

*Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society (Inc.)*  
(formerly the Friends of Ida Bay Historical Society)  
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20<sup>th</sup> February 2020

The Hon. Roger Jaensch, MP - MHA  
Minister for Environment and Parks  
Executive Building,  
15 Murray Street, Hobart, 7000

Dear Sir,

### **Proposal for the management of the Ida Bay Railway and parts of the Ida Bay State Reserve**

The Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society (IBRPS) seeks the Parks and Wildlife Service cooperation in conserving the historic Ida Bay Railway in Tasmania's Far South.

It proposes the restoration and operation of the heritage-listed IBR by a volunteer, community-based, not-for-profit organisation. Consistent with the IBRPS constitution and objectives, all revenue is to be directed back into the conservation of the Railway and historic site.

The group seeks an agreement with the PWS that will enable the progressive restoration of passenger rail operations, implementation of appropriate associated services, site maintenance and conservation works.

The group also seeks the establishment of specific appropriate legislation to cover the Railway's operation and management in much the same way as that covering the Puffing Billy Railway in Victoria.

Why legislation? The repeated application of a commercially framed lease and insufficient oversight has incrementally failed the site. The demands of safety compliance frustrates commercial expectations and focus on financial return has denied site conservation obligations. The site is being degraded, and unless a realistic commitment is made, its values as a heritage listed site, operating railway and contributor to the regional economy will be lost – forever.

Specific legislation provides a framework for a more consistent approach and longer term perspective to the Railway's conservation and use. The legislation also ensures community and Government participation in the sites management.

To promote resolution of the proposal, a summary of matters that IBRPS would like to see included in an appropriate form of agreement is attached. Also attached are the Society's constitutional vision and objectives that define its purpose to keep the Railway for future generations.

The Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society has a diverse range of appropriate skills and considerable experience and participation in support of the site and its operation and management.

In order to assess the group's capacity to fulfil the proposal, it has undertaken initial track-work inspection, specification and estimates. Engineering qualification and rail safety accreditation procedures have also been prepared. A business plan to achieve the desired goals is being prepared

as the information is assembled and assessed. Though we have offered to maintain the site whilst matters are sorted, we have not as yet included assessment of site maintenance and building conservation works as we are not yet permitted to enter the site.

A significant aspect of early stages will be the development of the group's capacity. This will include community participation, commercial and other support to the effort.

Also attached is a preliminary schedule for the staged restoration of service.

We have secured sufficient seed capital from within the group to initiate works. This would see the first stage of track restoration enabling operation to the Ida Bay Township site and Cemetery. We will be exploring further grant funding and support as we progress. This is a resource previously denied to the group - as their volunteer efforts were seen as supporting a private commercial operation – a model that has repeatedly failed.

The project is considerable and will take some years to bring the Railway reliably to a self-sustainable standard. We are under no illusions as to the size of the tasks ahead. That is why we seek the cooperation of the PWS and a particular set of arrangements that would enable the project in this manner.

We have very recently been made aware of a bushfire relief project (Project X) proposed for the Ida Bay State Reserve near the Lune River Railway Workshop precinct. Whilst the proposal has not as yet been detailed, we are concerned that the heritage-listed site is not further compromised nor the opportunity to restore the Railway to sustainable operation expediently negated.

In our discussions with the CEO - PWS late 2019 and early 2020 we had been advised that there were no other interests in the site/lease area and that the Railway should be conserved. We seek your assurance that the site and its values are appropriately respected and that the community and our interests are meaningfully consulted in any activity planning or site allocation.

As the Railway enters its 100<sup>th</sup> year, we see an opportunity for both proposals to cooperatively contribute to the region's prosperity and provide unique experiences for visitors and the community. From the Railway's point of view, the dividends to the local and regional economic activity will be immediate once safe operation is regained and the Railway – and its memorable experiences - are returned to their unique position in Tasmania's living history.

**Our plan is to have trains running again by early next summer. To achieve this, as the attached timeline shows, we would need to reach a preliminary agreement with Parks allowing us access to the site - with tenure - by the end of March 2020.**

We look forward to your timely consideration of the proposal and would be pleased to discuss the matter with you at any stage. Please call 0447 373 673 if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

*Mick Williams* – President

and the Steering Committee members

*James Shugg, David Hanlon, Dave Collins*

for the Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society

## **Attachments:**

- 1.0 **Summary Outline of matters to be included in an agreement** that will enable the restoration of the Ida Bay Railway.
- 2.0 **Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society (Inc.) - constitutional vision and objectives.**
- 3.0 **Preliminary Schedule for the stage 1 restoration of passenger services – Ida Bay Railway.**

### **Attachment 1.0:**

**Summary Outline of matters to be included in an agreement** that will enable the restoration of the Ida Bay Railway.

In the definition and determination of an agreement between the Tasmanian Government and the not-for-profit community based group, the following is a preliminary list of matters that need to be addressed within the agreement.

#### **1. Approved Uses**

- **Restoration and conservation of the Ida Bay Railway, its buildings and infrastructure in an operational and appropriate condition.**
- **Maintenance of the grounds and sections of the Ida Bay State Reserve relevant to the Ida Bay Railway and related operations.**
- **Provision of appropriate services associated with the Ida Bay Railway operation and conservation:**

*Guiding, interpretive and educational services, - based on the Railway, historic site, Ida Bay State Reserve and region.*

*Community participation, liaison and support using the site.*

*Refreshments, - supporting the use and enjoyment of the site.*

*Accommodation, - from fully serviced to bush camping – based on the Railway, site and Reserve.*

*Tour and event management based on the Railway and historic site.*

- **Development and upgrading of appropriate infrastructure and services to sustain the Railway and site conservation.** e.g. Rail infrastructure, visitor facilities, advisory and interpretive signage, etc.
- **History keeping,** - artefact and site research and conservation activities.
- **Site, service and development planning** - to support the above uses and site conservation.

#### **2. Rights and Responsibilities - to use the Railway, site and relevant Reserve areas - that enable provision of services, sustain conservation and support revenue and management efforts.**

**These Rights and Responsibilities include:**

- **Use and enjoyment – the Railway, the site, approved uses and term – exclusivity, co-operation, duration and options etc.**
- **Compliance – laws, policies and management plans,**

- **Rail Safety Systems – compliance, management and reporting**, - including track/permanent way, rolling stock, associated infrastructure, operation and management systems,
- **Performance standards and expectations** – for visitors and participants – includes staged restoration, operating periods, publicity and contingency advice.
- **Risk Management** – ongoing assessment input to planning and response,
- **Training** – development, application, assessment and recording of appropriate skills training and performance,
- **Services and utilities** – their provision and maintenance,
- **Buildings and Grounds** – repair, restoration, maintenance,
- **Residence – repair, use and occupation** – site servicing, protection and caretaking roles,
- **Insurances** – adequacy and maintenance,
- **Effluent and Rubbish** – service provision, collection, storage, treatment, and disposal,
- **Environmental liabilities**, - prevention and incident response,
- **Development and activities** – planning, standards, procedures, compliance etc.
- **Natural and Cultural values** – managing effects on wildlife, flora, geology, reserved lands, cultural sites and stories. Interpretation and recording.
- **Fire**, - appropriate use, reserve and asset protection, biodiversity conservation and visitor safety,
- **Emergency planning and procedures**, - staged planning and preparation, equipment and training,
- **Signage and interpretive standards**, - standards, approvals etc.
- **Advertising and Photography** – appropriate use of the site, commercial management
- **Dispute Resolution** – procedures, communication and initiation,

### 3. Operator and Agreement

- **Understanding the proposed Operators not-for-profit, community-based organisation, its motivation and principles.**
- **Determination of an appropriate non-commercial agreement**
  - that enables the Approved Uses, upholds the Reserve and site Management Plans, sustains the Operators mission and objectives, and sustains the Rights and Responsibilities of each party and their obligations to the wider community.

### 4. Legislation

**Consultation, development, drafting and implementation of an appropriate legislative framework** that enables and oversees the ongoing protection, conservation and use of the Railway, associated historic site and Reserve.

*The purpose and application of this legislation is similar to that which defines the management and use of the Puffing Billy Railway in Victoria.*

## **Attachment 2.0:**

### **Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society (Inc.) - constitutional vision and objectives.**

#### **Vision:**

*To engage people in the preservation of the Ida Bay Railway for present and future generations.*

#### **Mission:**

*To preserve, restore and operate the Ida Bay Railway in a safe and sustainable manner to promote understanding and appreciation of this publicly owned heritage railway and to support the Far South and Tasmanian communities by providing an outstanding railway experience for residents and visitors.*

#### **Objectives:**

- 1. To preserve and restore the narrow gauge railway known as the Ida Bay Railway.*
- 2. To support the community, local business and employment by keeping the Railway in operation as a major tourist attraction, whilst maintaining the historical integrity of the Railway.*
- 3. To record, conserve, restore and acquire Ida Bay Railway related artefacts, sites and infrastructure.*
- 4. To develop and display the collection of archival and historical items related to the Railway.*
- 5. To document and research the history of the Railway, its people and community in the Far South region.*
- 6. To engage with and seek assistance and support from the network of historic rail organisations across Tasmania and interstate.*
- 7. To engage with and seek assistance and support from organisations promoting tourism and sustainable development in the Far South and across Tasmania.*
- 8. To support the cohesion and wellbeing of members of the Society by maintaining communication, sharing off-site activities and interests and ensuring the time, effort and resources provided by members is appreciated.*
- 9. To provide support, encouragement and opportunities for personal development to members and volunteers working for the benefit of the Railway.*
- 10. To provide all members and volunteers with a safe, cooperative and rewarding experience when working for the benefit of the Railway.*
- 11. To raise funds and seek that all income from operating the Railway and associated activities is to be directed to the achievement of the Mission.*



**Attachment 3.0:**

**Preliminary Schedule for the stage 1 restoration of passenger services – Ida Bay Railway.**

**Stage 1- Lune River Loop and main line from Lune River Works Depot to Ida Bay Cemetery.**

(approx., 2.5km)

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**Site access secured - by end March 2020**

**Engineering and works assessment completed - by mid April 2020**

**Trackworks completed - by end September 2020**

**Rolling stock maintenance works completed - by end September 2020**

**Trackworks and Rolling Stock preparation – Engineering qualification - by mid September 2020**

**Safety Management System approved - by end October 2020**

**Site management works completed - by end November 2020**

**Administrative and Operational requirements for Stage 1 completed - by end November 2020**

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**Operations commence: - 19<sup>th</sup> December 2020**