NSW.....are more than highly skeptical of the NSW Nationals capacity to achieve anything for NSW railways and its voting rail passenger transport users.

Despite this news, the overall reopening the whole Blayney to Demondrille section is Cowra line progress is viewed as potentially fake news. This is because with some research you find that the town of Young at the southern end of the branch line, recently released new plans for the town for 2040 showing a rail trail in the middle of the town using the same line that is supposed to be where the railway line is situated. It seems the NSW Government has not publicly announced this change. We cannot help but wonder why. See the Hilltops Shire report at http://www.hilltops.nsw.gov.au/getattachment/Services/Building,-Planning-and-Transport/Strategic-Planning/Local-Strategic-Planning-Statement/Hilltops-2040_Draft-LSPS.pdf.aspx?lang=en-AU

Furthermore, in late May 2020, a surprise was announced with the Federal, not the State, Government, funding 6km for reopening of the Blayney to Demondrille branch line from Cowra to Holmwood for heritage train reuses. See more at https://www.michaelmccormack.com.au/media-releases/2020/5/19/1-million-for-cowra-projects-to-fight-drought-mccormack?fbclid=IwAR30P-b4pOsIzITYJer8MBjMqcMf2gjo9fROYBpvOX9LvJTTzDn-EPf_T0

This Commonwealth funding is a great but small start but still leaves the entire branch line cut off from main line services with no hope of extra tourism from passenger and heritage trains or freight services. The NSW Government appears extremely reluctant to bring back the railway line and very unwilling to support Central
Western NSW businesses and tourism. This creates the loss of many potential uses for rail and local jobs not least of which is the possibility of less road accidents with death or permanent injury, which cost the community dearly in many ways.

**DUBBO RAILWAY STATION**

Plans to improve the station has seen planning commenced for accessibility upgrade at Dubbo railway station. As part of the planning process, initial investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Dubbo railway station fully accessible.

**FAULCONBRIDGE RAILWAY STATION**

Planning approval has been granted for an accessibility upgrade at Faulconbridge railway station.

**GIRILMABONE RAILWAY STATION**

**RESTORATION UPDATE**

I have long followed the situation at Girilambone Station...especially as I once stayed in the area as a child. I like to seek out the latest news from across NSW and am happy that the news of the rebirth of this heritage railway station with its funding grant becomes available is finally so positive.

NSWHRSI has been advised by the Bogan Shire Council with extensive insights that there is quite a bit of restoration work to undertake across the 3 station buildings and the general rail site.

Key work underway to restore the station site includes the removal of old paint from external walls, installation of a septic tank, removal of floor boards, construction of a new detached amenities block and finalisation of site plans.
Current works
A security fence has been put up earlier this year around the entire site and safety measures were put in place to enable commencement of work. By late June 2020 the indepth cleanup and initial site works had commenced. Workers have been actively cleaning up the site with extensive removal of rubbish, termite damaged flooring, including all sub floor timbers throughout, restoration of electrical power to the site, weed and vegetation control/removal, removal of asbestos and overall site clean-up. Safety handrails installed along the passenger platform and goods platform to prevent trips and falls. Water is being brought into the site for workers.

To date Bogan Shire Council has also undertaken extensive research into the structure and confirmation of room usage; this was achieved via conducting interviews and community input both in Nyngan and Girilambone. The team has obtained a photocopy of the original 1884 drawings from the Museum staff in Nyngan. These plans, even though poor in quality, have provided endless data on the original Girilambone plans. These 1884 drawings were also redrafted to refine the details of the original 1884 drawings. The restoration team have obtained photographs of the station from the early 1900’s through to the mid 1970’s, these have been examined and allow for the fine-tuning of previous information. The team has sought preliminary costings for new windows and doors.

Future plans in the coming weeks/months through to the end of 2020 include:

- A tender process for the main building/renovation aspects is hoped to start in August 2020.
- A suitable builder will be involved in the removal of all roof iron.
- New roof sheeting, roof guttering, downpipes, flashings and cappings will be installed to reflect the 1884 era. These down pipes will lead to an underground tank for storing water.
• Workers will construct the new platform awning and front portico awnings as per the original 1884 plans.
• Old lead paint is to be removed around August.
• They will install new timber double hung windows and timber doors throughout and render and set all internal walls ready for skirting and architraves to reflect the Victorian era.
• An external colour scheme of the building is yet confirmed but the roof is to be galvanised. Walls were painted with varying colours so presumably that will be repeated.

Other works on the station site will include:
• Reinstating the entire 1884 floor layout, lay new underfloor isolated brick piers, lay new Cypress bearers and joists and engage in extensive termite control measures so all further works are not impacted again by termites,
• Electrical fit out, replace fireplace hearths,
• Painting throughout the buildings,

Workers have already removed a small section of bitumen from the platform with the intent to regrade it and gravel it with a lightweight colour gravel up to 10mm.

There is evidence that the Girilambone railway station sign on each end of the platform was supported by railway track section posts. The team’s intention is to reconstruct this entire platform fence using the same method of construction as close as possible to the original 1884 drawings.
For site water supply and toilets – the plans will be to construct a new amenities block with flushable toilets, install new high rainfall capacity storm water drainage for reuse and install new underground rainwater tanks for fresh water usage from the new storm water drainage system. Interestingly no water service is programmed to be installed because in 1884, water was from an underground well.

Access from the main road will be via a gravel roadway. There could be some landscaping undertaken. It will be more to protect the station buildings from vehicles parking too close and to also generate pathways around via a walking track.
Exciting news for railfans and tourists, is that some 1950 era passenger railway carriages, are being assessed for delivery to Nyngan and then relocated to Girilambone railway station. The intent is to convert the intended railway carriages for hospitality uses like café, coffee shop, high tea.

At this stage it is the Bogan Shire Council’s intention to return the Girilambone railway station site back to its original status. Any future usage will depend on what interest comes from it. There is no expected date for the completion of this entire restoration project. It will depend on the level of works required for such a substantial restoration so may take a while.

As we learn more at NSWHRSI we will keep you advised. NSWHRSI kindly thanks the Bogan Shire Council for this news update. All photos Phil Buckley.

**MENINDEE WATER TANKS**

During May 2020 speculation was aired that ARTC or JHR / NSW Government is planning to demolish these former NSWGR steam locomotive work tanks. See more on the Menindee tanks uncertain future at [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1180549898970502&id=293979850960849](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1180549898970502&id=293979850960849)

**NYNGAN RAILWAY STATION**

Nyngan station changes in mid 2020 have included works in the two storey section which was occupied by the SES for many years. It has been completely reconstructed internally, walls painted, carpet etc. The staircase needs a second continuous handrail, so the original handrail was left and the new handrail attached to the adjacent walls. Other works include external ramps etc and the generation of access to the platform via new additional ramps. Access to a large external shed for wagons etc and allowing access to a trolley shed via a concrete path. NSWHRSI thank the Bogan Shire Council for this news update.
PARKES RAILWAY STATION

Construction is underway on an accessibility upgrade at Parkes railway station.

RAGLAN RAILWAY STATION

No news is available on long term outcomes for the station. The NSW Government will not allow access as it is a restricted site as it is located in an operational corridor. What this means long term for the locals is unknown, but it is known they could use a railway station at their doorstep rather than drive 8km into Bathurst which only further causes road congestion issues.

STOCKINBINGAL RAILWAY STATION

Nearly 2 years on from public letters to MPs in the NSW Government asking to have ARTC fix the decaying Stockinbingal railway station, it seems nothing has and will not, be done to fix it. Why Transport for NSW and the MP of the region, Steph Cook, cannot seem to have ARTC be held accountable is a political mystery. The local MP seems not to have created the change that was reputed to occur on her watch. The ongoing damage and graffiti is appalling.
TARANA RAILWAY STATION

May 2020 Tarana railway station was announced to be refreshed and upgraded for handing over to the local community for reuses. The signal box is undergoing a refresh as part of this process.

SOUTHERN NSW NEWS

ARIAH PARK RAILWAY STATION

During May 2020 the Ariah Park station project launched a facebook page to help spread the news of the heritage station project now that it has obtained a site lease. See the page at https://www.facebook.com/groups/3663216823715302/

DAPTO RAILWAY STATION

Plans to improve the station has seen planning commenced for accessibility upgrade at Dapto railway station. As part of the planning process, initial investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Dapto railway station fully accessible.

GOULBURN RAILWAY STATION

Construction is underway for an accessibility upgrade at Goulburn Station.
**GRIFFITH RAILWAY STATION**

Plans to improve the station has seen planning commenced for accessibility upgrade at Griffith railway station. As part of the planning process, initial investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Griffith railway station fully accessible.

**GUNDAGAI RAILWAY STATION**

Gundagai railway station was observed to close down in March 2020. It would seem that the current lease hold holders have not been maintaining the site as it should be under lease regulations. With an anti rail organisation running the once well maintained Gundagai station site, it is starting to look less cared for over the last 4 years observing the site and photos seen online. It is suggested to NSWHRSI that the rail trail organisation running Gundagai station has no long term interest in the 1883 era heritage station, as there has been only 5 updates posted on facebook page about the railway station over the last 12months. Intriguingly the focus of these posts has been not so much on the station but discussing the nearby historic railway bridge, which *curiously* is more suited for rail trail needs….. rather that the railway station.

**MICHAELAGO RAILWAY BRIDGE**

During May 2020 John Holland Rail, working for the NSW Government at arms length, sent the Michelago Region Community Association a list of questions on the Michelago railway bridge. They are working with Heritage NSW on a strategy for heritage listed timber built bridges in NSW and including Brebo's example.

**MICHELAGO RAILWAY STATION**

Amazing revelations came to light in early 2020 as to how poorly NSW country railway heritage Stations are treated. It has been publicly revealed the Michelago railway station, located on the non-operational CRN in southern NSW, has not been funded for a repaint since last being done in 1999.

In 2019-2020 the locals banded together using funds raised from with assistance from the Boco Rock Wind Farm and the Snowy Monaro Regional Council, along with only some money coming from John Holland Country Rail / NSW Government. In the end it was repainted by local tradies. The question many will be asking is why is a NSW Government asset managed for them by JHR, having to seek out local council funding to repair a Government asset?
The NSW Government should be properly funding all NSW heritage CRN repairs...not pushing back onto councils, local people and other businesses to pay. The Stockinbingal disease seems to be spreading some may think. Some people have asked is this underfunding approach an easy way out for our Sydney based politicians to dismiss our states country railway history?
Ask your local MP some questions in an email or phone call and find out why the NSW Government is cutting back on country NSW heritage railway station repair funds. In the end its your own state that loses out when cashed up tourists seeking out rail heritage bypass country towns to spend their money elsewhere and as a result, local jobs in country towns that depend on tourism just disappear.

In June 2020, the Michelago community shared an update on Facebook showing some rarely seen inside views of the station. See more at https://www.facebook.com/1512100495674270/posts/2576788085872167/

MITTAGONG RAILWAY STATION

Construction is underway on an accessibility upgrade at Mittagong railway station.

QUEANBEYAN RAILWAY STATION

Plans to improve the station has seen planning commenced for accessibility upgrade at Queanbeyan railway station. As part of the planning process, initial investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Queanbeyan railway station fully accessible.
SYDNEY REGION

ARNCLIFFE RAILWAY STATION

Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at Arncliffe railway station.

BANKSIA RAILWAY STATION

Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at Banksia railway station.

BARDWELL PARK RAILWAY STATION

During May 2020 works were conducted to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities, which included pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas.

BEECROFT RAILWAY STATION

Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at Beecroft railway station. Facilities being proposed include two new lifts, new and upgraded access paths throughout the station precinct, a new kiss-and-ride zone and improvements to CCTV, wayfinding and lighting.
BEXLEY NORTH RAILWAY STATION

The Transport for NSW is looking to improve passenger accessibility as part of the Transport Access Program. Facilities being proposed include a new lift and upgraded station entrance, stairs and canopy, new accessible pathways throughout the station precinct, reconfigured and upgraded commuter car park, including two new accessible parking spaces and improved amenities such as accessible toilets, CCTV and lighting.

During May 2020 works were conducted to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities, which included pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas.

BIRRONG RAILWAY STATION

Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at Birrong railway station. Planning is underway for an accessibility upgrade at Birrong station. As part of the planning process, preliminary investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Birrong station fully accessible.

CANTERBURY SIGNAL BOX

In June 2020, the Canterbury Signal box was observed to be fenced off and undergoing early works for a refresh. The works are being done as Sydney Trains is undertaking maintenance from June into August 2020. Improvements done included upgrading the condition of the Signal Box, via refurbishment works including painting and repairs to the glass windows and roofing. Phil Buckley 2016 views showing the damage and silly artworks. It will be interesting to see how the Sydney Trains manages in the future this historic signal box.
CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION

Latest news on the Central to Eveleigh railway corridor / precinct development can be seen at https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/A+A+western+gateway/Explanation+of+Intended+Effect.pdf

Over the last few months Metro railway conversion works has changed Central’s skyline with cranes now on site and more digging and modifications works now underway in the passenger walkway areas. Metro has been reported in the news media with some issues relating to the ride/comfort of the trains. It is understood that the Metro trains has shakes and this for many people this a risk. The shaking carriages can cause balance issues for people sitting and standing. This editor can attest to these shaking and balance concerns. Older people may be at risks of falls or injuries due to the shaking of the Metro trains. Below are June 2020 views of Central station works.
July 2020 views of Central station Metro conversion works
DENISTONE RAILWAY STATION
Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at Denistone railway station. As part of the planning process, preliminary investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Denistone fully accessible. The upgrade may include new lifts, accessible pathways, and new accessible amenities such as a family accessible toilet.

DOONSDIDE RAILWAY STATION
In July 2020 to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities works covering pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas were undertaken.

DULWICH HILL RAILWAY STATION
In July 2020 to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities works covering pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas were undertaken.

ERSKINEVILLE RAILWAY STATION
Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at Erskineville railway station. As part of the planning process, preliminary investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Erskineville station fully accessible.

In July 2020 to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities works covering pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas were undertaken.
EVELEIGH RAILWAY YARDS

During May 2020 Mirvac’s site development heritage consultants found old relics of a modern theme on the site - https://click.e.office.mirvac.com/?qs=7b341dob617db78ed1c67ab8c0c4fae79a2b525b116a8aca897d314cd6532b9c8829cd4443902ae281a281b61e40f1ddbb2da9df603bf2fe7

During late July 2020 another stakeholders meeting was held to discuss the plans for the heritage retention and public display of the site under Mirvac. Editor Phil and other select stakeholders were given updates on what was being offered. As we went to publication we were expecting to include some of the news into this newsletter for you but this will have to move to the next issue, as Mirvac has not provided their public media information in time.

FAIRFIELD RAILWAY STATION

During April to May 2020, Sydney Trains are installing new audio frequency induction loops on both the platforms and within concourse areas. Other works will see upgrades to the public address and audio systems.

GRANVILLE RAILWAY STATION

During May 2020 works were conducted to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities, which included pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas.

HOMEBUSH RAILWAY STATION

During May 2020 works were conducted to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities, which included pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas.
HURLSTONE PARK RAILWAY STATION

In July 2020 to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities works covering pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas were undertaken.

KINGSGROVE RAILWAY STATION

During May 2020 works were conducted to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities, which included pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas.

LIDCOME RAILWAY STATION

During May 2020 works were conducted to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities, which included pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas.

LIVERPOOL RAILWAY GOODS YARD

Sydney trains has recently undertaken work to refresh and restore the Liverpool goods yard platform and jib crane. The goods shed building has also being restored. Phil visited this area in 2018 as seen below with special access to record the site when it was all unrestored. We may examine a future return to inspect the restored site.
MARRACKVILLE RAILWAY STATION

In July 2020 to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities works covering pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas were undertaken.

NARWEE RAILWAY STATION

During May 2020 works were conducted to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities, which included pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas.
NORTH EVELEIGH

During May 2020, the arts/entertainment hub the “Carriageworks” went into administration. It was the first Sydney arts company on a large scale to collapse during the Corona virus and seek administrators. The decision to enter administration was started after the NSW government declined to support funding after June 2020. KPMG was chosen as the restructuring business. More can be seen at this link https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/carriageworks-enters-voluntary-administration-20200504-p54pr5.html. More news in May - https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/opera-house-push-to-take-over-carriageworks-proposed-20200505-p54pxl.html. In July 2020 a new venture was publicly announced which will save the site from closure. See more at https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/carriageworks-saved-as-lease-and-funding-guaranteed-20200710-p55b1m.html and https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/carriageworks-rises-out-of-voluntary-administration-20200721-p55dxt.html

NORTH STRATHFIELD RAILWAY STATION

Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at North Strathfield railway station. A proposed metro station is to be built immediately to the east / around 20m away from the heritage station.

PANANIA RAILWAY STATION

During May 2020 works were conducted to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities, which included pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas.

PADSTOW RAILWAY STATION

During May 2020 works were conducted to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities, which included pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas.
PENRITH STEAM LOCOMOTIVE WATER TANK

NSWHRSI was advised in May 2020 that the Penrith water tank was covered in scaffolding and undergoing a refurbishment. This will be similar to Gosford’s water tank last year. Penrith is due to be completed by September 2020. Brendan Farr photos, both left and both right Simon Herivel photos.

PETERSHAM RAILWAY STATION

Planning approval has been granted for an accessibility upgrade at Petersham Station. Upgrades are to include two new lifts connecting the existing footbridge to the Terminus Street station entrance and the station platform, a new access ramp and stairs from the Trafalgar Street station entrance to the existing footbridge, upgrade works to the existing footbridge and stairs, a new accessible parking space adjacent to the Terminus Street lift, a formalised kiss and ride area on Terminus Street, new bicycle parking on both sides of the station, improved amenities such as new male and female ambulant toilet, a new family accessible toilet and CCTV and lighting.

POWERHOUSE MUSEUM RELOCATION

In absolutely surprising news on 4 July 2020, the NSW Government suddenly backflipped and removed its intention to close and downgrade the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo, Sydney. Currently the Ultimo site is home to many rare and historical state artifacts, including railway heritage items as seen in photo at right. It seems the Liberal National Government MPs must have been sent many angry emails, letters and phone calls from voters across NSW for this backflip to take place. This backflip occurred after a series of events took place including –

- very damning reports on how the new building at Parramatta wouldn’t and couldn’t fit or handle the existing Ultimo site exhibits,
- a Union ban on the new Parramatta site due to the planned demolition of 2 major historical buildings, which if it does go ahead, means Parramatta destroys its own local history to preserve state history.

- the NSW Liberal Government under even more pressure from the legislative committee which was finding questionable reasons to move and the cost at over $1 billion, which suggested a huge waste of money in moving items to Parramatta,

- the Government has also been inundated with many angry voters demanding they cease the Powerhouse Museum move and build elsewhere in Parramatta instead of ruining the heritage buildings.

Until the Parramatta site is stopped and modified to include the keeping in place of Willow Grove and the Terrace houses, this July Government announcement is really not telling the full truth. It is more about stopping blue ribbon Liberal and National vote losses. This backflip is only likely to be a temporary vote calming measure. Many NSW voters still won't and don’t believe the NSW Liberal Govt will actually allow the Powerhouse to remain where it is at Ultimo, as it is already marked for redevelopment. It remains to be seen if the Liberal National Party will go against the building industry who they support, without any major backlash and repercussions taking place. See more at https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/powerhouse-backflip-as-ultimo-site-saved-by-berejiklian-government-20200703-p558vn.html. In late July 2020 the NSW Government made an announcement at a Parliament hearing on the move to Parramatta site. This announcement still doesn’t give the Powerhouse Ultimo museum much long term security or hope – as the minister is vague on outcomes or changes let alone the museum’s staff future. See more at https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/ultimo-is-final-stop-for-the-powerhouse-s-famous-locomotive-20200729-p55gev.html

PYMBLE RAILWAY STATION

Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at Pymble railway station. As part of the planning process, preliminary investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Pymble station fully accessible. The upgrade may include new lifts, accessible pathways, and new accessible amenities such as a family accessible toilet. In February 2020 work started on the station with part of the platform taken up for this. In April it was noted repainting of the stair way railings was underway.
REDFERN RAILWAY STATION

As part of the planning process, preliminary investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Redfern Station fully accessible. The upgrade may include new lifts, accessible pathways, and new accessible amenities such as a family accessible toilet. As a reminder plans were released in 2019 on the new southern footbridge walkway plan and this area is planned to undergo radical change with a new walkway and lifts to take up platform space. See more at [https://www.smh.com.au/national/fin...](https://www.smh.com.au/national/final-plansfor-100m-redfern-station-upgrade-reveal-new-liftsconcourse-20191104-p537ah.html). During June 2020, platform remediation works saw extensive work undertaken to platform 5/6 to improve the platforms as it has been sinking into the ground we understand. See views right and below, Phil Buckley photos.
July 2020 views showing the work now mostly done.

RESVBY RAILWAY STATION

In July 2020 to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities works covering pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas were undertaken. Sydney Trains installed new audio frequency induction loops on both the platforms and within concourse areas. Other works was to undertake upgrades to the public address and audio systems.
RIVERWOOD RAILWAY STATION

During May 2020 works were conducted to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities, which included pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas.

ROOTY HILL RAILWAY STATION

Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at Rooty Hill railway station.

ROSEVILLE RAILWAY STATION

Planning approval has been granted for an accessibility upgrade at Roseville railway station. The upgrade is understood to include new lifts, accessible pathways, and new accessible amenities such as a family accessible toilet.

ST MARYS RAILWAY STATION

During May 2020 it was noted the old 1800s era brick goods shed at St Marys was being refurbished.

Also in June 2020 the NSW Government announced plans for St Marys to be an interchange for the Metro line to the south west Sydney Airport. See more at https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-01/sydney-metro-western-sydney-airport-extra-funding-pledged/12306184
**STANMORE RAILWAY STATION**

Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at Stanmore railway station. As part of the planning process, preliminary investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Stanmore station fully accessible.

**STRATHFIELD RAILWAY STATION**

During May 2020 works were conducted to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities, which included pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas.

**ST PETERS RAILWAY STATION**

Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at St Peters railway station. As part of the planning process, preliminary investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make St Peters station fully accessible.

In July 2020 to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities works covering pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas were undertaken.

**SYDNEHAM RAILWAY STATION**

Metro works to the north east end of the station has seen the platform covered over with a massive awning.

**TEMPE RAILWAY STATION**

Work on the footbridge has been done in June to August 2020 to upgrade the footbridge.
TURELLA RAILWAY STATION

During May 2020 works were conducted to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities, which included pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas.

WAHROONGA RAILWAY STATION

Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at Wahroonga railway station. Construction is underway for an accessibility upgrade at Wahroonga Station. The upgrade may include a new lift, accessible pathways, and new accessible amenities such as a family accessible toilet.

WAITARA RAILWAY STATION

Planning is being undertaken to assess how to improve passenger / customer accessibility at Waitara railway station. As part of the planning process, preliminary investigations will be undertaken to help identify what upgrades will be required to make Waitara station fully accessible. The upgrade may include new lifts, accessible pathways, and new accessible amenities such as a family accessible toilet.

WARATAH RAILWAY STATION

Improvements are underway for an accessibility upgrade at Waratah railway station. The upgrade may include new lifts, accessible pathways, and new accessible amenities such as a family accessible toilet.

WARRAWEE RAILWAY STATION

Improvements are underway for an accessibility upgrade at Warrawee railway station. Facilities being proposed include a new lift and entry points, accessible pathways, formalised kiss and ride zones, accessible parking and new accessible amenities such as a family accessible toilet.
WOOLAWARE RAILWAY STATION

In July 2020 to improve the condition of the station and enhance customer facilities works covering pressure washing floor and wall surfaces, removing graffiti and cleaning high access areas were undertaken.

YOUR SAY - HERITAGE PHOTOS

Every issue NSW HRSI will publish a selection of photos from our growing collection of various railway photographers (50+ now contributing), showing different NSW stations from the 1850s onwards.

Left, Hugh Campbell 1974 view of Jerilderie railway station, right, Matthew Ramsey 1987 view of the then still intact Mudgee railway depot.

Left, Warren Banfield view of Whitton railway station in 198. Later on it would be moved off site to the museum ground. Right, Todd Montgomery 1980s view of Gerogery railway station.
A very rare view of Baan Baa in 1967, Peter Burr collection.

OTHER NEWS

RAILWAY PHOTOGRAPHER NOTICE FROM ARTC – ARTC RAIL SAFETY PHOTO GUIDE

From photos/videos uploaded to various facebook groups over the last year, more and more modern day era railway enthusiasts are taking risks it has being observed accessing/walking into live/operational main line corridor areas and accessing closed off station areas along with signal boxes without permission or the awareness of what they are doing is “unsafe”.

It is known that railway agencies in NSW(such as ARTC and John Holland Rail) do watch facebook forums for breaches and combined with reporting of trespassers by train crews, it has seen there is a need for an education campaign. The result has seen ARTC release an online rail safety guide to ensure enthusiast don’t trespass or cause a problem with railway operations while taking photos. Many photographers don’t know that there are serious fines and police action if you are found inside an operational railway corridor without a proper and valid reason. See http://www.artc.com.au/library/News%20-%202014-%2008-09.pdf and http://www.artc.com.au/Article/Detail.aspx?p=6&np=4&id=434 for more details.

WARNING NOTICE FOR NSW RAIL FANS AND TOURISTS

As we go to press, in August 2020, the NSW Government has begun making the CRN operator, John Holland Rail, issue warnings to people to not enter disused and unmaintained railway yards across NSW.

People are being warned to leave sites immediately if JHR come across people roaming the old rail sites. People who refuse the directives may be at risk of fines or jail penalties if they don’t comply.

What this now means is that no one can enter as a tourist into a former railway yard anymore in NSW. The political impact of this new directive is likely to cost many NSW towns and businesses local jobs, as people cant anymore visit old railway stations it seems as a tourist and thus less money is spent. We expect to see a few politicians being asked to explain this in next few weeks.

Recommended rail history web links –

NSWHRSI has a large online footprint bringing you the latest heritage news and photos. View our various online publications to learn more -

* Our primary facebook page is at https://www.facebook.com/NSWHRSI for heritage railway station and infrastructure news.

* Join our sister page "NSWGR History" for past current and future NSW rail news and issues - https://www.facebook.com/groups/117001524313/
* Read our older NSWHRSI newsletter issues at https://nswrailwaystations.wordpress.com/nswhrsinewsletters/

* Visit our rail history websites for NSW country railway stations at https://nswrailwaystations.wordpress.com and Sydney stations at http://sydneyrailwaystations.wordpress.com/

* Join NSWHRSI on Twitter at https://twitter.com/NSWHRSI

TRAIN HOBBY PUBLICATIONS RAILWAY BOOKS

As some may know there is an excellent range of NSW railway stations and locomotive depot photos available from Train Hobby Publications in Victoria, who have over the years brought together many unique and nowadays very rare to find images of NSW railway stations before they were demolished. NSWHRSI at times works with the publishers to showcase select images for stories or articles and help to increase your awareness of what once existed in NSW. We highly recommend these fabulous all colour books as the best insight to NSW railway stations from the past years from the 1950s to the 1980s. Some of these titles may no longer be in print but most are still available to buy. If you are keen to buy.... check out http://catalog.trainhobby.com.au/ and review the title on the left-hand side menu.... for NSW titles :) 

HERITAGE RAILWAY STATIONS PROJECTS - A variety of NSW volunteer run or community heritage railway stations projects are online with websites and facebook pages. Join their official facebook if you are interested.

Ariah Park railway station – https://www.facebook.com/groups/3663216823715302/

Dumaresq railway station - https://www.facebook.com/groups/627419178046564/


Other pages of interest

Like to learn a very indepth history of the NSW railway system this link may appeal - http://www.transportheritagensw.com.au/#!thematic-history/c1jyt


NSW station name listing - http://www.ozrevenues.com/Articles/nsw-railway-station-names.html

STOP!!!! - Heritage railway stations still to be saved / restored / reused in NSW

Did you know the list below is a small sample of the many underfunded / decaying / ignored or uncompleted restored heritage railway stations across NSW. These stations still need NSW Government funding to be fully saved and restored back to a suitable community level safe for reuse – and in some cases reopened to passenger railway trains stopping at the locations. Majority of these are in the CRN network and some are in the ARTC network.

Ben Bullen railway station - https://heritagerailwaysnsw.wordpress.com/ben-bullen/

Ben Lomond railway station - https://heritagerailwaysnsw.wordpress.com/ben-lomond/
Binalong railway station - https://heritagerailwaysnsw.wordpress.com/binalong/

Clandulla railway station - https://heritagerailwaysnsw.wordpress.com/clandulla/

Cumnock railway station - https://heritagerailwaysnsw.wordpress.com/cumnock/

Galong railway station - https://heritagerailwaysnsw.wordpress.com/galong/

Newbridge railway station - https://heritagerailwaysnsw.wordpress.com/newbridge/

Nimmitabel railway station - https://heritagerailwaysnsw.wordpress.com/nimmitabel/

There are even more heritage railway stations needing to be still saved / restored / reused and they include Conoble, Mangoplah, Molong, Westby, Raglan, Stockinbingal, Glenreagh and Broken Hill.

**SO WHAT?**

**So why should you worry** about these?

Well - unless you stand up now and **do something to make your local and State MPs take notice**, your state’s rail heritage is **going to crumble and fade away over the next few decades / be demolished before too long**. Once these buildings are gone, they are gone for good sadly and you can’t bring them back.

Importantly for all MPs in electorates across NSW, restored railway stations bring country towns inbound rail and history tourism as tourists seek out old railway stations. This tourism spending helps maintains and secure critical jobs in rural NSW. Politicians **love job creation schemes**. Ever seen a politicians that doesn’t support tourism job retention and creations in their own electorate?

A well known fact is the current NSW Governments of the last few decades are trying to privatize all functions of NSW public service and transport and rail heritage is one area. With rail heritage maintenance the majority of it in rural NSW this has been outsourced to a third party private business, John Holland Rail, which makes money from such CRN contracts. When things go wrong the NSW Government doesn’t take the blame but can shift this onto the people at John Holland Rail…. who as we have seen over the years are totally unfunded by the same NSW politicians. The only way these rural country NSW heritage railway stations will get fixed/restored and reused is by you **the ordinary person** of NSW applying **political pressure to get funding for these stations**.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

What you can do is now **take 5mins and write and contact your local MP, the NSW Premier and the Deputy Premier via email and or phone** and ask why they refuse to restore and/or reopen these above listed railway station locations and **what will they do to fix this issue**.

**NEXT ISSUE**

Coming up in our next NSWHRSI newsletter- issue 25 due November 2020, we will examine:

- The Kurrajong communication signal railway museum.
- Cootamundra to Griffith branch line review
- Albury railway station review
- Ranleigh House platform review
• A Rail Career, What Next? - Mark Brady - Part 2

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TAIL END TRIANGLE PHOTO

A view of the South Grafton railway station way back in 1915.