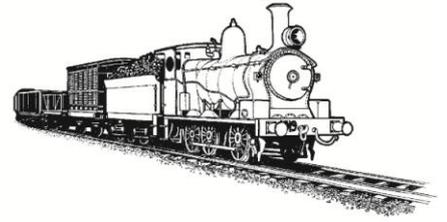


# Rainforest



## RAILWAY NEWS

No. 29 – May 2013

Address: P.O. Box 5104 GLENREAGH NSW 2450

ABN: 88 246 630 101

Email: [gmr@gmr.org.au](mailto:gmr@gmr.org.au)

Website: [www.gmr.org.au](http://www.gmr.org.au)

### From the President

Many of you are concerned at the lack of information being disseminated by the Board and I'm sure I can speak for the rest of the Board when I say that we are equally frustrated at not being able to provide more information to you via our newsletters, our website or our facebook page. If I tell you that it falls to a handful of us to carry on the business of managing GMR's operations you may begin to understand the problem. The responsibilities that have been bestowed on the Board by the new National Rail Safety Act 2012 in relation to record keeping and reporting activities are very onerous. Our other main drawback is limited funds. It is the Board's intention to produce a newsletter every two months. To assist in cutting costs, we are happy to send your newsletter by email. If you have not already arranged this, send us an email advising your email address so that we can put you on the list.

The new Board that was elected unopposed is as follows: President, Colin Sambrook, Vice President, David Page, Secretary, Bill Harrison, Treasurer, Tessa Johnson-Walker, and Directors, Helen Bamford, Andrew Simpson, John Munson and Stephen Joyce. David retained his position as Infrastructure Manager and Andrew continued as Rail Safety Manager. Andrew resigned his position for personal reasons earlier this month and has been replaced by Stephen Joyce.

Apart from the legislative requirements under the Rail Safety Act and lack of funds, our other main problem is lack of support from members at working bees. There are plenty of tasks that are not strenuous that will help us to progress. If you are able to help, call me on 0418610142 or David on 66545350. Remember, that the Cottage has two bathrooms, cooking facilities and rooms for portable beds if you need to stay overnight. There is also room outside if you have a tent.

The Glenreagh Timber Festival is on again this year at the Recreation Ground on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July. If you can help in showing visitors over the shed please contact John Munson on 0421053106.

It is that time of the year again when membership dues become payable. Attached is your renewal form. Payment can be made by cash, cheque, money Order or PayPal. PayPal details can be found on our Website.

### From the Secretary

Before I detail our current activities let me detail what we have been doing in the 7 months since our last report.

- The various activities required to comply with our obligations under the Rail safety Act and Regulations.
- The removal of our last remaining tram to provide more covered space in the shed for our end platform cars.
- Continued negotiation with NBN Co on their proposed lease of land at Glenreagh West.
- Renewal of insurance policies.
- Application for membership of the Permanent Way Institute.
- Insurance coverage for GMR during Rally Australia Coffs Coast event.
- Negotiations with TURSA re possible employment of Work-for-the Dole recipients.
- Continuing negotiations with the owners of neighbouring properties at Moleton over their property located within our rail corridor.

- Submissions of GMR's monthly periodic report to the Rail Safety Regulator as required under the act and regulations.
- Submission of an application to the Rail Safety Regulator to allow us to carry out shunting operations at Glenreagh, Glenreagh West and Lowanna.
- Submission of an application to the Rail Safety Regulator to allow us to re-commence restoration of our heritage rolling stock.
- The preparation of applications for various Commonwealth, State and Local Government grants during the year.
- Continuing participation in the Rail Safety Strategic Forum.
- Finalisation of an Interface Agreement with Clarence Valley Council.
- Continuing negotiations of interface agreements with Coffs Harbour City Council and Forestry Corporation.
- Continuing negotiations of Rights of Carriageways with Clarence Valley Council, Coffs Harbour City Council and Forestry Corporation.
- A visit to the Rail Motor Society at Paterson to seek their assistance and advice concerning the restoration of CPH11.
- Negotiations with various parties, including the preparation of a proposal to Pacific National to acquire surplus rolling stock at Grafton at no cost to GMR including a 7 tonne fork lift and a Coles yard crane.
- Negotiation and ultimate sale of the ballast regulator and tamping head for \$9,000.
- Advertising the sale of 2 of our surplus U boats and negotiating the sale of 1.
- Ongoing discussions with Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour and Bellingen councils to develop a professional business plan for GMR.
- The acquisition of 640 used timber sleepers in good condition from ARTC Scone delivered to Glenreagh at no cost to GMR.

Our current activities include:

- Finalising our lease of land within our rail corridor at Glenreagh West to NBN Co.
- Correspondence with ARTC over conditions for our occupation of Glenreagh yard.
- The preparation of our response to the findings of a recent audit of our operations by the Rail Safety Regulator. This includes the investigation, preparation and implementation of an action plan to address issues raised in the audit, including a review of our current Safety Management System (SMS) that should have been performed last year and the investigation and revision of our SMS to address changes resulting from the introduction of the new National Rail Safety Law on 20 January 2013 which replaced the Rail Safety Act 2008.
- The preparation of our response to issues raised by the Rail Safety Regulator with respect to our applications to operate track machines, shunt in our depots and restore our rolling stock.
- Ongoing negotiations with the Department of Education concerning the conditions of an easement on our rail corridor allowing access to Lowanna Public School.
- The continuation of negotiations through our legal representatives with Coffs Harbour and Clarence Valley Councils over a legal requirement for Rights of Carriageway to allow them to maintain roads that cross our rail corridor and to provide GMR with necessary cover for liability in the event of any incidents.
- The preparation of an Asset Register as specified in our Safety Management System.

We urgently need a publicity officer and somebody to identify and coordinate our applications for the myriad grants available. Once we gain our additional accreditations, we will be looking to recruit more individuals with recognised skills and experience to assist with what we hope will be increased restoration activity. Rail Safety law mandates that we must only use people with recognised qualifications for certain tasks so we will be looking for qualified boilermakers, joiners, electricians etc. and we can promise some interesting and challenging activities.

Whilst our annual revenue is low, we have at least now arranged a reasonably secure income from our Optus lease and feel confident that we can augment this with revenue from NBN Co.

**From the Infrastructure Manager**

Members must be wondering what has been occurring since the last newsletter in September. The infrastructure department has been trying to do more with less funding as well as meeting the increasing requirement of our accreditation.

Training for 4 members in Certificate II, Rail Infrastructure has been completed to ensure we comply with our accreditation. These courses are not cheap but necessary. Now that this has been done we are training mainline workers at Lowanna to recover some of the costs and help with repairs on the line. Even so, it will take time to recover the costs for training that is ongoing with members undertaking working at heights courses in the coming months so we can clean the gutters on the big shed at Glenreagh West and repair the Cottage.

Sleeper replacement is ongoing with 80 new sleepers installed at the Lowanna section with another 640 sleepers waiting to go in once the accreditation for track machines is approved. The application went into the Regulator in June last year and we are still waiting on final approval. This will mean that not just trikes but our sleeper inserters and other hi rail machines can start working on the line. The approval of the application has been a bottle-neck for further re-sleepering to occur.

Our existing accreditation has enabled us to do some projects with 1.6km of track cleared at Lowanna with a further 1.6km planned in the coming months. This has been carried out with our hydraulic slasher attachment on the excavator. The process of clearing drains and weed control is ongoing.

The Glenreagh Station area has not been forgotten with a major weed control program and new gate to address trespassing with people accessing the main North Coast Line. There were plans to step up this process on the land we lease until ARTC refused us access to the site which is being dealt with by the Board.

Even with our limited resources we still have to maintain and repair our equipment. The trusty excavator started to show signs of its age and past life before we received it so required a \$7500 overhaul to keep it operational. This included a rebuild to the central hydraulic post, new set of tracks, new radiator, repairs to seat, new and repaired hydraulic hoses, repairs to a number of hydraulic leaks, new fuel, oil, air and hydraulic filters, new horn as well as hazard light. We also have repaired the small sleeper inserter at Lowanna with new braking system, repairs to hydraulic systems, new floor, new horn and hazard lights. The large sleeper inserter at Glenreagh West is in urgent need to be under cover as it requires a complete de-rusting and repaint but is waiting on the approval from the Regulator to move it into the Tram shed. This was applied for in June last year and we hope this will be approved soon.

As well as the interesting jobs there are boring ones like mowing lawns. We now have some four legged lawn mowers at Glenreagh West that assists but it is still a huge task undertaken by a small band of workers such as Gordon Greenbury, Eric Shaw, Steve Martin and David Page who do most of this work with other Board members such as John Munson and Stephen Joyce who help when the call goes out for workers on the track. Buildings at Glenreagh West are in urgent need of repairs and maintenance. John has started repairs to the Ganger's Shed that has been attacked by white ants. There are urgent repairs and re-painting of the Cottage needed with John and Stephen managing that project. Bill Harrison has been trying to sort and clean out the carriage workshop as well as all his other tasks. It is mentioned that Bill lives in Sydney, John lives in Brisbane and Stephen lives in Brisbane but works in Walgett. This involves a lot of travel and personal expense for these members to attend working bees.

Glenreagh Mountain Railway has been lucky with support from both Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour City Councils by effectively waiving their rates and Coffs Harbour City Council with their yearly grants to the Association for activities at Lowanna. This year we successful in receiving an additional grant for woody weed control in the Lowanna section of the line. However this is your Association and without further active workers or the funds to employ contractors to fill the gaps, work on the line will slow.

Our big event to promote the link between the Coffs Harbour Railway Station and Lowanna Railway Station is occurring again on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July. The Station to Station Vintage Car Rally will be joined this year by a Vintage Tractor Trek from Glenreagh to Lowanna. The tractors are arriving on the Saturday to be ready to greet the vintage cars as they arrive on

the Sunday. This was a highly successful event last year and this time the local community is becoming involved with stalls and food stands. It should be a great event and please try and make it if you can.

## **Rail Cruisers**

Two years ago the members at the AGM were informed that GMR was looking at bringing Rail Cruisers to our line to generate a steady income stream. Since then, there has been lots of meetings with Neil Oppatt the Manager of Rail Cruisers, with him providing information workshops with Clarence Valley Council, Coffs Harbour City Council and Bellingen Shire Council as well as the development of business plans for the concept. Neil has also been meeting with the Rail Safety Regulator in Sydney about obtaining National Accreditation for his operations. The proposal has not received final Board approval as yet with Neil flying over again in July from New Zealand to meet with the Board and other stakeholders. I understand some members have been asking why the process is taking so long but we hope the final decision on the proposal will be made by the end of the year. It is clear that for any heritage railway association to survive it needs multiple income streams. If you want to see video of the operations just type *Rail Cruisers New Zealand* into your web search engine. If you don't have access to the internet, a picture of a Railcruiser with a brief description on how they work has been included. More information about them will be included in future newsletters.

## **What is Railcruising?**

RailCruising is a new tourist activity that allows people just like you the ability to travel along railway lines in your own powered self-drive, 4-seat railway vehicle called the RailCruiser.



## **How does RailCruising work?**

Groups of RailCruisers spaced about 300 metres apart, travel together like a virtual train in one direction. They are then turned around to head back to their starting point.

Cruising along at 20km/hr, you can listen to an audio tour and discover a unique piece of railway history. This is the ultimate way to experience a railway.

## **Safety**

The RailCruiser is the world's first fully automated, state of the art petrol-electric four seat self-drive hybrid rail vehicle. The RailCruiser has comfortable seats with unobstructed views, is fitted with clear drop down waterproof sides and comes with onboard heating. They are operated from a central point and are computer controlled to ensure that they do not collide. The system keeps them at a minimum of 5 metres apart.