



NEW SOUTH WALES RAIL TRANSPORT MUSEUM

ABN 25 000 570 463

- Thirlmere Rail Heritage Centre
- Heritage Express rail tours
- Valley Heights Loco Depot Heritage Museum

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MEDIA RELEASE

Locomotive 3801 – setting the record straight:

The people of NSW will be able to ride into the future with iconic steam loco 3801. NSW Rail Transport Museum (NSWRTM) President Peter Berriman said today, “There’s no threat to 3801.”

The NSWRTM, the primary custodian of 3801, has public plans to operate the loco widely and frequently, and has an expert Taskforce reviewing the best options for the loco’s future community role – in steam, out on the tracks. RailCorp’s support for the loco has been guaranteed.

Mr Berriman added, “3801 has a bright future and will have an operating base at Thirlmere as part of NSWRTM’s vision of *Telling the NSW railway story*.”

NSWRTM is 3801’s legal custodian ‘in perpetuity.’ 3801 Limited have operated the loco for 20 years under a fixed term lease which terminates in November 2006, with no renewal clause.

Mr Berriman explained, “Put simply, the NSWRTM’s agreement is needed for any new or extended lease. We’re astounded that 3801 Limited continue to claim that a new lease is the responsibility of the NSW Transport Minister - this seems like a blatant attempt to complicate and politicise a straight forward contractual matter.” RailCorp has also confirmed that it does not have the legal right to unilaterally step in and extend the lease. Any extension or alteration would need the agreement of all three parties: RailCorp, the NSWRTM and 3801 Limited.

NSWRTM saved 3801 from scrapping in the 1960s. Mr Berriman said, “3801 was handed over by the NSWRTM to the fledgling company 3801 Limited in 1986, in good working order fresh from overhaul in Newcastle. It was handed over in good grace, on the understanding that it would be operated by 3801 Limited until November 2006. NSWRTM now has a reasonable expectation that 3801 will be returned in accordance with the lease – and with the same good grace.”

“For 20 years, 3801 Limited has enjoyed operation of the loco and has earned and spent money on it, they say, resulting in a profit. There’s no ‘make good’ provision in the loco’s lease – and in fact 3801 will be handed back to NSWRTM needing major boiler work, but with no obligation on 3801 Limited to pay for the work.” Mr Berriman added. The looming need for the major and costly boiler work has not been clearly disclosed to the community by 3801 Limited in its media statements.



“3801 Limited’s emotive allegations about previous neglect of the loco by NSWRTM and State Rail and claims about the future of the loco when it returns to be based at Thirlmere are just plain wrong. They are an affront to the 2,000 members and 300 volunteers of the NSWRTM who have worked tirelessly at Thirlmere for 31 years displaying and operating the state’s rail heritage.

The NSWRTM is a living, working museum – we operate NSW’s largest rail heritage fleet throughout NSW. To state 3801 will be solely a static display in a museum is complete nonsense. The NSWRTM has been a highly successful operator of heritage trains for over 30 years.

Unlike the membership-based NSWRTM, the company 3801 Limited is, in effect, a closed shop – the company has had the same Chairman for 20 years, and its Board is selected from just 16 members who are private individuals. The company is accountable to no constituency.

RailCorp announced last week that they wished to work with NSWRTM and 3801 Limited to assess the financial capacity and asset management plans of both organisations.

Mr Berriman said, “The NSWRTM has agreed to collaborate with RailCorp in these assessments – this is a clear point of difference with 3801 Limited, which has not said it will participate in the assessment of finances, nor declare the condition of the state-owned assets in its care.”

Mr Berriman said, “The key message coming from the NSW community is that they want 3801 to operate, and to see a better future for the state’s rail heritage. The NSWRTM is best placed to deliver this consolidated outcome, by working collaboratively with RailCorp – developing a working museum at a viable location and by providing a better, more open and imaginative future for 3801 and the dedicated people who support it.”

The NSWRTM as the state’s leading, community-based rail heritage organisation has the legal right to manage the heritage assets in its collection – including 3801. The NSWRTM has decided that the time has come to focus on a new, clear future for 3801 as a vital part of the NSW railway story.

Visit www.nswrtm.org/3801 for details of 3801’s new future with the NSWRTM and get the real story.

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Special Web page: 3801’s new future: www.nswrtm.org/3801