

Rail History

RTBU NSW Locomotive Division



Bob Newham, RTBU passenger organiser, explores some of the incredible history behind NSW rail in the month of September...

September 1947



Junee Roundhouse today

The Junee Locomotive Depot was built by the New South Wales Government Railways when the line from Sydney opened to Junee in 1878. On 29 September 1947 a 42 road, fully covered roundhouse was completed. This was the last steam locomotive depot built by the NSW Government Railways. As well as being the depot for locomotives on various branch lines it was strategically important, being located half-way between Sydney and Melbourne. On 9 July 1993 the State Rail Authority closed the depot.

In December 1994, Junee Council leased the roundhouse with part of it sublet to Austrac Ready Power who restored several ex State Rail Authority engines at the site as well as rebuilding engines for BHP, Port Kembla with the other part set up as a museum.

Following Austrac Ready Power ceasing in September 2000 the depot lease was taken over by Junee Railway Workshop.

Since April 2010 Junee Railway Workshop has been overhauling a fleet of eighteen 48 class locomotives for GrainCorp.

The building features a 100-foot turntable, and part is still used for commercial reconditioning and the rebuilding of locomotives.

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September 1956

The class of six locomotives was built by A Goninan & Co, Broadmeadow (a sub-contractor to Australian Electrical Industries), and entered service in September 1956.

The 43 class were initially used on the Main Western line from Sydney to Orange, prior to electrification of the line to Lithgow in June 1957, appearing regularly on the *Central West Express*. Subsequently, they were transferred to Broadmeadow Locomotive Depot operating from Gosford to the Queensland border via both the North Coast and Main North lines. They also saw service on the Main South line.

The 43 class were not popular with the train crews, but they did pave the way for a long line of Alco powered locomotives. They did receive some improvements in the late 1950s with water cooling of the turbo-superchargers replacing the air-cooled units.

The last 43 class was withdrawn in October 1979 with 4306 placed by the Public Transport Commission in the custody of the New South Wales Rail Transport Museum. It is now a designated NSW heritage item. It was transferred to Thirlmere in March 1980. In 1986, the Illawarra branch of the Rail Transport Museum commenced overhauling 4306 at Yallah. The locomotive returned to traffic in June 1996 and has since been used extensively on charters in New South Wales as well as interstate to Brisbane and Melbourne.



4303 at Temora

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September 1973

Locomotive 1301 was constructed as a 4-4-0 tender engine by Beyer Peacock J.J Company at their Gorton Foundry, as works number 1624 in 1877. Following erection, it entered service on the NSWGR, given road number 79. In 1896, due to traction shortages on the expanding Sydney suburban network, a program of converting the surplus C(79) class tender engines to 4-4-2 tank locomotives was commenced, and in December 1896, C79 entered service in this guise. As the duties were taken over by the newer S class it was displaced from the suburban service and transferred to other services on tramways and other light lines, being noted at Carlingford, Casino, the Picton-Mittagong loop line, and the Yass Tramway, where it was fitted with a large (M3) generator, subsequently replaced with a K2 type. The larger generator was to power the passenger carriage's lights, due to the low speed and short distance involved. The locomotive was renumbered in 1924 to 1301. Locomotive 1301 was allocated to the Vintage Train locomotive roster in 1962, though it frequently deputised for motive power shortages on lines where the class was formerly well known such as Yass and Kempsey. It was withdrawn in **September 1973**, having been condemned originally on 17 November 1967.

It was transferred to The Rail Transport Museum, firstly to Enfield then Thirlmere, arriving in mid 1975. Currently on display under cover, the locomotive has not been operational since withdrawal from NSWGR service as part of the 'Vintage Train.'



1301 hauling a vintage train service



September 1991

The Royal National Park Line opened on 9 Mar 1886 and closed on **11 September 1991**. Built by the military, the 1.9 km line linked the station of Loftus on the Illawarra Line to an Army Camp in Royal National Park. The line opened shortly after the main line and at various times served the army camp, park visitors and residents of nearby Grays Point. At its peak, 25 services were provided on weekends. When electric trains were introduced in 1926, this branch was included.

The Scouts Platform was introduced in 1946 to serve the nearby NSW Scouts Jamboree of that year. The original terminus station boasted a 10-car island platform, goods bank and five sidings. Services were reduced in the 1960s and 1980s, and by the mid 1980s only two trains a week serviced the line. Following the 1990 Cowan Bank collision, it was used to test whether automatic sanders could insulate a train's wheels from the track circuit (they could). It was also used for driver training; track irregularities from wheel skids are still visible in places.

In 1978, the Royal National Park station was closed to make way for an improved national park visitor's centre and a new station constructed adjacent. It opened in time for the park's centenary the following year. In 1991, a signalling problem caused the suspension of services. The line was closed after it was found that \$400,000 was needed to bring the line up to an acceptable standard. At the time, patronage was on average, three people per train. Two years later the line was taken over by the Loftus-based Sydney Tramway Museum, which now uses it to run tourist trams.



Original Scouts Platform built in 1947