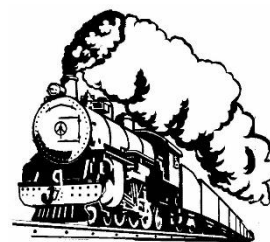




RAIL HERITAGE WA

Members Newsletter

March 2022



FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Please note that all museum attendances, including meetings and volunteering will require you to be double vaccinated.

- Sat 12 March General meeting 2pm followed by a presentation on 'Quintinshill disaster, UK's worst rail tragedy' by Charles Waterton
- Sun 27 March South-West Rail and Heritage Centre Open Day 9am to 2pm
- Sat 9 April Entertainment meeting 2pm 'From the Archives'
- Sun 24 April Leschenault Lady in steam at the South-West Rail and Heritage Centre Open Day 9am to 2pm
-

FROM THE PRESIDENT (Philippa Rogers)

As I write this COVID infections in WA are raising swiftly and its impact on our activities is hard to ascertain. The 2 sq m rule indoors does not affect our museum operations but the heat and the uncertainty in 2022 has certainly affected our visitor numbers. Thank you to the volunteers who have continued to open the museum twice a week despite the extreme heat that has been experience at times.

Our next monthly meeting (12 March) is planned to be held under the main roof – near the dining car. This should give us plenty of room and fresh air. Please come around the entry building and down the ramp to under the main roof where you will be asked to sign in as usual. I note that some of our active volunteers have already been affected by COVID in their contacts. Please check your email in case we have to notify of a last minute cancellation.

MEMBERSHIP

Your management committee discussed membership fees at its past meeting and agreed that they should stay the same for the coming year. Your renewal form will be coming out shortly. Our preference is for people to pay via direct debit but please note that we now have a Bendigo Bank account and the ANZ account has been closed so your quick link / records from last year will be out of date. Thank you. And don't forget to return your renewal form too. Thank you.

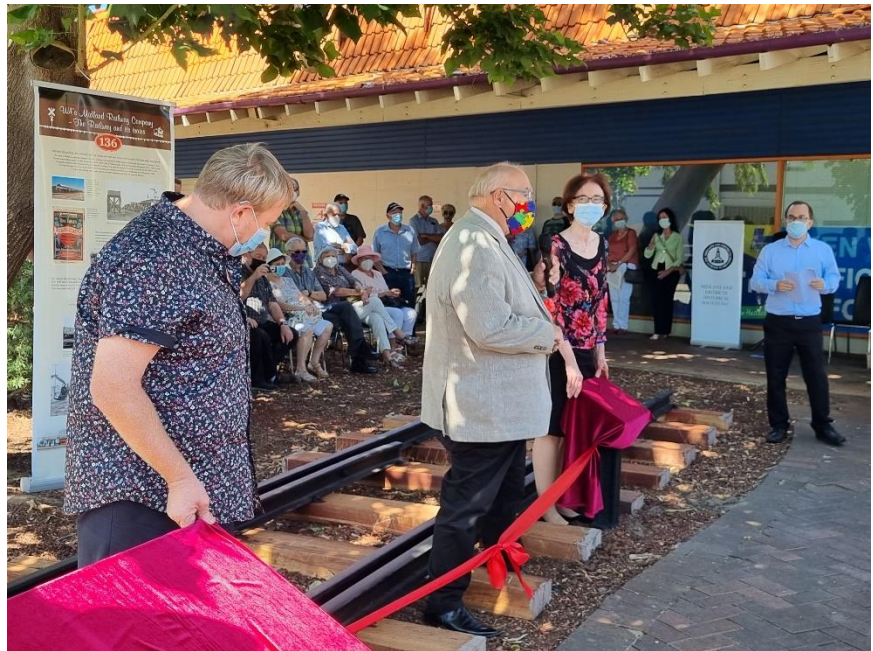
MIDLAND RAILWAY COMPANY OF WA HONOURED IN MIDLAND

It's been 58 years since the Midland Railway Company of Western Australia was taken over by the WAGR. Thanks to a great initiative by the Midland and Districts Historical Society, the company was honoured with the unveiling of a commemorative site on 13 February with the relocation a piece of rail track and

plaque that had been sitting behind a fence on the former Tuohy Gardens site on Great Eastern Highway.

The rail track and plaque with the addition of a new interpretive sign now take pride of place on the corner of Helena Street and Great Eastern Highway adjoining the Centrepont Midland Shopping Centre which was the site of the Midland Railway Company of Western Australia Limited – its administration, locomotive depot and workshops.

Rail Heritage WA supported the event with the supply of display and the loan of our MR pull up banner.



Mayor of the City of Swan, Cr David Lucas, Hon Donna Faragher MLC, Judith Dowson – daughter of the late John Dowson, the last General Manager of the Midland Railway Company of Western Australia and Mark Richards – Deputy Chairperson of the Midland and Districts Historical Society had the honours of unveiling the commemorative site. (P Rogers)



Former MRCoWA employees – a much smaller group left than were able to attend our 2014 celebrations. Seen here with the new display panel. (P Rogers)

LOCOMOTIVE HISTORY (Jeff Austin)

SSM No.7 – displayed in Pemberton

125 years ago on 1 January 1897, the railway opened to Kalgoorlie. Today there is only one surviving locomotive which worked that line in the beginning. This is the story of SSM No.7/ex WAGR G 53.

WAGR Years

In 1895, James Martin & Co., Gawler, South Australia built a number of 2-6-0 tender locomotives for the WAGR and SAR. One of these locomotives, Makers No.117/1895 arrived at Fremantle on the 'ss *Innamincka*' on 12 August 1895 and was unloaded and transported to the nearby railway workshops for final assembly and trials. The locomotive was painted black with the dome cover and safety valve surround highly polished brass, while the chimney top and piping was polished copper and brass. The twin whistles and cab fittings were also polished brass, with polished steel side rods and motion. Large individual brass numerals, '53', were fitted on the cab sides and rear of the tender. The locomotive cost £2400.



*James Martin & Co. 1895
works plate*

'G 53' entered service on 22 August 1895 and was sent to Northam depot. At that time the 'G' class were the principal passenger and goods engine on the railway to the goldfields. Each day 'heavy' goods trains departed Northam hauled by double-headed 'G' class on the long haul to Southern Cross. After the railway opened to Kalgoorlie in January 1897, '53' was transferred to Kalgoorlie. It continued to haul goods trains but also at times the Perth passenger train, No.10/37 Express, to and from Southern Cross.

By the end of 1897 the new 'O' and 'R' class locomotives had taken over most of the main line work and '53' was transferred to Bunbury (1898-1901) and Midland Junction (1901-04).

The introduction of large numbers of new and more powerful locomotives in 1901-3 made the 'G' class almost obsolete. From 1902, 32 of the 2-6-0 'G' class were stowed at Fremantle and Midland Workshops, while the newer 4-6-0 engines continued in service. '53' was one of those stowed and it languished at Midland Workshops until 1910. The construction of the agricultural branch line network in the early 1900's returned many of the stowed 'G' class engines to service and '53' was re-issued to traffic after general overhaul on 30 April 1910 and sent to Fremantle. It

had so far travelled 229,353 miles (369,130 kms). '53' was used mostly as a shunter at Fremantle (1910-14), Perth (1914-19) and East Perth (1919-24).

In the post-war years the WAGR had a large backlog of stored locomotives requiring new boilers. Steel prices were still at high war time prices and supplies were difficult to source. The situation improved by 1924 but the demand for new boilers was beyond the capacity of Midland Workshops. To remedy this, the WAGR ordered 32 boilers from the Yorkshire Engine Company in Sheffield, England.

'53' was stopped for an overhaul and new boiler in April 1924 and returned to service on 15 April 1925. It then worked at Geraldton (1925-27), Fremantle (1927-30) and Northam (1930-33). On 29 September 1930, '53' was hired to the Public Works Dept for construction and ballasting work on the new Kulja-Bonnie Rock Railway and later returned to Northam. The Depression years were a busy time for railway construction and deviation works, especially in the Geraldton district. '53' was then sent to Geraldton (1933-38) and Fremantle (1938-42).

North Australia Railway Years

During World War 2, the WAGR sold 26 'G' class to the Commonwealth Government for war service on the North Australia Railway at Darwin. Initially they were shipped direct from Fremantle, but most were sent via Sydney. Due to limitations on lifting gear on the ships at Darwin, the NSWGR agreed to break down the engines in Sydney. Three were dropped into Sydney Harbour but recovered without any major damage. They were then shipped north and reassembled once unloaded in Darwin.

'G 53' was sold to the Commonwealth in May 1942 having travelled 614,621 miles (989,195 kms) on the WAGR. It departed Fremantle with 12 other 'G' class on the ship '*Clan McPherson*' on 14 May 1942 and entered service on the NAR in August 1942, classified 'NGA 53' and in 1943 reclassified as 'NFC 69'. The large group of locomotives were kept busy hauling heavy wartime traffic from Darwin-Birdum.



After the war ended, '69' was withdrawn and stored at Katherine. The locomotives were then offered for sale and representatives from WAGR, Public Works, State Saw Mills and Lakewood Firewood Company travelled to Katherine to look over the engines. State Saw Mills purchased 'NFC 69' for £1500 in November 1946 and it was returned by ship to Fremantle in early 1947. It was overhauled at Midland Workshops and reclassified 'SSM No.7'.

SSM No.7 hauling a rake of logs to the Pemberton mill, c.1963 (P19457)

State Saw Mills Years

In 1947 State Saw Mills built a new mill on the Shannon River and connected it to the WAGR siding at Terry (3km north of Northcliffe) by a railway, 32 km long. A small network of bush lines was also built at Shannon and 'No.7' spent several years hauling logs to the mill and sawn timber to the government siding. On 1 July 1961, the Shannon mill was sold to the English-based Hawker Siddeley Building Supplies Pty Ltd.

Despite the change of ownership, the routine for 'No.7' continued unchanged and it even hauled a special train of tourists from the ARHS Vic Div. along the railway on 20 September 1962.



*SSM No.7 hauling the
ARHS Vic Div special at
Shannon mill, 20
September 1962 (T00006)*

'No.7' was transferred to Pemberton mill by February 1963 and hauled the last load of logs by rail from the forest on 31 January 1964. It was then used only to shunt wagons from the mill to the Pemberton station.

*Tender view of SSM
No.7 at Pemberton mill,
11 January 1968 (P.
Hopper, RHWA
Archives, P11804)*



Hawker Siddeley took delivery of a ComEng diesel from Queensland in October 1969 and this replaced 'No.7' from the end of November 1969. 'SSM No.7' was last steamed on 30 January 1970 and later placed on display in the main street of Pemberton.

'SSM No.7' is one of the earliest Australian-built locomotives still surviving and the oldest 'G' class locomotive used by the WAGR. Combined with its wartime service with the Commonwealth Railways and work in the south-west forests for State Saw Mills, 'SSM No.7' historic significance was recognized with listing by the National Trust of Australia (WA) in June 2003.



SSM No.7 hauling wagons of timber to Pemberton station, 11 January 1968 (P. Hopper, P11807)

SSM No.7 shortly after being displayed at Pemberton, c.1971 (J. Parker, P09254)



SSM No.7 displayed at Pemberton, 1 October 2012 (J. Austin)

Ed: Fifteen of the G class locos that went to work on the North Australian Railway returned to WA but only one - SSM No.7 - survives.

ARCHIVES (G Watson)

A further selection of photos this month, taken by a young Adrian Gunzburg.



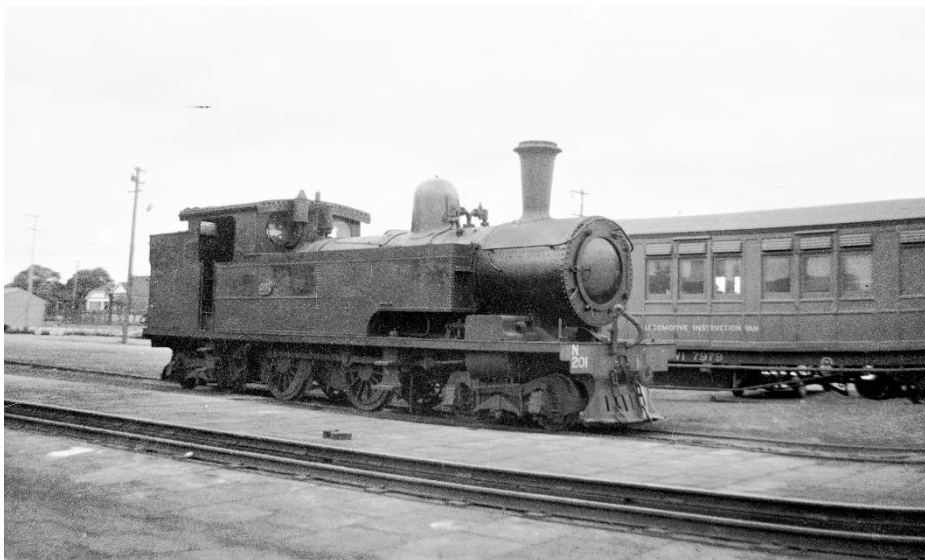
*Mt Lawley down
platform and signal
box, 1961*

*A closer look at the Mt
Lawley down platform
and signal box, 1961*

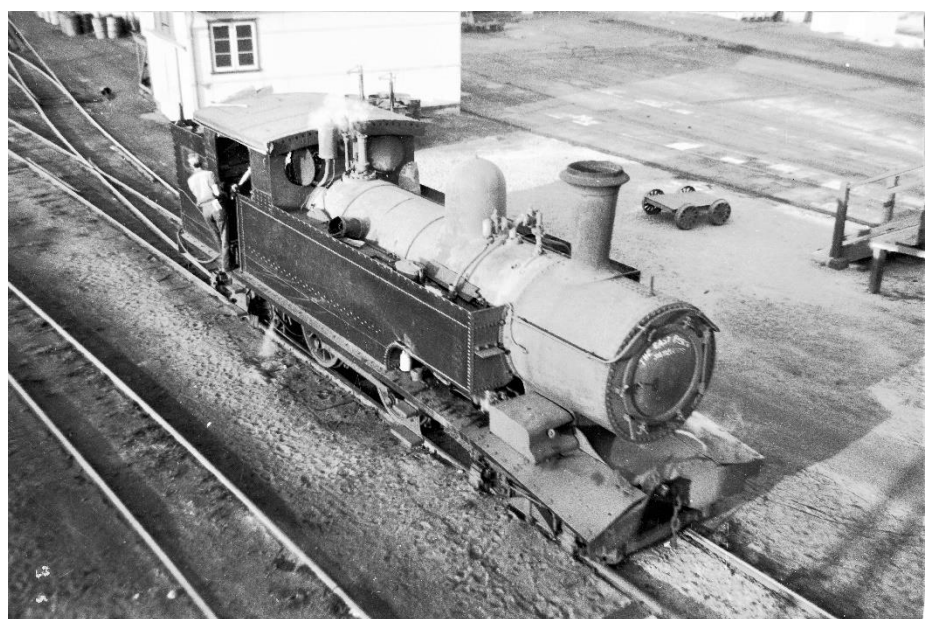


*Mt Lawley station
Up platform
building, 1961*

The next three images are all of N201 at East Perth in 1961, where it was used as a steam cleaner.



In the background of this photo can be seen the Locomotive Instruction Van VI 7979, that had been converted from AP 86 to the VI in April 1946. It was written off in September 1971.



MUSEUM (Philippa Rogers)

The Tuesday Museum Collection and Exhibition team has been making great progress with the accessioning and photography of items into the collection. We were very fortunate to recently receive the donation of a table top showcase – thanks to Dom and John for collecting it for us.

In the showcase it is intended to put small displays that can be changed every 3 months. The first such display is one of railway headgear and covers a period of around 70 years.

The 1970s Prospector stewardess hat had the name Gadsby written inside and we have been able to establish that Lynette (Lyn) Gadsby worked for Westrail from 1977 to 1979.



Stephanie has been researching early tramlines in Geraldton with information revealed about a convict-built line to a limestone quarry c1859. Like others in the colony at that time it was horse drawn and will contribute towards the new timeline display.

Late last year we were fortunate to receive a 'Powering Communities' grant through the office of Patrick Gorman, MP, Member for Perth.

This grant for \$5,500 is enabling us to replace our many lights with LEDs. This includes lights in our buildings, office, carriages, workshops, etc. It will assist us with our power bills, improving our sustainability and reducing our environmental footprint. Having no UV light emitted is also better for our collection.



We are able to spend the grant on actual equipment thanks to the work by John, who has been assisted by Brayden in the case of higher lights and Ian with the carriages. Thank you to everyone involved.

RESTORATION AND MAINTENANCE

The weather has slowed down progress on various activities the past two months, but work is continuing, albeit slowly. Much of the obvious work is taking place along the main platform.

The cab of R174 is being refurbished thanks to Andy – it was a bit too hot to paint the BAS hopper out in the full sun. AY 452's roof repairs with the installation of replacement d-mouldings has continued. As Kevin's offsider Colin has had a health scare and isn't around to help on AVL 314 for a few weeks, work has commenced on the partial repaint of the bullion van as many of the windows were now missing paint.

As can be seen in the photos below, there was a cooler day (only 33 deg) so James has returned to work on ZF 441 but this time he was assisted by Andrew. Welcome back to Andrew who has returned from Germany for some weeks.



The loco team has been working on both steam and diesel items. S 549 'Greenmount' and G 233 'Leschenault Lady' are having pre-season attention paid to several components to ensure best operational status.

On the diesel front, they travelled to Minnivale to ensure that AB 1535 started, and the asset was still in good condition. Meanwhile TA 1807 in Boyanup, which has not worked for some years, is receiving attention to its fuel pump by an outside specialist and doors have been removed and brought to Bassendean for preparation to repaint them in Westrail orange.

Also in Boyanup Garry, Ian and Mick are finishing off the repaint of the Y class – in green. Both ends are painted white with the red V in place on one end. With the TA and the Y class we will have both the WAGR green and the Westrail orange liveries there, with the intention to repaint Jardee into the yellow scheme she carried at Bunnings.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE (Simon Barber)

AURIZON

INTERSTATE INTERMODAL TRAFFIC

The closing of the ARTC east – west railway from 21 January due to major flooding in South Australia halted interstate rail services into Western Australia. The Eyre Highway was also close initially in South Australia, severing both land corridor east – west links. When the highway reopened, a transport strategy involving rail and road operators was developed to enable containers to flow efficiently between the two states. Triple road trains carrying containers were permitted to run as far as Kalgoorlie from the east. Some of the loading was then transferred to rail at West Kalgoorlie, with the balance being conveyed to Perth by road using double road trains. The line was restored to full operational condition on 15 February.

Pacific National service 6P22 hauled by NR7 and NR112 did the first transfer of containers by rail, departing West Kalgoorlie on 5 February. Aurizon then took over the rail flow traffic, utilising its 025 / 426 general freight services which operate daily between Kwinana and West Kalgoorlie. Interstate container loading was detached and attached at Forrestfield, with Pacific National tripping the wagons to and from its Perth Freight Terminal facility at Kewdale. Train service 1426, combined with 1430, was noted running to Forrestfield from West Kalgoorlie on 7 February with a healthy loading of interstate containers on the front, followed by local loading bolstered by Minara Resources containers from Malcolm. The locos were AC4304 and Q4017.

TRONOX



The initial Tronox service at Burracoppin, photo by Simon Barber.

The first Tronox mineral sands service departed Broken Hill on 16 February as 4UP1, with an early morning arrival at Kwinana on 19 February. The flood caused railway closure in South Australia delayed the inaugural service. Locomotives 6025, 6023 and 6022 hauled the train consisting of an in-line fuel tanker, crew car and 95 flat wagons. The sands will be taken to plants at Chandala and Bunbury for processing. Initially one service a week will run, with a path for a second train to commence later.

ARC INFRASTRUCTURE

The Millendon Junction – Avon Yard railway was closed from 29 January to 2 February because of a bushfire in the Moondyne area. The incident region came very close to the rails and access road, resulting in DFES and Arc deciding to suspend services. The flow of grain to Kwinana was severely disrupted at a time when a record crop was in the process of being moved for shipping. Passenger services were replaced by buses. Interstate services had already ceased during this period, ironically because of flooding in South Australia.

The Miling branch was reopened to traffic in January following completion of bridge repairs near Toodyay.

WATCO / RHWA

Watco has taken a three-year lease on AB1535 from Rail Heritage WA. DR1565 and DR1564 ran light engine from Bellevue to Minnivale on 20 February to collect AB 1535 from the former silo complex, where a number of items of rolling stock are housed. It is planned to use AB1535 on railways such as the Miling branch, where use of the DR class is restricted due to axle weight. Watco no longer has CBH class units available to it for such work.



METRONET

The State Government has announced that the Armadale line will be closed south of Victoria Park for 18 months, commencing in early 2023. Rail services will continue between Victoria Park and the city during this period, and the Perth Stadium station will remain in use, including a possible expanded role. The closure is to enable a number of major works to be completed at the same time. Tasks to be undertaken are the Victoria Park – Canning level crossing removal, the construction of the Byford extension including redevelopment at Armadale, and work connected with the Thornlie – Cockburn Link. Buses will replace rail services during this period. No mention has been made yet of the changes which the *Australind* passenger train to Bunbury will need to undergo.

FROM



(Jane Patroni)

The month of January proved to be hot, dusty and lacking in guests at Merredin Rail Museum!

We suspect many would-be visitors sought the cooler climes of the coast and exploring Museums and places of local interest far from the hot interior. Nevertheless, we took the opportunity to do some archiving, cataloguing and general dusting in our display areas.

Of interest is the weighbridge at Hines Hill, approximately 20kms to the west of Merredin. Situated on the southern side of the Great Eastern Highway, it was originally set up in 1926 as a private venture when wheat was carted by horse and cart. Comprising a wooden and iron roofed hut and scales, it became the receival point for bagged grain on the narrow gauge rail line. Unfortunately, the structure has deteriorated due to age and low repair priority.

The site and structure of the weighbridge would have been typical of those in the wheatbelt serviced by narrow gauge rail – a precursor to the storage and handling of bulk product by CBH. After successful efforts by the community, the structure was saved from demolition and invested by the Shire into the *Merredin Historical and Railway Museum*. There was interest to preserve its agricultural history as the last remaining weighbridge of its type in the wheatbelt, prior to the commencement of the standard gauge line in 1966/67.



We are exploring possible funding avenues that may contribute towards the repair of the weighbridge hut. In looking at the old structure one can't help but reminisce on the life and times of bygone days when these little sidings were both the social and economic hub of small, resilient communities for whom wheat growing was a major industry.



Stay tuned – in next Month’s newsletter we will introduce you to our latest Merredin Rail Museum “member.”

IN OTHER STATEWIDE NEWS (Geoffrey Higham)

A visit to Bellevue

The new “C series” railcars for Perth are rapidly taking shape at Alstom’s new works in Bellevue. On Sunday 23 January, Metronet and Alstom organised a visit to be guided through the works. The day was mainly aimed at family of Metronet and Alstom staff, but a limited number of passes were offered to others including some to our society.





The workshop, built on the site of the old grain transfer silo, is large, and is impressive inside. Railcar assembly is well underway, with cars progressing through about 6 stations around the facility as the components come together. We were not allowed to take photos, however Metronet have supplied the attached photos of the day, from which it can be seen how the car is elevated so that work underneath is easy, and there are walkways at the different level for interior access and for roof access.

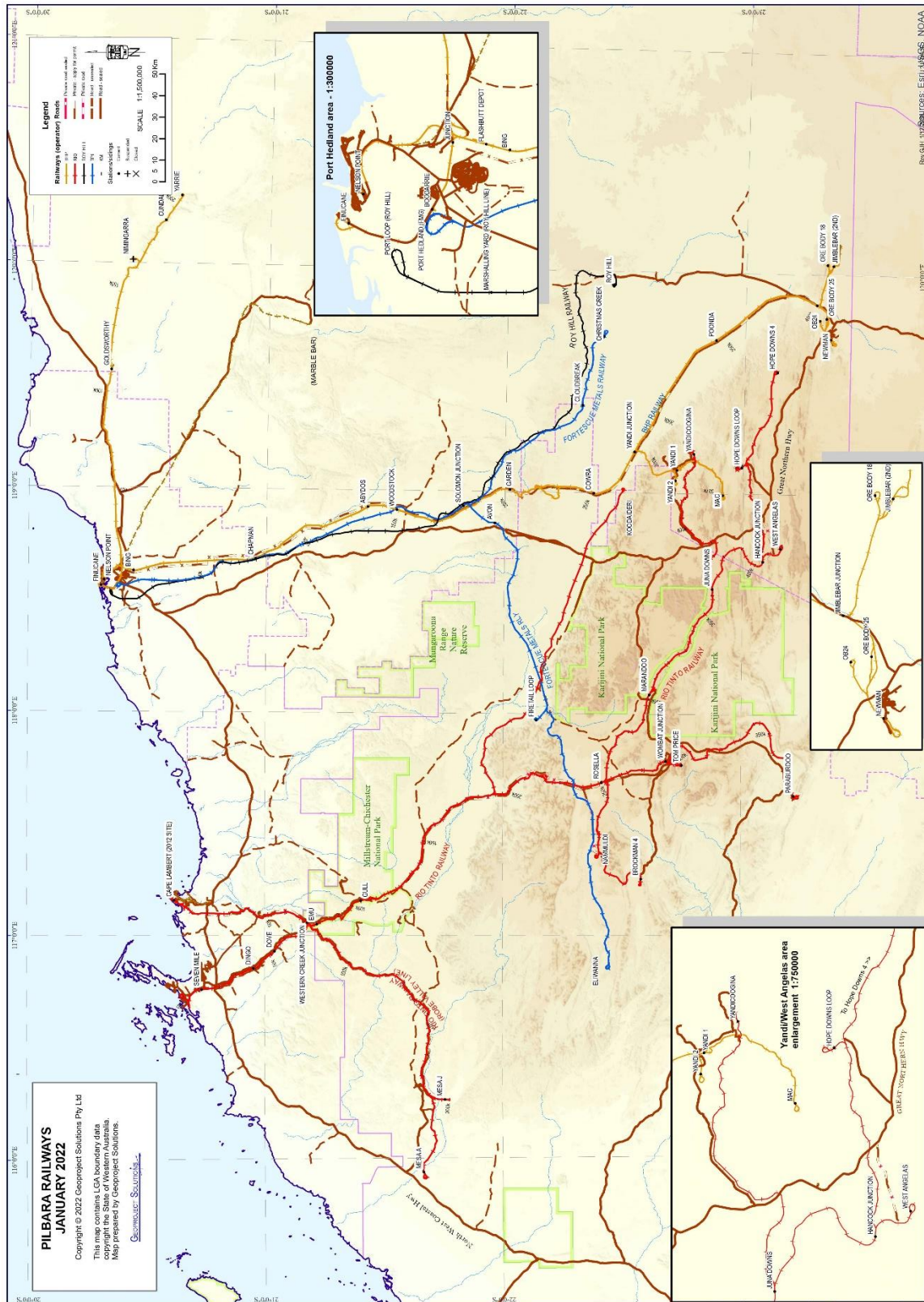
Staff indicated that the first car would be ready for testing in April. A separate building is ready for the electrical and waterproof testing, etc, which will last for some months. It appeared that the first cars would be ready for traffic at the end of 2022, so some could be available for opening the Forrestfield Airport line, supplemented by B series cars released from the current system due to closure of the Armadale line.

One track is dual gauge so that standard gauge cars such as the Prospector could be maintained in future.

Thanks to Metronet and Alstom for the access, informative guide, and photos.

In The Pilbara

Following the opening of the latest Pilbara line, Rio Tinto's track to the Koodaideri (Gudai-Darri) mine, has been added to the latest map (next page).



SOUTHWEST RAIL AND HERITAGE CENTRE (Alasdair Kenyon)

Our second open day for 2022 whilst slightly cooler than January was very windy, however we finished with attendance numbers of 47 adults and 26 children roughly the same as January.

The wind made it impossible to set up our new RHWA banner, however despite this our merchandise sales of \$167 were up substantially on January. This indicates, together with increased catering sales, that with the slightly cooler weather, people are spending more time looking around the Centre.

OPEN DAY

Sunday February 27th
9.00am - 2.00pm

The Boyanup Foundation Blacksmith will be turning steel into various items.

The Capel Men's Shed are available for a cuppa and a chat.

The Leschenault Lady is on display in the Round House

Preston Old Machinery Group have a variety of stationary engines to see

The South West Model Railway are working hard on their new layout

Light refreshments are available from the Picnic Van
Entry is \$5 per Adult
Children under 18 Free
Proof of Covid Double Vaccination will be required.
For more information Phone 0427 771 864

MUSEUM ROSTERS

DATE	TICKETS/SALES	SITE SUPERVISOR		DUTY SUPERVISOR
WEDNESDAYS		Museum open 1.00pm – 4.00pm		
02 March	K Smith	A de Smalen	D Ingram	A De Smalen
09 March	K Smith	B Williams	T Nunn	B Williams
16 March	K Smith	G Bradley	D Ingram	G Bradley
23 March	K Smith	B Williams	T Nunn	B Williams
30 March	K Smith	A de Smalen	D Ingram	A De Smalen
6 April	K Smith	B Williams	T Nunn	B Williams

DATE	TICKETS/SALES	SITE SUPERVISOR		DUTY SUPERVISOR
SUNDAYS		Museum open 1.00pm – 5.00pm		
06 March	Quynh Hoang	K Smith	G Watson/M Gillooly	B Williams
13 March	B Williams	K Smith	C Forsey	B Williams
20 February	K Ayerst	B Keay, K Smith	D Raine	K Ayerst
27 February	L McBeath	M Miles, K Smith	G Higham	G Higham
03 April	Quynh Hoang	K Smith	G Watson/M Gillooly	B Williams

Any alterations to the rosters would you please contact Brian at brianwilliams@railheritagewa.org.au