



LONGFORD RAILWAY SESQUICENTENARY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date	Wednesday, 22 July 2026
Time	Commencing at 3:30 pm
Venue	Council Chambers, 13 Smith Street, Longford
Status	For final review

1. Attendance

Present	Cr Dick Adams OAM (Chair) Mayor Mary Knowles OAM Gayle McLucas John Stebbings Nigel Burch Rhys Prestidge, General Manager Asset Management, TasRail
In Attendance	Vivien Tan, Executive & Communications Officer (Minute Taker)
Apologies	Roy Tan

2. Confirmation of Minutes

Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Motion	The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2025 were confirmed.
Moved	Nigel Burch
Seconded	Gayle McLucas

Carried



3. Business Arising

3.1 Rail Bridge Update – Columns Installed

The Committee noted that the replacement heritage columns have now been installed on the Longford Rail Bridge, marking the successful completion of the key project associated with the Longford Railway Bridge Sesquicentenary.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chair reported that a number of walking groups had incorporated the Longford Rail Bridge and restored columns into their guided walking tours. Cr Dick Adams OAM has also provided historical talks to walking tour participants on a number of occasions.

It was noted that extensive media coverage of the project, including social media, local, national and international print and television coverage, had been positive.

The Norfolk Plains Historical Society advised that information relating to the project and the Longford Rail Bridge would be included within its historical archives.

Members discussed opportunities for further exposure of the bridge through walking groups, railway enthusiasts and historical tours.

5. General Discussion

Mayor Mary Knowles OAM congratulated the Committee on achieving such an important outcome for the community and acknowledged the contribution of those involved in delivering the project.

John Stebbings congratulated the Committee and shared his research into the reasons for the removal of the original columns in approximately 1967. He advised that the Mechanical Engineers responsible at the time were Alan Willcox and Archie Moore. The columns were heavily cracked and welding technology available at the time was insufficient to undertake repairs. In addition, newer coal wagons had a larger rolling stock profile which prevented them from passing through the column structure.

Gayle McLucas noted that many visitors she meets through her stall at the Evandale Market talk about railway history within the Northern Midlands. She advised that the bridge columns remain a well-known and much-loved feature of Longford's heritage.

Members noted that the columns formed part of the bridge's original Victorian-era design and reflected the highly decorative public infrastructure style of the period. Comparable decorative features can be seen on other major Australian structures, including the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The Committee also remembered the late Len Langan, a Longford resident who was a local historian and who had been on the committee.

5.1 Committee Finalisation

Resolution

That the Longford Railway Sesquicentenary Committee be placed in recess and reconvened only if required for future railway heritage projects or related matters.

Carried



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Background

The Committee acknowledged that the Longford Railway Sesquicentenary Committee has fulfilled its purpose in facilitating the replacement of two heritage design columns on the Longford Rail Bridge. The works were completed in February 2026 as part of activities commemorating the sesquicentenary of the Longford Rail Bridge. The Committee expressed its sincere thanks to TasRail, Northern Midlands Council and the Tasmanian Government for their support of the project, with special recognition given to Deputy Premier Guy Barnett for his advocacy and assistance.

5.3 Interpretation Panels

Motion

That the Longford Railway Sesquicentenary Committee request that the remaining project funds be used for the development and installation of interpretation panels detailing the history of the Longford Rail Bridge, to be located in the vicinity of the bridge.

Moved

Nigel Burch

Seconded

John Stebbings

Carried

5.4 Acknowledgement of Cr Dick Adams OAM

The Committee expressed its sincere appreciation to Cr Dick Adams OAM for his passion, dedication and advocacy throughout the life of the project.

Members acknowledged Cr Adams' significant contribution in championing the return of the heritage columns, supporting fundraising activities, promoting the project within the community and organising railway heritage exhibitions.

The Committee thanked Cr Adams for his commitment to preserving and celebrating the railway heritage of Longford.

5.5 Railway History Discussion

Nigel Burch and John Stebbings shared several historical railway stories relating to Tasmania's rail network.

Members heard that large transformers destined for the Lake Gordon Power Station originally arrived in Hobart but were subsequently transported to Burnie after it was realised that the southern rail route was on the opposite side of the river. Specially modified FFF wagons were reconstructed and the wheels lowered to enable the transport of the transformers.



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Three timber bridges located across farming properties were temporarily lifted by cranes to allow the oversized loads to pass underneath before being reinstated. These modified wagons were destroyed after their use.

Discussion also occurred regarding Conara, which was once a significant railway town where the north-western, Hobart and coal line routes intersected. Members noted that many houses in Conara were originally built for railway workers before later being sold as low-cost housing. A sewerage treatment plant also operated within the settlement.

5.6 Future Works and Site Planning

Rhys Prestidge advised that TasRail has aspirations to repaint the Longford Rail Bridge and, subject to future funding availability, install matching heritage columns on the opposite side of the bridge to complete the restoration project.

Mr Prestidge noted that protective fencing required to safeguard the rail corridor remains to be installed. The design should incorporate an access point for TasRail vehicles undertaking ongoing maintenance activities.

Members noted that a site master plan would assist in identifying the most suitable location for maintenance access and future interpretation panels.

The proposed interpretation panels are expected to be approximately 1200 mm wide by 800 mm high. Mr Prestidge suggested that the design could incorporate elements reflecting the heritage columns to create a cohesive visual connection with the bridge restoration project.

Interpretation Panel:

1. The next steps would be to find 5-6 photo images for the panel
2. Background work undertaken by the committee.
3. TasRail QR code to link to the website or other destination of history.
4. Proposed official unveiling with Deputy Premier Guy Barnett acknowledging his support for the project along with other community members and committee members who have been instrumental in this project.

6. Close of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair thanked members for their attendance, contribution and commitment to the successful completion of the Longford Rail Bridge Sesquicentenary Project.

The meeting closed at 4:25 pm.

Certified as a true and accurate record

Chairperson:

Name:

Dick Adams
Dick Adams

Date:

August 3 - 2026
August 3 - 2026

LONGFORD RAIL BRIDGE RESTORATION GROUP PROJECT

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2025-26	Total
Op Balance						
505035 Income - Longford Rail Bridge Restoration Group (GST Free)						
10/01/2022 Donations	1787.34	48.6				
11/08/2022 Donations (Misc)		75				
24/07/2023 Donations			1000			
28/07/2025					921.35	
	1787.34	123.6	0	1000	921.35	3832.29
505036 Income - Longford Rail Bridge Restoration Group (GST Applicable)						Income
Contribution 1 x Calendar Anonymous		9.09				
Contribution 1 x Calendar N/A		9.09				
Contribution 1 x Calendar Paul Godier		9.09				
Contribution 1 x Longford railway Calendar 2022 Andrew Howard		9.09				
Contribution 1 x Calendar Cash Sale		9.09				
Contribution 1 x 2022 Calendar NMC		1336.36		18.18		
Contribution 1 x Calendar Levi		22.73				
1 x Calendar P & D Poole			9.09			
1 x Calendar John Izzard			9.09			
	0	1404.54	36.36	0	0	1440.9
						Income
Sub total	1787.34	1528.14	36.36	1000	921.35	5273.19
						Sub total
505037 Grant Income						
27/01/2022 Grants State Government						
15/08/2022 Grant Liability increase 2021-22 Capital grants		50000				
	0	50000	0	0	0	
505095 Expenditure - Longford Rail Bridge Restoration Group						
23/02/2021 Contractor payments - Testing and tagging	-75					
9/12/2022 Consumables/Materials - Print		-931.82				
9/12/2022 Consumables/Materials 150gsm calendar pages & 250gsm Cover Pre-Press		-290				
Jul/Aug 2023 Hall Hire and test/tag electrical equip			-518.18			
24/7/2025 JJ Bakery - catering				-181.82		
7/7/2025 Hall Hire - Train Exhibition					-328	
	-75	-1221.82	0	-518.18	-509.82	-2324.82
						Expenditur
	1712.34	306.32	36.36	481.82	411.53	
						2948.37
						Balance