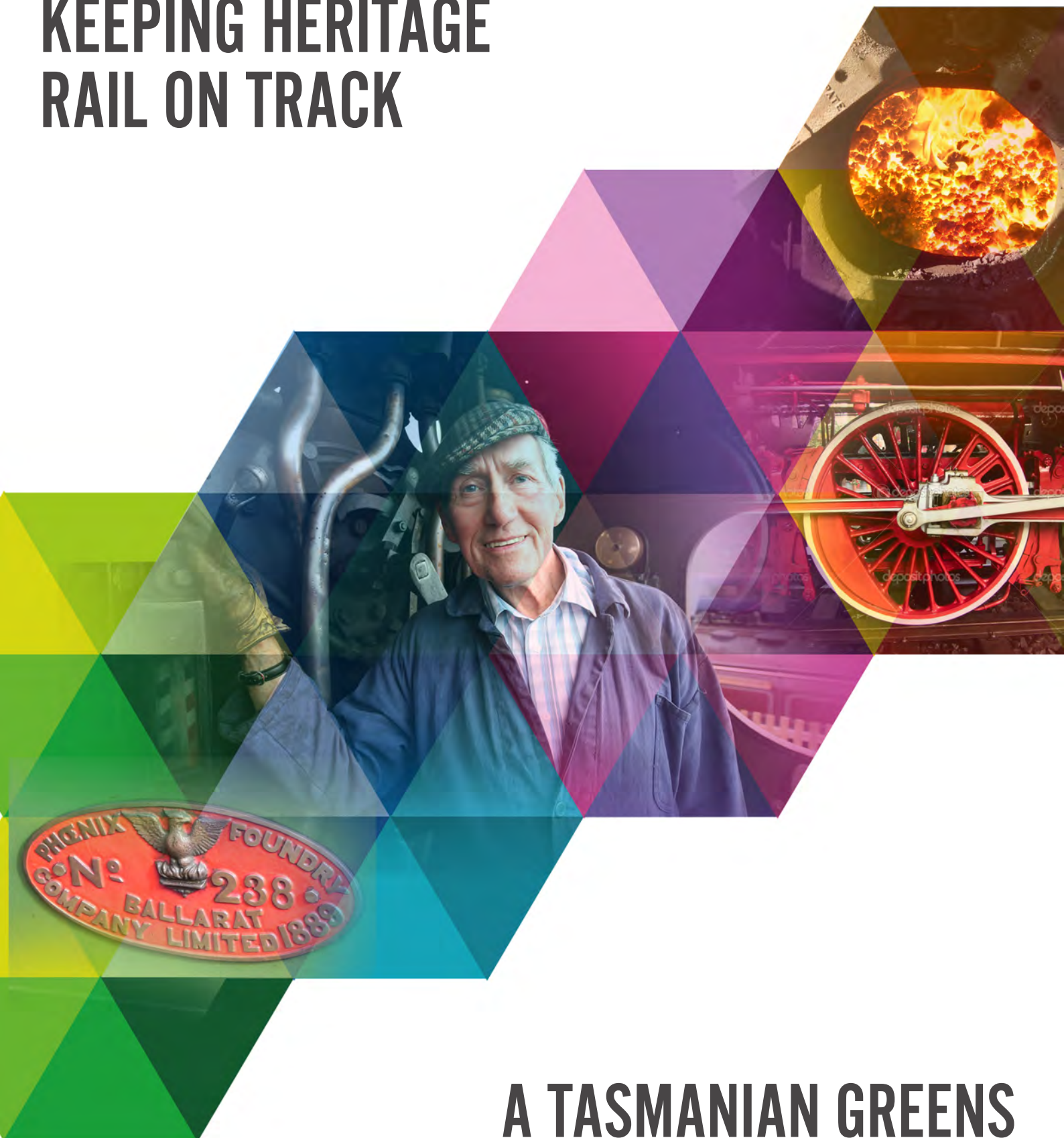


KEEPING HERITAGE RAIL ON TRACK



A TASMANIAN GREENS POLICY INITIATIVE

Launched by **Tim Morris MP**
March 2014



**TASMANIA.
CREATE OUR
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Keeping Heritage Rail on Track

Investing in heritage, skills and expertise

The Tasmanian Greens will invest \$2.25 million into our heritage rail operations, and move to establish a Heritage Rail Skills and Expertise Centre of Excellence.

Tasmania has nine, eight currently operational, high quality, regional heritage tourist railway systems throughout the state. These include the West Coast Wilderness Railway (otherwise referred to as the Abt Railway). While it is the best known of Tasmania's heritage railways, there are others which are key features of their local communities and economies.

These heritage railways are often run on a very tight budget and it is often the case that their funding is intermittent or irregular, a funding model that doesn't allow administrators to plan for the medium to long term.

In recognition of the valuable work the Heritage Rail organisations do to maintain and house the State's world class heritage rail collection, the Greens plan will deliver certainty for heritage rail organisations in funding for special projects. If successful this program will be extended for a further 10 years.

> THE ISSUE

Heritage railways serve a number of tourism benefits. Including:

- Providing visitors with a unique way to experience Tasmania's unique wilderness areas.
- Adding depth to Tasmania's tourism offerings and providing tourism offerings in region areas of the state, encouraging visitors to leave urban areas and spend more time exploring Tasmania.
- Attracting a unique subset of visitors with particular interest in heritage rail infrastructure, and travel experience.
- Despite the valuable contributions of heritage railways to Tasmania's infrastructure, many heritage railways are under marketed and underfunded.
- The current grants program to support heritage railways (community grants) is not targeted and does not provide appropriate consideration for short to medium term planning for rail heritage businesses operating in Tasmania.

- These heritage railways are often run on a very tight budget and it is often the case that their funding is intermittent or irregular, a funding model that doesn't allow administrators to plan for the medium to long term.
- Heritage railways face an additional issue when maintenance issues arise as a lack of a large skilled and specialist staff trained in traditional maintenance skills to maintain rolling stock, means repairs or parts milling is often expensive or time consuming.

> OUR PLAN

The Tasmanian Greens will invest **\$2.25 million over the forward estimates** in making our local tourist rail operations sustainable business operations, and in developing Tasmania's reputation as a stronghold for heritage rail skills and expertise. The Greens will:

- Provide a **\$1.5 million** grants program (as a trial) over the forward estimates which will ensure continued funding for special rail heritage projects and allow organisations to plan for their future with certainty.

This will be a competitive grants scheme, to assist the Tasmanian Heritage Rail organisations become viable commercial operations.

- Invest **\$500,000** over the forward estimates to fund a preliminary scoping study to establish a Heritage Rail Skills and Expertise Centre of Excellence to encourage skill development, education, training and expertise garnering required to maintain and improve heritage rail infrastructure. Should the feasibility study return a positive finding, the remaining funds will provide seed-funding to establish and assist running the Centre for its first year.
- Invest **\$250,000** over the forward estimates as seed funding to establish a Not-for-Profit Heritage Rail Operating company, comprising the current operators, to provide sustainable heritage rail operations on Tasmania's mainlines. To be administered by DIER.



> DELIVERING OUR POLICY

Tasmania has a wealth of historic rail heritage, predominantly kept on track by the hard work of community organisations, volunteers, and skilled enthusiasts. There is potential for this historic resource to become an integrated feature of Tasmania as a tourism destination to national and international visitors.

Additional to tourism potential, is the opportunity to position Tasmania as the place to come for rail skills training, research and maintenance.

Derwent Valley Railway

- Based at New Norfolk, the Derwent Valley Railway aims to be self sufficient by operating tourist passenger services. Currently it is not operational but is working towards returning tourist rail excursions along the Derwent Valley Line. Relies on volunteer labour, and assistance with equipment, materials and financial donations.

Don River Railway

- Based at Don Village, Devonport, the Don River has a collection of steam and diesel engines and other historic rolling stock. Utilises the old Melrose line to Coles Beach.

Ida Bay Railway

- The Ida Bay Railway is the last operating bush “tramway” in Tasmania, and Australia’s Southern-Most Railway, located at Lune River in the far south. The railway line is over seven kilometers long, traversing bush and coast.

Launceston Tramway

- The Launceston Tramway Museum Society Inc. has acquired and rebuilt former Launceston trams and have developed a museum collection and commenced a heritage tram operation. Based at Inveresk, it has fast become a unique Tasmanian and Australian heritage attraction.

Rail Track Riders

- A Railtrack Rider is “rolling stock”, a four-wheeled, lightweight vehicle that is powered by foot pedals. It travels on 1080mm gauge railway. The unused rail infrastructure in Maydena utilises this pedal powered track cycle as a successful tourist attraction

Redwater Creek Steam Railway

- Operates from the original Sheffield railway, and is instrumental in establishing and running the successful steamfest annual event. The Railway began as a community

building enterprise almost twenty years ago and is well regarded for the restoration and preservation of steam-era machinery and local history.

Tasmanian Transport Museum

The Society had its beginnings in 1960 when four young Hobart men persuaded the MTT to donate a Hobart tram car for preservation. From this small start, the Society was formally established in 1962, and in 1965 purchased its first railway locomotive. From these small beginnings, the Society has grown enormously, and will continue to do so. To establish and maintain a museum in which items of interest concerning Tasmanian transport will be preserved and displayed

Wee Georgie Wood Steam Railway

- Residents in Rosebery as well as Tullah and in 1977 the “Wee Georgie Wood Steam Railway Inc” was formed with the aim of fully restoring Wee Georgie to working condition and, in the long term, to have a steam railway attraction on the West Coast.

After a lot of hard work by a dedicated band of volunteers and generous support from local and coastal businesses Wee Georgie was back in steam. 1.9km of track was reestablished, and a passenger carriage, previously used on the Lake Margaret Tramway, was restored for use.

West Coast Wilderness Railway

- The railway travels from Queenstown deep into the West Coast Mountains to the beginning of the iconic ABT rack and Pinion section of track. The first of its kind in the nation, the system allows the locomotive to traverse the steep slopes through breathtaking scenery.

> Heritage Rail Grants Scheme

The Greens will provide a competitive grants scheme where Heritage Rail organisations can apply for grants of up to \$100,000 or \$250,000 per annum for the protection, upgrading and development of rail operations to move them toward becoming viable businesses that protect our significant rail heritage.

This funding will allow the state’s nine regional heritage rail organisations to plan special events and put long term funding plans in place without having to struggle simply to keep afloat.

It will also deliver greater opportunities for strategic planning over the medium and long term.

This grants scheme would be administered through DIER.



> Heritage Rail Skills and Expertise Centre of Excellence

The Greens propose a \$250, 000 scoping study to establish a Heritage Rail Skills and Expertise Centre of Excellence.

- This Centre of Excellence project would be developed in consultation with the Tasmanian Association of Tourist Railways and other stakeholders including local government, regional authorities and the University of Tasmania. It is perceived that it would be joint-funded with private sector contribution. This will be administered through DIER.
- The Centre for Excellence will:
 - Provide a facility dedicated to the restoration and conservation of heritage rail assets and sites. It will also ensure traditional skills are retained, expertise shared and applied in a practical and training forum.
 - Bring together both training opportunities and tradespeople with heritage skills to restore and maintain heritage rail assets.
 - Facilitate existing local skills while developing training opportunities to meet the restoration and maintenance needs of our heritage rail.
 - Provide a work experience and training opportunity for trades apprenticeships and engineering, history students.
 - Provide a reservoir of specialist skills in areas such as heritage paint, upholstery, timber carving, locomotive and

track repairs and maintenance. Ensuring that instead of those traditional skills and techniques disappearing with those generations, they are passed on.

- The Centre of Excellence can also offer short term specialised courses which national and international rail enthusiasts will pay to participate in.
- The Greens envisage that a Heritage Rail Centre would operate in a similar fashion to the Heritage Education and Skills Centre at Oatlands, which specialises in built heritage skills training and retention.
- We envisage that any centre dedicated to preserving and promoting the skills required to maintain heritage railways by offering courses, and utilising heritage rail operations as on-site training operations (where appropriate) the Centre of Excellence will become an a significant education and training facility, as well as a tourism draw card for people interested in or involved in heritage rail operations.

“Having a dedicated Tasmanian Heritage Rail training centre will mean specialist skills will be passed onto the next generation of rail enthusiasts, as well as providing a larger pool of skilled workers now with the specific expertise required to restore, maintain and operate heritage rail.”

Tim Morris MP, Greens Infrastructure and Tourism Spokesperson

> **TABLE 1: Keeping Heritage Rail on Track Investment**

	2013-14 Budget	2014-15 Forward Estimate	2015-16 Forward Estimate	2016-17 Forward Estimate
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Heritage Rail Grants Scheme		500	500	500
Heritage Rail Skills and Expertise Centre of Excellence – scoping study	-	250	-	-
Establishment seed-funding: Heritage Rails Skills and Expertise Centre*	-	-	125	125
Establishment seed-funding: not-for-profit Heritage Rail Operating Company	-	50	450	

* This funding is contingent on the feasibility study delivering a favourable finding.