



PUFFING BILLY RAILWAY

Top 10 Priorities for Master Plan



The Puffing Billy Railway Master Plan 2017 has been developed to guide the railway into the future. It contains projects that will allow the railway to accommodate visitor demand, improve the overall visitor experience, generate revenue to support the ongoing sustainability of the railway, upgrade existing infrastructure and improve facilities.

Puffing Billy sees the following 10 projects from the Master Plan as the priority projects to ensure it can cater for the continued growth and visitor expectation over the next 10 years.

1. Emerald Lake Park – Discovery Centre \$15,691,000

The Discovery Centre is the future signature project for opening up the eastern end of the railway and releasing pressure on the Belgrave to Lakeside end of the line.

The Discovery Centre will provide an all-weather destination for passengers from Belgrave and will also be marketed as an alternative entry point for the railway to travel on the Lakeside to Gembrook section of the railway. It will be a multi-function facility, incorporating an education and interpretation centre, a café and gift shop, and convention facilities. Access will be provided from the station via a covered walkway.

A significant amount of preliminary planning has already occurred with the Shire of Cardinia to progress this project to a more-detailed design stage. In addition the federal government has committed \$5,500,000 to the project, should it proceed.

This facility will be a major new revenue stream for the railway, with many additional revenue producing opportunities. In addition it will provide a substantial lift in passenger amenities and significantly improve the railway's food and beverage offering.

2. New Way and Works Building – Belgrave \$333,600

The current Way and Works office building is the original house that was built on the site many years ago. It is totally inadequate for today's operation and is beyond repairing. It is planned to be replaced with a new purpose-built office building.

The railway will require more office space for project managers and assistants along with temporary office space for workshop staff while locomotive construction work is taking place.



3. Convert one NA Locomotive from Coal to Oil Burning \$400,000

All of the current daily operating steam locomotives are coal-fuelled. This creates some risks on hot and windy days. These risks are mitigated by running fire-patrol trollies behind trains during the annual fire season. However, fire risks are intensified between Lakeside and Gembrook, which runs through Wright Forrest. In this section of the track Diesel locomotives are used during the fire season to further minimise fire risks. However this can lead to "brand damage" since Puffing Billy is marketed as a "steam" railway.

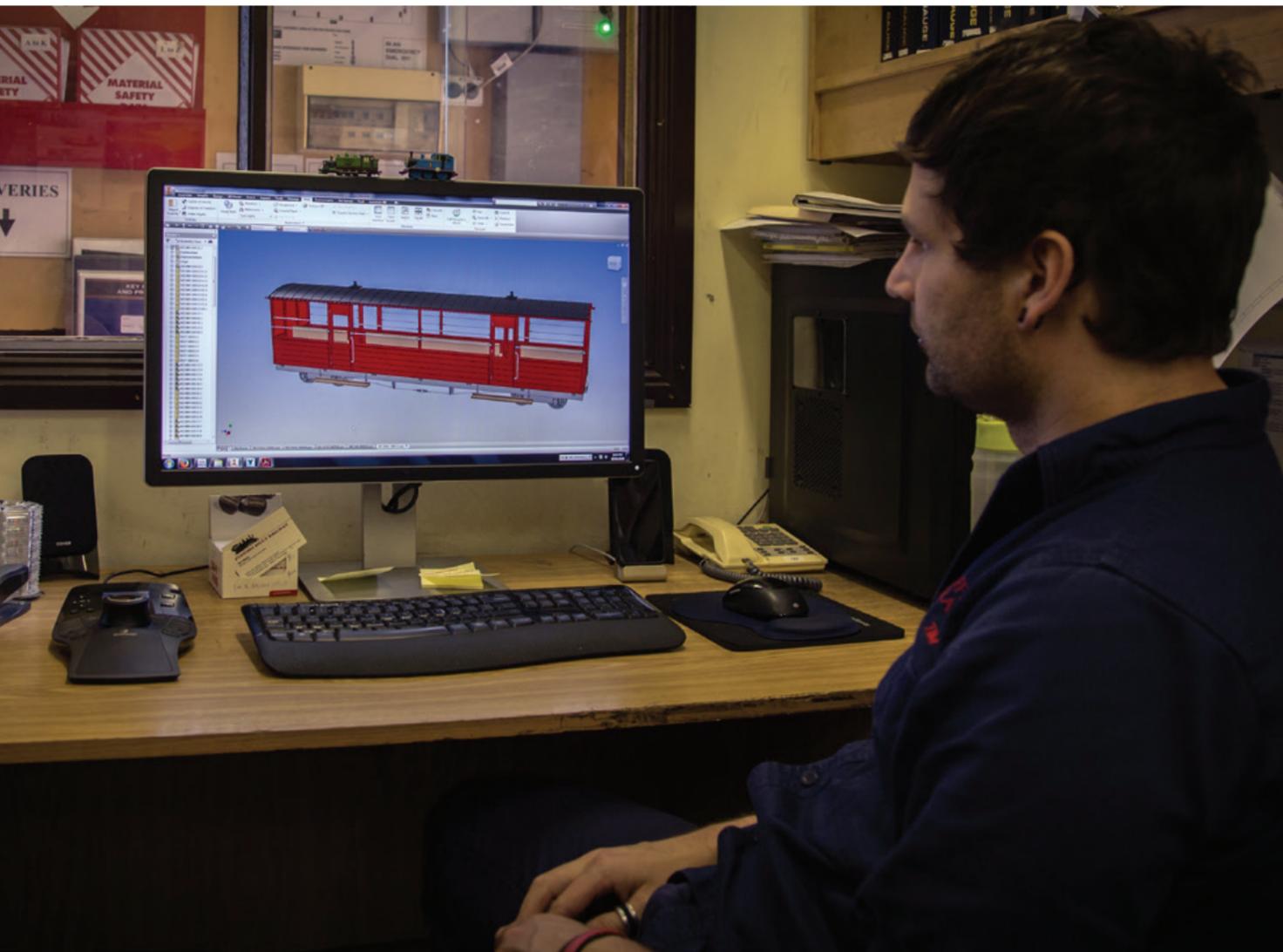
To counter this problem, it is planned to convert one locomotive from coal to oil burning. This technology significantly reduces the risk of sparks coming from the funnel or the firebox, and will allow a steam locomotive to operate in this section of the railway throughout the fire season (except on total fire ban days).



4. Additional Rolling Stock – 12 new carriages \$2,800,000

Puffing Billy has converted several freight wagons to passenger carriages over the last few years, as passenger numbers have increased. But they do not provide the comfort and “heritage appeal” of the original carriages nor do they cater to the needs of the accessible market.

In addition, the railway is operating at near capacity with its current carriage fleet, and will require extra carriages to cater for the anticipated increase in passengers over the next few years. Therefore it is planned to build twelve new accessible friendly carriages using the original designs as far as possible.



5. Locomotive NGG16-129 restoration \$950,000

The railway currently has one large locomotive capable of pulling sixteen carriages. The other “NA” locomotives are limited to pulling eight to ten carriages. With the increase in passenger numbers on many days, the railway requires a second large locomotive to carry them all.

Locomotive NGG16-129 was purchased from South Africa twenty years ago and has been in the process of being fully restored for the last few years. The restoration will take a further two years to complete.

6. Additional Carriage Storage Sidings – Belgrave East \$819,800

Currently there is one siding in Belgrave East and it is proposed to build a second siding to stable up to twelve additional carriages.

Two proposed projects in the business case involve building twelve new carriages, and levelling the “top yard”. Both of these projects will require more storage sidings for carriages in Belgrave. The “top yard” levelling project will result in three current sidings being reduced to two, partly because the proposed second platform project will require some of the lowered land to be used for the new platform 2.

The new siding will also have an inspection pit to allow carriage maintenance staff to inspect carriage “undergear” equipment. Currently this inspection takes place at Menzies Creek in the open, and requires empty carriages being taken from Belgrave to Menzies Creek on a regular basis. This is an inefficient waste of resources.



7. Bus Parking – Menzies Creek (In total \$1,596,200)

The majority of Tour Group passengers come to the railway in tourist buses and start or end their train journey at Menzies Creek. This results in a significant number of buses parking on a residential road at Menzies Creek on busy days, and this in turn, causes significant traffic problems for the residents.

Bus Parking – School Road \$460,200

It is planned to use railway land along the road side of the station precinct to construct a parking area for full size tourist coaches.

Bus Parking – North Side \$1,136,000

The railway has a significant amount of land on the north side of the station precinct which is currently used for storage of ballast and non-operational rolling stock. It is planned to use this land to construct a parking area for smaller tourist coaches and cars of passengers boarding the train at Menzies Creek.



8. Museum Extension (Stage 2) \$457,800

The first stage of the reconstruction of the narrow-gauge museum is almost complete and is expected to be opened in the next year. The second stage involves restoring and reconstructing the remaining buildings which will house the maintenance facilities on the museum site.



9. Extension to Belgrave Locomotive Workshop \$2,136,100

The locomotive workshop at Belgrave was extended in 2003. However cost considerations resulted in the extension having only three tracks and workshop offices were built on the site of a proposed fourth track. Since the extension was completed, the railway has rebuilt two more steam locomotives and is currently restoring another Garratt locomotive. It has also added another diesel locomotive. Furthermore, the additional locomotives are stored in the open as there is insufficient room in the Running Shed for them to be stored.

It is planned to extend the locomotive workshop by rebuilding the workshop offices over the current offices, and adding offices for additional workshop services (eg drawing office). The current offices will be replaced by a fourth track to provide space for the additional locomotives to be stored. Also temporary workshop offices in portable buildings will be removed.

10. New Running Shed – Emerald \$2,506,000

A new locomotive light-up shed will be constructed to house at least two locomotives that will provide services from Lakeside to Gembrook.





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