

3. Candidate Statement

Now retired, I previously had a 45-year career in Mining Engineering including Project, Environment and Mine Management; and as Environment and Community Relations Manager in Illawarra and Wollondilly regions of NSW.

This has included extensive experience communicating and consulting with Federal, State and Local Government, particularly within Wollondilly Shire, and with local non-Government organisations. My experience also included a 12-month secondment working within the Commonwealth Government.

Engineering and Project Management

Technically, I have comprehensive experience and broad management expertise in Mining, Mechanical, Electrical, Structural, Subsidence and Project Engineering.

In recent years, I led multidisciplinary teams responsible for major multi-million dollar railway projects in the Wollondilly Shire, including Managing Mining Subsidence on the Main Southern Rail Line, and Picton to Mittagong Loop Lines (2007-2017); Construction of the Redbank Tunnel Deviation of the Main Southern Railway at Tahmoor (2012-2013); and Replacement of the Bridge Street Railway Overbridge in Picton (2014-2015); all completed on time and within budget.

I was part of the multidisciplinary team that developed the Safety Management System for Managing Mine Subsidence Under the Main Southern Rail Line, that received the 2010 Engineering Excellence Award in NSW for Project Economy and Ingenuity from Engineers Australia, along with several other excellence awards, and was a finalist in the Engineers Australia Engineering Excellence National Awards.

Health, Safety and Risk

I have a comprehensive knowledge, expertise and experience of health, safety, and risk management in the safety critical underground coal mining industry.

Additionally, I was the operational manager responsible to the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) and the Independent Transport Safety Regulator (ITSR), now the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR), for development, approval, implementation, and operation of Rail Safety Management Plans for safety critical railway projects.

Environment and Community

I was the responsible manager for environment management and community relationships for a large mining operation in Wollondilly Shire. This included comprehensive environmental impact statements, community engagement, government approvals and consequent environmental management plans and continuing community consultation and communication.

Leadership and Management

I have attained statutory, engineering and management qualifications in the underground coal mining industry. My employment included almost every role in the coal mine, from two years at the coal face as an underground coal miner, to over thirty years in a variety of senior operational coal mine management roles.

These mine management roles involved a variety of skills and areas of responsibility including:

- Development and maintenance of high standards, systems and procedures in Health and Safety
- Leadership of a diverse range of people, with engineering, technical, operational, and financial skills, while continuously communicating and consulting with our people to improve culture, individual satisfaction, and organisational performance.
- Management of an asset intensive operation, involving significant capital, maintenance, and operational expenditure, combined with a workforce of up to 500 employees and contractors.
- Development, management, and control of, and accountability for, multi-million-dollar capital, project, and operational budgets.
- Environmental management, over many years, of several mines and secondary metallurgical industry operations
- Community consultation and communication with a broad range of government, non-government, and community groups, in addition to many individual stakeholders.

NSW Rail Transport Museum / Transport Heritage NSW

Having an interest in trains and railways since as long as I can remember, I joined the Illawarra Group of the NSW Rail Transport Museum (NSWRTM) in 1968 at the age of 12. I was attending an exhibition where committed and enthusiastic volunteers were hoping, with the assistance of the NSW Department of Railways, to establish a railway museum at Enfield, for the benefit of current and future generations of the people of NSW.

This led to me travelling on several steam train tours organised by the NSWRTM, as well as joining a number of like-minded friends, to witness and photograph the last days of steam operations in NSW.

Joining the NSWRTM as a student member in 1973, I immediately commenced as a volunteer with the NSWRTM at Enfield, working with the Illawarra Group on the static restoration of former Public Works Department steam locomotive No 79. Restoration of this locomotive was well underway, when the winds of change brought about the relocation of the railway museum from Enfield to Thirlmere in 1975.

Having been an active volunteer member of the NSWRTM, now Transport Heritage NSW (THNSW), since 1973 and having worked alongside members and volunteers at Enfield and Thirlmere, I take pride in what we have collectively achieved since those early days at Enfield.

The establishment of the NSW Rail Museum at Thirlmere from what was formerly a paspalum filled paddock, is a tribute to the efforts of everyone involved. Certainly, the more recent and continuing support from the NSW Government has been a landmark improvement for our organisation, and which we all greatly appreciate.

However, while much has been achieved, there are many challenges that lie ahead of us. The potential development and establishment of Stage 2 of the Chullora Heritage Hub in future years, and the reopening of the loop line to Colo Vale in 2026, will no doubt have its share of issues.

I commend the view that Stage 2 of the Chullora Heritage Hub offers a strategic benefit for our museum, providing substantial secure facilities for rail heritage exhibits currently stored and stabled across several sites. In addition, Chullora affords an improved location for the operation of mainline locomotives and rolling stock, being located within the Sydney metropolitan area, and close to Central station, the starting point for most of our main line operations.

The completion of the reopening of the loop line to Colo Vale, which is on track for 2026, will also provide a great opportunity to enhance the heritage rail experience for visitors to the NSW Rail Museum at Thirlmere.

I have always held a view that the restoration of locomotive 5711 to display condition should be completed, since I first saw the commencement of restoration of this iconic locomotive at the embryonic Enfield Museum in 1973. I continue to actively support efforts by all team members across THNSW to complete its restoration.

In the future, enhancing and extending the nature and scope of our operations, will most likely, over time, require additional team members to support and participate in our enlarged activities. I am of the view that we should maintain our efforts to expand and engage new team members, while continuing to support and appreciate the continuing efforts of all our existing Team THNSW.

More recently, I have supported the much improved communication and consultation activities with our team members, and contributed to and supported the recent development of our Culture Framework and Five Year Strategic plan documents. I believe that as an organisation, we need to do much more to communicate, consult and engage with our team members. Periodic structured consultation, as in our recent "Town Hall" meetings, will tap into the wealth of ideas, knowledge, experience, and expertise that exists among us.

Improved consultation and communication ultimately support improved decision making by the Board, and other leaders within THNSW. Not only will this bring potential benefits to the culture, personal satisfaction, and performance across our organisation, but the associated two-way communication brings enhanced commitment, confidence, and enjoyment to all those who wish to become involved.

With these thoughts, I offer myself as a candidate for re-election to the Board of Transport Heritage NSW.

Ian Sheppard Life Member THNSW

September 2025