



MARY VALLEY
RATTLER

ANNUAL
REPORT
2018/19

OUR GOAL IS TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE ON OUR GREAT GUEST EXPERIENCE, WHILST REMAINING ONE OF THE BENCHMARKED RAIL SAFETY ORGANISATIONS IN THE TOURISM AND HERITAGE RAILWAY INDUSTRY.

MARY VALLEY RATTLER



Historic Gympie Station 10 Tozer Street Gympie
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www.maryvalleyrattler.com.au
[@maryvalleyrattler](https://twitter.com/maryvalleyrattler)



ABN: 89 168 604 975
ACN: 168604975
The Rattler Railway Company Ltd.
Trading as: Mary Valley Rattler



TRADING HOURS
Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri - 8am to 3pm
Wed, Sat & Sun - 8am to 5pm



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"Our objective is to continue driving regional tourism while operating a safe railway."

KAREN DAVIS
Sales & Marketing Manager

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The 2018-19 year was a landmark year for the Rattler Railway Company Ltd.

The management, staff and dedicated volunteers were focused on preparation and training for the imminent relaunch of the rail operation. The team were resilient in working through the challenges of the ongoing delays throughout July and August in commissioning the track and finalising the regulatory approvals to commence rail operations.

However, following the outstanding success of our 'First Train Day' on October 6th, it has been full steam ahead. Congratulations go to our marketing team and industry partners for the outstanding promotion of the Mary Valley Rattler across Australia.

Congratulations to the staff, volunteers and community partners for providing the highest standards of service. During the year, the team expanded the operation with the introduction of additional regular services and Holiday Express trains to accommodate the demand over school holiday periods.

Several events were held at the Gympie Station to celebrate milestones of the first year of operations with community members invited to the Station for children's activities, live music and entertainment, which all added to the festivities. We've had many special event trains such as the 'Anzac Troop Train' honouring our servicemen and women, and the popular 'Christmas Twilight Train' steaming through the Valley at full capacity.



The successful launch and growth of the business has been strongly supported by a management team dedicated to the structure and safety of the operation. I would like to commend them for their professionalism in meeting the challenges in our startup year.

With the focus on safety, the management, staff and volunteers can be congratulated in meeting all requirements of the National Rail Safety regulator in our inaugural year. Highest standards of maintenance of the rail corridor and rolling stock allowed for additional services to be added during the year.

During the year Micheal (Mike) Green was appointed in the role of Asset and Operations Manager. Mike showed outstanding leadership in this role and was recently appointed as General Manager. He now leads a strong team, able to build the business well into the future. On

behalf of the Board I would like to thank Mike and his team, our volunteers, and our community partners for their outstanding contributions.

Thanks to the Gympie Regional Council for their ongoing support in the formation of the business and consistent contribution during the year.

My appreciation to the Board of Volunteer Directors for their commitment to the Mary Valley Rattler. This includes current serving Directors and to Kath Massey, Rick Cooper, Gerry Blaine, Craig Walter and Gavin Ivey for their contributions to the Board in the formative stages of the business. Particular thanks to Les Fleet, Director and Company Secretary for his role as interim General Manager and to Catriona Scott in her interim role.

We end the year with a great team and a clear plan for full steam ahead in 2020, and beyond.

IAN MCNICOL
Chairman of the Board



BOARD MEMBERS

CURRENT & ACTIVE VOLUNTARY BOARD MEMBERS



**IAN
MCNICOL**



**ADRIAN
HURLEY**



**GARRY
DAVISON**



**LEN
SIVYER**



**MARK
POYNTER**

"We end the year with a great team and a clear plan for full steam ahead in 2020, and beyond."

IAN MCNICOL
Chairman of the Board

WHO WE ARE

A Brief Introduction & Our History

The Mary Valley Rattler (MVR) commenced operations in October 2018, and is situated in the small regional town of Gympie (population 21,000) approximately 79km north of the Sunshine Coast and 170km north of Brisbane. Commencing at the historic Gympie Station, guests are treated to



an enchanting and informative half-day rail journey on board a heritage fleet of locomotives and carriages. Over the rolling hills of stunning Queensland countryside, and through small country communities nestled along the line, the Mary Valley Rattler experience is a delight for visitors and locals alike.

This heritage rail experience is run as not-for-profit. The organisation is administered by a voluntary board and operates with assistance from a large group (150) of volunteers.

Historically, the Mary Valley Heritage Railway Museum Inc., a rail enthusiast operation, was operating on the line from Gympie to Imbil. In 2012 the Safety Regulator closed the operation due to not being able to demonstrate a confirmed forward investment in rail infrastructure following two minor derailments. Since then, community partners maintained discussions with the Queensland Government to re-establish a historic rail operation.

In 2013, the Deputy Premier committed funding to support a study to review potential business opportunities and refurbish the track and rollingstock. The outcome of a feasibility study was to initiate works to open a new tourism focused product operating from Gympie to Amamoor return. Five years later, the Mary Valley Rattler was born, providing a unique and key attraction for Gympie and wider region.

The Mary Valley Rattler work collaboratively with industry, community, government and private enterprise to drive additional economic benefit to the Gympie region by bringing more travellers to the region and encouraging longer stays. Working with events, tourism operations and museums we aim to develop a strong heritage brand for Gympie ensuring the preservation of local history and to share that with visitors, educational institutions and rail enthusiasts.

VISION & VALUES MARY VALLEY RATTLER

The success of the Mary Valley Rattler since commencement of operations is testament to the appetite for an authentic heritage rail experience. The Mary Valley provides a stunning backdrop for the region showcasing the natural beauty, fertile lands and historical and friendly townships. The feedback to date heroes the volunteers that share stories with the many guests on board and the locals from the communities that they meet on their journey. This collaborative and genuine approach delivers a unique tourism experience that guests from far and wide are enjoying.



GENERAL MANAGER STATEMENT



ABOUT MIKE GREEN

Micheal Green has a young family living in the Gympie Region, with his wife working at the Gympie Hospital. Mike holds a Bachelor of Business with majors in Accounting & Finance, as well as a post-graduate Diploma in Management.

Mike is proudly a lifetime member of the Golden Keys Honour Society in recognition of his academic achievements. He has been in the industry at senior levels of management for forty years, across all Australian Track Gauges. Mike has worked in rail across five states, and was a member of the National Rail Materials Committee for Standards Australia.

Mike looks forward to a long-term tenure with the Rattler Railway Company Ltd.



The first year of operations has seen the Mary Valley Rattler brand grow from strength to strength. The brand has been seen on Sunrise, The Great Day Out and Queensland Weekender. The Mary Valley Rattler is the number one attraction in Gympie according to Trip Advisor.

During the financial year the business welcomed 22,383 guests on the train services. Train operations only commenced on the October 6th 2018.

During May a customer survey was conducted with 94% of the respondents stating that the experience was value for money. The goal of the Mary Valley Rattler was to stimulate tourism for the region, this objective is being validated with 72% of the surveyed respondents stating that the reason they travelled to Gympie was to visit the Mary Valley Rattler.

ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Mary Valley Rattler has employed an equivalent of 23 full time employees, many of whom were regional and long term unemployed. During the 18/19 financial year, additional train services were introduced. The Rattler Picnic Train is a popular new service utilising the 'Red Rocket' RM76 rail motor. In the four months of operation (February to June 2019) 368 guests experienced the Picnic Train service.

OTHER INITIATIVES

The most exciting highlight of the 18/19 financial year was the return of C17 locomotive 967. This rebuild was completed in 26 months. During the year an asset management plan was developed and capital funding secured for track and structures asset replacement, ensuring sustainable asset management.

In addition, new collateral was developed with the C17 Locomotive 967 as the 'hero shot', central to our brand.

I'm proud to be a 'Rattler', and at the end of June 2019 we can now say that "We are on our Way."

Micheal Green
General Manager

OUR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

At end of last financial year, there were 150 volunteers on the books, and 23 Full Time equivalent staff employed by the RRC.

The Mary Valley Rattler Volunteer Team consists of a passionate group of individuals, dedicated to preserving and sharing heritage rail experiences as well as the history of our beautiful region. We could not have achieved what we have so far without our incredible volunteer family. Endless compliments and raving praises fill our consumer reviews, both online and in person, and we are very proud of the work the volunteers accomplish on a daily basis.

The volunteer team have developed a highly polished guest experience with a genuine country charm, and unwavering friendliness.

At the Mary Valley Rattler, we have created several voluntary roles that include On-board Guest Experience Officers, Rail Safety Workers, Tour Desk Attendants, Administration Volunteers, Gardeners and more.

As ambassadors for the region, their role is to ensure that every guest to the Mary Valley Rattler has a safe, authentic, informed and exceptional tourism experience.

'We have a small but energetic team of motivated employees, all contributing their personal best to the operation of this business.'

MIKE GREEN
General Manager

"You could compare our volunteers with the steam of a loco - without them nothing would move."

PHILLIP SHAW
Maintenance Manager



MANAGEMENT TEAM

At the Mary Valley Rattler, our team consists of multiple volunteers, part time workers, full time workers, and of course our management team. Below outlines the positions and roles of our Management Staff, who oversee the entirety of the Mary Valley Rattler.



Micheal Green
GENERAL MANAGER

Responsible to deliver the Strategic and Tactical Plans approved by the Board of Directors.



Julia Avis
HR BUSINESS SUPPORT & SAFETY MANAGER

Responsible for rail compliance, workplace health and safety and training. HR, recruitment and retention and business support.



Karen Davis
SALES & MARKETING MANAGER

Covers all business marketing strategies, product delivery, collateral & company outreach. Responsible for Brand development.



Phillip Shaw
MAINTENANCE MANAGER

Responsible for the long term sustainability of the asset. Development and delivery of the Asset Management Plan. Workshop management & operations.



Hellen Jones
FUNCTIONS, FOOD & BEVERAGE MANAGER

Cafe & restaurant operations, function co-ordination, cafe staff management and all cafe product delivery.

OPERATIONS & SAFETY

The Ratter Railway Company Limited (RRC) is proud to be an industry leader in rail safety and compliance. We have developed a benchmark which is now shared with others through our membership with the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR) tourist and heritage safety improvement committee.

The RRC is an accredited rail transport operator in Queensland, holding both rolling stock operator and rail infrastructure manager accreditation. This accreditation was effective from 1st July 2017 with a variation for passenger operations granted in August 2018.

Track and structure handover was delivered on 31st August with training and commissioning commencing on the branch line in September 2018. Passenger operations commenced on Saturday 6th October 2018.

In this time RRC activity has transitioned to a fully operational and accredited railway. The focus remains on securing sustainable funding channels, ongoing development of strategic business plans and management of the safety management system.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The primary rail safety risks identified in the RRC's operations include derailments, level crossing incidents and proceed authority exceedance occurrences. Other safety incidents can include work health and safety incidents which are reportable to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.

Rail safety performance at the RRC will be measured by examining its performance against these key risks and implementing programs to eliminate or mitigate them.

Due diligence oversight of the entity continues to be performed by the RRC Management Committee (MC) including General Manager Micheal Green, Maintenance Manager Phillip Shaw, Sales & Marketing Manager Karen Davis and HR Business Support & Safety Manager Julia Avis.

In the June 2018 – June 2019 reporting period the RRC transitioned from the track and civil work project phase with no rollingstock movements to full revenue services. This was conducted at all times within the guidelines of our safety accreditation.

DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF SAFETY PERFORMANCE FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD

The RRC Key Safety Performance Indicators for non-rail-based incidents are reported around three indicators;

- Lost Time Injuries
- Medically Treated Injuries
- First Aid Injuries

While RRC is committed to reporting of key safety performance indicators we are taking a holistic view to safety moving forward. Key assessments criteria will be added focusing on consultation and collaboration with staff volunteers and passengers.

The RRC recognises that the nature of our operations can result in a variety of incidents. We are confident we have “reasonably practicable” processes in place to avert these incidents, however have developed our reporting, audit, investigation and review processes accordingly.

INCIDENTS 2018/19

First Aid	5
Medical	0
LTI	3

EXTERNAL AUDITS 2018/19

WORKSAFE	1
ONRSR	7

In the reporting period there were a number of external audits undertaken. The scope and nature of the audits covered all aspects of rail safety, rollingstock compliance, asset and track maintenance, and safety management systems. No Prohibition or Improvement Notices were issued during this period. No non-conformances have been issued since the start of revenue services.

The RRC holds the view that audits are the opportunity to improve systems and procedures in collaboration with industry experts.

“We support a culture of continuous safety improvement through consultation and collaboration.”

JULIA AVIS
HR Business Support & Safety Manager

As part of the RRC Commitment to developing best-practice safety within the Tourist and Heritage railway sector we have worked with industry regulators to showcase our system to the wider industry.



SAFETY INITIATIVES

The June 2018 – June 2019 reporting period included track and bridge restoration and replacement activities, maintenance certification of rollingstock, commencement of 5 day a week operational passenger services, major refurbishment of C17 No 967 and other rail vehicle restoration for operations.

The following significant safety initiatives have been undertaken:

- Review of the RRC Risk Register – June 2018
- Further development of the RRC Safety Management System (SMS)
- Safety improvements within the RRCs’ Chapple Street Gympie Workshop and Workshop Compound.
- Business audit schedule including 6 month safety audits of workshop, café and train services.
- Continued compliance with rail safety worker medical requirements.
- Training and Assessment processes for workers, volunteers and contractors
- Formal training, assessment and High Risk Work (HRW) license records
- RRC induction and Safely Access the Rail Corridor (SARC) training/assessment for all workers who access the rail corridor
- Completion of WHS Queensland Injury Prevention and Management Program – 12 months.
- Compliance with drug and alcohol management plan. Increased testing across the business.

THE REVIEW PROCESS AND CONSULTATION

Review of the RRC Safety Management System (SMS) follows on from formal review of the RRC Risk Register considering the transition to an operating railway. Specific documents have been reviewed by persons responsible for the ongoing management of the SMS as well as content experts and workers who will perform specific tasks.

ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Estimate of the Economic Impact on the Local Economy of the Gympie Region.



EARTHCHECK

OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

Benefits during the Operational Phase

This activity results in **\$2.87m of value-add within the Gympie region**, accounting for approximately 80% of the total value-add of \$3.66m. **Within the Gympie Region, this activity creates 35 additional jobs (Full Time Employees - FTE)**, which accounts for 85% of the total increase of 41 Australia-wide. These impacts are on-going for the region.

Additional Expenditure by Visitors to the MVR

From the survey data, the **average expenditure in the region outside of the MVR was \$245 per party**. This results in an estimated additional expenditure of \$2.9m, which results in additional value-add of \$2.21m within the region, accounting for 39 jobs (FTE), with flow-on effects of \$880K value-add outside the region, supporting a further 8 jobs (FTE).

The average expenditure per party OUTSIDE of the MVR is **\$245**

Creating an Additional Visitor Expenditure of **\$2.9 million** for the Gympie Region

Due to the multiplier effect this will create another;

\$2.21m Value-Add within the Gympie Region;
\$880k outside the Region



39 Jobs within the Gympie Region;
8 outside of the Region

75%

OF CUSTOMERS surveyed said that their main purpose for visiting the Gympie Region was to visit the MVR

82%

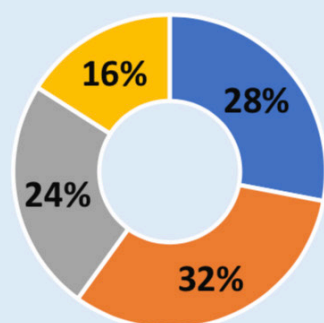
OF THE MVR GUESTS are from outside the Gympie Region

94%

SAY THAT the MVR experience was Value for Money

90%

OF THOSE SURVEYED would consider revisiting the MRV



Types of Expenditure outside the MVR

(All within the Gympie Region)

- Accommodation
- Food & Beverage (excluding Platform No. 1 Café)
- Transport Expenses
- Other Expenses (such as entertainment, shopping)

CONSTRUCTION BENEFITS

Benefits during the Construction Phase

The total value non-residential building construction in the Gympie region is \$110.1m (2.3% of total regional output), with a value-added component of this equal to \$38.3m (1.8% of total value-add). **The \$17.5m of construction costs resulted in \$11.9m of value-add within the Gympie region**, accounting for approximately 68% of the total value-add of \$17.4m. **This activity created 92 local jobs for the regional economy**, accounting for two thirds of the total 139 jobs (FTE) created, of which 71 (50%) were filled by Gympie Regional Council residents. Note that these jobs are short-term in nature, as construction expenditure occurs for a short period.

92

REAL JOBS created for the Regional Community

\$11.9M

VALUE-ADD within the Gympie Region

SUMMARY

Overall Impact

Including all activity since the initial investment, the **\$17.59m investment has led to a one-off value-add of \$17.36m and 139 jobs (FTE) and on-going value-add of \$6.75m and 88 jobs (FTE)**. Three quarters of the on-going impacts are regional.

This initial and on-going increases to value-add and jobs suggests that **the initial investments by Council (\$10.59m) and the State Government (\$7m) have had, and will continue to have, a desirable and worthwhile economic impact on the regional economy.**

\$5.1M

ON-GOING VALUE-ADD within the Gympie Region

74

ON-GOING REGIONAL JOBS



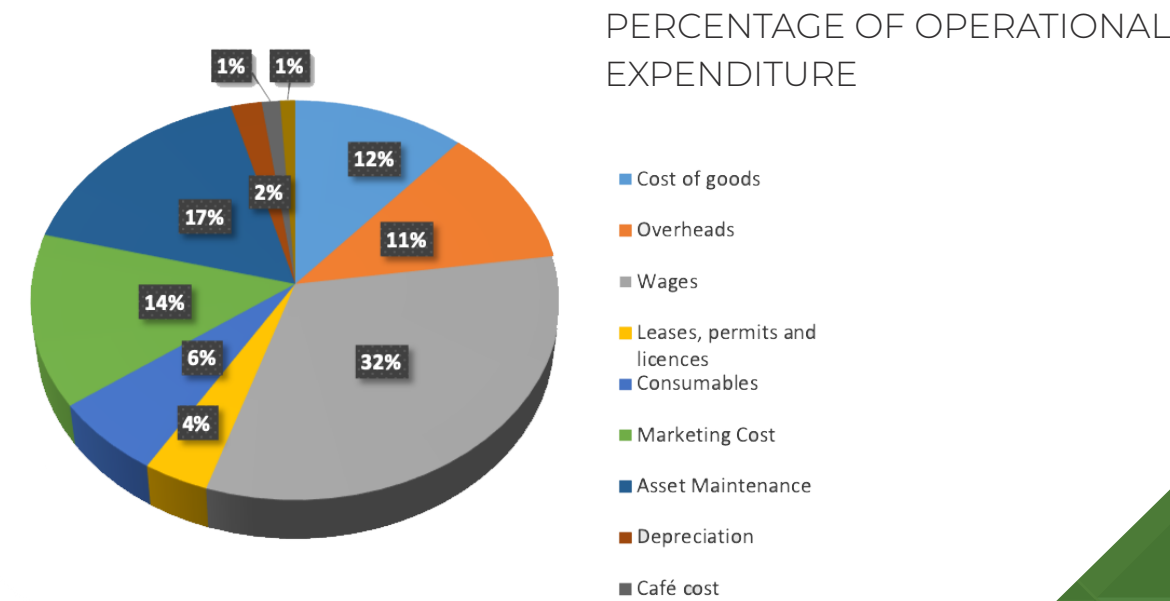
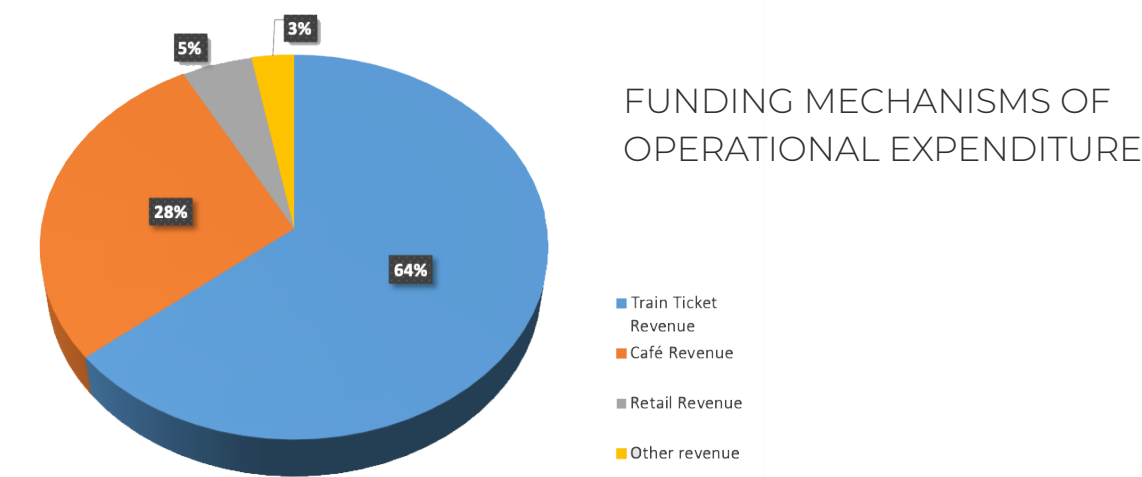
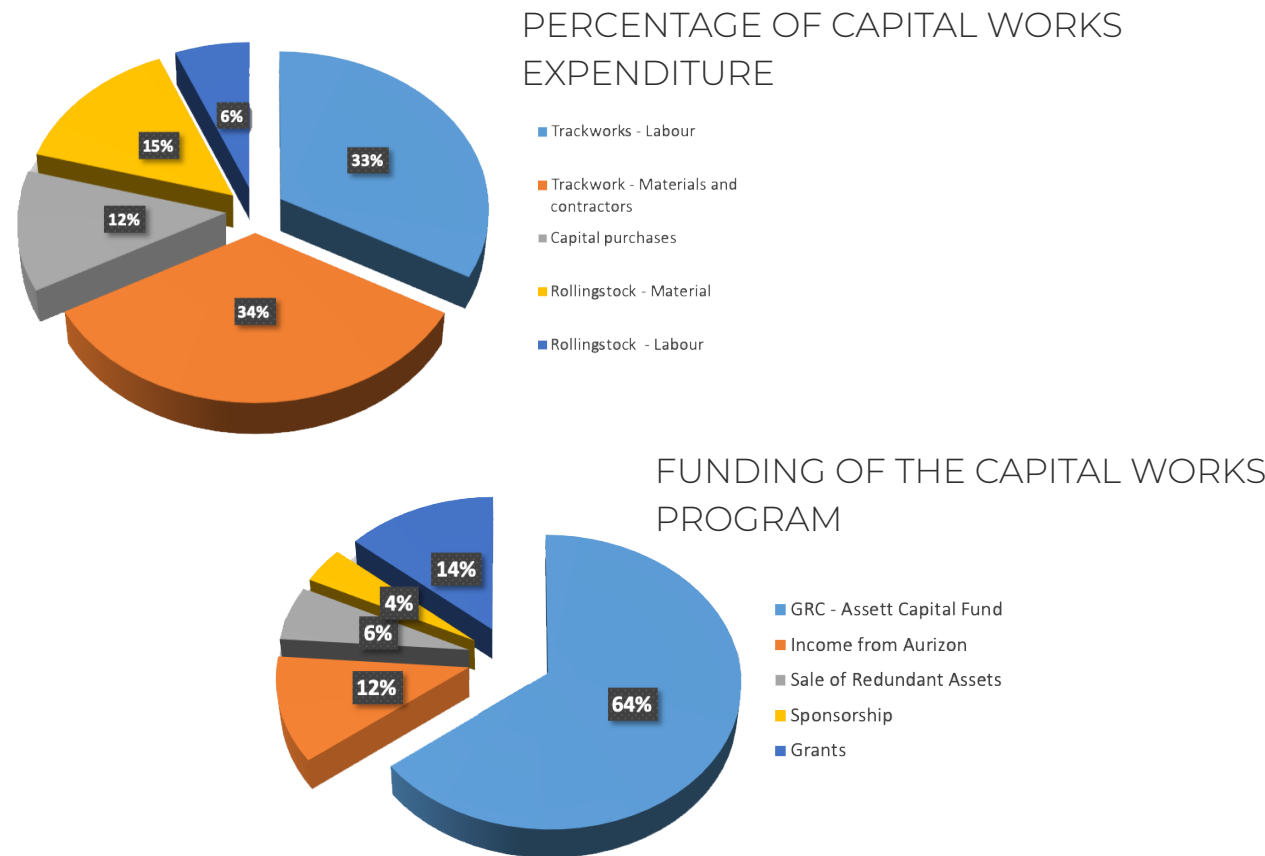
OUR COMMUNITY ASSETS

RATTLER RAILWAY COMPANY LTD.

We currently have three agreements with Gympie Regional Council (GRC) that highlights our responsibility to deliver sustainable safe assets. During the 18/19 financial year, RRC & GRC negotiated minor asset transfers, infrastructure delivery schedules & asset maintenance schedules. These variations to the lease agreements should be signed off by both parties in the 19/20 financial year. We hold a skilled workforce that on a daily basis inspects, maintains and refurbishes the asset base of the community. We are proud to be the custodians of the community assets.

During our first year of operation, we developed an asset management plan that takes a long term, life cycle view of the assets that we are the custodians of. The diagrams below indicate that the percentage of spend against each asset group, and the funding mechanisms to fund the capital works program.

Capital Works Expenditure – Long Term Sustainability of Assets



CAFE & FIRST CLASS CLUB CAR

‘Our goal is to continually improve on our great guest experience whilst remaining one of the industry’s benchmark in safety.’

MIKE GREEN
General Manager

The Platform No. 1 Café underwent multiple changes this past financial year. The operative during our inaugural year was to increase functionality and maintain sustainability throughout the business. Café income plays a large part in the sustainability of operations, therefore to increase revenue, offerings were expanded as were café opening hours.

Our team has had continued opportunities to upskill, including coffee training & expanding every team members’ experience throughout back of house or front of house. Building a skilled, dynamic and multi-functional team is the continued goal amongst all fields of the business.

Changes that were made in the café included extending offerings, the ability to short order & take meals/drinks away, onboard offerings for the train, and of course continually focusing on the club car VIP experience. The menu underwent multiple changes, incorporating local produce wherever possible with gluten free options also available. Incorporating local produce (in addition to selling local goods in our gift shop) allows us to give back to our region, as well as promote the ingredients used in our café menu.

Hallmark events, such as The DeguSTATION Train (in conjunction with the Sunshine Coast culinary festival, The Curated Plate) & weddings held at the station, brought ample visitors to the region. These events were wildly successful in raising awareness of the business, providing event opportunities for our staff, and generating income. The Rattler looks forward to offering more and more events in the future, especially with the upcoming holiday season.

The forecast for the upcoming financial year is to maintain sustainability, while incorporating new elements into life at the Rattler, such as buffet meals, coffee carts and more.

We’re on our way here at the Rattler, and the Platform No. 1 Café is only just getting started!



RATTLER RAILWAY COMPANY LTD.

*“WRITING A NEW CHAPTER IN
THE HERITAGE AND TOURISM
RAILWAY INDUSTRY.”*

MICHEAL GREEN
General Manager



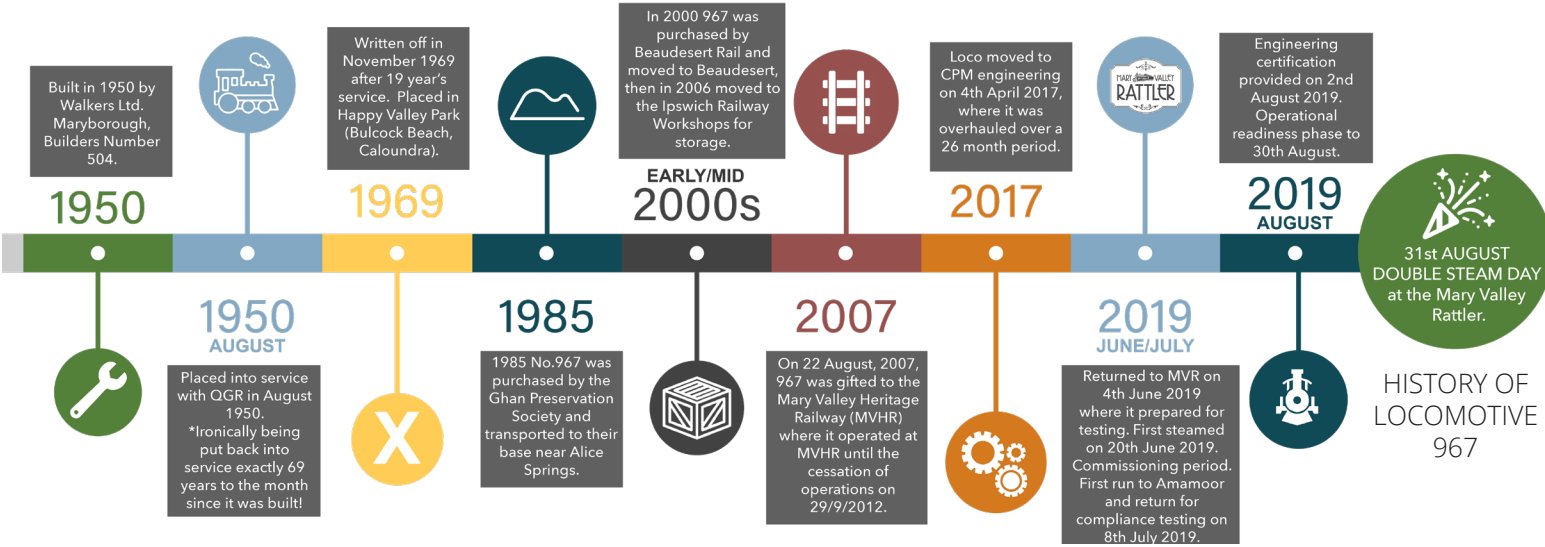
OUR FIRST YEAR!



"Really nice day out. Great service from the start, with someone calling us and confirming the date as well as organising a table for us at the train station restaurant in Gympie. The staff on the train Graham and Marilyn were so welcoming and added to the fun. Thank you!"

Lisa | TripAdvisor

MARY VALLEY RATTLER 2018/19



"Should have done it years ago. Get on board!! What a fantastic way to spend a Sunday. Worth the upgrade to The Club Car. Special thanks to Courtney for making our journey that little bit more special."

John | Facebook

INDUSTRY PARTNERS



GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Energy Skills Queensland | SkillsCentred QLD. | Madill Holden | Lions Club

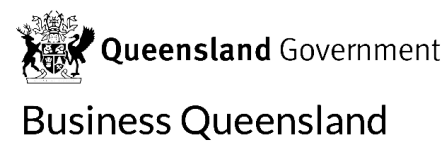
Volunteering Sunshine Coast | Volunteering Gympie | Bernard Petroleum

Dagun Community Group | Friends of Amamoor

SUCCESSFUL GRANT SUBMISSIONS

Small Business Digital Grants Program

Gympie District Community Branch of Bendigo Bank Grant



ACHIEVEMENTS, AWARDS & NOMINATIONS



Ranked Number 1
Attraction for the
Gympie Region on
TripAdvisor



QTIC Awards Participants for New
Tourism Business &
Contribution by a Volunteer Group
**AWARDED SILVER IN NEW
TOURISM BUSINESS**



Finalists in the
Gympie Chamber
of Commerce
Tourism Award



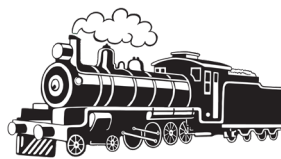
**GREY NOMAD
AWARDS**
Finalists in the Grey
Nomad Tourism
Attraction Award





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