



MEDIA RELEASE

11th June, 2007

EVELEIGH STILL THE BEST LOCATION FOR TURNING AND WATERING EVELEIGH STILL BEING USED BY THE RAIL TRANSPORT MUSEUM



Friday, 8th June 2007 Locomotive 3801 moving off the turntable at Eveleigh.

Who said Eveleigh was not needed for heritage steam operations?

On Friday 8th June, 2007, locomotive 3801 was turned and watered at Eveleigh and on Tuesday 12th June, 2007, locomotive 3801 was turned at Eveleigh. Over the past seven months, the Rail Transport Museum has refused to use Eveleigh. Eveleigh was not required as part of their heritage rail operations. Then failure to coal at Eveleigh resulted in one locomotive running out of coal on a trip to Maitland. Is there now a sensible change of attitude at RailCorp. Perhaps they don't realise what has happened?

The coaling and any overnight engine storage should take place at Eveleigh where it has occurred for over 130 years. Eveleigh's original design and placement near Sydney formed part of its economic viability allowing access to the main rail hub (Sydney Station) and to the rest of the State. This close access to Sydney is still vital today in the economic viability of preserving and running of heritage trains. This is what the founders of our great railway system planned and it is only when political pressures prevail that common sense goes out the window.

The safest way to propel a locomotive is not tender first. The driver and fireman can see very little of what is in front of them. Steam trains should be turned at Eveleigh not taken out to the Meeks Road XPT Depot at Marrickville.

EVELEIGH STILL THE BEST LOCATION FOR COALING



*Friday, 8th June 2007
Locomotive 3801 being
loaded with coal in front
of the Heritage Listed
Mortuary Station*

**THE MINISTER JOHN WATKINS
AND RAILCORP HAVE BOTH
BEEN ADVISED OF THE POSSIBLE
DAMAGE TO MORTUARY STATION
IT'S STILL HAPPENING SO THEY DON'T CARE
OR HAS THE MINISTER NO CONTROL OVER
RAILCORP?**



On Friday 8th June, 2007, locomotive 3801 was again re-coaled in gale force winds in front of the Heritage Listed Mortuary Station. The Minister John Watkins and RailCorp had been informed of the irreparable damage caused by smoke, steam and coal dust on sensitive sandstone used in this beautiful building. A look above the portal of any country railway tunnel will show you what happens. Dirty black staining and discolouring.

Why won't they do anything? Don't they care or are there ulterior motives for damaging this building?

Yes, you are right, it is the Eveleigh usage problem again. This coaling, watering and overnight engine storage should all occur at Eveleigh. Mortuary Station in the 1980's had a complete restoration. The roof needed extensive repairs, the wrought iron fence was restored and the sandstone external surfaces were completely cleaned and chemically treated to protect them from the elements.

The Mortuary Station building at Regent Street Station experienced a long period of neglect and abuse after its original function came to an end. It is recorded as having been used "for the despatch of horses, dogs, poultry and parcels", as a tool-shed for the rail fettlers, and also to have stood idle for years. Then it was renovated and the surrounds were landscaped to house a proposed railway museum. Instead, it became a tea-room. Now it is hired out by the Railway Department as a popular venue for weddings, receptions, and promotions – particularly book launches. For dinners and for refreshments, two heritage carriages are parked at the station as a backdrop.

We should honour those who arranged for the restoration of this fine buildings, so that it has not fallen into the hands of the demolishers. It remains as memorials to multitudes of Sydney's departed, who travelled to their final resting place along the Mortuary Railway Train Line to Rookwood. "May their memory be a blessing" and may this building rest in peace not in pieces.

EVELEIGH STILL THE BEST LOCATION FOR SECURITY

Once again it must be questioned if RailCorp is really serious about railway heritage and the manner in which it is kept. Heritage items are being distributed but little seems to be done to secure these items. It has been stated that most of the core collection will go to the Rail Transport Museum at Thirlmere with other items going to various selected railway museums or associations across the State. This is not acceptable when you look at securing these valuable items, then there is a major problem. These railway museums or associations do not have the money to employ sufficient guards or install adequate alarm systems to protect the State's irreplaceable rail heritage items under their care.

Recently a large amount of bronze and brass, being bearings and other spare parts have been removed in an overnight raid on the Thirlmere base of the Rail Transport Museum. It has also been reported that copper piping for the 57 Class locomotive at the Rail Transport Museum's Valley Heights Depot was taken in a later raid. This Depot has an alarm system but the thieves found a way to evade setting off the alarms. One pipe was reported to be over 3 meters in length - no doubt a truck would have been needed.

Again the dreaded word Eveleigh comes up. You cannot get a safer and more secure site than Eveleigh and its Large Erecting Shed for Rail Heritage items. 24 hour guards, well lit, no taking a truck in here and taking away a load of scrap metal in the middle of the night.

It's about time that the Government and Minister John Watkins had an objective look at this option instead of handing over the birthplace of the New South Wales Railway to Frank Sartor. A walk around the "Carriage Works" site will show you why you should never hand anything over to the Redfern Waterloo Authority.

Yes Morris Iemma and yes John Watkins it's time to stand up and be counted as someone who appreciates our Colonial History - save something that is important to a lot of true blue Australians. Eveleigh was the political birthplace of 1 Governor General of Australia, 3 Prime Ministers and 25 parliamentarians and the inaugural Secretary of the Nurses Association and was a significant place for Aboriginal people of Redfern as it was one of the first places that offered employment, training and employment transfers from regional NSW to the city.

This is the place for a working railway museum where heritage items can be stored safely and with easy access to the people and visitors to Sydney.

EVELEIGH STILL THE BEST LOCATION FOR SYDNEY S RAILWAY MUSEUM