

The Great TRAIN ROBBERS *still in business*



Seating being set out - pipe frame on right is start of table design

Finished and ready to polish the brass and run



Above: Section of the original wall
Below: The new wall with its routed panels



THIS IS VOLUNTEER'S WEEK, 12-18th MAY, 2008

There is no joy this week for the volunteers working at Eveleigh's Large Erecting Shop with RailCorp doing everything possible to get rid of and close down their Heritage Rail operations. This is the thanks and the respect that RailCorp's Office of Rail Heritage affords over 150 dedicated volunteers for looking after Rail Corp's heritage rollingstock for over 21 years. These same volunteers maintained locomotive 3801 and took it on tours to all areas of NSW for 20 years .

Now RailCorp have taken away the carriages that for years were their pride and joy and are selling the *Lounge Car CPJ 924 from under their feet.

State Rail records of the carriage prior to the Lounge Car rebuild states: ***In June, 1975, the seating was changed for commuter use and it was recoded as IFV. It was withdrawn from service and condemned by the State Rail Authority in March, 1989.***

In 1991 while sitting in the shell of this condemned IFV Carriage a group of volunteers set the wheels in motion to build a replacement Lounge Car for 3801 Limited and planned to have it running behind 3801 in 1993 the locomotive's 50th Anniversary year.

Concept plans were drawn up and seating was sourced from carriages being scrapped by State Rail in an adjacent Goods Yard. Timber paneling and paint were provided by supporters, volunteers donated items and 3801 Limited financed the rest.

Thousands of hours of volunteer labour was supplied and many bought in their own specialised tools and equipment. They built what was to become the showpiece of the Company's fleet. It was different, with its t-shaped tables, its brass railings and its contrasting timber panelling - but it worked and even RailCorp demanded its use on their corporate junket excursions.

Yes, for over 21 years locomotives and carriages have been restored and maintained by a group of railway professionals and volunteers in the Large Erecting Shop with many volunteers giving their valued spare time keeping the heritage trains running for the people of NSW.

Without these people and the Large Erecting Shop, many heritage rail trips to country areas would not be possible.

RailCorp is not only claiming back this Lounge Car and offering it for sale, RailCorp is playing the same game on other railway heritage volunteer groups across this State.

Linda Burney MP, the Minister for Volunteers knows what is happening, will she do anything? John Watkins MP, the Minister for Transport also knows. We all know what he will do. Rubber stamp the whole operation.

And RailCorp - do they have an agenda to get rid of most of the heritage railway rollingstock that we still have in NSW?

*It must not be forgotten that this carriage forms part of the accepted Nomination for National Heritage Listing of The Large Erecting Shop.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE COMPANIES WHO GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED THIS PROJECT

Wattyl Paints, Lovell Springs, Caltex, CIG Gas, Mister Plywood

“The Human Face of this Scandal”.

An Open Letter from a long term Volunteer.

What is happening now in New South Wales? It is now not the same New South Wales everyone remembers growing up in. Now, dishonesty is rewarded and honest citizens are victimised . This is not the Australian way .

Why has Railcorp and the N.S.W. Government set out to deliberately destroy a Company and its hardworking volunteers, who have devoted many years of selfless service for the good of the wider N.S.W. community?

These volunteers have had their lives turned upside-down, their reputations ruined by innuendos - why?

Perhaps they are convicted criminals? No! Why then?

The volunteers are honest, sincere, reliable, generous, devoted, industrious, law-abiding citizens - all the attributes Australians' value in our National Character. “True Blue”.

They are trying their utmost to save “something for the future”, our Heritage and our Inheritance - for today's and tomorrow's children - to be shared with future generations in New South Wales. They should be supported, helped, applauded not belittled, and especially not by the very people who are meant to ‘Govern us’.

New South Wales has now become the laughing stock of all other States of Australia and the wider heritage community worldwide. Where has “stewardship” gone one may well ask - where indeed?

A Volunteer of The Large Erecting Shop.
8th May,2008.