



14 December 2006

## **AFTER THE O'ROURKE REPORT – NSWR TM MOVING AHEAD WITH 3801 AND MAIN LINE STEAM**

The final report of the 3801 Advisory Group headed by Vince O'Rourke was accepted by the NSW Minister for Transport on 29 November.

The Minister's media release and the report are available on line via the NSWRTM web-site – [www.nswrtm.org](http://www.nswrtm.org)

### **NSWR TM's view of the O'Rourke report:**

NSWR TM has long held the belief that the future sustainability of the state's rail heritage required new directions. Our 2006 – 2010 Corporate Plan outlined our key future strategies, the RTM's unique value cycle, the need for consolidation, the challenges of funding and resource constraints and a general inability of the rail heritage sector to fund capital works. These factors were among the reasons we chose not to renew the operating lease for 3801.

The O'Rourke report identifies that, given the capital and resource intensive tasks, neither 3801 Ltd nor the RTM are independently sustainable in the longer term.

A recognition of this fact has driven RTM's recent plans – and we are working towards a strong and effective partnership between the RTM and RailCorp (through the Office of Rail Heritage) underpinned by the necessary committed and planned investment to maintain and develop rail heritage assets and activities.

The overall analysis of the report and its findings support the direction the RTM has been taking and advocating, and there is no question that it is aimed at the necessary consolidation of resources, fostering and intergenerational transfer of skills, the strengthening of management and a strategic partnership with RailCorp's ORH.

However since the report relies to some extent on a snapshot of the two organisations in the analysis by John Hearsch, it inevitably misses some relatively minor points. For example, the report notes that the RTM does not have a marketing plan or a process for management of volunteers. In fact the RTM does have marketing plans both for its train operations and for Thirlmere (currently being updated as many of the goals have been attained), and it does manage its volunteer workforce with a number of dedicated team leaders – though of course we are working on improvements in this and many other areas.

The recommendations of the report contain two scenarios, both aimed at consolidation or at least collaboration between the RTM and 3801 Limited. The report recommends that arrangements for sharing locomotive 3801 (and by implication, carriages) be developed for operations in 2007. Both organisations have subsequently been asked by the ORH to provide proposals for their operating plans, and we have done so.

### **NSWR TM's initiatives to support the O'Rourke report findings:**

We have proposed and are pursuing a number of collaborative projects with ORH to underpin the RTM's long term and enduring business, and to support the NSW sustainable rail heritage strategy and the Government's investment at Thirlmere.

These include:

*Governance Reform* – to position the RTM as an integrated business – planned investment, partnership with ORH, strengthened management, better marketing, more capable safety compliance

*Information & Communications Technology* – systems for marketing, train reservations and customer relationship management, and management of assets, documents, finance, membership

*Safety* - focus on implementation of National Accreditation Package for enduring network operations

*Training and marketing* – as key areas needing planning and development

*Exhibit and train fleet restoration projects* - plans being finalised to inform investment priorities

*People* - new staff and volunteer opportunities; membership recruitment and retention

### **Update – Locomotive 3801:**

Locomotive 3801 returned to the custody of the NSW Rail Transport Museum on 27 November and was steamed from Eveleigh to the Hunter Valley Training Company workshop at East Greta by a joint NSWRTM / 3801 Ltd crew.

3801 has been in constant service for 20 years – a major overhaul is looming and is to be funded by RailCorp. 3801 is currently at HVTC for a boiler condition assessment which is intended to scope the locomotive's availability for the 2007 steam season and to inform the development of options for its eventual major overhaul. The assessment, funded by RailCorp's Office of Rail Heritage, is being conducted by a collaborative team of the RTM, 3801 Ltd, Puffing Billy Railway and Powerhouse Museum technical experts together with HVTC and its apprentices. The arrangements and accommodation of the locomotive at Maitland are under the control of HVTC and Puffing Billy Railway, who have been engaged by RailCorp as independent experts, with the RTM supplying labour and advice.

Following the boiler assessment, 3801 will re-locate to Thirlmere for its annual summer pre-service maintenance.

Conditional upon the boiler assessment outcomes, 3801 is planned for official re-launch on March 3 and 4, 2007 at the Thirlmere Festival of Steam, and will then be maintained and operated from the RTM's Thirlmere depot. We are currently implementing plans to ramp up RTM's operational capacity and capability to match the increased level of operation from Thirlmere.

### **2007 Heritage Train Operations:**

The RTM's preliminary program for 3801's tour operations as part of the integrated heritage fleet in 2007 will be released soon, once the 3801 boiler assessment outcome is known. Ticket sales are expected to commence in mid to late January through RTM – watch Heritage Express outlets and [www.heritageexpress.com.au](http://www.heritageexpress.com.au)

### **Volunteer opportunities – a new future with steam:**

The RTM's Legends of Steam program, including 3801 operations, is the framework for an enhanced level of integrated main line steam operation, and it will need the support of an expanded volunteer workforce. In 2007 and beyond, the RTM will be providing increased opportunities for volunteers, particularly for involvement in the steam program. New volunteers with a dedication to steam operations and customer service will be made welcome – look out for our Induction / Information days!

***Thinking of joining our team? A special volunteer induction and information day is planned for Saturday, 17 February 2007*** – more details will be provided in January. Mark it in your diary!