

Personal Information DAVID ORAM

Introduction

My name is David Oram and a lifelong volunteer since 1969.

Currently I am leading the 3820 rebuilding program at Chullora.

I feel a strong passion to contribute to the ongoing success of THNSW, through nominating for an elected Board position.

Having worked for over 50 years in major hazard facilities, until retirement, my experience has given me skills in strategic planning, risk and safety management, people and operational skills which I believe would add to the Boards breadth and desire for future proofing the organisation. During my time I also had exposure to Government relations through dealings with regulators in planning, safety and environment. Also including project management skills working in a capital-intensive industry.

My Journey

My journey of passion for NSW railways started as a 6 year old going “into town” past Eveleigh and witnessing the wonderful collection of locomotives, particularly the “green engine”, which later I would come to know as 3813.

I was fortunate to join the RTM in 1969, enticed by travel on fabulous tours run with a variety of motive power to many destinations.

Reflective

Therefore, I am grateful

- To the pioneers of the RTM
- To all the members who have worked tirelessly over the years to preserve and conserve our transport history
- To THNSW and the NSW Government for ongoing financial support
- To all people involved in maintaining and operating heritage trains to enable people today to experience what drew me to trains some 56 years ago.

As A Volunteer

Over this period I have been a volunteer, firstly at Enfield, then Thirlmere and as life permitted, was involved in the Roundhouse magazine production, and then editor for 7 years until 2016, before upon retiring from full time work, joined the Chullora 3801 restoration team in 2018, including time at Goulburn helping with the boiler rebuild.

After that, harbouring a lifelong passion to see 5711 displayed, I joined volunteers to re assemble the tender including full conservation. As an aside I spent 3 months inside the tender fully rust treating then painting the internals to protect the tank, last done when the tank was built.

After 3 years work and 55 years since volunteers first attempted conservation, the tender was finished in February 2025.

Since then, I have been appointed project manager for the static restoration of iconic locomotive 3820, which again has involved me spending time inside the tank removing 50 years of thick rust.

I was fortunate to be awarded life membership in 2023 for my work and this year featured in the rework of the 50-year-old classic, 'A Steam Train Passes'.

The Thirlmere transformation began in 2009, with funding by the NSW Government, and now we have a world class Museum. All progress up until this time was largely driven by volunteers with limited financial means. The creation of THNSW in 2013 with funding arrangements for operational exhibits and conservation of rolling stock has enabled higher levels of conservation and major replacement of items such as boilers, long ago life expired.

My Enduring Passion

And yes, I continue my passion for 5711 and will work to assist its rightful restoration to a fully assembled locomotive, in tribute to those early pioneers who 'saved' this icon and featured it as the RTM's mascot.

And of course, building on the significant enhancement to 3801's boiler life and operational excellence, I would support another 38 class being returned to service, as they are a crowd favourite.

In particular what I support more broadly going forward is:

- to support the ongoing development of a THNSW culture, whereby volunteers are skilled, resourced, with clear roles and problem-solving processes available, to build a seamless Team THNSW
- the ongoing roll out of the Henry Reed culture enhancement program, including modelling the 5 cultural norms
- the completion and operational success of the Colo Vale extension of the Loop Line
- the fulfillment of a program for all exhibits that conserves their intrinsic and historic value through an action plan prioritising
 - 1) significance
 - 2) condition
 - 3) presentation
 - 4) conservation including appropriate funding and resources

Operational fleet renewal including a program of returning to service some currently non-operational exhibits.

Next Steps

In closing if I am fortunate to be elected and represent members, I will extend my practical volunteering to the application of strategic and governance skills to help guide and equip THNSW for a long and successful future.