



# JOURNAL

APR 2020  
ISSUE # 198

PUBLISHED BY FEDERATION OF RAIL ORGANISATIONS NZ INC :

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDITOR, SCOTT OSMOND, BY E-MAIL : [scottosmond54@gmail.com](mailto:scottosmond54@gmail.com)

## IN THIS ISSUE

FRONZ Executive Update	1	News From Our Members	6
FRONZ Conference 2020	2	Classifieds	12
Covid-19 Future Planning	2	Future Mainline Excursions	12
NZTA Update	3	Future Journals	12
West Coast Train Plan Canned	4	Picture of the Month	13
TAIC Clinton Crash Report	5		

## FRONZ EXECUTIVE EFFORT DURING COVID-19

The FRONZ leadership team are working hard for our members during this time of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Covid-19 has thrown each of our groups into an unprecedented situation, and the challenges are changing from week to week. We want you to know that as a result, the Executive has been meeting weekly on a Saturday, via Zoom, to talk through issues and make sure that we are doing all we can do to help.

Unfortunately everything seems to be up in the air at the moment, but there are some certainties:

- We are pushing NZTA to provide relief on the fees it charges our members, given no group has had any income coming in over the last few months. This lack of income hits every group, however the larger the group is, the harder the impact. We will let you know the outcome, but remain hopeful they will follow the Government's advice of "being nice". See *page 3 for more from NZTA about fees*.
- While there is at this point no financial relief for non-profit groups, we're open to ideas on how we can change that.
- We are exploring every avenue for support, and this includes setting up meetings with the Ministry of Transport, to make sure we are leaving no stone unturned. We cannot promise results, but we can promise that we are doing everything we can.
- We're committed to keeping costs as low as possible. The twice-yearly meetings of the Executive are some of the largest expenditure we have outside of conference. To mitigate this, we are meeting via Zoom, which reduces costs dramatically.
- While the international tourism market is gone for the foreseeable future, this is a chance where we can capitalise on getting New Zealanders to see their own backyards. If you have any marketing ideas that could benefit groups, or be taken to a higher level, please contact [secretary@fronz.org.nz](mailto:secretary@fronz.org.nz).
- The reduction from Level 4 to Level 3 (or more like Level 3.9) still means groups have a responsibility to ensure members safety - it's not as easy as just rocking back on site. Please look at this NZTA information to ensure you are complying with the law.
- You will have seen an email from Margaret Gordon on April 25 outlining changes to the way we cost insurance. This is a really unfortunate situation, but again, we are doing everything possible to reduce costs to everyone.
- There will be no FRONZ AGM this year as such. The President's and Financial Report's as well as Convenors Reports will be circulated online to all members. The Executive members will continue in their present positions and additional support will be sought where appropriate.
- There will be no FRONZ Awards this year, but we will hold them until 2021. Several award sponsors have indicated they will not be able to continue their sponsorship this year and there will obviously be less projects and rail

**JOURNAL IS FOR ALL OF YOUR MEMBERS. PLEASE  
FORWARD IT TO ALL ON YOUR E-MAIL LISTS**

vehicles available for nomination due to the lockdown stopping any progress. Our eventual awards nominations will be able to include any projects completed from 2019 on.

Finally, your groups are not alone. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with Fronz if you need to. You can email Margaret Gordon, Executive Officer on [marjohnzoe@gmail.com](mailto:marjohnzoe@gmail.com), or Secretary Jeff Tollan on [secretary@fronz.org.nz](mailto:secretary@fronz.org.nz) and we can pass your message on.

While the times are uncertain, we know that New Zealanders love trains, and love what our groups do. We've survived branch closures, scrap merchants and odd politics. If we all band together, we can meet rail heritage's latest challenge.

The work of the Heritage Technical Committee reset has continued where possible and we are pleased to report that Steam Incorporated has gained full endorsement for their locomotive Ja1271 and steel car fleet to return to the main-line. Congratulations Steam Incorporated on this achievement.

## FRONZ CONFERENCE 2020

As reported last month, by now most readers will be aware that the decision has been made to cancel this year's Gisborne conference in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

For those of you who already had flights booked, your airline may provide a refund or credit.

At this stage we plan to move conference venue plans ahead one year and expect to hold the next conference in Gisborne at Queen's Birthday Weekend, Friday 4 June to Monday 7 June 2021. That will then put the planned conference for 2022 in Invercargill.

## COVID-19 FUTURE PLANNING

*It is appropriate now that all FRONZ members are planning a future as the threat from Covid-19 continues. Hopefully with strong national leadership the threat to health can be overcome before we then must plan a strategy for the future economic issues that may well take longer to recover from. Here are some thoughts from WATTRAIN (World Alliance of Tourist Trams and Trains) to which FRONZ is affiliated. ALL FRONZ member groups need to be planning their future now ensuring that such plans are liable to need to be changed regularly as the situation changes.*

- During these unprecedented times, all we can advise our Heritage Railways and Tramways worldwide is to follow the advice of your Governments and help prevent the transmission of this dreadful virus.
- We would also recommend using the internet and Social Media to keep in contact with your customer base.
- Please be very careful how you word posts on Social Media, make sure there is nothing contentious posted accidentally.
- Try and keep your websites up-to-date informing your followers of your current situation.
- As cash flows dry up and revenue temporarily becomes a thing of the past, try to be inventive. Some Railways have set up online shops, virtual cafes where yes you can buy a virtual bacon butty.
- It may be to your advantage to try and plan how you are going to restart your business when this is all over. Things will not be the same as they were at the beginning of 2020.

Here are some more suggestions:

- One of the most important things any Heritage Railway, Tramway or Museum can do is to keep in touch with their customer base.
- There are many options for doing this on social media.
- Running simple quizzes or just showing photographs of artefacts can keep people interested in you.
- Setting up an email address for people to respond to is a way of collecting email addresses so that when things do start to get back to normal, and they will, an organisation can directly contact its customers.

## NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY UPDATE

*Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's Safer Rail team have recently circulated an update to all rail licence holders. Key excerpts are below for any that may have missed it and for the interest of non-operating FRONZ members.*



Kia ora and welcome to our rail industry update. This is the first of our regular updates to you, where we will outline what is happening in Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's Safer Rail team, sharing information that can help you with your railway activities.

First and foremost, our team wants you and your families, friends and the wider circle of New Zealand to stay safe throughout the Covid-19 Alert Level 4 period. We are living in unprecedented times with the Covid-19 lockdown and are navigating our way through the complexities that come with continuing as the rail industry regulator in these circumstances.

### Communication notification

Recently, the Safer Rail team contacted all 82 licence holders and key rail stakeholders to discuss Covid-19 and the level 4 lockdown. We thank you for your positive response and engagement as the Government continues with its plan to unite against Covid-19 and stop the spread of Covid-19 within New Zealand.

### Rail safety fees

We contacted your rail organisation on 31 March to advise that we understand the current Alert Level 4 Covid-19 status may be putting pressure on your ability to pay this quarter's rail safety charge (to cover the period 1 January to 30 March 2020) that was due by 1 April.

If this is the case, please get in touch with us immediately. For those who do contact us, we can put your obligation temporarily on hold whilst we consider any alternative arrangements that may be possible and appropriate.

During the lockdown period, there has been the need to defer ordinary safety assessments. As the pandemic Alert Level for New Zealand changes over the course of the coming weeks and months, so will our way of working as we adapt to the environment which we regulate. We will keep you posted of any changes to safety assessments and appreciate your co-operation.

The process for applying for and reporting safety case variations, change notifications and occurrence reporting remains unchanged. Please refer to our website or contact your rail licence manager for further guidance if required.

### Safer Rail team structure update

Over the past 12 months the Safer Rail team has made changes to become a more proactive, focussed and successful regulator. This has resulted in a structure change within the Waka Kotahi regulatory function. Safer Rail's two main functions **Compliance and Intervention (C&I)** and **Licensing and Assessments (L&A)** remain unchanged but the team has grown across both groups to deliver the rail regulatory key functions with a dedicated team of 22.

**Ray McMillan** leads the Safer Rail team as Senior Manager. Ray was previously Manager C&I and has been acting Senior Manager in the absence of Brett Aldridge for more than 12 months.

**Raaj Govinda** has recently been appointed to the role of Manager, C&I. Raaj joins us from an executive role in a private sector consultancy firm, and has significant experience before that leading local government compliance teams.

**Rob Gould** continues as Manager, Rail Licensing for L&A, having recently returned from a secondment as Senior Manager, Commercial Licensing and Revenue.

These teams have key workforces with a wealth of experience and knowledge across multiple areas of the industry to deliver the overall rail regulatory strategy.

For more information about Safer Rail at Waka Kotahi, contact us at [railregulation@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:railregulation@nzta.govt.nz).

Visit our website at <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/rail/our-role-in-rail-safety/>

### Covid-19 Alert Level 3

Further information along with a more detailed Fact Sheet has been released by Waka Kotahi NZTA Safer Rail Team outlining whether your operations are likely to change when New Zealand progresses from Covid-19 Alert Level 4 to 3 on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020. If you have not received a call from us yet, we will be in touch very soon.

A Factsheet that summarises what you should consider whilst preparing for Alert Level 3 has also been circulated to all rail operators. Even if you plan to remain fully closed during the changed Alert Level, the Factsheet will be of help when you consider future changes.

To confirm, if you are planning to undertake any work during Alert Level 3 you need to assure yourselves that you are able to operate safely, which means:

- Complying with the Government Alert Level 3 advice, and
- Meet appropriate public health requirements for their workplace (including for workers), and

- Complying with the Railways Act (managing risks SFAIRP, adhering to their safety case or seeking a variation etc), and

Fulfilling all other health and safety obligations

If your work plans during Alert Level 3 change, it is important that you update your Waka Kotahi Licence Manager as soon as possible.

As a reminder, you must undertake the following prior to restarting any work within Alert Level 3:

- A risk assessment covering all work that will be carrying out within Alert Level 3
- Formal planning for such work
- Identify how you will train staff undertaking Alert Level 3 work, particularly new ways of working
- Record the risk assessment and planning process as Waka Kotahi will check these documents on its next ordinary safety assessment

Consider whether your level 3 operations are in line with your safety systems and safety case. If not, you will need to consider a safety case variation – please speak to your licence manager for further support

Stay safe and well.

Ngā mihi,

Safer Rail Team

## WEST COAST TOURIST TRAIN PLAN SHELVED

Search Results

Otago Daily Times

### \$91m cost scotches tourist train idea

Travel  
11 Apr 2020 LAURA MILLS

THE idea for a tourist train between Westport and Hokitika will not go ahead, after KiwiRail concluded it would have required \$91 million of investment.

A \$250,000 study into the idea was funded by the Government's Provincial Growth Fund and released in July 2018. KiwiRail commissioned consultants to conduct the study.

KiwiRail has only just released its report, requested by the Hokitika Guardian under the Official Information Act, and said it would not be taking the idea any further.

Chief operating officer Todd Moyle said while there was some demand, a tourist train on that route would struggle. Even a 5% drop in passenger numbers would make it unsustainable.

Significant investment would be needed, the building of facilities and upgrading the Hokitika to Greymouth rail line alone costing \$45 million.

To upgrade the line all the way to Westport would push it up to \$91.6 million, he said.

Upgrades to allow the train to travel at 70kmh would cost \$5 million for culvert upgrades alone.

"I appreciate that there would be wider economic benefits for the West Coast in establishing the service, but in KiwiRail's view that has to start with the service being sustainable."

However, the study had been a valuable exercise, he said.

It looked at various options, including six and seven day a week services from Hokitika to Westport, and Greymouth to Westport.

Ticket prices mooted were \$240 return, or \$120 one way.

The report said to make it stack up, the train trip would need to be packaged with other tourist experiences, such as nature or heritage.

However, there were very few larger tourism operators on the West Coast with the resource ca



## TAIC RAIL INQUIRY. CLINTON DERAILMENT, 29 MARCH 2019

Below is a brief plain English summary of key points in the report. The Commission's report speaks for itself -- you can find it here: [www.taic.org.nz/inquiry/ro-2019-102](http://www.taic.org.nz/inquiry/ro-2019-102)

**Key point: If you identify a solution to a safety issue, do it.**

### What happened

On 29 March 2019, the three rear wagons of a freight train derailed as the train exited a crossing loop at Clinton en-route from Invercargill to Dunedin. Two of the three derailed wagons overturned onto their sides, causing damage to the wagons, track and a signal.

### Why it happened

To summarise the Commission's findings:

The oscillation was very likely due to a combination of excessive speed, track geometry at the point of derailment, and the centre of gravity of the fully loaded coal wagons.\*

The derailment (when one or more wheels on a wagon lifted and climbed the rail) happened because the wagon was oscillating.

The train exceeded the maximum permissible track speed because it was on a downhill gradient and the driver was distracted.

\* The wagon condition and loading were within the operator's maximum permissible limits.

### How to prevent similar accidents in future

The Commission noted that at the time of this accident, the operator had not implemented a procedure to stop loaded trains using the crossing loop.

The key lessons arising from this inquiry are:

A train driver can become distracted even when carrying out tasks specific to their role which, if poorly timed, can have unintended consequences.

To avoid repeat accidents and incidents it is important to learn from previous incidents\*\*. This requires a focus on implementing corrective action in accordance with the hierarchy of controls. However, when procedural control measures have been identified they should be implemented, checked and monitored properly to ensure the desired results are achieved.

\*\* There was a similar derailment at the Clinton crossing loop in 2016, that TAIC did not investigate. KiwiRail's safety actions included speed monitoring and track repair, *but they did not adopt a procedural control measure to stop loaded trains using the crossing loop*.

KiwiRail has taken several safety actions that address the issues raised in this report. Due to this, the Commission made no new recommendations.



Transport Accident  
Investigation Commission



## NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

These items are obtained from numerous e-newsletters that our member groups publish. Members are welcome to submit these or any other information they would like to share with the wider rail and tramway heritage community by e-mailing to [scottosmond54@gmail.com](mailto:scottosmond54@gmail.com)

### NEW ZEALAND RAILWAY AND LOCOMOTIVE SOCIETY

*From Facebook*

Here are a few updated photos of WMR 48 taken outside of the Northend Workshop back at the end of February.

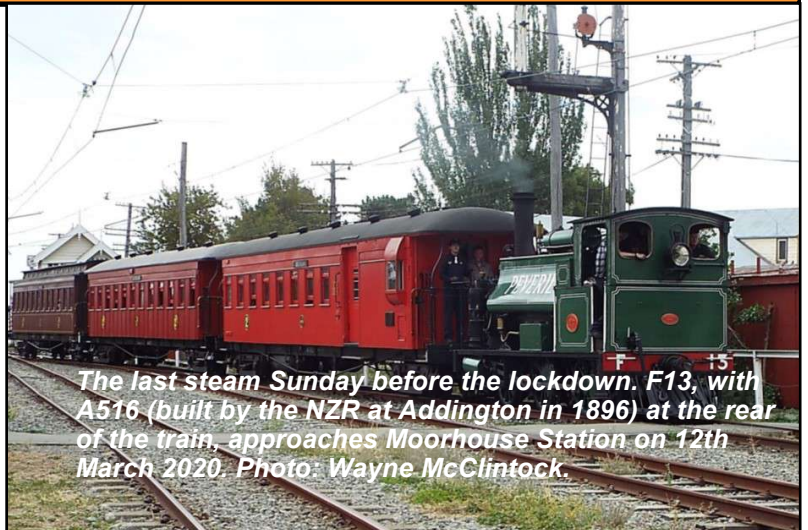


### CANTERBURY RAILWAY SOCIETY

*From "Branchlines"*

*CRS has introduced a pandemic Management Plan here summarised by the president, Wayne McClintock*

The AGM which was planned to be held on 28th April has been postponed until conditions change enough for it to be held. The existing Executive Committee remains in office until the AGM takes place. Special constitutional provisions allow the Executive Committee to continue its governance role should more difficult situations occur. Face to face meetings of both the Executive and HOD committees have been cancelled, and are to be replaced by phone and email discussions so essential decision making can occur until the situation returns to Alert Level 1 (or its equivalent).



*The last steam Sunday before the lockdown. F13, with A516 (built by the NZR at Addington in 1896) at the rear of the train, approaches Moorhouse Station on 12th March 2020. Photo: Wayne McClintock.*



## BAY OF ISLANDS VINTAGE RAILWAY

### From March Newsletter

*From the Trust's Funding Manager. Frank Leadley*

If ever asked to list the most frustrating thing I have ever been associated with, our attempts to get funding for the extension of the railway to Opuia, Gabriel's boiler and associated projects would have to be top of the list!

We formed a company, Northland Adventure Experience (NAX) Ltd to obtain and administer the funding from the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF). The 3 Shareholders in the Company are BOIVR holding 51%, FNDC holding 25% and the Cycleway Trust 24%.

An application was sent off in July last year. The project included restoration of the railway to Opuia, Gabriel's replacement boiler, repositioning a permanent cycleway within the railway corridor, significant building and rolling stock developments at Kawakawa, completing the restoration of the historic steam ship "Minerva," a new railway station/transport hub with a wide range of components at the area known as the Colenso Triangle in Opuia, a job training programme particularly for the Railway and "Minerva", and an art trail along the railway / cycleway. Once the project is completed we would have been in a position to offer up to 25 jobs to local people, and be a major local employer.

It was an excellent and highly detailed application. It was accompanied by 12 very strong Letters of Support from community organisations and groups. But after over 4 months of waiting with not a single query from the PGF it was turned down in December without a cent! It seems it was a political decision with the application turned down by some MP's deciding Northland had had enough funding support! It was a devastating blow.

However, NAX decided the project is far too important to give up on, so we have retained all the components, but broken the project down into "chunks" with the Kawakawa buildings, Gabriel's boiler and rolling stock, railway line restoration, and "Minerva" components being the subject of the revised application to the PGF, FNDC funding the design, construction and administration costs for the cycleway, FNHL and/or others funding the Opuia station development, and Ngati Hine/KiwiRail taking responsibility for the job training component.

The total cost for all components is nearly \$16 million, a little more than the first application but retaining all the significant elements. This revised application was sent off at the end of March after BOIVR had a meeting with a PGF representative, and received strong signals that by breaking the project up in this way showing the levels of community support from our partners that we had a good chance of success this time, and we could possibly hear a result by the end of April.

### 1 March. Railway Concert at the Station - another vintage success.

The 11th annual "Concert At The Station" held in the big green shed was filled to the back doors with a crowd who revelled in the wide range of top quality performances, with MC Mayor John Carter even joining in a duet with Country and Western singer Carleen Still.

**"Curry Train"** This was held on the evening of 19 March. Three choices of meat or a vegetable curry – all were super delicious!

*Below: BOIVR is not open at present, but two friendly bears have been visiting to check on the locos and carriages. Gabriel Bear and friend, Paddington Bear, arrived at the station platform today, Thursday 9 April.*

*Right above: Carriage "Blue Heron" had a facelift before summer Christmas holiday runs in the workshop, whilst DSA 225 receives mechanical attention.*

*Right below: Station yard – Moa, Esmae, loader & Gabriel - minus boiler*



## WELLINGTON TRAMWAY MUSEUM

*From "Tramlines"*

Graham Stewart, the doyen of New Zealand's tramway history has very kindly donated to the Museum, electronic copies of his entire collection of Wellington tram photographs taken by himself plus Wellington scenes collected from other sources.

Graham first started photographing trams in 1948 and was lucky enough to have a job that took him around the country while working in the media industry. This gave him ample scope for pursuing his hobby. He has an extensive collection of professionally taken photographs of every system in New Zealand which have been published in the many books he has produced over the years.

Never selfish in sharing his knowledge and extensive collections with enthusiasts both here and overseas, by his donation, Graham has ensured that his legacy will be available to Museum members and we sincerely thank him for this very kind gesture.

Having now completed the restoration of Fiducia Tram No.260, and with the restoration of Combination Tram No.17 in its final stage it is now time to maintain the momentum and make inroads into our trams "waiting restoration".

Tram No.207 is a stand-out in this category, as the only complete example of the most numerous type of tram that ran in Wellington.

It was purchased from Wellington City Council by the Tramway Preservation Society (Wellington) Inc. in May 1964 its price, approximately \$950 in 2020 values, being sponsored by the Wellington Branch of the Vintage Car Club of NZ. From 1965 to 1973 it operated at the Wellington Tramway Museum. Lack of covered protection resulted in deterioration of its condition and it was taken out of service.

Financing. A broad estimate of funding requirements, based on knowledge learned from the Tram 17 project, is \$200K - \$250K for the body (Commercial Restoration), Mechanical and Electrical (in-house), say \$50K. Total \$250K - \$300K

New Tram Drivers. As a result of the advertisement for Tram Drivers on our Facebook Page and on posters in the trams, we now have three people training to be Tram Drivers. When they qualify this will provide more drivers for the monthly roster and thus reduce the pressure on the current tram driving members.

*Below Left: Tram No.207 in operation at the Wellington Tramway Museum in 1966. Right: Tram No.207 as at present. Photos: Keith McGavin*



## OAMARU STEAM AND RAIL

*From April "Digest"*

With most of the world's population in some form of lockdown, the Committee hopes that all of our members and supporters and their friends and families are staying inside, staying safe and staying cheery during this difficult time. It will be a long time before overseas tourists return to Oamaru in the numbers of recent years, but domestic tourism will take its place. They and local families will be looking for a nice train ride around the harbour to celebrate a gradual return to normality. Stay safe.

### Work on McKeown's Crossing

Work on the new railway crossing at the entrance to McKeown Group's yard has seen the existing track removed, soil dug away to a depth of about two metres and replaced with crushed rock. Track work has been stopped due to the lockdown, but once it recommences, the new crossing - complete with heavy rail and fresh ballast on either side - will meet modern KiwiRail standards.





## MAINLINE STEAM HERITAGE TRUST

*From "Autumn Newsletter"*

The Section 28 notices have required a review of our Safety Systems and documentation including risk management. FRONZ through the HTC (Heritage Technical Committee) has been working with KiwiRail and NZTA who collectively have developed a reset programme for the Heritage Operators. As well as a documentation review the reset programme requires a re-certification of all of our locomotives (both steam and diesel) and carriages. The HTC has recruited, trained and endorsed 3 new certifying engineers with more to follow this year. Mainline Steam has engaged 2 of the Certifying Engineers to work with us and recertify our rolling stock. To date they have both spent several days in Plimmerton reviewing the rolling stock and our documentation. The Covid-19 lock down has delayed the next planned visit by our Certifying Engineer but thanks to modern technology work continues from our homes.

### Auckland.

Good news is that our resource consent applications to infill our site at Mercer has been approved. However, like all bureaucratic documents it comes with about ten pages of conditions. A big 'thank you' to Stuart for his perseverance on this matter. Our team in charge, Stuart, Michael, Pete and Gary, are now meeting various organisations and companies trying to put a deal together to get infill so we can make a start on the site. Meantime, as I reported in a previous newsletter, there is some drainage to take care of first. This involves the laying of the first lot of pipes and three storm-water chambers. Then we need to cover these with brown rock so that truck and trailer units can come on site to drop infill. We hope that the fine weather will continue for a little while yet so that we can get going on the project. We also have a long term lease on an access to our site from KiwiRail. Recently, we laid some temporary track down on our access site and moved the South African locos to the site.



### Plimmerton

With Wellington's weather giving us a very nice summer it was an opportune time give the depot a bit of a tidy up with tree trimming, general vegetation control and removal of any scrap metal that had been accumulating for a while. Hopefully it will be another year or two before the trees need another trim. As part of the re certification of the Ao carriages they have all been over the pit for inspection and cleaning. Any areas that were looking a bit tatty were needle gunned and painted. Most of the carriages have had new steps installed as some of these were starting to crack. Anti-slip strips have also been replaced or refurbished on the steps to prevent any slips while entering or disembarking from the carriage.

**Ao 117** has been painted and the reassemble of the interior of the carriage is currently under way.

**Ao 100 and Ao 209** both require some interior work to be finished as well as inspection and test work underneath the carriages.

### Christchurch

As many of you will be aware we have been occupying a piece of land at the back of CWF Hamilton's property who have kindly looked after us for the past 20 odd years.

CWF Hamilton propose to redevelop their site with new purpose built buildings and as much as they tried are unable to accommodate Mainline Steam in their site redevelopment. This is unfortunate but thank fully we have a good relationship with members of the Management team at CWF Hamilton's who are doing all they can to help us.

## DUNEDIN RAILWAYS

*From: Otago Daily Times. 20 April.*

Fifty-one staff will likely be made redundant as Dunedin Railways Limited mothballs its track and equipment in a bid to avoid closing entirely.

In a statement this morning, chairman Kevin Winders said mothballing was a way of preserving DRL's assets "with a view to exploring future options for the company in what will undoubtedly be a very different tourism environment".

The Dunedin City Council has agreed to meet the ongoing costs of mothballing the operation.

Consultation had begun today on proposals which would result in 51 job losses, Mr Winders said.

"We deeply regret the impact on our staff and their families. This is a very difficult time for them and we will work hard to do everything we can to look after them."

DRL would retain a skeleton staff of four to prepare the company for hibernation, and to maintain selected assets that will be kept.

Mr Winders said DRL's existing business challenges, even when operating in a buoyant tourism market, were well known.

"The impacts of Covid-19 exacerbate these challenges severely because the company is largely reliant on international tourism which makes up 80% of DRL's total passenger numbers.

"We are unlikely to see international visitors return in the 2020/21 summer and the outlook beyond that is uncertain at this time. With this outlook, it is simply not possible to keep the business operating as normal." DRL's main shareholder is Dunedin City Holdings Limited (DCHL).

Chairman Keith Cooper said they were supportive of the decision to mothball the operation.

"This option provides flexibility to explore new and sustainable tourism offerings based on DRL's assets as the economy and tourism recover post Covid-19."

The future evaluation work will be led by DRL's sister company, Dunedin Venues Management Ltd (DVML). Future options will be reported back to DCHL and the council later this year, which will then make decisions on initiatives and any proposed investment.

Mr Cooper said it was too early to say what options might emerge, but that the business and its products could look quite different in future.

One of DRL's biggest challenges is high operating costs due to the age and condition of the train/ track along with a deferred maintenance bill in the order of \$10 million for the Taieri Gorge track in the longer term. Even before Covid-19 came along costs like this were unsustainable."

Mr Winders said DRL was grateful for shareholder support for mothballing as an alternative to closure. "Although it is not a step that is taken lightly, it leaves us with the opportunity to potentially return with new sustainable services once the tourism market becomes clear in the future."

As part of the decision to mothball the company, the Otago Excursion Train Trust has decided to sell its 28% shareholding in DRL to DCHL, making DCHL the sole shareholder of DRL going forward.

### **MOTHBALLING ONLY ALTERNATIVE - MAYOR**

"However, this still a heart-breaking outcome because under the proposal a number of jobs would be lost, which is devastating for those impacted and their families," he said today.

"It is also a significant blow to an iconic and long-standing tourist attraction. Dunedin Railways, and particularly the Taieri Gorge Railway, is much loved by the Dunedin and wider Otago community."

With the business already facing some financial challenges, international borders closed for the foreseeable future and the cruise industry unlikely to recover until at least 2021/2, Dunedin Railways' passenger numbers would be significantly reduced even post the Covid-19 national lockdown.

DCHL had advised the council that continuing to run Dunedin Railways would cost about \$750,000 per quarter ongoing through winter, with little hope of any significant revenue for at least another 18 months.

The company was not able to sustain those costs and would quickly become insolvent without a significant contribution from its shareholders, Mr Hawkins said.

The council had therefore agreed to financially support mothballing the company's assets to allow exploration of new and sustainable tourism offerings, rather than seeing the business close completely.

That would cost up to \$1.05 million from June 30.

That included the retention of a small number of staff and the storage and maintenance of key assets such as locomotives, carriages and power vans.

"The council has asked for a report to come in advance of the Long Term Plan next year that will present future options for the railway operation, including restarting the business. The council and DCHL will then make decisions on initiatives and any proposed investment," Mr Hawkins said.



## TRAMWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### From "Tracts"

Celebrations for the Fiftieth Anniversary of Electric Tram Operation which commenced at Ferrymead on 9 May 1970 have been delayed. Something may be possible later in the year.

Heritage Tramways Trust has successfully applied for the Government wage package and is committed to keeping our highly skilled workforce intact through this period, yet another testing time for us all.

HTT has also put in a submission to the Christchurch City Council Revised Annual Plan 2020. We have indicated our support for the CTL and THS submissions and reinforced the need for work to continue on track extensions in the city this year.

By Tuesday 7 April, it was becoming apparent from media reports that the City Council was looking to opt for a nil rates rise and concern was raised that this might impact on funding included in the Council's Draft Annual plan relating to both the city tramway and Ferrymead.

Although the Draft Annual plan as published had included the funding to complete the tram extension and related High Street refurbishment projects, there is now a real risk that this may change given COVID-19, and also that maintenance budgets relating to the tram infrastructure could be cut. Christchurch Tramways Ltd made the decision to lodge a submission to the plan. It is obviously vital to THS/ HTT that CTL is able to survive the current crisis and be confident of economic recovery, given the uncertain future particularly for international tourism at least in the short term.



*Here's a sight we hope we will see again in Christchurch next summer. Photo from "Tracts".*

## BUSH TRAMWAY CLUB

### From May Newsletter

March Open Day: This was moderately well attended. Because of recent track work, we were able to run our passenger trains to Glen Afton whilst the Mamaku jigger ran on the bottom half of the line.

Thanks to all who turned up & helped make this day a success.

April Open Day: We decided to cancel this day as we considered that passengers in our carriages did not have sufficient space between them to stop the spread of Covid-19. It was just as well that we had cancelled as the NZ Government brought in a nationwide lockdown shortly afterwards.

We had three charters booked for April which were all cancelled because of the lockdown. Two were Probuss Clubs based in Auckland & the other was the Huntly Lions Club.



One was run in mid-March for Ian J's Rotary Club & was very successful.

Our contractor & his worker came to our railway for the last week in February. They worked on the top half of our line which had been closed to heavier trains since May 2019 following several derailments. During the week, they replaced 163 sleepers, re-gauged 196 sleepers where the gauge was too wide & replaced 1x 30ft rail.

They lifted & packed the top half of the sandfill area & dumped 1 x Yb wagon of ballast in this area.

*Left: Pukemiro Junction Station with a passenger train approaching from Glen Afton – 1960's. Photo: Wilson Lythgoe.*

## STEAM INCORPORATED



A big cheer to the team at Steam Incorporated this month who have successfully gained registration for Ja 1271 and their steel carriage fleet as part of the FRONZ Heritage Technical Committee reset. This is no small task, especially with the present pandemic situation. Well done Steam Inc!

*In this picture JA 1271 hauls a Steam Incorporated excursion train as part of the annual Art Deco festival. This was a trip Napier to Otane return for the local tourists to partake in, seen approaching Otane on 20 Feb 2015. Photo: John Russell*

## CLASSIFIEDS

### THE RECLAIM

The place where FRONZ members can place buy, sell, swap, wanted requests.

*The Reclaim has been developed so that any Fronz member can send us information about items they want to sell or buy (preferably with pictures, and deadlines if applicable), and that will be circulated to all members. This benefits the rail heritage movement as a whole by promoting a greater sharing of resources, as well as the opportunity to save useful items from scrapping.*

This is distributed to the FRONZ Journal mailing list for free.

To place your request, please send details to [djmaciulaitis@gmail.com](mailto:djmaciulaitis@gmail.com).

## FUTURE MAINLINE EXCURSIONS

Mainline excursions will be cancelled during the Covid-19 pandemic. This feature will return when trips again begin running.

## FUTURE JOURNALS AND COVID-19

During the pandemic there is virtually no activity at all our members sites so very little news. I will continue to produce a truncated edition, probably monthly, as usual with information to report from the FRONZ Team and our members.

Keep calm and above all keep well and keep safe.

Scott



# PICTURE OF THE MONTH



**Sign of our times.** Two interesting photographs found on Facebook. Taken 56 years apart at Ellerslie, Auckland. Both photos show just one vehicle on the southern motorway and somewhat different passenger trains.

*Top: Thursday 6 February 1964 Ja1275 approaches Ellerslie with 207, the Mercer passenger. It's not a very busy evening on the Southern Motorway. JM Creber photo posted on Facebook by Trevor Cheer.*

*Below: A ghost road and a train mainly full of air. First days of Lockdown, 29 March 2020 at 4.06pm. Leo Neal.*



\*\*\*\*\* FRONZ CONFERENCE GISBORNE \*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\* 4—7 JUNE 2021 \*\*\*\*\*

**FRONZ JOURNAL # 198**  
**WAS PUBLISHED ON 26 APRIL 2020**  
 CONTENTS MAY BE REPUBLISHED WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT