

# All Aboard

News from the Friends of the North Australia Railway at Adelaide River

July 2005

## Pedestrian crossing reinstatement critical

REINSTATEMENT OF THE pedestrian crossing in the precinct is now of critical importance.

The cattle fence erected by the AustralAsia Railway Corporation (ARC), which claimed the fence was in the interests of public safety, severed pedestrian access across the track, and has effectively split the precinct in half, giving rise to the erroneous impression that there is no heritage value on the Stuart Highway side of the precinct.

The cattle fence running through the Adelaide River Railway Heritage Precinct is several kilometres long. Immediately to the north of the precinct, there is no cattle fence. Could it be that cattle are extremely discerning and will only cross the railway track in the heritage precinct or at points further south? If that is the case, could we not give human beings the same credibility as cattle and give them back a place to cross the track in the precinct?

We have lobbied and lobbied and lobbied on this issue, and we have been very reasonable to date.

When the railway was constructed, both existing pedestrian and vehicular access to the precinct were cut off. We accepted the loss of the vehicular access, but always maintained that pedestrian access be reinstated.

Indeed, we constructed an access road at a cost of \$15,000 into the precinct from Dorat Road. This was achieved completely

unassisted and unfunded by ADrail, the AustralAsia Railway Corporation or the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and the Environment (DIPE).

As recently as a fortnight ago, DIPE, the very department supposedly responsible for preservation of heritage, destroyed the foundations of two railway fettlers quarters. The explanation of the destruction was that they were tidying the area up to make life easier for the mowing contractor responsible

for the highway verges. More heritage vandalism!

The crossing has existed at the station for over 100 years. It is crucial to the heritage value of the precinct and crucial to the Territory's tourism industry. Travellers on the Stuart Highway need a safe place to pull off the highway and walk into the precinct. This is NOT

rocket science, but it is unnecessary conflict between rail organisations - albeit it one old and one very new. Surely it is in the interest of the AustralAsian Railway to preserve the heritage of its forebear.

We have hit a bureaucratic brick wall, have the bumps on our heads to show for it and have resolved that it is completely unsatisfactory.

If you have not already signed our petition, please get in touch with one of the Committee members and we'll arrange to get a copy to you. If you can take copies of petitions and ask people to sign it, so much the better.



*An aerial shot of the station courtesy of Ultralight enthusiast Mark Christie. The pedestrian crossing is clearly visible at the north end of the station.*

# Changes in the electorate

SOME OF OUR INTERSTATE and overseas Friends may not be aware that the NT went to the polls on 18 June for a general election.

Adelaide River is in the electorate of Daly, which was held by the CLP's Tim Baldwin who retired from politics and did not contest the election.

The seat was won by the ALP's Rob Knight, who has popped into the precinct on several occasions over the past year or so.

FNAR extends our congratulations to Rob (and we hope he's a train buff!), and our thanks to Tim for his help and support over the past few years. We look forward to seeing Tim at the precinct as a civilian over the coming years.

At the time this newsletter went to print, the Chief Minister had not announced her Cabinet, so we do not know who the Heritage Minister is.

## Upcoming events at the River

Monday 1 August

Sat 3-Sun 4 September

Sunday 12 November

Picnic Day – Railway Picnic at the Station

76th Anniversary - *Back to Birdum*

Anniversary of last WWII bombing raid on Adelaide River and, indeed, Australia.

### Rejex Rally

Leo Izod and the Rejex Rally will be visiting the Railway Precinct for lunch on Picnic Day, 1 August. There will be lots of wonderful old cars, so come along and say g'day.

## BECOME A MEMBER!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Sandfly an NT icon

THE LEGENDARY *SANDFLY* has been officially named a Northern Territory Icon by the National Trust.

Announcing the 2005 icons at a dinner on June 4, His Honour the Administrator, Ted Egan, who was one of the judges, said he was particularly pleased that *Sandfly* had been nominated and accepted as an NT icon.

*Sandfly* was nominated by FNAR. Whilst we are delighted with *Sandfly's* iconic status, we remain concerned about her deteriorating condition by salt water



exposure and corrosion at the wharf precinct in Darwin. We have been urging officers from the Heritage Branch at DIPE to take appropriate action - and quickly.

Other Northern Territory icons announced at the dinner were: the Pukumani pole; the art of Albert Namatjira; the Berrimah Line (the original one, not the political football); Kurt Johansen's road train; and the song *Arafura Pearl* written by Kath Mills.

The awards are annual and details of the selection criteria appear on the National Trust's web site: <http://members.iinet.net.au/%7Entnt/index.html>.

Go to the 'icons' button on the corrugated iron panel on the left of the screen.

## And speaking of icons...

THE SIDNEY WILLIAMS HUT was last year named as a Territory icon. We are fortunate to have one in the precinct.

This year, our first project is to finish restoring the Hut. We have painted the outside and Mick and Trevor have been painting the support beams inside a nice rusty red. Judy has been painting the outside (and herself on occasions) green.

We are looking for a good tradesman to organise the concrete floor. If you know of a super-duper concrete man or woman, we would like to hear from you.

Once the floor is in, we plan to install the railway wheel lathe for display.



*Judy Richardson and Fran Briggs aloft in the SWH*

## WE'RE ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR...

a windmill (we're serious!)  
access to Hotmix  
quality plates, cups and saucers  
any railway memorabilia

any old photos of Adelaide River Railway Heritage Precinct

# Annual general meeting

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Friends of the North Australian Railway at Adelaide River Inc was held at the Station Precinct on 27 March.

As this was Easter Sunday, we were very appreciative the Friends who attended.

The Committee has been working hard on rewriting our Constitution to bring it in line with the new *Associations Act*.

The Constitution was passed unanimously. The new Constitution and Financial Statements have been lodged with the Commissioner.

Friends at the AGM were Robyn Smith, Leo Izod, Wendy Leach, Mick Kent, Trevor Horman, Mike Bowman (photo above taken by Allison Bowman) Judy Richardson, Nola Smith, Rilla Kerr, Di Lunn and Joan Moore.

The Committee elected to serve this year is: Trevor Horman (President and Public Officer), Mick Kent (Vice-President), Joan Moore (Treasurer), Judy Richardson (Secretary), and Committee members Fran Briggs, Mark O'Hagan, Wendy Leach, Nola



Smith, Di Lunn, Robyn Smith, M i k e Bowman and Chris Renahan.

Another of our very generous Friends is Terry the Plumber who has been finishing the plumbing at our newly commissioned 'Country Dunny'.

One day whilst Terry had his back turned for about five minutes, someone pinched all his brass fittings with which Terry was about to fix to our new Dunny. Unable to continue his work, Terry, undeterred, mowed the lawn and fastened the dunny roof instead.

It makes you wonder why people would steal from people working very hard at a volunteer job. Thanks, Terry, we are very appreciative of your generosity.



Another Friend is Bob Reid from Adelaide River who has been very busy manicuring the lawns at the precinct. Thank you, Bob, for a great effort. It is very much appreciated.

## BCs 329 and 300

BOB THE WELDER FROM Adacka Services started work on the BC329. He has cut the end door way to a metre wide to make it suitable for wheel chair access and he has cut off all the protrusions hanging down (including the only access steps). Does anyone have spare step ladder?

Terry MacManemin will finish removing the old floor this weekend (good BBQ timber if anyone wants it - dried for 70 years). The new floor will not go in until the painting is finished.

Vic Martin is getting geared up to come and sandblast the outside and paint it. Vic is the same person who did the NSU.

The hold-up is ordering the windows, which will take three weeks to deliver. We do not want to install them until after the exterior is blasted and painted.

We still need to think about electrics. We want the wiring installed before the interior lining goes in.

For those not familiar with this project, the BC329 is a 1936 NSW carriage we are restoring with the intention of using it as our Visitor Information Centre. It is going to be great and should be ready in a few weeks time, according to the ever-optimistic Trevor.

BC330 is coming along, too. The first job was to burn underneath it so that the welder does not cause a fire. The remaining rubbish inside will be turfed out and a welder should start in the near future.

Carpenter Terry MacManemin will also start the floor in this carriage (using pre-loved ply). Hopefully, Vic will move in with the blasting and painting soon after. This carriage will be used for mounting displays (another exhibition hall).

Does anyone have a friendly supplier of 50x50 SHS steel to fabricate the roof of BC330? We may need 200 metres of it.

# Adelaide River briefs

## ARSS CLUB ACTIVITIES

THE ARSS CLUB HAS BEEN BUSY OF LATE with consecutive weekends of the annual race meeting followed by the Adelaide River Show. We were there, selling pies, corned beef sandwiches and Devonshire teas as a fund raiser. Thanks to everyone to took a shift or donated product. A big thanks to Bernie and Noelene Trinne for the scones and muffins.



*Casey Jones or Simple Simon? In any event, it's Trevor the Pieman with Mike Bowman at the races.*



*Rilla, Nola and Joan on duty at the races.*



*Joan and Kay at work*



*Winners are grinners! Fran's horse BRAVE DECISION won the Adelaide River Cup with David Bates on board and wasn't SHE happy?*

## STEEL SLEEPERS

TREVOR, MICK AND PETER POOLE moved 14 tonnes of steel sleepers to safety using two box trailers. They are an item we need to complete the Snake Creek railway. We are short of them. They are worth \$400/tonne at Sims, which makes them worth \$20 each.

## BACK TO BIRDUM!

THE 76TH ANNIVERSARY APPROACHES. We are, once again, going *Back to Birdum* on the weekend of 3-4 September. If you're interested in this historic epic outing, please contact our Co-ordinator, Rilla Kerr on 8927 6144 AH.

## SHORT TOM

OUR HERITAGE CARPENTER extraordinaire is busy restoring our Short Tom. Barry Slingsby is out there almost every day doing a wonderful job. Thanks, Barry, your efforts are truly appreciated.

Barry's wife Marion has not been too well of late. Our wishes go to her for a speedy recovery and, on a completely selfish note, we badly need her back at Adelaide River!

## DORAT ROAD

REGULAR MAINTENANCE IS ONGOING on the crossing over Dorat Road until we are able to get some Hotmix onto it.

## STOP PRESS

Gorgeous Adelaide River precinct presentation/gift cards now available for sale. \$4 is a bargain. Photos taken by the delightful Norma Allen.



**FNAR  
All Aboard!**

**If undeliverable, please return to FNAR, GPO Box 3504, Darwin NT 0801**



*Photographs by Mark Christie.*