

MEDIA RELEASE



21 June, 2023

Railway Preservation Society turns 50

One of Australia's most loved heritage railways is steaming up and preparing to celebrate its 50th Anniversary. The Society's volunteers completely operate the entire organisation and are totally committed to conservation, restoration, maintenance and running the authentic heritage Pichi Richi Railway.

Half a century ago, on July 22, 1973, at a public meeting in Port Augusta's Coinda Hall, Pichi Richi Railway Preservation Society was established with the objectives of preserving the historic dry-stone walls and the railway bridges along the original 1800's railway, which includes a section of the original Ghan line.

Just 12 months after being established, the Society was running heritage trains along the old narrow-gauge line, using original steam locomotives and rolling stock.

Over the past 50 years the PRR in Quorn has become a key tourist destination in the Flinders Ranges of South Australia and in 2021 Pichi Richi Railway was awarded the Winner of the SA Tourism Award for Tourist Attraction.

In 2022 the township of Quorn was announced the Winner of the SA Tourism's Tiny Tourism Town.

In addition to riding the authentic and historic Pichi Richi Railway there's the history of the town itself, as Quorn was once a thriving commercial centre at the intersection of the railway lines across, and from south to north of Australia. Aside from the historic buildings in Quorn there are many new and interesting businesses set amongst the natural beauty of the region.

We recommend visitors allow a few days to explore this regional town in outback Australia, which is located under 4 hours' drive from Adelaide.

On Saturday 22 July and open to the public, showing just after sunset, will be a short movie premiering on the Quorn Silo Light Show showing some of the history and wonderful volunteering achievements of Pichi Richi Railway.

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PRRPS will be hosting an Anniversary Dinner for their Foundation, Honorary Life Members and current members, as well as a small number of VIPs, and corporate supporters, including ARTC (Australian Rail Track Corporation).

The original three principal lobbyists who understood the historical significance are no longer with us, being Reg Mayes (First PRRPS President) L Quentin Smith (First Honorary Secretary) and Trevor Ward (First Honorary Treasurer). However, their families will be attending the events and representing these very determined individuals.

Other key guests include the Hon. Geoff Brock M.P., Hon. Eddie Hughes M.P., Flinders Ranges Councils' Mayor Ken Anderson and CEO Eric Brown, Port Augusta Mayor Linley Shine and CEO John Banks.

On Sunday 23 July we are running a Pichi Richi Explorer train departing Quorn at 10am to Woolshed Flat and return and tickets can be purchased via our website or at the FRVIC.

In mid-2024 Pichi Richi Railway will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Society's FIRST train which ran on part of the volunteer-restored "Old Ghan" line. The restored section of old narrow gauge Central Australia Railway between Quorn and Summit line was reopened by Sir Mark Oliphant in 1974. This anniversary event will be marked with a steam festival, open to the public and be widely publicised.

Pichi Richi Railway has been completely and continually run by volunteers for 5 decades and their contribution to heritage rail and South Australia's regional tourism, an outstanding achievement.

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