



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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HANDOVER OF PLANS FOR THE AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY MONUMENT

Member for New England, Tony Windsor today received the finished plans and specifications for the external repair of six heritage buildings at Werris Creek. He said that this follows the commitment of \$1.3 million by the State Government for the establishment of The Australian Railway Monument at Werris Creek. Mr Windsor explained that the plans permitted the start of physical repairs to the structures.

“The plans and specifications were prepared by Tamworth Heritage Architect, John Carr, in consultation with Dr Donald Ellsmore, a Sydney based heritage architect specialising in railway conservation”, Mr Windsor said.

“The six buildings receiving attention are the main platform building, the Railway Refreshment Room, the platform signal box, the Railway Institute building and two residences.”

Mr Windsor indicated that work will commence in September and start with repairs to the residence at No. 1 Single Street, which is located adjacent to the pedestrian bridge across the main line. The physical repairs will take place under the supervision of Bruce Sheridan who is a senior project manager for the Department of Public Works and Services located in Tamworth.

“In the interim, work has already started on the redesign of the road from Single Street across the railway line. There is a problem with the design of the entrance and for some time buses and other long vehicles have not been able to use the entrance as they bottom out on the road surface. The redesign will eliminate the problem and allow unrestricted access”, Mr Windsor explained.

As work progresses on the physical repairs, much attention is being given to the development of the concept of the Monument. State Rail has appointed MWA International as the Project Facilitator for the next two years. One of the principals of the organisation, Bob McKillop, will work full-time on the project. Mr McKillop has had 35 years experience in development projects which have taken him throughout Asia, the South Pacific, Africa and Europe.

As well as vast experience in development management, Mr McKillop is recognised as a specialist in Australian railway history. He is the compiler of the Guide to Australian Heritage Trains and Museums, now in its sixth edition. Also, he edits the journal, Light Railways. Bob is a country boy, having been born and raised at Narromine and has worked widely for State Rail on projects throughout NSW.

Mr Windsor said that another key player in the MWA International team is Desmond Kennard who is providing specialist advice on the development of the concepts to be expressed in the refurbished building. Mr Kennard has worked in the museum industry for 30 years and his achievements are outstanding. As Deputy Director of the Powerhouse Museum, he was directly responsible for its layout. He was also the founder of Sovereign Hill in Victoria, which is Australia's leading rural tourist attraction. Mr Kennard was director of the Australian Bicentennial Exhibition, which toured Australia in 1988 and has been General Manager of the Sydney Maritime Museum. He has undertaken numerous projects throughout NSW and is highly regarded as one of the most thoughtful and thorough practitioners in Australia.

Mr Windsor stated that the aim of the contract with MWA is to manage the project through stage 1. Recently, State Rail called tenders for the design of the monument, landscaping and research for the names of deceased staff to be placed on the Wall of Honour. The organisation will facilitate those processes and also develop the displays and exhibits that will be implemented in stage 2.

Mr Windsor advised that, at the last meeting of the Steering Committee to establish the Monument, senior staff from State Rail confirmed that the overall project had been identified as one of the major events to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the NSW railways in 2005. "We are targeting an official opening to coincide with that event", Mr Windsor emphasised.

Mr Windsor ended with a reminder that the 125th anniversary of the arrival of railway workers in Werris Creek will take place over the October long weekend and said a further announcement will be made shortly.

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