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TWEED RAIL SOCIETY INC.

"The North Coast Mail"

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Casino Locomotive Depot

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Tweed Rail Society - October 2007 Newsletter

Presidents Report

Vale Mark Wilson

On a sad note I have been informed that Mark Wilson, from Casino Minirail, passed away late July. Mark was a mind of rail information and was very supportive of us in our endeavours to get the Murwillumbah line reopened. He will be missed but certainly not forgotten by us. The Tweed Rail Society wishes to express our sincerest condolences to Mark's family and to the Casino Minirail members.

Business Plan Soon to be Launched

Since I commenced this report in August (it's now Oct) there have been other significant happenings. First and foremost, the Tweed Rail Society Business Plan is for all intended purposes completed. Stage 1 was to complete this project as part of my TAFE studies. Stage 2 is to finalise items such as time tables and other points. Stage 3 is to launch the plan in the run up to the federal election. It is hoped that Stage 3 will commence in the next few weeks.

Other points of interest are:

1. A very worthwhile discussion with Geoff Provest the Nationals member for Tweed in early July
2. Discussions held with a major rail heritage group who are interested in doing business with us to get heritage operations on the Murwillumbah line
3. Discussed the importance of maintaining Casino depot intact with another rail heritage group for turning and servicing locomotives and leasing of equipment
4. Am in discussion with an interested and well connected rail consultant who is working with us to do 'modelling projects' to strengthen our arguments and is examining freight options for us for the rail line
5. I hope to be a speaker at the upcoming Rural Taskforce conference chaired by Richard Torbay to be held in Grafton 30th October
6. I had a meeting in Canberra with Mark Vailes office regarding rail issues in the NSW Northern Rivers on the 17th August

In the Pipeline

The coming months could herald a number of changes for the Tweed Rail Society. First on the agenda is the next annual meeting of the Society in October (Sunday 7th) and then a federal election in October/November. Two other items of note are:

Studies

1. I am hoping to complete my advanced diploma in tourism management by late November this year (after 3 years study) and hope to now carry on next year to now complete a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree over the next year or 2. (I have already completed about 80 - 90 % of the degree due to previous TAFE studies) so hope to have plenty of time to keep pursuing rail issues - this will then complete all planned studies)

Casino Locomotive Depot

2. Perhaps the most interesting of all is the news received in late July of Interail vacating the Casino locomotive depot in August this year. As soon as I heard this news I immediately got in touch with ARTC who are the property managers of the depot and registered the Tweed Rail Society as an interested party to take over the depot. I have been advised that other parties are also interested in the depot. ARTC advised that when the depot is fully vacated and Interail terminating the lease they will advise all interested parties to lodge an expression of interest for the depot. I have written to Interail regarding a number of items still at Casino loco such as the X100 shunter and 49 class 'shells'

Casino depot would be the perfect location for us as a rail group to establish ourselves. It has all the facilities one could ask for in a rail depot. If we are successful in obtaining the lease on the depot it is intended that it will certainly become our base of operation and most definitely for our maintenance and restoration programmes as well as a rail museum for tourists to visit. Casino loco is a heritage listed property. The coal stage is one of the last if not the last remaining of its type in the state. From all appearances the depot, including buildings and structures, such as the roundhouse, has been well maintained by Interail. The property and round house are well secured with cyclone fencing and security doors.

I have placed an aerial photo of Casino loco on the newsletter cover page for reference. The sweeping curve on the left side is the main north coast line. The brown object next to it and behind the shed is the coal stage. It is obvious to see the roundhouse with its several roads leading to the turntable. Below the roundhouse are various out buildings. The yellow rectangular object to their right is a gantry crane. Surrounding the turntable are various locomotives belonging to Interail. Next to them are coal wagons on a separate road. Above these are the 49 class shells. To the right can be seen the various administrative buildings. The compound is located in a triangle, with the Murwillumbah line on the bottom of the photo. The top part of the triangle was removed by RailCorp in the 1990s.

Having the Tweed Rail Society based at Casino could bring a number of benefits to the society as well as the community at large. The following could be established in conjunction with loco depot as a rail tourist precinct that would be both educational and family friendly:

1. A rail museum could be established on site that could include interactive displays
2. An educational facility established in the Northern Rivers for the purposes of training all manner of rail jobs locally
3. A link to other tourist attractions in the immediate area most notably the Casino Minirail - is virtually next door as well as the Casino Golf Club

Pay Bus

Work on the pay bus continues to progress well. Further work has been done on the electricals and all external and external lights bar one internal fluoro light now work. A new lock and bolt have been secured to the side door. Diesel fuel, filter and engine oil have now been changed. The big news is that the alternator has now been refitted and new belts added. A big thanks to Ivan from Casino Minirail for his sweat and tears in getting the alternator repositioned up under the “bus”. My son Christopher assisted me and my brother Rick in reassembling the water system for the sink. The sink has been removed temporarily to secure a tap fitting in place.

History of the Pay Bus

Some very interesting history about our pay bus has recently emerged. It relates to the operation of the pay bus when it was based out west on the Hillston - Roto line and a section about the last days of operation in the June 07 edition of Australian Railway History. Volume 58 No 836, Pages 211 - 233. On page 224 and 225 there is a section on timetables and a paragraph about the pay bus. Our bus actually had a timetable. It ran on alternate Wednesdays from Roto to Hillston as train No. 70 departing at 5.34pm and arriving Hillston at 6.36 pm. It then ran the following day from Hillston to Griffith still as No. 70 departing at 9.00am and arriving Griffith at 10.45am. Departing Griffith at 11.20am No. 70 then headed to Parkes via Stockinbingal.

Pay bus began appearing in timetables in 1946 operating fortnightly services. The last passenger service on the line was a pay bus and left Roto at 4.00pm and arrived at Hillston at 4.52pm. Paragraph concludes by saying “where the pay bus went after that is not shown”. What is known is that this was pay bus 8. Our records of maintenance and trip logs show this plus all the red dust underneath. Further evidence is the Black Stump Hotel sticker from Hillston which is glued to a mirror inside the bus.

The pay bus returned to Parkes for some time where it remained before it was acquired by the Lachlan Valley Rail Society at Cowra. It was then going to be sold to the Glenreagh Mountain Railway but was subsequently offered to us by GMR as it was more suited to our needs.

My thanks go to the Australian Railway Historical Society for this information.

Other Issues

Numerous discussions, talks with politicians and community link ups are occurring on a regular basis. In brief:

1. A link up with a group called Coast to Coast 100 who are campaigning about dangerous driving practices by semi trailer drivers - most notably tail gaiting by truckies on the Pacific Highway. Go to www.coasttocoast100.com.au for more information. The word “coast” is an acronym for COmmunities Against Semis Tailgating. We have agreed to support each others campaigns to make roads safer and to get more freight onto rail. After you read it you wonder why there aren't more deaths as a result of bully truck driver's tactics. I too have been the victim of this very dangerous practice
2. A campaign has been launched to rescue Eveleigh erecting shed from the clutches of the housing developers. Go to the History icon on the TRS website for more information and tell any other rail minded people about this campaign to rescue precious rail heritage and have a Sydney home for significant rail heritage items.



Vice President's Report September, 2007.

The World Wide Web.

Over the past months I have had 15 videos on the web, all concerning the Murwillumbah rail line in one form or another. In addition to the videos is a web poll for the world to vote on concerning the Murwillumbah rail line.

Question 1: Would you consider joining a rail society to help maintain the integrity of the Murwillumbah rail corridor?

Question 2: Would you like to have rail services run under Government or Private control?

Question 3: Would you like to have rail services returned to the Casino to Murwillumbah rail corridor?

Question 4: Would you use a commuter rail service or freight service on the Murwillumbah rail corridor?

Question 5: In your valued opinion, which do you consider to be most cost effective in both construction and maintenance, cleaner fuel emissions, less land usage, quantity of people and freight transported, and cater for all types of people - disabled?

Question 6: If voting from in Australia, than what is your State/ Territory?

Question 7: If voting from outside Australia, than what is your country?

If anyone wishes to view the videos and vote than visit the web site: www.freewebs.com/b7el
The results of the voting can be viewed on the site.

As for the videos, here are the current results of their viewings:

[Vintage Trains](#)

08:12

Three vintage trains on the North coast of NSW during 2005 - 2006.

Tags: Vintage Trains.

Views: 74

[Brief history of the Murwillumbah line.](#)

07:36

The beginning and pause of the Murwillumbah rail line.

Tags: History of Murwillumbah line.

Views: 80

[Past, Present, & Future.](#)

03:07

Rail traffic on the Murwillumbah line.

Tags: Past Present & Future.

Views: 74

[Steely](#)

03:33

Freight on the NSW North Coast Rail Corridor.

Tags: Steely

Views: 36

[Remember When.](#)

03:10

Remember when there were trains on the Murwillumbah line.

Tags: Remember When.

Views: 90

[Pt 5.](#)

06:57

Cab ride from Lismore to Casino.

Tags: Lismore to Casino.

Views: 20

[Pt 4.](#)

08:27

Cab ride from Bangalow to Lismore.

Tags: Bangalow to Lismore

Views: 30

[TRS Presentation](#)

05:47

TRS Vision.

Tags: Tweed Rail Society.

Views: 43

[Pt3.](#)

03:39

Cab ride from Byron Bay to Bangalow.

Tags: Byron Bay to Bangalow.

Views: 22

[Pt 2.](#)

08:22

Cab ride from Burringbar to Byron Bay.

Tags: Burringbar to Byron Bay

Views: 15

[TRS](#)

02:55

TRS and the Murwillumbah rail line.

Tags: TRS Video.

Views: 51

[Casino Run Pt 1.](#)

06:15

Drivers view from Murwillumbah to Burringbar.

Tags: Casino run pt 1.

Views: 53

[Murwillumbah to Mullumbimby](#)

09:57

Drivers view from the cab of a 421 Class locomotive.

Tags: Drivers view no: 1.

Views: 496

[Walk in the SAFE zone.](#)

01:37

Never walk or near railway lines. Trains don't have feelings, but YOU DO!

Tags: Trains safe zone.

Views: 10

Additional information which has come to hand in the past few days has been that it would appear that Pacific National could be winding down their operations in the State of Victoria. As well as this it also appears that Interail could be in hot water again over their disregard for operating outside safety standards in Victoria. Time will tell.

End Report.

Secretaries Report

There is no news for the secretary to report on for this edition except to say that I do not intend to run for this position again. May I say thank you for the opportunity to assist the society this year in this capacity and look forward to another year of progress towards returning rail services to the Murwillumbah line.

Treasurers Report

As at 30 June 2007 the membership holding fund had a balance of \$733.65

As at 31 August (latest statement) Balance was \$713.65

Since 31.8 07 a deposit of \$135.00 was made

No outstanding debtors or creditors to 30 June 07

Membership Report - "Welcome Aboard"

The Tweed Rail Society warmly welcomes Warwick Mead as our latest member. Warwick is a well versed rail enthusiast. He was the president of the Pacific Coast Rail Society (the Casino Minirail). I hope to harness some of Warwick's knowledge and skills regarding rail issues in general and in particular issues pertaining to the Murwillumbah line.