

## LANDMARKS, LEGACY AND LOCAL PRIDE

Longford is celebrating twice – with the reinstatement of the rail bridge’s heritage columns and the *Choose the Scenic Route* People’s Choice Award going to a breathtaking photo of Christ Church.

### LONGFORD’S HISTORIC RAIL BRIDGE COLUMNS RESTORED TO LANDMARK POSITION



Longford Rail Bridge back to its beautiful glory with the newly installed columns. Photo by Fred Talavera.

Longford has marked a proud moment in its history with the return of two replica heritage columns to the town’s iconic rail bridge, celebrating the culmination of a major, community driven restoration project years in the making.

Standing six metres tall and weighing around one tonne each, the composite columns were successfully craned into position over the weekend following their delivery from Penguin Composites. Their installation restores a striking architectural feature that once framed the 1870 rail bridge, before the original pillars were removed in the 1960s to accommodate larger freight trains.

#### A COMMUNITY VISION REALISED

The project fulfils a long held community aspiration championed by Councillor Dick Adams OAM, who established the Longford Railway Bridge Committee in 2019 to pursue reinstatement of the original pillars. Residents gathered along the riverbank and in the nearby park to witness the lifts, celebrating the return of a defining visual element.

#### LONGFORD’S ENGINEERING HERITAGE.

Community support has been central to the project’s success, with local fundraising efforts including the sale of bridge themed calendars and rail exhibitions held at the Longford Town Hall helping to keep the vision alive.

#### FAITHFUL RESTORATION, BUILT FOR LONGEVITY

The replica columns were meticulously crafted to faithfully match the appearance of the originals, which stood from 1871 until the mid 1960s. Importantly, Penguin Composites has retained the custom moulds used in the fabrication process, allowing for another matching pair to be produced in the future should funding be secured to complete the symmetry at the opposite end of the bridge.

TasRail engineers designed and installed modern internal steel frames to support each column, inserting them through precision cut openings and securing them to large steel base plates. This contemporary internal structure ensures the pillars are structurally robust while preserving their historic form and character.

#### SAFE AND SEAMLESS INSTALLATION

Crane crews accessed the site from the park side of the bridge, working closely with Northern Midlands Council’s Works Manager to manage safety requirements and temporary access changes.

The complex lift was completed smoothly and safely, drawing the attention of many locals who stopped to watch the towering columns being carefully guided into place.

#### A SHARED COMMITMENT TO HERITAGE

The restoration project was funded by the State Government, TasRail and the Northern Midlands Council, reflecting a shared commitment to honouring and preserving Longford’s rich engineering and rail history.

With the columns now standing proudly once more, the bridge has regained a landmark feature that speaks to both the town’s past and the power of community collaboration.

### PEOPLE’S CHOICE WINNER

Local pride was on full display as a Longford scene claimed the People’s Choice Award at the *Choose the Scenic Route* photography exhibition, announced during the Australia Day Awards in Campbell Town. Visitors cast their votes, with the People’s Choice Award presented to Craig Wem for his stunning photograph of Christ Church, Longford, captured in the stillness of the early morning mist.

The *Choose the Scenic Route* photography competition was a testament to the Northern Midlands’ natural beauty, its resilient and welcoming communities, and the quiet yet profound qualities that make the region a place of pride and belonging.



Craig Wem receives his prize presented by Acting General Manager Maree Bricknell



Christ Church, Longford by Craig Wem



- 1 Cr Dick Adams with the cast columns at the Penguin factory August 2025
- 2 Cast ends of the columns at the Penguin factory
- 3 Columns waiting to be installed next to the bridge
- 4 Giant crane lifts the second column into place 8 February 2026. Photo by Fred Talavera.

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#### OPENING HOURS

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