



Article in NSWRTM September E-News

An article in the latest issue of NSWRTM E-News this week about future management of the Rail Heritage Centre at Thirlmere, headed "Under New Management," makes a number of incorrect assertions. The article was not approved by the Chairman or CEO of NSWRTM and does not represent our organisation's views.

Development of a new business model for the upgraded centre has been under way for some time. NSWRTM Chairman Peter Berriman has kept members, volunteers and staff informed throughout the process, including a detailed update in the August edition of *Roundhouse*.

NSWRTM has and is contributing substantially to shaping the overall direction, including the vision and potential new products and services to be offered, after the upgraded Centre is launched in early 2011. The new model builds on the experience of NSWRTM and a range of other cultural attractions, as well as on recent market research indicating what would attract visitors to the site.

In early September, the Minister for Transport, the Hon. John Robertson, endorsed the proposed business model. This means establishing a private, not-for-profit company with the specific responsibility of managing the Centre, pending NSWRTM demonstrating the governance and capability to become the management entity in its own right.

NSWRTM is integral to the success of the new business model. It is the ongoing custodian of rolling stock and objects and the accredited operator on the site, drawing on the skills and dedication of volunteers for a wide range of activities.

NSWRTM is in negotiation now with RailCorp on the future roles and responsibilities of both organisations, working towards an agreement that will ensure the best possible management arrangements, supportive of NSWRTM stepping up to overall management in the future. To meet anticipated increases in both visitor numbers and public expectations of a higher profile visitor attraction, there must be a focus on positioning the Centre to operate effectively as a cultural attraction and tourism destination, and on generating new income streams.

For this reason, board members with relevant expertise and a professional management team are being recruited to the new company for this period of transition. This search has begun and appointments are anticipated to be made to the new company in November. The NSWRTM will have representatives on the board.

Working in partnership with NSWRTM, the new Company will give the upgraded Centre the best possible start as a new family and tourism destination for the region and beyond.

The NSWRTM Board is holding a members' forum at Thirlmere at 5.00pm on Saturday 9 October, coinciding with the Vintage Train Weekend, to further inform our members of the business model's development and the implementation process.

Another members and public forum will be held on Saturday 20 November. At the end of this forum there will be guided tours of the new display buildings.

Richard Mulvaney
Chief Executive Officer, NSW Rail Transport Museum
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