

JOURNAL

March-April 2024
Issue CCXXXV

CONFERENCE 2024 details

What to expect in Palmy North

Flyer reborn
*Kingston captures hearts
and minds once again*

**'Time to focus on
fact, not myth'**

*Government's appetite for rail
left wanting - TRAC*



Image: Kevin Prince



Ja 1271 gets steam up at Picton on Friday, March 29, ahead of Steam Inc's Whale Train to Kaikoura. Photo: Tommy Secker

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President's Conference ramble

Grant Craig, FRONZ President

The FRONZ Conference is back for 2024, this year visiting Palmerston North.

We're offering a one-way connection from Wellington to Palmerston North on Friday the 31st of May, with multiple site visits to our groups up the coast along the way.

Thanks to your feedback, we've revamped the conference sessions and timetable so there will be something for everyone, with some fresh topics that apply to all of us, whether we're part of a large organisation or small.

At Conference this year, join us on the Friday to see Mainline Steam, Steam Incorporated and Wellington Tramway Museum as we travel from Wellington to Palmerston North by bus.

Following the AGM on Sunday, we'll be visiting the Pahiatua Railcar Society. Travel by railcar (or bus) to Pahiatua, with the groups swapping for the return leg. This is followed up by our annual awards dinner.

On Monday we will be travelling by coach to see our host group, the Feilding and District Steam Rail Society, followed by visits to SteamRail Wanganui Inc, and the Whanganui Tramways Museum.

There will be a drop off at the Palmerston North airport on the way back.

We're planning an alternative Conference programme for younger members (30 and under) who are interested in the railways and being a member of groups, but not quite ready for the full conference sessions.

This year, that sees a site visit to the KiwiRail Electric Depot, and we want to develop the "Next Gen" mini conference into a much larger opportunity over the coming years. It's important we give younger members a taste of conference, help them network with their counterparts, and spark their interest in rail even more.

What you need to do: If you're keen to come to conference, talk with your organisation's leadership and book your accommodation. Register for Conference once the page is live on our website.



Conference 2024 is being held at the Distinction Hotel in Cuba Street.

Book your accommodation!

Email: reservations@distinctionpalmerstonnorth.co.nz
Phone: 06 355 5895.

Discounted rate for FRONZ delegates:

\$205 per night, or \$225 per night including breakfast
(Reference FRONZ when you book!)

Palmerston North has several large events on over the weekend. Secure your accommodation now.

Conference costings and FAQs

When do registrations for conference open?

- The registration page on the website will be open soon; we'll email you when it's live.
- Please book your accommodation (details page 2) and travel arrangements.

How do I get to Palmerston North?

- Members can fly to Palmerston North Airport and arrange a taxi to the venue.
- On Friday, May 31 a bus leaves Wellington Airport about 10am, and visits groups up the Kapiti Coast.

How do I get home from conference?

- There is no return bus ride to Wellington.
- Instead, following the field trip to Whanganui, the bus will drop delegates off at Palmerston North airport at 2.30pm on Monday.
- For those wanting to catch the Capital Connection, this service leaves Palmerston North Railway Station at 6.15am on Tuesday.

What's the total cost?

Registration

Registration costs are still being finalised, however it is expected to be below last year's fee of \$355 per person.

Optional extras:

- Friday May 31 - bus from Wellington Airport to Palmerston North (including lunch): \$67 (*tbc*)
- Sunday June 2 - bus ride to or from Pahiatua: \$60 (*tbc*)
- Monday June 3 - bus ride to Whanganui: Lunch & entry: \$70 (*tbc*)
- Monday June 3 - using your own vehicle: Lunch & entry at Whanganui: \$40 (*tbc*)

You can book the bus once the registration page on the website is live.

2024 FRONZ Awards

Entries now open: Prizes to the value of \$10,000 up for grabs!

We're proud to announce the reinstatement of the Young Achiever of the Year Award, and the brand new Sustainability Award!

We'd like to thank Glenbrook Vintage Railway for putting \$1500 towards professional development of the winning Young Achiever, and KiwiRail for their \$1000 sponsorship of the inaugural Sustainability Award. We would also like to thank the sponsors of our other awards for helping to recognise the tremendous work our member groups have achieved.

[Download the criteria here](#), or email the secretary for a copy.

Entries close at 11.59pm on April 30.

Achievement awards

Steam Locomotive Restoration Award
Glenbrook Vintage Railway Young Achiever of the Year Award
KiwiRail Infrastructure Improvement Award
Tramway Restoration Award
Pounamu Tourism Group Carriage/Guards Van Restoration Award
Goods/Service Wagon Restoration Award
Motive Power Award
Volunteer of the Year Award
Rail Heritage Trust Restoration Award
NZ Transport Agency Tourist & Heritage Rail Safety Award
KiwiRail Sustainability Award



2024 Conference programme

Friday, May 31

(Travel times on Friday may vary)

10am	Bus departs Wellington Airport
10.45am	Mainline Steam, Plimmerton
12pm	Lunch: Steam Incorporated, Paekakariki
1.45pm	Wellington Tramway Museum, Paekakariki
5pm	Registrations open at the Distinction Hotel, 175 Cuba Street, Palmerston North
5.30pm	Bus arrives in Palmerston North

Saturday, June 1

8.15am	Registrations continue
9am	Welcome and housekeeping - <i>Grant Craig - FRONZ president</i> Host group welcome - <i>Feilding & Districts Steam Rail Society</i>
9.10am	Conference opening - <i>Rachel Keedwell, Horizons Regional Council Chair</i>
9.30am	Keynote speaker - <i>Tangi Utikere Labour Transport spokesperson and local MP</i>
10am	Morning tea
10.30am	Operational seminars: <i>Each runs for 20 minutes. Each attendee can attend four of the six seminars:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Operational training and how RAIL can help your organisation - <i>with Donald Ross.</i>2. HTC and what it can offer to non-mainline groups3. Future-proofing museums - <i>with Bridget Wellwood</i>4. Safety moment: National Park resleeper incident “a case study” - <i>with NZTA</i>5. Marketing your organisation via social media - <i>with Melissa Brenzinger</i>6. Internal audits - <i>with Alan Nielson</i>
12pm	Lunch
1pm	KiwiRail update - <i>David Gordon</i> Tour of KiwiRail electric depot for young attendees
1.30pm	TrackSafe update - <i>Megan Drayton</i>
2pm	NZTA presentation: Updates and insights
3pm	Afternoon tea
3.30pm	Update on climate change and emissions issues - <i>Dan Armstrong</i>
4pm	Video presentation: “The Rail Heritage Year” - <i>Lindsay Benbrook</i>
4.20	Discussion groups: Mainline; Museums and non-mainline; Tramways

Sunday, June 2

8.40am	AGM sign in
9am	AGM
10am	Morning tea
10.30am	Heritage operational training update - <i>with Donald Ross</i>
11am	Rail Heritage Trust update - <i>with Murray King</i>
11.30am	Tramways update
12pm	Lunch
12.45pm	Coach departs from the Distinction Hotel for Palmerston North Railway Station with railcar passengers The coach returns to the hotel to uplift remaining passengers for trip to Pahiatua Railcar Society depot Passengers swap over for the return journey
4pm	Railcar and coach depart Pahiatua and return to the Distinction Hotel (The bus will pick up railcar passengers from the railway station)
5pm	Arrive back at the Distinction Hotel
6pm:	2024 FRONZ Awards Dinner at the Distinction Hotel

Monday, June 3

7.45am	Meet coach ready for an 8am departure from the Distinction Hotel to the Feilding and Districts Steam Rail depot
8.30am	Arrive at the Feilding depot
9.30am	Depart Feilding for Whanganui
10.30am	Arrive at Whanganui to visit SteamRail Wanganui for lunch, and Whanganui tramways thereafter
1.30pm	Depart Whanganui for Palmerston North
2.30pm	Arrive at Palmerston North Airport
2.45pm	Bus leaves Palmerston North Airport, arriving at the Distinction Hotel 15 minutes later.



FRONZ Executive roundup

Jeff Tollan, Secretary - Good god, it's been a busy start to the year, hence how February passed us by without a Journal being produced!

The Executive's focus has been on a few gnarly and time-consuming issues:

- Liaising with AON on insurance renewals;
- Redesigning the FRONZ website;
- Organising Conference 2024 and planning the trips and speakers;
- Meeting with Canterbury groups regarding Conference 2025;
- Meetings with KiwiRail, HOC and HTC, and a quarterly meeting with all three;
- Working with several members on issues around insurance, access to rolling stock, crewing, training, and general catch ups.



The FRONZ Executive met with Christchurch groups in March. Pictured here, Gordon Bartrum from the National Rail Museum gives Clark Simmonds and Guy Wellwood insight on a unique coat of arms that is now in the NRM's collection.

The FRONZ Exec met in January and March -

if you would like a copy of the minutes of those meetings please email secretary@fronz.org.nz for a redacted copy. *Yes, yours truly was going to include those minutes with this Journal, but suddenly we were in the deathrows of March... like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives!)*

Members we have lost:

If one of your key members has passed away over the last year, please email the secretary at the address above, so we can include them in the memorial at Conference.

Keep us in the loop

We're aware of a few groups having ongoing issues with the likes of local government, and in those cases, we want to know. In many cases, you might not be the only having these issues, and if FRONZ is aware of what one group is going through, we're able to help others when they have the same trouble.

Don't wait til conference to bring it up.

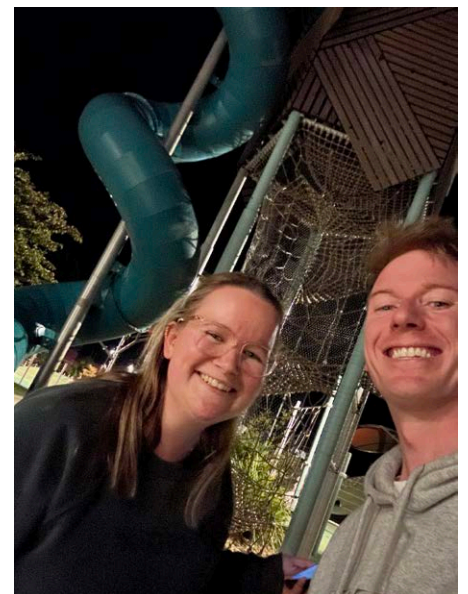
Museums and non-mainline operators should contact your convenor, Guy Wellwood, on 027 378 5114, or by email at guywellwood48@gmail.com.

You can also email secretary@fronz.org.nz.

Got something for Journal or Facebook?

Let us know if you've got a big event in the pipeline, or have a short write up about what's been happening at your group.

Email your photos and a short write up to journaleditor@fronz.org.nz.



Your Journal crew, Courtney Kilner and Jeff Tollan, testing out the Margaret Mahy playground in Christchurch (as part of prep for Conference 2025).

In photos: River City Express



On February 25, Steam Inc ran the River City Express to Whanganui, hauled by Da 1410 & Ja 1271. Photos: Jeff Tollan



Boarding at Paekakariki.



The trip gets under way, to the delight of Jack Dolman.



Passengers crowd around 1271 for a photo at Palmerston North.



The ops team catch up with GV Allen (far left); Marty (Train Manager), Tommy (Excursion Organiser), Jack (Steam Loco Fitter) & Aden (Assistant Train Manager).

Flight of the Flyer





The Kingston Flyer Steam Train is near to completing its second successful operating season since opening under new management!

During these two seasons the Kingston Flyer has been offering regular heritage tours to the public running most Sundays, and have had a number of private charters and tours run from September through to June.

From the Kingston Flyer's re-opening in September 2022 to the end of February 2024, we will have completed 174 return trips to Fairlight, and carried over 11,000 passengers. The operation has been guided and managed by Keith Simpson and Ken McAuliffe (General Manager).

The training of new staff is well under way with two new firemen having passed their NZQA 21755 Certificates 'Prepare, bring to steam, and operate a steam driven boiler vehicle and steam boiler' in 2023.

Ethan is an Engineer by trade, and a quick learner. Kerry is a Pilot and Flight Instructor by trade,

and the Kingston Flyer's first female fireman!

Both Ethan and Kerry have started their driver training, and we are looking forward to watching them both progress and learn over the next few seasons.

Sunday tours have been largely successful, with good reviews from locals and tourists alike. A key highlight for families has been watching the kids 'Race the Engine' down alongside the straight at the Fairlight triangle!



In February we had our first 'Annual Jigger Trolley Run' organised by Neville Martin. Private trolley operators were able to bring their own vehicles to use on the

14km track from Kingston to Fairlight. We had four trolleys, and one hand jigger attend the event.

The rain followed us to Fairlight but after a hot cuppa and a sausage sizzle, the crew were refuelled and ready for some fun on the way back to Kingston. We look forward to running the event again next year.



As for the question on everyone's mind, what is being done with Ab778? We are pleased to announce that Ab778 is being moved into the Kingston Yard in the next few weeks to be stripped down for a more comprehensive inspection and a closer look at its boiler.

We have now cleared the line of rolling stock, and fixed the points located near the Kingston wharf in anticipation of shunting Ab778 into the Kingston Yard and Workshop.

Warm regards, The Kingston Flyer Team.



In photos: Remutaka Incline Railway



Ron Jones applies a finishing green enamel to the cab interior and fittings of ex-Ohai Railway Board diesel loco #1, a precursor to the Ds class. Photos: RIR



We now use 50-foot car A 1328 on our regular operating days, seen here hauled by Hillside-built Tr 189. The railway operates train rides for the public on the second Sunday of each month, Saturdays are the regular volunteer day.



Work continues on rebuilding components of the two Wb-class Baldwin steam locomotives - Wb 292 and Wb 299. The driver's side tank's seen here inside our workshop, with original filler lid try-fitted. Cabs for both locos to the right.



Part of our mainline was temporarily lifted in October, to allow room for track renewal in the Maymorn and Remutaka Tunnels over the next couple of years. The sets were repurposed into a storage siding beside our rail vehicle shed.



The first public use of A 1328 back on a rainy day in July 2023.

Busy times at Bush Tramway



Vinnie Nicholson and Evan Walters give Peckett's smokebox lick of paint at Bush Tramway Club. Photos: BTC

Colin Jenner

Summer brought the dry conditions and challenges that many other groups have been faced with.

While BTC now runs all year round, we're using

our diesel locos during the dry times, which can start in October & go through until May. With a lot of very dry scrub around our railway, one has to take precautions.

Our loco is currently undergoing its annual boiler survey so the timing works out well!



A foggy morning for lighting up.

Work on remedying another issue, this time caused by earthquakes, is ongoing.

Only 1.8 km of our line has been operational since early in February last year, when a swarm of earthquakes hit around Te Aroha. The worst, a magnitude 4.8 shake, was really felt in our part of NZ.

The result was two twisted sections of line, one of which we have dealt with, but it also dropped the centre section of this area by half a metre. This particular section was washed out in NZR's day so is now a large filling and a constant headache. Approximately 200m long, the area is continually dropping into itself.

It is the result of underground mining many years ago, even though the mine plans tell us there wasn't a shaft there! Some older miners told us that there was a tunnel dug there in

1920s but no one officially knew about it! The club is now the owner of three Tr diesel locos, which were purchased & donated by a couple of members. Two of them are in use but the third needs a replacement engine. While we have three spare engines, they are all in Auckland at present. The two Tr locos are in regular use as are our two diesel locos that came from Meremere power station, near Mercer.

Club members are also currently upgrading a large flat top wagon sourced from the West underground coal mine in Huntly and which used to take heavy machinery underground.



It's not only Trs that we've had donated; one of our members gifted us a three-way tipping body off a truck and a hydraulic pump and motor. The idea is to use it to take our 1.5 tonne digger up and down the line to clean out our line-side drains and help with track work. The wagon has



Demand for rides has seen the need for an extra carriage to be put on the train.



Ian Jenner's Tr.

very small wheels on two bogies and will come in very handy.

We have just taken delivery of 100 composite sleepers for use on our railway. We normally use 6"x 6" pine but the latest price we obtained was \$125.00 each! These composite sleepers are second hand but will be used in all parts of our line. We still have a supply of pine sleepers as well.

Our passenger counts are really very good and we're often faced with the delightful problem of having to use our three carriages on our trains rather than the two we would normally use.

We're also pleased to report that we have four new young members, Vinnie, Evan, Fraser and Matt, who are very keen. Us older members can't do what we could a year or so ago, so it's great to get a hand!



Wheelsets from the Heisler, ready to be shipped to GVR for TLC.

Work on our Heisler steam loco seems to have ground to a halt somewhat, as other pressing work has come up. However, a little progress is made occasionally. We have recently had the axle journals from one bogie, and their bearings, machined by Glenbrook Vintage Railway.

For the coming period, we hope to get the damaged areas of our line sorted out but it is presently too hot to work outside much after mid-day.

We're finding numbers are strong even though we advertise only on Facebook - this seems to be how most passengers know about our railway and we are also getting some enquiries for charter trips.

Anyone wanting to know more about Bush Tramway can visit our website at www.bushtramwayclub.com.

April 2 deadline for submissions on draft GPS



The GPS is the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport and outlines what the Government wants to achieve in land transport, and how it expects to see funding allocated between types of activities across New Zealand's land transport system.

Each GPS sets out the priorities for a 10-year period and is updated every three years; with this latest iteration taking effect from 1 July 2024.

You can read the consultation draft at <https://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/GPS-on-land-transport-2024-Consultation-4-March-2023-.pdf>

Feedback on the document should be sent to GPS@transport.govt.nz or you can submit feedback via a consultation survey at <https://consult.transport.govt.nz/policy/gps2024/>.

KiwiRail out of money for Auckland's rail network rebuild Cash only for Newmarket to New Lynn

Manawatū and most of the central North Island do not have a place on the map in the Government's freshly released draft policy statement on land transport, and Palmerston North mayor Grant Smith is not happy about it.

Labour slams Government for hiking fuel tax by 22c next term, increasing regos by \$50, slashing public transport cash

Luxon's budget problem is not going away

Every week that passes seems to tighten the fiscal noose for Christopher Luxon and co – a noose, moreover, of their own making.



A need for Government to focus on evidence, not myths

Niall Robertson

Opinion: The new Government has come into power and has immediately set to on the transport sector.

The IREX rail ferry project has been scuttled. The Auckland regional fuel tax has been scrapped. Meanwhile, the Government is announcing intentions to build a motorway from Whangarei to Tauranga and a second harbour crossing for road vehicles only. Its current preference for the Cook Strait? Ferries solely for road vehicles.

This pro-road plan for the Cook Strait makes rail between Hamilton and Christchurch unviable.

A second harbour crossing will add to Auckland's road congestion, but will provide the road transport industry an alternative to the current harbour bridge which was not designed for the leviathan trucks on New Zealand roads currently.

All of these measures have been based on myths around both the rail and road industry

Myths about rail

Ask the critics and they will tell you rail is inefficient, expensive, uses too much land and is limited due to its gauge and the terrain of New Zealand. Yet, rail is extremely efficient in moving large volumes of freight and offers the lowest possible rates for non-urgent freight. On some routes rail can even compete for urgent freight with the most competitive rates, provided volumes are large enough.

While successive governments have built more motorways and straightened roads, cheaper solutions for rail were never considered.

Imagine a new line from Levin to Greatford, near Marton. This shortcut would make the NIMT far more competitive with SH1 and bring greater competition on the routes from the South Island and Wellington to Whanganui, New Plymouth, and to the Golden Triangle.



No, gauge is not a problem. Freight trains up to 10,000 tonnes and passenger trains travelling up to 160kph are used on the New Zealand gauge in other countries. Yes, our terrain has some challenges in some places, but we already have a network to improve and make more resilient and most areas are fine for rail.

Rail does have marshalling yards that take some room, but these have been made smaller by modern practice and must be compared with the large trucking distribution warehouses which take much more room.

However...

In every other part of the journey, rail uses much less room. In a city, rail with just two lines can move the equivalent number of people that it would take 24 motorway lanes to move.

Myths about road transport

Road transport is seen as quick, reliable, efficient and cost efficient

Road transport is good for urgent freight, smaller lots and door to door delivery. But then the advantages evaporate; and then there is a need to look at the problems with road transport. A quick shopping list comes up with dangerousness, pollution, congestion, poor use of land area and expense. Yes, expense!

Leviathan road vehicles on two-lane roads have a closing speed of 150kph with the family car, with just a white line separating the two vehicles. Where else does health and safety tolerate this risk? Trucks are involved in 20% of all road fatalities.



Trucks pollute, not just with CO₂, but from microplastics and other toxic tyre dust, and further chemicals from brake systems. Road transport contributes 17% of all emissions and more regarding particulate pollution, which leads to 400 deaths in New Zealand each year due to respiratory events such as asthma attacks.

Microplastics from road vehicle tyres are the second greatest contributor to oceanic plastics now.

On state highways up and down the country, cars are caught for miles in the polluting air stream behind trucks. As trucks are much faster and longer than they used to be, they are difficult to pass. When you do pass one, there are so many that, usually, you just catch up to another one.

Because these trucks are so congesting, there is a greater need to build motorways to separate the heavy vehicles from light vehicles. These motorways are very land hungry and take up vast acres of arable land.

Man has built over about 23% of all arable land on the planet and continues to build over it at about 1% per annum. With climate change now taking and inundating arable land, where will we be on 20 years? In cities where land is more restricted, the problem becomes more problematic.

Roading like all infrastructure is expensive. Could this be why governments back away from rail? However, there is an amazingly distorted way of funding roads which is popular with governments and with the road transport industry, but is, in effect, nothing more than a rort!

Roads are used by most New Zealanders, who love driving. Petrol cars pay the fuel excise tax (FET), while all diesel vehicles pay road user charges (RUC) and electric cars will soon be added to the RUCs. However, it is important to note that heavy vehicles do exponentially more damage to roads than smaller vehicles.

A 20-tonne vehicle does not do 10 times more damage than a 2-tonne vehicle. It does 20,000 times more damage. Many New Zealand trucks now weigh 55 tonnes. Heavy vehicles therefore, do 99% of all the road damage!

Current revenue (2022-23) figures show that all vehicles below 3.5 tonnes paid \$1,8924 billion to use the roads while the vehicles that damage roads, demand bigger roads, congest, pollute and kill paid just \$7.854million. This is a subsidy at a rate of 3 to 1 to the road transport industry from motorists who suffer all of the negative effects of that heavy road transport industry.

This money, to benefit motorists, would be better spent on rail!

Conclusion

The current Government needs to seriously consider its approach to transport, as many of their current ideas are likely to be seriously damaging to valuable infrastructure that New Zealand needs to increase productivity, mitigate climate change, meet our Paris Accord commitments, promote road safety, offer industry and the people the best transport choices, achieve better land use and not rip the general public off while paying for all of it!

- *Niall Robertson is national co-ordination of TRAC, The Rail Advocacy Collective.*



In photos: To Ohakune, Waikato and back



Glenbrook Vintage Railway's "Spiral Express", hauled by DBR 1254, digs into the grade on its way from Hamilton to Ohakune on March 9. Photos: Jeff Tollan



While passengers waited for Dora to pass during the run around at Ohakune, the local Lions Club was on hand with a sausage sizzle.



The ever-effervescent Aaron, Wokky and Tim, all smiles at Ohakune.



On March 10, Ww 644 ran shuttles to Ruakura in the morning, and to Huntly in the afternoon.



Even at 108, the Ww still turns heads, with hundreds of people turning out to the station before the day even began.



Waimea Plains Railway pushing on with work

- Waimea Plains Railway chair Colin Smith

We are powering through our running weekends of the 2023/24 season, which spans from October to April. This season, the running days have been scheduled to coincide with a tour group schedule, and it will be interesting to see whether this strategy proves to be a success.

In the South of the Island, from the beginning of January to beginning of April, every recreational organisation jockeys for the traditional “best” summer weather dates and the subsequent share of revenue.

The 2024 season is no exception; to date our passenger numbers are about the average for last season, but like everyone else, we like to think that next three months will improve.

Land acquisition

Some 20-plus years ago, a handshake agreement was made with the adjoining land owners, Val and Geoff Horrell. They agreed that on the occasion they were to relinquish

the land to the west of the existing railway yard, they would make sure the Railway Trust got first refusal over the eastern-most area that was part of the original rail corridor for Waimea Plains Railway.

The agreement guaranteed the proposed yard plan by the WPR Trust could mirror the original Railway Line and the original loop, which converged with the Main line within that area of land.

The WPR Trust now owns that land, meaning our plan can become a reality.

Thank you to the Horrell Family for honouring that handshake all those years ago.

Rails for the future

The WPR Trust has been fortunate in negotiating the supply of rail, thanks to Zac Pritchard, prior to him retiring as KiwiRail’s principal Materials Co-ordinator for the South Island in Christchurch, and his newly appointed successor, Mr Michael Buckley.

They helped the Trust secure sufficient rail to ensure the proposed 2½-3km track around the Mandeville Airfield becomes a reality over a period of time.

There has been progress aplenty on the replica of the Gulley Building from Hillside. Stage II – work on the structure – is now complete. This has also seen the distinctive curved roof, roughly 900sqm, finished off. Once financing allows, the outer cladding and other components will be added to complete the project.

Under cover

The building provides for five roads of track and, once laid, we will be able to cover all of the heritage rolling stock the Trust has committed to preserving: Two Addington cars, c1883, A194, A196; one “B” car, B72; three cars of the 1893 era, A294, A463, A130; Guard Van F111; plus some seven period wagons, a steam crane, coal crane, and our locomotive.

A further section of the yard track will be completed this season, enabling access to the Gulley Building for the Loco and carriages to No. 2 Road from the eastern most end of the yard. This track incorporates three-throw, double-slip, and three standard turn outs.

We’re looking forward to getting our operational loco and carriage under permanent cover.

Captivating the crowds

It’s the younger parents with little children who are the principal patrons, some travelling from beyond Dunedin and making a day out of the trip, knowing they can frequent the local cafe, visit the aircraft museum, watch older type aircraft flying, or ride on the train as often as they wish for a \$5 all-day ticket.

The second-most frequent patron is the older person or couple, which the steam loco and older carriage hold quite some nostalgia. The passing tourist on seeing K92 in steam is sure to stop and photograph, often leading to the purchase of a ticket or a donation toward the development.

Thank you to the volunteers

The Waimea Plains Railway Trust is totally reliant on shared staff and volunteers from the four other major railway organisations in the South: Ocean Beach Railway, Taieri Gorge Railway, the Kingston Flyer, and the more recent F150 Group, Southern Steam in Invercargill.

It is from these organisations that we depend almost exclusively on for train drivers for our



Inside the Gulley Building

operations. We are tremendously grateful to those people in giving of their time and skills to our operation and we currently have several fireman and guards under training.

The Waimea Plains Railway is, and no doubt will continue to be, a work in progress for some considerable time. The Trust’s original objective is creating a working 19th Century historic NZ Railway system.

We are now operational in a limited way, but the vision will be accomplished stage by stage as funding is raised.



Above: Tokomaru climbs to Cass from Cragieburn during its South Island tour. Photo: Kevin Prince
Below: 31 at the Mt White Bridge, and below right, traversing the rails at Ferrymead. Photos: David Oakley

Tokomaru on tour

Pahiatua Railcar Society has staged an epic adventure to the South Island, with RM31 - Tokomaru - covering the length and breadth of the Mainland.

It's the first time in New Zealand's railway history a Standard railcar has worked on South Island rails and the trip was keenly followed by a strong contingent of photographers.

With a packed itinerary, the PRS has operated several public trips during this chartered experience: To Weka Pass, Arthurs Pass, and from Christchurch to Picton.

On March 16, following the trip to Waikari, Tokomaru meandered through Christchurch to Ferrymead, where for the first time ever, a Standard railcar met a Vulcan. Standards only ever operated in the North Island, while Vulcans only ever operated in the South.



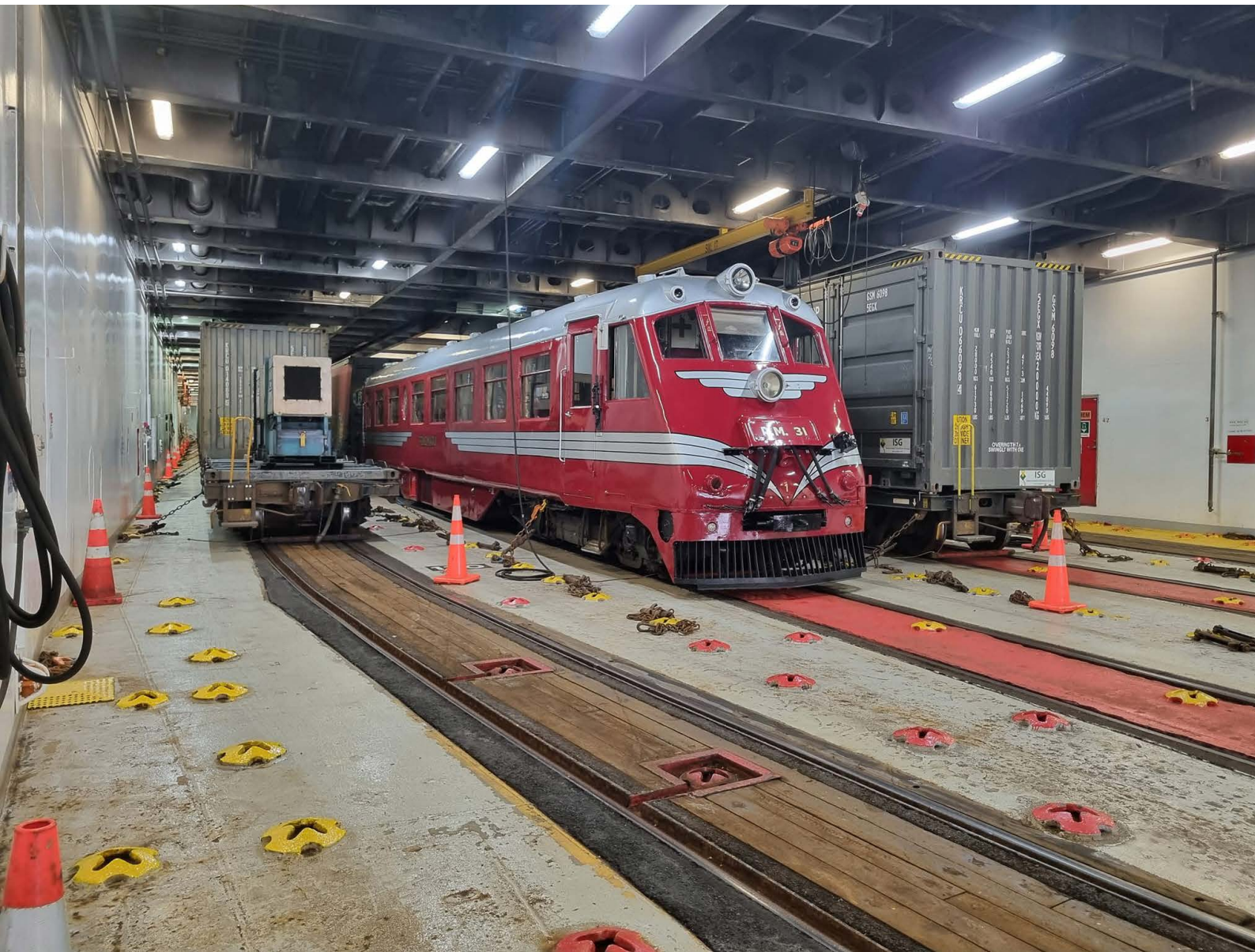


Above: When a Vulcan met a Standard: A first-of-its-kind photo at Ferrymead. Pictured are N Hogg, driver of RM 56, and D Hoare, driver of RM 31. Photo: Michael Tolich.
Below: Tokomaru cuts through Lake Grassmere in Marborough. Photo: Bobby Boulton





Above: Tokomaru sits at Moorhouse Station. Photo: David Oakley
Below: Tucked away on the rail ferry ahead of its trip south. Photo: PRS





Above: RM31 rumbles down the coastline. Below: Visiting Weka Pass on a stunning Canterbury day. Photos: Bobby Boulton



In photos: A Day Out With Thomas



Mainline Steam's Bagnall took the role of Thomas at Glenbrook on March 2 and 3, ferrying passengers for the Day Out With Thomas weekend. Photo: Michael Tolich



Unsurprisingly, the children made up a good percentage of the thousands of people who came through the gate. Photos: Jeff Tollan



Te Puke, Flynn and Troy, seen in between charming the crowds.

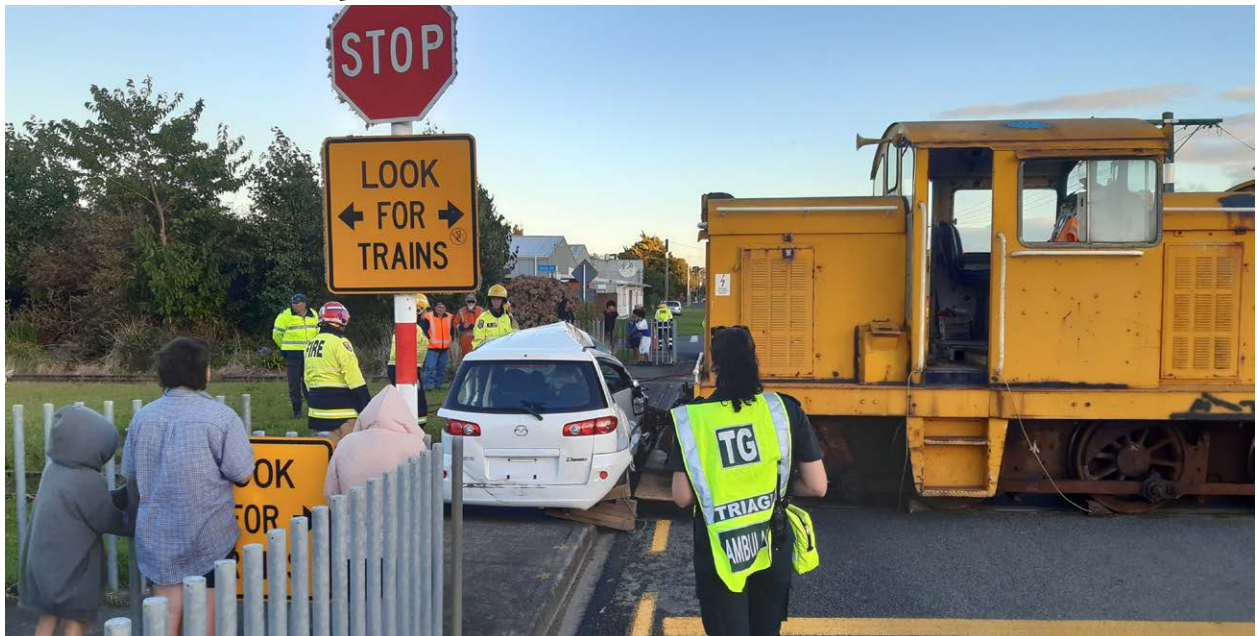


The theme for the weekend was bubbles, and the kids seemed to approve.



Passengers enjoy the fully air-conditioned carriages on a very hot Saturday.

A training exercise and wake-up call



Waitara Railway Preservation Society staged an exercise recently, aimed at giving emergency services the chance to test how they would respond to a very real threat.

A car that had driven through a stop sign at the Grey St crossing was “hit” by WRPS’s train on a Tuesday night. In the scenario, emergency services and volunteers at Waitara were faced with injured people in the train and the car.

We never want to think that something like this will happen, but it’s a real possibility because some people just don’t want to wait for a minute at a level crossing.

Exercises like this are a great chance for FENZ, St

John and Police to test their response, and for organisations to test how we would respond to such an incident.

Four people from Waitara were involved in the exercise, while more than a dozen people were involved from the emergency services, treating several people acting with varying injuries.



The exercise had been several weeks in the planning, and a damaged vehicle was sourced from a wreckers yard and dropped off at the crossing by a hiab.

It’s also hoped the exercise helps drive the message home about the danger

of level crossings because your 1-tonne car won’t hold up to being hit by a train.

Your FRONZ Executive:

Committee:

- President - Grant Craig
- Treasurer - Bruce Shalders
- Secretary - Jeff Tollan
- Interim Exec Officer - Jeff Tollan
- Guy Wellwood
- Alan Verry
- Courtney Kilner

RAIL:

- Director - Clark Simmonds

Convenors:

- Sustainability - Dan Armstrong
- Track - Robert Storm
- Health and Safety - Donald Ross
- Tramways - Henry Brittain
- Mainline - Jeff Tollan
- Non-Mainline Groups and Museums Convenor - Guy Wellwood

Contact:

- secretary@fronz.org.nz
- journal@fronz.org.nz

WELLINGTON - LOWER HUTT RAILWAY

**FREE
FAMILY
EVENT**

150TH

1874

ANNIVERSARY

2024

CELEBRATION

SUNDAY 14 APRIL 2024

WELLINGTON RAILWAY STATION

PLATFORM 9, 11AM TO 3PM

FEATURING
Heritage & KiwiRail locomotives
Steam & diesel locomotives
Vintage railcar
Great displays & give-aways



KiwiRail

STEAM Incorporated
Heritage Rail Excursions • Tours • Charters steaminc.org.nz

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TRUST
OF NEW ZEALAND**

**SILVER STREAM
RAILWAY**
HERITAGE RAILWAY

RAIL

**MAINLINE STEAM
HERITAGE TRUST**

50 years of Pichi Richi Railway



Media release: One of Australia's most loved heritage railways is marking an important milestone event in 2024. It will be 50 years since Pichi Richi Railway Preservation Society first ran a train on the original narrow gauge railway line between Quorn and Summit.

Originally completed in 1879, the railway through the Pichi Richi Pass was the first section of the Port Augusta and Government Gums Railway which was later extended and became the Ghan Railway to Alice Springs. For nearly 70 years trains hauled people, coal, troops, livestock, minerals and agricultural products between Port Augusta, Quorn and beyond. In the late 1950s, when a new standard gauge railway line was built to the west of the Flinders Ranges, the line fell into disuse.

In the early 1970s the line was almost pulled up, but saved by a group of volunteers who formed the Pichi Richi Railway Preservation Society in July 1973. Their main objective was conserving the bridges and drystone walls along the line. The Society subsequently acquired locomotives and rolling-stock and began running steam-powered trains only 12 months later, in July 1974.

On July 27 - 28, 2024 Pichi Richi Railway will hold a RailFest in Quorn when our operating fleet will be fired-up and on display in and around Quorn. We will be running short trips for passengers to experience heritage rail travel and steam power. In addition to showing our fleet we will have locomotive workshop tours and activities for people of all ages.

In addition to the RailFest visitors can enjoy the Award Winning - Quorn Silo Light Show, Pithi Kawi - bush tucker trail, Flinders Gin - tastings, pubs, shopping, cafes and tea rooms. Quorn has a wide range of accommodation choices and there is much more to explore in the region.

Pichi Richi Railway is a key tourist destination in the Flinders Ranges, operating between Quorn and Port Augusta, between March to November. About 10,000 visitors each year enjoy magnificent scenery, local produce and the unique atmosphere of the town and surrounding area.

All our locomotives, rolling stock, catering, customer service, management, marketing, restoration and compliance departments are managed by dedicated and compassionate teams of volunteers, based in SA and interstate.

In winning the Tourist Attraction - Silver Award, during the SA Tourism Awards, last November, our organisation was recognised for the contribution we make to heritage railway and to tourism.



RailFest

Saturday &
Sunday
27 & 28 July 2024

Quorn, Flinders Ranges

- 50 years ago, Pichi Richi Railway ran our very first train from Quorn to Summit.
- Come & see what we have achieved since 1974, at this unique & special event in Quorn.
- View our collection of operational steam locomotives, diesel engines & rolling stock.
- Workshop tours, train rides, family fun & festivities.
- New Pichi Richi Railway book launch, *"Into The Pass"*.



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