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2014

BYRON BAY

RAILROAD
COMPANY LTD

6 May 2016

Dear Neighbours

Please find below an update on the Byron Bay Train.

We have appointed an accredited railway contractor to undertake work on the track, construct the two approved platforms (one between Simmos garage and the First Sun Caravan Park in town and the other beside the track on Bayshore Drive, Sunrise Beach) and the approved shed to store the train (located beside the Sunrise Beach platform). The work will commence this month and we anticipate that it will be completed within 5 months.

Prior to this, our licence and safety accreditation requires select vegetation removal. Whilst the corridor is 40 plus metres wide, we will only be removing a minimal strip either side of the track plus some other locations where select vegetation removal is required for visibility and safety such as approaches to road and pedestrian crossings. This will all be within the rail corridor and will be done in the same manner that Roads and Maritime Services and Councils clear vegetation alongside roads – with an excavator with a mulching head attachment. No asbestos was detected during the contamination assessment carried out in April.

The train itself is fully refurbished and is operating on the Western Line in and around Lithgow until we are ready for its journey to Byron. We anticipate that it will take its first Byron passengers later this year.

There has been misinformation spreading regarding the train so we have provided some information below. Our website northbyronbeachresort.com.au provides further detail.

Diesel / energy efficiency

It's a small amount of diesel used to run this train - nothing like the old trains spilling out diesel smoke. And our train is not an offender compared with trucks and buses (our train uses less diesel fuel than a Sydney bus and we have more than twice the capacity for passengers). Because it's a level track with only one small curve and there is the lower friction of steel wheels on steel rails the train can run on a minimum amount of fuel (approximately 3.5L per 7km round trip) with the engine idle most of the time.

The train is fitted with a standard Cummins diesel engine as used in road vehicles such as medium size trucks – not semis and prime movers which have much larger engines. Fuel use is proportionate to the size of the engine. And it's the same fuel, from the same bowser, that goes into all these vehicles. There is not a special kind of more toxic diesel fuel for our train.

The engine is fitted with exhaust emission controls which have been progressively updated over the years.

Noise

The engines in our two car train are quieter than those fitted to trucks and buses and the train itself is much quieter than the XPT or other large locomotive hauled trains people may be familiar with. Only one engine will be operating at any time. Safety regulations require the train to sound its "suburban" whistle when crossing Kendall Street. This is gentle sounding and short, very different to the much louder "country horn" used on the XPT. Our train is also fitted with the country horn but it will only be used in emergencies. These are exceptionally different trains and no comparison can be made between them in terms of noise or impact.

Fare and timetable

The fare will be \$3 for a one way journey. There is provision on board to store bikes, surfboards and luggage and these will be carried at no cost. The operating hours are within the range of 7:30am – 10:30pm, in accordance with our Council approval. During the early stages of operation we will ascertain the patronage demand and structure an ongoing timetable in line with this and operating costs.

Heavy vs light rail

We have never reported our train to be light rail. The term "light rail" is commonly used to refer to what was traditionally called trams. Having said this, our 2 carriage train at 78 tonnes fully loaded with 106 seated passengers is lighter than a Gold Coast Light Rail "tram" at 84 tonnes fully loaded with 80 seated passengers. A standard 6 carriage XPT train fully loaded with 301 passengers weighs 416 tonnes. That's 1.38 tonnes per seated passenger, almost twice as much as our train.

Practicalities dictated what could work on our tracks and our beautifully restored train is one of very few options to tick all of the boxes. There is not an abundance of trains lying around that comply with the standards and regulations or that are suitable for this operation.

Operating licence

We have a non-exclusive licence to use the railway, which remains a public asset that can be used by any accredited rail operator or other licenced organisation. As a condition of our licence with Transport for NSW we have taken on responsibility for maintenance of this section of railway and the rail corridor at our cost without any taxpayer subsidy. Byron Bay Railroad Company Ltd (BBRC) is a not for profit company limited by guarantee, is a heritage rail operator and is a separate and independent company to Elements of Byron resort.

Solar conversion

We are working on the technical aspects of a solar electric conversion and will provide details when we have more information at hand.

Please contact us directly with any questions or concerns on 6685 6561 or enquiries@northbyronbeachresort.com.au We will keep the train page on www.northbyronbeachresort.com.au updated.

Thank you.

The North Byron Beach Resort Team