

Grafton to Brisbane National Railway Link

Award of National Engineering Heritage Marker

7th December 2011

Brisbane Ceremony Report

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The Brisbane ceremony followed a similar ceremony held in Newcastle in 2009.



First standard gauge train from Sydney arriving at South Brisbane, 1930

Invitation

Award of National Engineering Heritage Marker For the Grafton to Brisbane Railway Line

To be presented by Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley, AC, Governor of Queensland

Engineers Australia Queensland Division and Queensland Rail request the pleasure of your company on Wednesday 7 December 2011 from 2.00pm – 3.30pm at a ceremony on the Carriage Deck at Roma Street Parklands. A locality sketch is attached.

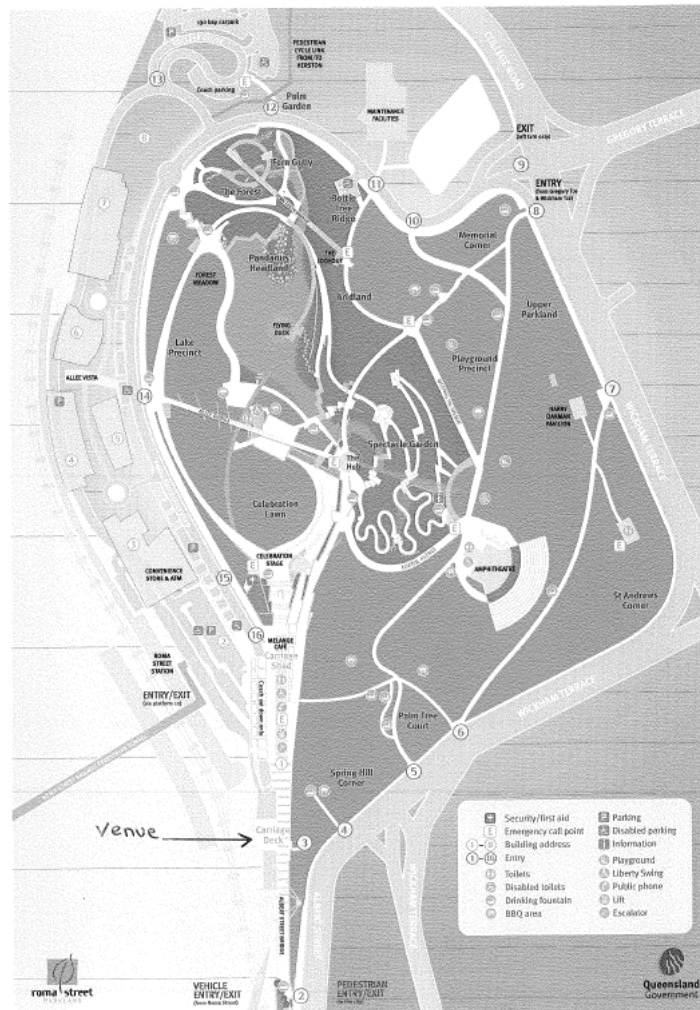
Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AC, Governor of Queensland, will unveil the National Engineering Heritage Marker. The Marker is in recognition of the Grafton to Brisbane Rail Link which has been presented a National Engineering Heritage Award. New South Wales have erected a Marker at Grafton.

The Standard Gauge was extended from South Brisbane to Roma Street 25 years ago to complete the original proposal for rail between Sydney and Brisbane.

Light refreshments will be provided. If you have any dietary requirements please include this information with your RSVP.

RSVP by Friday 25 November 2011 to Lesley Schneider by clicking on the following link;
<https://engineersaustralia.wufoo.eu/forms/award-of-national-engineering-heritage-marker/> or telephone 07 3832 3749.
Please provide the full names and position of those attending the ceremony (a Government House guest-list requirement).





Locality Sketch

Grafton To Roma Street National Heritage recognition Ceremony

Venue:	Carriage Deck : Roma Street Parklands
Event Date:	Wednesday 7 December 2011

Reason

To celebrate Grafton to Roma Street engineering heritage significance and its recognition by Engineering Heritage Australia as an Engineering Heritage National Landmark.

Key Personnel

Ms Penelope Wensley, AC	Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland
Mr Andrew Barnes	Master of Ceremonies & Member of Engineering Heritage Australia Panel
Mr Dennis Wogan	Engineers Australia Queensland Division President
Mr John Pistak	Chief Network Officer, Queensland Rail
Mr John Heathers	Chairman of Engineering Heritage Australia
Mr Greg Hallam	QR Historian

Time	Event	Duration	Notes
1.50pm	Guests arrive. Name tags.	10 min	
2.00pm	Guests and media arrive & guided by EA and VIP to sit in allocated seating, all other guests sit in unmarked area.	10 min	
2:10pm	Andrew Barnes asks guests to stand to acknowledge arrival of Her Excellency the Governor of QLD.	5 min	CV/ Bio of Andrew Barnes
2:15pm	Andrew Barnes welcomes key guests (including Her Excellency), reads apologies.	5 min	CV/
2:20pm	Andrew Barnes invites John Heathers to speak. John provides an overview of Engineering Heritage Australia and Heritage Plaque award program.	5 min	CV/Bio of John Heathers
2:25pm	Andrew Barnes thanks John and invites Greg Hallam to speak on the Grafton to Brisbane Engineering History.	10 min	CV/ Bio of Greg Hallam
2:35pm	Andrew Barnes thanks Greg and invites Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland to speak.	10 min	
2:45pm	Andrew Barnes invites Greg Hallam, John Pistak and Dennis Wogan to the podium to accompany Her Excellency to unveil the interpretive panel and plaque.	2 min	
2:47pm	Close of formal ceremony; refreshments provided		
2:49pm	Official photographs with 4 Groups 1 st Group – Governor, Greg Hallam, John Pistak, Dennis Wogan, Andrew Barnes 2 nd Group - Governor, Andrew Barnes , EHA Heritage Chair, Dennis Wogan, Ian McEwan 3 rd Group – Governor, John Pistak and Greg Hallam 4 th Group – EA representatives		
3.15pm	Governor departs		
3:30pm	Guests depart		

SPEECH NOTES: JOHN HEATHERS

MARKING CEREMONY 7th DECEMBER 2011

GRAFTON TO BRISBANE RAIL LINK 25TH ANNIVERSARY

REMARKS RELATING TO NATIONAL HERITAGE RECOGNITION PROGRAM (5 MINUTES)

Your Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Members of Engineers Australia, Ladies and Gentlemen. The EHA Heritage Recognition Program is now in its 27th Year, having commenced in 1984 and this ceremony marks the 158th site to be recognised.

The aim of the Engineering Heritage Recognition Program is to provide credit where it is due to people and objects that have improved the lives or wellbeing of Australians. We wish to increase the public's understanding of engineering and engineers through appreciation and understanding of appropriate achievements.

Engineering Heritage items are those that have been designed, constructed and operated by engineers, tradesmen or other technicians that are significant for historic, aesthetic, scientific or social reasons. These items may be significant because of their association with particular people or their rarity; and may also have significant social as well as scientific significance.

Engineering heritage provides an insight into past societies and cultures. Represented by innovation in equipment, structures or processes, it can also include the historical nature of services and the nature of work and working conditions while also supporting community life.

The sites recognised to date are located in every State and Territory and cover virtually all aspects of our engineering heritage including:

- Agricultural Machinery innovations
- Bridges
- Computers
- Dams & Power Stations
- Industrial Plants
- Pipelines & Pumping Stations
- Ports and Harbour Works
- Railways
- Road-works
- and many other categories of engineering achievement

Our ongoing program of heritage recognition attempts to recognise 9 sites around Australia each year and I would like to briefly mention the next few sites proposed for recognition in Queensland and the rest of Australia in 2012.

In the ACT there will be the Rededication of the Kingston Power Station, now re-used as a Glassworks and later in the year we will recognise Canberra's Main Sewer Outfall.

In Victoria we will honour the Geelong to Ballarat Railway with a ceremony proposed for 10th April 2012, to coincide with the 150th Anniversary of the opening of that original railway.

In Western Australian there are also plans to recognise the Standard Gauge Railway from Perth to Kalgoorlie, installed to fully provide Standard Gauge from West to East.

In my state of NSW, The Moruya Granite Quarry is to be marked. This quarry was an important local employer and was where the granite columns for the Sydney General Post Office came. Later and on a much grander scale the huge granite blocks for the four pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge were quarried in the early 1930's.

In Queensland, I look forward to the ceremony to honour the Barcaldine Water Tower, scheduled to be held around the “Back to Barky” celebrations in early May 2012; and further projects still in the process of recognition.

Each of these sites has an interesting history and their stories are documented by the researchers of Engineering Heritage Australia. Together with our previously marked sites they fit into the wider history of Australia.

I have just returned from Tasmania, where the Sixteenth Engineering Heritage Australia Conference was held in Hobart. The conference, together with the Pre Conference Tour of suburban and rural items of engineering significance, was an enormous success. Over a four day period more than 140 people attended and had the opportunity to experience an excellent array of papers on many varied engineering and social topics.

Within the schedule of the conference, as is usually the case, an Engineering Heritage Marker Ceremony took place at the Tasmanian Transport Museum, Glenorchy. Engineering Heritage Tasmania was privileged to have on that occasion an address by The Honourable Peter Underwood AC, The Governor of Tasmania.

I would like to thank Her Excellency Penelope Wensley, AC. Governor of Queensland for her attendance this afternoon and her ongoing support for our heritage program.

The aim of Engineers Heritage Australia is to continue to play our part in keeping the history and recognition of these engineering achievements alive and in public view; and this ceremony this afternoon is an integral part of that process.

Thank you

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Greg Hallum QR Historian Speech Notes

From the Border, to Brisbane...

KYOGLE LINE.

"A GREAT ADVANTAGE"

"The Kyogle line should be finished in about 2 and a half years. It is the first step in the unification of the gauges, and I imagine that it will be a, great advantage to Brisbane to have a connection of that kind."

The Brisbane Courier , Wednesday 15 September 1926, page 9

In 1887, a railway link through to the Queensland- New South Wales border was completed by the Queensland government. This railway travelled via an inland route through Toowoomba and Warwick to the border. The Queensland Railways line ended at a small township called Wallan-garra.

A line from New South Wales, via Tenterfield, to Wallan-garra was completed in 1888. Until the opening of the railway via Kyogle and the Richmond Gap, train travellers leaving Central or Roma Street, made their way to Toowoomba, then via Warwick to the border.

Here they changed trains on to the New South Wales system, and travelled through the New England tablelands, through Armidale, Tamworth, Werris Creek, to Maitland. This journey originally took 36 hours, although by the late 1920s this was reduced to 27 hours. By the post war period, after the opening of the Uniform Gauge Railway, the Brisbane Limited train was completing the journey in 20 hours.

The Queensland side of the railway to Kyogle was built by the Queensland Railway Department under contract to the Railway Council, a body formed of Commonwealth, New South Wales and Queensland representatives (other states were not represented as they failed to contribute to the uniform gauge scheme to link the state capitals.)

This linking of the state capitals was however, not accomplished without considerable rancour on many levels. A century ago the then Commissioner for Queensland Railways J F Thallon was a strenuous advocate of the 3ft. 6in. (1067 mm) gauge which in many ways had been pioneered in Queensland, in the 1860s. His argument was that with any introduction of a national gauge, than for the needs of a young country which has long distances to traverse, he considered it most appropriate gauge for use. In 1896-97 he compiled statistical information supporting his contention that expense changing QR gauge (from 3' 6" 1067 mm to 4' 8 1/2" 1435 mm) not warranted. His argument was based on geography, and at that time what was considered the unlikely event of any great volume of goods traffic between Queensland and New South Wales. After the South African War (1899-1902) he maintained his contention that it was a serviceable width (of gauge), and would use this example to point out that the South African railways carried all the required traffic in war time, using exactly the same gauge. He also stated that Victoria and New South Wales at this time were the only "countries south of the Equator" which had not adopted 3ft6 (1067mm).

In 1910, Lord Kitchener had visited Australia to provide recommendations on how the new country was to attempt to defend itself in the event of a general war breaking out. Amongst Kitchener's recommendations was for a Railway Council of Defence to be formed to secure cooperation in time of war. The Commonwealth Government agreed to this and asked the state governments to implement this. It was their decision that the Chief Commissioners of the various Australian state railways constitute the council. The Railway War Council was to have its first meeting in Sydney May 1911.

The Daily Mail commented that at the Meeting Commissioner Thallon "was completely isolated by his insistence upon retaining the 3ft 6in gauge for the portion of the military line intended to connect all the State capitals by a uniform gauge."

Despite his advocacy for a uniform or standard link, on the Queensland gauge, Thallon was unable to see this through. He died in office in early 1911, and was eventually succeeded by Colonel Charles Evans, a fifty year veteran of the Queensland Railways. Evans was more supportive of uniform gauge link, although seemed to prefer a link via the Tweed River. His overseas trip to Europe and the United States, saw him in London as the Great War erupted, and watching the mobilisation of the armies in the early part of the war. It was to demonstrate to him the importance of the link in times of crisis.

After many years of agitation, an agreement was reached between the Commonwealth, Queensland and New South Wales. The Railway Department under contract acted as construction authority as far as the Border. The line was actually laid to 3 foot 6 gauge (1067mm) but on wide sleepers and standard gauge 4 feet 8 ½ (1435mm) formation. It connected with the Beaudesert Tramway and Dulbolla and a number of excursions were run from Brisbane and one from Beaudesert before one rail was moved out to standard gauge. The first sod was turned at Rocklea on 17 January 1925. The final cost of the railway from Grafton to the Queensland border, including reconstruction on the line from Grafton to Kyogle, was £4, 791, 952.

The line opened officially on 27 September 1930 with through services to Sydney (there being a train ferry over the Clarence River until May 1932 when the bridge opened). The line was owned by Queensland Rail (QR) but operated by the New South Wales Government Railways, and its successor organisations. This was under an agreement between the two states which dated back to the depression and included a provision for Queensland Rail staff to transfer to the so that jobs were not lost to Queenslanders. QR continues to maintain the track.

The line was designed to avoid break-of-gauge between the capitals and to avoid the high altitude climbs required on the Wallangarra route. This included the construction of the Border Tunnel which was at the end of Queensland section of the Uniform Gauge Railway. Construction of the tunnel required diversion of a creek and several weeks pumping to overcome the water problem during tunnelling. There were other problems associated with liquid as well during the construction works. One of the "navvie" camps on the Cougal Spiral rejoiced in the name of "Metho Flat", a reference to the preferred refreshments partaken there.

The tunnel was constructed under the state border of Queensland and New South Wales, and is significant that it is the only transport link between Australian states completed by tunnel. Some might say that, for many years it also signified the traditional sporting outcome for Queenslanders, in both Rugby League, and Sheffield Shield, with an eternity in darkness, before finally emerging into the light. There was another bit of social history attached to the completion of the tunnel as a young nipper on the works was the first to pass a billy of tea through the completed breakthrough bore on the tunnel. That nipper later became Senator Neville Bonner, the first Indigenous person in the Federal Parliament.

Originally the interstate, and South Brisbane railways stopped at the Melbourne Street (South Brisbane) terminus. The station opened in 1891, and was built well above the then known flood level. Several surveys were made of connections across the river, including one in 1889-90 and another in 1913-14. The first plan envisaged a triangular connection enabling train to run either to Roma Street or Central (but not both) and required very sharp curves on the north side of the river. Later surveys provided a junction on the Ipswich side of Roma Street. The cross river line was not given a high priority, as trams provided a connection

between inner Brisbane and the railways on the "South side," via the Victoria Bridge, although there was also seen no problem to train travellers having to "leg it" across the Victorian Bridge either.

Approval was given in 1956 for construction of a cross river link, but again, never begun.

Finally approval was given in the early 1970s. Construction started on the tunnel under Roma Street as the official start of the project on 5 August 1974. The bridge design was prepared by Cameron, McNamara and Partners Pty Ltd, consulting engineers and they were appointed to supervise the construction. The bridge contract for \$13.6 million was awarded to Transfield (Q) Pty Ltd, including bridge and viaduct. McDougall Ireland constructed the tunnel.

The Merivale Bridge was opened on 18 November 1978, and its graceful arch completed the integration of the railway system in suburban Brisbane. However, it was also designed to be able carry a dual gauge (or double track line) across the Brisbane River. The bridge is the longest single span on the Queensland Rail network yet constructed, and was to eventually include the first example of dual narrow and standard gauge main line in Queensland.

The final extension across the Brisbane River, to the new Roma Street Transit Centre, was completed on 24 May 1986. The new line required a gauntlet track, and additional rail to provide a mixed gauge line over the Merivale Bridge. So, after fifty six years, the first Brisbane Limited train to and from Sydney made its way into the long distance railway station in Queensland. Its extension across the river also allowed for several other what (as a historian), I would consider important moments in the wheel of things- such as allowing 3801 to visit Roma Street in 1988, for the Bi-centenary, and then in 1989 allow the "Flying Scotsman" to steam into the state capital.

The first XPT entered regular service to Roma Street in 1990, and since then the Countrylink service provides the rail journey north and south. The new arrival platform for trains at Roma Street became Platform Two, in 2007, as the Busway became Number One and the mixed gauge was also extended over to Platform Three, thereby allowing the 1870s Roma Street terminal station to see standard gauge trains, as required. Or again for those of us with steam in our blood see the Queensland Rail heritage steam locomotives mix it with the XPT on odd occasions.

So it is good that after a quarter of century since the uniform gauge made it over the river, that it this important link being honoured today by Engineers Australia. As the original Roma Street station today is sheathed in scaffolding and conservation works are underway, it will be good in time to come, for people waiting across from it to spend some time contemplating before or after the journey from Sydney the importance of the story beneath the bogies of their train, courtesy of Engineers Australia.

NEWS Report

Grafton to Brisbane Standard Rail Gauge Heritage Recognition.

On wed 7th December 2011, an important Engineering Heritage ceremony was held at Roma St railway Station to recognise the completion of the first interstate standard gauge rail connection between Grafton in NSW and Sth Brisbane in 1930 and on to Roma St in the CBD in 1986. Attended by some 45 guests, Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland Ms Penelope Wensley AC unveiled an interpretive panel and an Engineering Heritage National Landmark (EHNL) in the company of Mr John Pistak, Chief Network Officer Qld rail, and Mr Dennis Wogan, President Qld division Engineers Australia.

The ceremony was conducted at a temporary location overlooking the Station, and the panels and Landmark will be erected permanently near the Interstate Platforms in line with extensive restoration work in 2012. Mr Andrew Barnes, Chair of the Engineering Heritage Australia-Qld panel, chaired the ceremony and outlined the overall importance of the program, reminding everyone of the immense hardships endured by the work force in the steep wet forests of the border range crossing.

Mr John Heathers, newly appointed Chair of Engineering Heritage Australia, described the national program of heritage recognition to increase the public's understanding of engineering and engineers through their outstanding achievements.

Rail historian, Mr Greg Hallam, gave a detailed review of the tedious political events after federation leading up to the final extension of the standard 4ft 8.5in gauge to Queensland, including the visit from the UK by Lord Kitchener in 1910 who emphasized the importance of a common national rail system in planning for the defence of the country. Each state designed and constructed the line in their respective states, with the Queensland portion starting at the 1.150km tunnel under the Richmond Range on the border. The interstate terminal at Sth Brisbane was used from 1930 up to 24 May 1986, when the line was extended to Roma St over the new Merivale Rail Bridge which had been completed in 1978.

Her Excellency, who is well known for her support for Engineering Heritage throughout the state, expressed thanks for the invitation to conduct unveiling, this being her 5th ceremony for Engineers Australia since 2010. The full transcript of her speech will be found in due course on the web site www.govhouse.qld.gov.au/the_governor/speeches_articles (this link no longer connects)

Brian Beconsall- Draft #1- 18 Dec 2011

Photographs from the ceremony



Dennis Wogan EAQ Chair, John Pistak QR, Governor of Queensland Penelope Wensley, ?????



John Pistak QR, Governor, Andrew Barnes EHQ Chair, John Heathers EHA Chair



Mrs Coghlan, Paul Coghlan, Governor



EHQ Committee 2011