

Restoring the Ida Bay Railway

– How you can help...

It will be a big job to get the heritage listed Ida Bay Railway up and running again.

Contact us if you would like to help

Here's the picture....

The volunteer not-for-profit Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society has put a proposal to the Tasmanian Government to restore the Railway to passenger operation and help support the local and regional economy.

It is proposed to first restore the section of track from the Lune River Works Depot down to the Ida Bay cemetery – about one third of the way to Deep Hole. This will mean checking the gauge (distance between the rails), fixing track spikes (large 'nails' that pin the track to the sleepers) and tightening fishplates (joiners bolted between lengths of rail). Where necessary, sleepers (wooden cross pieces to which the track is fixed) will be replaced and the sleepers packed in a bed of ballast (coarse gravel that holds the track in place and spreads the load of passing trains). Vegetation needs to be trimmed and drains cleared.

All this work will be assessed and inspected by an engineer so that approval can be given by rail safety regulators. So too the 'rolling stock' (carriages, locomotives – anything with wheels that runs on the tracks) need to be checked, repaired and maintained – then an engineering inspection.

And then there's the paperwork...All this preparation has to be recorded and compiled into a Safety Management System that describes how we will safely operate and manage the Railway....and there's always bills to pay.

That's just getting the Railway ready to run. There are Drivers to be trained and tested, - Conductor/Guides to assist visitors, answer questions and relay some of the Railway's many stories, as well as the history and features of the landscape through which the Railway runs.

The Lune River Works depot on the road to Cockle Creek has a number of buildings requiring repair, restoration and maintenance. These include the Workshop that

once housed steam locomotives, a Carpenters Shop, a Crib Room where meals were shared, amenities for the workers, their small sleeping huts, a Recreation Hut, Managers House – including pay office and laboratory - and several smaller buildings each with a specific function in the mining and transport operations. All of the buildings have been modified and repurposed in the Railway's one hundred years. All have been neglected. Our job will be to carefully record and assess the condition of each structure, prepare a priority works programme for their care and consider their future role within the Railway's renovation.

We will be providing refreshments for visitors when the train is returned to operation and accommodation options will need to be developed to support volunteers and visitors alike. So, there are a range of tasks and skills required to maintain hospitality services. Underpinning all this are the facilities and infrastructure services woven into the site. Water storage and reticulation, sewage and its treatment, power, communications, rubbish, stores, fire protection, security and safety all contribute - and need to be managed and maintained.

And don't forget the grounds...mowing, footpaths, fencing, weeds, seats and signs. Or the promotion, insurance, accounting, fundraising, community information and public relations etc. etc. etc.

All this is to just get the Railway to where it was before shutting down eighteen months ago.

We have options for many appropriate supporting facilities and services to support the operation. Rail tours, education activities, camping, and an improved range of accommodation to name a few.

And then there are the activities that the volunteer organisation has been undertaking through the past years. We research the history, gather stories, record and conserve artefacts and sites, undertake specific restoration projects – a 'loco' here, a 'siding' there - and many other interesting tasks. We raise revenue, engage with our communities and represent the Railway at public meetings and events across the state. We also take time to meet with others of similar or related interests, help them with their efforts and invest in each other with time to meet, train, learn and contribute to each other's lives as well as this important heritage site.

We are a not-for-profit organisation. Revenue from all activities is to be fed back into the operation and conservation of the Railway and site. This is the key to a future for the Railway – along with your help and participation. Our business is open and goals are agreed to by members. We agree on expenditure, seek to pay our way throughout the restoration of the Railway and wherever possible will engage,

support and promote local employment, business services and the regional economy.

We have been supported by many members, businesses, community organisations and donors. This has been much appreciated but was all cast aside when the group was advised by Government that it could not enter the site to continue its work.

From all the above you can see that we need a wide range of skills and experience. We need people,

- people good with people,
- people to meet and greet, relay the railway's stories and interpret the natural and cultural features through which we travel,
- people that are handy with the necessary "fix and fiddle" that is required to get things going and keep them in sufficient order, and those willing to learn,
- people good with figures, records and words,
- people wishing to learn new skills from old,
- people who can use new skills in the service of the old – eg web, social media and communications management,
- people curious to research history and those with an eye for detail to record stories, sites and artefacts,
- people willing to help keep an eye on business or arrange materials and services for those rebuilding and keeping the railway on track,
- people who can help manage the business of training others,
- people willing to accept the rewards of working with others trying to preserve a small but significant working piece of Tasmania's colourful history for others to appreciate and enjoy into the future,
- people willing to give a little of their time – as much as you want to share.

If you would like to join our efforts to restore the Railway to service you can contact us

- to join the community group,
- register your business or service interest, or
- ask to be advised of progress - or –
- let us know of your story, photos, interest or participation with the historic Ida Bay Railway.

Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society

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