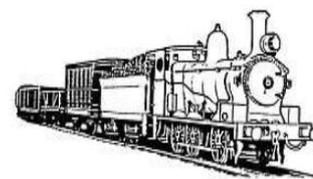


Rainforest

RAILWAY NEWS



No. 31 – April 2014

From the President

I write this as both the president of GMR and the Rail Safety Manager. Whilst it has been a while in between newsletters, rest assured a small band of volunteers have been working hard to both maintain our infrastructure and move towards the next stage of our accreditation.

As you read this we are awaiting the result of our application to run Trikes and Track Machines, maintain rolling stock and move the end platform carriages under cover. Fingers crossed we can make the official announcement shortly. Of course this will not only move us in to the next phase of maintaining our infrastructure, but will also mean we can start planning our application to finally start running trains again.

Special thanks needs to go to Bill Harrison and David Page who have both worked tirelessly on writing and reviewing policies to assist with our application. Bill has also been active giving me a hurry up when I drag the chain on anything. The policy review is on-going, so if there is anyone out there that would like to review and critique a policy every now and then please let me know. Anyone with basic technical skills would be more than welcome, as policy review requires the use of a range of people and knowledge. There is no need for extensive railway knowledge, just an ability to provide feedback.

As many of you would be aware, we don't have a lot of active members. One of the greatest risks for GMR is the ability to sustain ourselves with the limited number of active members. This is also a risk that is closely monitored by the Office of National Rail Safety – our Accrerator.

There are two ways to overcome this risk – recruit and encourage more members to become active, and/or through the use of qualified contractors. Of course the second option costs money – a lot of money. I know it isn't possible for everyone to be active, but it would be very helpful if donations could be forthcoming.

Our major projects at the moment include Lowanna, Glenreagh West, and Glenreagh. Once we have further accreditation we will also start working on the rollingstock.

The work at Lowanna is on-going and the efforts of a very small band of volunteers need to be recognised. By the time you read this an extensive track clearing program will have commenced, allowing work on the line from Lowanna to the first bridge.

One of our major concerns currently is the potential loss of Glenreagh Station and some of the infrastructure in Glenreagh yard. This area is currently under lease from ARTC and as we have not been able to keep up with the work required there is now a major risk of the station and the water tower being removed.

One of our first priorities is cutting the grass in the yard. The size of the yard means we either need a number of volunteers with brush cutters over a few days, or a tractor. We can do a basic slash for around \$1000, or a heavy duty slash for around \$3000. We then need to ensure we weed spray on a regular basis. We therefore also need a heavy duty weed sprayer that can go on the back of a Ute. We are looking at a starting price of around \$1000 for this.



As it is anticipated that the first trains to run on our line will start and finish at Glenreagh, we are also keen to save the buildings. We will be getting quotes on doing this; however it is not going to be cheap unless we can find a builder willing to help and a few trades' people.

Given the cost of slashing, weed spraying and attempting to save the buildings, I am putting out an appeal to all members to make donations towards covering these costs. Without your donations there is very little chance of us running a train again. If you have a specific area or project you would like to donate to, then please let us know when you make the donation. Otherwise all donations are greatly appreciated, and all donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

If anyone would like to volunteer or discuss donations I can be contacted on 0409 473 643.

If you can find a weekend every now and then to come and help that would also be greatly appreciated. John Munson and I try to get to Glenreagh at least one weekend per month and are always keen to have others come and help. There is always work to be done including clearing track; spraying weeds; mowing; cleaning rollingstock; cleaning the cottage; painting the cottage and general repairs.

Finally, I would like to welcome on board our new publicity officer – Phil Buckley. Phil has been responsible for a revamp of our Facebook page and also for putting together this newsletter.

Stephen Joyce

From the Secretary

Members will note that our newsletters are now appearing less often; our last edition was in September 2013. While I don't wish to belabour the point, the reason is that it is the same few people doing much of the physical work on the ground, attending board meetings, dealing with accreditation issues and contributing to the newsletter. Having said that, there are notable exceptions, being the dedicated band at Lowanna continuing with general maintenance activities, repairing damage caused by vandals and replacing end of life sleepers in the yard and those working on the restoration of the seats for CPH11.

Accreditation

The President and Secretary attended a meeting with the Rail Safety Regulator at Glenreagh and Lowanna. Three representatives attended in response to our invitation at our meeting with them in September last year. Their intent (and ours) was for them to acquaint themselves with the

limited scale of our operations at present so they can better understand the minimal risks associated with our activities. Grant Windsham, our ITSR accreditation manager, and two members of its compliance team were present and I believe came away with a much better understanding of our situation. At the same time, they took the opportunity to discuss our three suspended accreditation applications and advised us on issues that we needed to address and we agreed a way forward.

In early March we resubmitted our application to operate track machines and since then have received a verbal response from ITSR that gives us cause for cautious optimism that we will soon receive approval. This will be an enormous morale boost for all of us and we hope this will open up opportunities for more work to be undertaken and to attract more active volunteers.



Next on our list is the resubmission of our application to re-commence restoration of CPH11 and inspection of 1919's boiler to determine the extent of any deterioration in its condition and what repair work will be required and the cost of that work. We hope to submit this application within the next two weeks. Finally we need to resubmit our application to move the two end platform cars under cover so we can begin restoring their exterior and preventing any further environmental damage. We hope to soon be able to

submit this application.

NBN Co

We have been negotiating with NBN Co now since mid-2012 and have experienced delays in responding to all our concerns. They finally agreed the terms of a lease with us in early February this year and promised to forward copies of the lease to us for execution. We are still waiting to hear from them. Our Optus lease payments each year are a valuable source of income for us and we are hopeful that we will soon finalise the NBN Co lease which will provide a similar income for us.

Glenreagh Station and Yard

We recently received advice from ARTC that they had obtained the advice of a structural engineer that the Glenreagh Station building and the water tower were in danger of collapsing onto the North Coast Railway and that they were considering demolishing the station and removing or lowering the water tower. This is clearly not news we were either expecting or wanting to hear but given we have been unable to carry out any restoration work or to keep the vegetation under control since taking out the lease with ARTC, their decision is understandable. We understand these actions may be carried out in the 2014-2015 financial year and the board has therefore determined to make an effort to at least clear as much of the vegetation as possible. To make life more difficult for us, ARTC has reminded us that their policy states that we need to have a qualified protection officer in attendance every time we carry out any work in the yard. At some expense to GMR but thanks to the generosity of Ernie Burnett from Burnett Civil, we have been able to qualify two members. We have now arranged to slash as much as possible of the yard on Tuesday 22 April and have committed to controlling the growth of any future vegetation. We would like to start work on restoring the turntable and perhaps the weighbridge and would

welcome the assistance of any members who would like to get involved. Seen below are a contrasting historical view of the station and a view from 2011.



Business Plan

In early November APR Consultants presented the draft Business Plan to representatives of GMR and Coffs Harbour City, Clarence Valley and Bellingen shire councils at the GMR cottage. The plan was generally endorsed by all the attendees and council representatives agreed to take the plan back to their respective councils for review. We are hopeful of a response from all three councils in the near future which would allow us to begin implementation of the plan.

Publicity Officer

One of our crucial needs has been to provide more publicity of our activities so members and the wider public will see that we are still alive and making slow but steady process. We recently appointed Phil Buckley as our first publicity officer and he has already started by invigorating our facebook page. He is keen for any other news or items of historical interest to post to showcase our activities.

Transport Heritage NSW

Earlier last year a consultant's report on the state of heritage railway in NSW commissioned by the NSW Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian was released to the public. One of its key recommendations was the formation of a new entity to be called Transport Heritage NSW (THNSW) which would have the NSW Rail Transport Museum at Thirlmere at its core. Formation of this group was subject to the approval of the members of the Rail Transport Museum which occurred late last year. THNSW will take over the functions of the Office of Rail Heritage, Trainworks (the museum at Thirlmere previously run by RailCorp) and will receive an annual budget from the NSW government. Part of that budget will be the establishment of an annual fund to be administered by an independent committee and allocated to individual state heritage organisations including groups such as GMR that owns its infrastructure and rolling stock that had previously been excluded by the Office of Rail Heritage. If we can provide a compelling case, we now stand a chance of receiving some of that money for a specific project.

While our active numbers are small, there is renewed optimism that we are at last starting to make some progress and my hope is that more members will see opportunities to get involved and hopefully encourage others to join GMR.

Bill Harrison

Secretary

Positions available

GMR are currently seeking expressions of interest for the positions of treasurer and infrastructure manager. Ill health and work commitments have seen these positions recently become vacant.

Treasurer

The treasurer is a board member position, with financial experience and a good working knowledge of MYOB required.

Infrastructure manager

The infrastructure manager requires an ability to manage teams; review policies and liaise with members and contractors. A relevant degree or trade would be highly regarded. This is a volunteer position, however will play a pivotal role in the next phase of GMR.

To submit your EOI or for further details, please write to the secretary - secretary@gmr.org.au

News From Glenreagh West

Stephen Joyce and I have been systematically going through the tasks that need to be completed before the Timber Festival due to be held in late July. Last visit we brush cut the area within the perimeter fence and along the eastern side of the compound. The area between the shed and the fence at the northern end needs to have weed matting laid down to minimize maintenance. A bit of landscaping in the area would also go a long way. Seen below are overviews of the yard and rollingstock.



Before the festival, steam loco 1919, the end platform carriages and the TAM (wooden sleeping carriage) need to be cleaned. The vintage trikes will have to be secured so that they cannot be operated. As part our Easter working bee we will be utilising a cherry picker to clean the shed gutters and install safety harness anchor points.



The fettler's cottage seen left, also needs maintenance work including gutters, window frames, vinyl flooring in interior bathroom and carpet laid in kitchen and living areas as well as painting inside and out. Colin Sambrook has been busy recently laying Masonite in the interior bathroom ready for the vinyl flooring.

So you can see we would appreciate any member that has the time available and would like to help out. The lack of people

helping is the biggest handicap we have. It is vital for our future to have more members attending our working bees. We have a small number of members who are shouldering the entire workload. This situation is unsustainable and is unfair to the few. For GMR to survive the membership has to make a physical and financial commitment to our future.

John Munson
Board Member and Project Manager Glenreagh West.

News from Lowanna

Work was undertaken recently to replace a number of windows at the station that were smashed by vandals.

We continue to receive assistance to maintain the area around Lowanna from the “Work for the Dole Program” who have been busy mowing and performing general repairs.

By the time you read this we will have cleared just over 2 kilometres of track from Lowanna down towards Moleton under the Council Funded Woody Weed program. Work can now commence on replacing sleepers and getting the track back to running standard. As usual, we are always open to any assistance.



CONTACT

Email - secretary@gmr.org.au

Glenreagh Mountain Railway Incorporated. ABN 88 246 630 101

A non-profit community based Association run entirely by volunteers with the goal of restoring the line and rollingstock and operating a heritage steam tourist railway on the GMR owned section of the Glenreagh-Dorrigo line

Glenreagh Mountain Railway Inc (GMR) has an Authority to Fundraise under the NSW Charitable Fundraising Act 1991

Donations of \$2 or more to Glenreagh Mountain Railway Inc. are tax deductible