

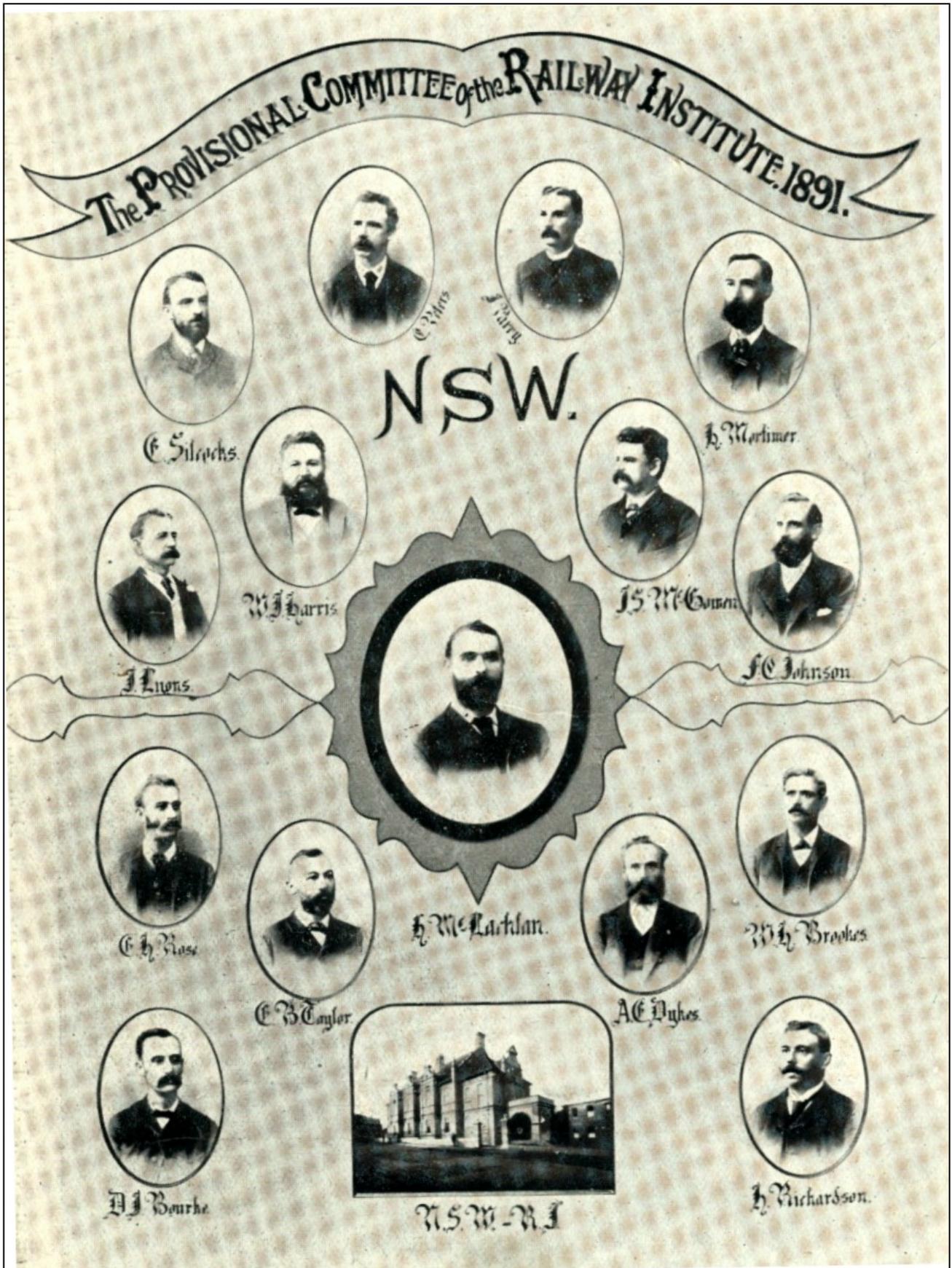
NSW Railway Institute

**Historical account of development  
and progress over the past**

**124**

**years**

# Provisional Committee 1891



# NSW RAILWAY INSTITUTE

## Life Members

1891 - 2011



C. A. Goodchap



E.M.G. Eddy



C.N.J. Oliver



D. Kirkcaldie

W. .M. McMillan	W.T. Foxlee	W.J. Morris	J. Chudleigh	C.C. Mason	E.H. Fairhall	F.C. Garside	T.J. Hartigan C.M.G.
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RT. Hon. Sir George Reid P.C.	H. Carruthers	J.P. Horan	J. B. Suttor	W.G. Thomas	G. Denison	Mrs. Mould	J. McSweeney
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J. Fraser C.M.G.	J. Scott	J.W. Balmer	W. McNamara	T. Burt	T.K. Mc Gowan	P.J. Fahey	H.C. Judd
J.J.C Bradfield	D. Kirkcaldie	J. Webb	W.E. Newell	H.B. Howe	A.E. Heaydon	S. Butler	J.D. Reid
D.C. Williamson	J. Parry	P.J. Lipman	A.M. Costelloe	R. Scott	E.D. Austin	D.J. Howse	C. Gardiner
A.J. Carruthers	G. Downe	E. H. Rose	J.P. Callaghan	G. Kay	S.R. Miller	K.A. Fraser	Dr. G.H.Taylor
F. De Courcey Brown	J.C. Thom	H.E. Sherlock	S.B. Williams	G. Macoun	R. Embleton	P.C. Sharp	W.R. Brewer
A.H.D Humphries	T.R. Firth	J. Kennedy	J. Russell	A. E. Jobson	S. Redshaw	W.A. Anderson	H.A. Downey
J. Angus	N. Selfe	G.C. Jones	W.J. Napier	A. Gannoni	H. Young	W. Gillespie	K. Clift
W. Gilliver	C. Cowper	D. Hadkins	D. Cumming	J. Turner	H. Harrison	C.G. Hynes	R.A. Stephens
T.Tate	W.J. Adams	W. Kirkham	M.J. Lacey	P.S. Hunt	A. Crow	A. Temple	R.F.W. Graham
J. Browne	W.M. Noakes	M.B. Donnellan	W.M. Fehon	F. W. Bretnall	G.W. Gerrard	H.J. Egan	E.E. Lucy
J.M. Cook	R. Imray	W. Finlay	W.S. Fullwood	J.S. Cargill	H. Fox	R.B. Roberts	Dr. T.L. O'Reilly
W. Monie	A. Gee	C.R.S. Gow	W.T. Sorrell	J.T. Chapman	R. Slater	J.C. Davies	Dr. B. Foulds
W. Tyson	E.B. Taylor	H. Rose	F. Wolff	F. Dowling	P.B. Hamilton	W.J. Rochaix	W.H. Newman
R. Richardson	H.R. Hill	W. Pollard	O.W. Brain	A. Stewart	W. Russell	R.J. Funnell	E.E. Frewin
C.H. Stanger	J. Scoular	E.L. Wailes	A. Percival	A.D.J. Forster	A.J. Harvey	G. Johnson	Mrs. J.D. Reid
W. Thow	W. Hoare	L. Birks	D. Childs	J.C. Harford	E. Silcocks	C. O'Mara	J. Usher
N. McCusker	E.H. Jones	F. Snelson	G. Christensen	T.Booth	W. Maddox	W.H. Jenkins	D.E. Bliss
<b>A.J. McAndrew</b>	W.A. McAnalley	C. Nunn	L.V. Morrow	W.B. Mahony	W.J. Harper	W.H. Nerney	R. Harrison
W. Lindsay	F. Lummis	J. Bone	A. Harvison	R.B. Brown	C. Mahoney	R. Yohnck	T. Sharpe
K. Rainford	T. Hunter	G. Harnish					

**NSW RAILWAY INSTITUTE  
BOARD OF ADMINISTRATORS**

1891 – 1909

**H. Mclachlan**

1910 – 1918

**E. B. Taylor**

1919- 1932

**D. Cummings**

1933 – 1940

**G. W. Nicholas**

1940 – 1958

**R. J. Funnell**

1958 – 1965

**A J. McAndrew**

1965 – 1970

**L. V. Morrow**

1970 – 1976

**T. H. Cash**

1976 – 1983

**R. J. Pretty**

1983 – 1988

**D. K. Pitt**

1988 – 1995

**J. Delapp**

1995 – 1998

**C. Buckley**

1998 – Present

**R.W. Ritchie**

## HISTORY

The NSW Railway Institute was formally opened on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1891. It was then the first and only Institution of its kind in the Commonwealth and since that time others had been founded in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, and Tasmania on similar lines. To some extent, in imitation of ours, it can therefore be claimed to have set the example of a wise undertaking in the interests of the Railway Staff in this part of the world.



To the late Chas. A. Goodchap, who was Commissioner for Railways from 1878 to 1888, must be given credit of cherishing the idea and of taking the first practical step towards its fruition. On Mr. Goodchap's retirement from office he was presented by staff with a testimonial of £500 (pounds). He at once announced his intention of making this sum the nucleus for the purchases of a library for the use and enjoyment of the staff, and induced the government of the day to supplement that sum with a like amount.



Mr. E.M.G. Eddy, the Chief Commissioner of the then new administration, cordially supported the scheme, for he was in possession of a mass of information relating to similar institutions in England and America, and was impressed with their usefulness. A committee was appointed by the Board of Commissioners and Representatives of different departments to draw up rules for the government of the Institute. In 1890 this committee was succeeded by a provisional committee elected by the various branches that consisted of:

H. McLachlan Esq. (Chairman), E.B. Taylor Hon. (Organising Secretary), J. S. McGowen, H. Richardson, J. Parry, F. Johnson, H. Mortimore, E. Silcocks, C. Peters, J.

Lyons, W. J. Harris, E. H. Rose, W. H. Brooks, D. J. Bourke, A. E. Dykes.

The design of the building was the result of a competition of which £50(pounds) was given, the winner J. T. Robinson a local architect supervised the work carried out by Thomas Henley of Balmain. The Government provided funding to carry out the work, which was completed and equipped by the inaugural open day.

Since then considerable alterations were made to meet the growing requirements of the members and students with a large hall capable of seating 500, a smaller hall seating 200, a large library, reading room, billiard room, class rooms, retiring rooms, gymnasium and librarian quarters. Yet this accommodation was found inadequate to meet the growing requirements of the students and the aims of the Council.

Below is the extract from the original report covering THE OPENING OF THE RAILWAY INSTITUTE, 14<sup>TH</sup> March 1891.



"A stranger in Sydney, riding on one of the trams between the city and Botany, when passing near the Redfern Railway Terminus, observed a handsomely proportioned brick edifice situated at the north-east corner of the station yard, close to one of the entrances to Prince Alfred Park. Impressed with its tasteful appearance, he inquired of a fellow passenger its nature and uses. The individual so addressed, evidently a railway employee replied, Oh, that is the Railway Institute, and then proceeded to explain that it had been established for the use of the Railway workers, at the same time describing its advantages and utility. His listener was much interested in the information afforded, and thinking that others might also feel some interest in the history of an institution occupying such a unique position in Australasia as does the Railway Institute, the following facts concerning its origin, management, and prospects have been collected and arranged."

## FOUNDATION



The building was formerly opened by Sir William McMillan (Minister for Railways) on the evening of Saturday, March 14th, 1891 its objects being the education, recreation and welfare of the staff of the Department of Railway.

The lecture hall was crowded with Railway employees, with every branch of the service being represented, and among the visitors on the platform were:

The Hon. Sir Henry Parkes, G.C.M.G., (Colonial Secretary and Premier),

The Hon W. McMillan (Colonial Treasurer and Minister for Railways),

Mr. E.M.G. Eddy (Chief Railway Commissioner),

W.M. Fehon and C.N.J. Oliver (Railway Commissioners),

Mr. C. A. Goodchap, M.L.A. (Ex-Commissioner for Railways).

Also included were other Railway Department and Branch managers along with many leading citizens of the day.

The Hon. W. McMillan declared the Institute open, and concluded his address in the following words:

*"It was a proud feeling to him to know that it had fallen to my duty to open this magnificent institution. I could only hope that under this roof there would be a spirit of intellectual activity and of fair dealing and of friendship with one's companions, and that the future of the Railways Service Institute would be great and prosperous"*

Sir Henry Parkes also delivered a lengthy and interesting address, which concluded with the following:

*"Real happiness in a country consisted in having so much of the gentleman in every man as to cause him to respect the rights and privileges of other men. And I looked to the Institute to do so much in the direction of improving the condition of those connected with it, to raise the character of all, and to impress the true sense of brotherhood upon all those connected with that great and important public service."*

Mr. Eddy also referred to his expectations of the work of the Institute, and said:

*"The Commissioners thought the best way to ensure the success of the Institute would be practically to allow the management to fall into the hands of the men themselves, they simply keeping a watch over it to assure that it was not diverted from the object for which it was started. The committee would open technical classes, and the Commissioners would render every assistance enabling those classes to be formed, and those classes, in conjunction with the system the Commissioners had commenced of sending some of their promising young men, after learning all they could do here to the workshops in England and America, would enable any man of ability to become as well educated in railway matters as in any part of the world."*

## PROGRESS

In the early years of the Institute, the social activities were more dominant than the educational, but it was not long before the needs of the younger men of the service became more insistent, and the Council of the Institute set itself to work to provide the means for that training which is an absolute essential of success, both for the individual and the Department. The goal the Council set before itself was the training of our own men for every position in the service. The rapid growth of the numbers of the staff emphasised the need for this training, and widen the field of the Institute's opportunities. During that life of the Institute the numbers employed in the service had doubled and the average number of new entrants was nearly 800 annually, all of whom had to be trained in the work they had to do. A committee of the Council was appointed to consider this question, and after careful deliberation drew up a schedule of the subjects that were needed to be studied for every grade and calling within the department. To that end classes had been formed which embraced the following:

Accounts, Goods & Coaching	Safe Railway Working	Arithmetic	Shorthand, Elementary
Applied Mechanics	Shorthand, Advanced	Chemistry	Shorthand, Reporting
Electricity, Physics	Telegraphy	Electricity, Applied	Typewriting
Locomotive Engine Driving	Westinghouse Brake	Mathematics	English and Composition
Mechanical Drawing	Elementary and Geometrical, Advanced		

All classes were free to members, and on payment of 5s per annum member's sons could also attend. In addition to free instruction, free passes were granted to junior student employees, and half-fares to seniors and sons of members to attend the classes. Prizes and certificates were awarded to those who gained the required percentage of marks at the annual examination. In order for those who passed their examinations successfully and gain the rewards of their efficiencies, their certificates were noted on their official history record, and were taken into consideration when the Heads of their Branch considered promotions.

Ladies Classes were also developed and opened to the wives and daughters of members so as to further their education with classes in: Dressmaking and Cutting Millinery Painting Cooking etc.

The social side of the Institute has always been a marked and attractive feature of its life. Among the many social activities for members were the 'Glee Club' and the 'Dramatic Club', others included games such as billiards, chess, draughts which held a prominent place, while the gymnasium attracted the young and active youths whose prowess in boxing, wrestling, and general gymnastics have won many State championships. Other clubs continued to be formed such as cycling, cricket, and miniature rifle range shooting, then later on bridge, darts, lawn bowls, golf, tenpin bowling, basketball, hockey, billiards/snooker and football.

The Institute had always been made available for charity concerts and benevolent purposes and allowed free usage of the large hall to various sick and accident societies, the hospital Fund, and similar organizations. The Ambulance branches made their headquarters in the Institute for practice and business purposes, while the various metropolitan district picnic committees utilised the building for their annual agendas. Tom Anderson and Dick Oxenham started regular Eisteddfods in 1925, by 1960 there were over 10,500 entrants and 504 sections, in their time there were none equal in size and grandeur as those held at the Institute up to their close in the 1970's.

By 1960 the Institute had some 8,492 students being tutored by 164 teaches in subjects type subjects as: Accounts Coaching and Goods, Algebra, Arithmetic, English, Geometry, Trigonometry, Shorthand, Timekeeping, Typewriting, Morse Telegraphy, Radio, Foremanship, Car & Wagon Examining, Dies, Electric & Diesel Loco Driving, Diesel & Electric Loco Maintenance, D L Engineers Course, Electricity & Magnetism, Explosives, Motor Car Maintenance, Safe Railway Working, Signwriting, Show Card & Ticket Writing, Signalling & Interlocking, Ticket Collection, Sketching(Railway), Inspector Bridges & Buildings, Inspector Permanent Way, Locomotive Way & Works, Trainee Engineman, Dressmaking and Ballroom Dancing.

The Institute prepared and distributed the first Railway paper called "The Railway Budget". The paper became a valued and informative item for country members, as its objective was to keep members abreast of what was happening, not only the general matters in the Railway but what was happening throughout the world. It served as a major railway communications paper particularly in country areas that did not always receive city newspapers.

In short no organization within the Department needed to go elsewhere to conduct their business, from these facts it can be seen how large a part in the life of Railway employees the Institute filled.

## Extract written by A. E. Jobson Hon. Secretary of The NSW Railway Institute 1910)

### Railway Jubilee

*"This reference to the Institute would hardly be complete without some allusion to the Jubilee Exhibition in 1905, which was organised and carried to a successful conclusion by the Council. The display was very comprehensive and well-illustrated the progress of Railways in this state from their infancy. Each branch of the Department made its own display showing the progress of its methods and appliances, and contrasting them with those then in use.*

*The history of our Railways, by Mr. G. A. Gilder, gave a finish to the week and provided a memento, which will take its place in the archives of our state history.*

*The financial result was also very satisfactory and the Chief Commissioner directed that the surplus should be used in a fitting manner. It was used to found a Railway Jubilee Scholarship in Engineering. After an open competition among the young men of the service, Mr. A. D. J. Forster was selected to become the Railway student at the Sydney University for four years. The period of his studies has now terminated, with credit to himself and the Institute. He is intending to proceed to England for a couple years to gain experience in the great workshops of England and Germany.*

*"In concluding this brief reference to the work of the Institute, it is hoped that the young men of the Service will recognise its value to themselves individually and to the whole staff as a centre of educational and intellectual activity, which has had, and must continue, to exercise the most happy and beneficial influence upon all who come within its sphere. The work of the Institute is purely voluntary, and for that reason makes appeal to the best instincts within us, not only to help ourselves, but to help others to achieve worthy ends by worthy means".*

### GROWTH

During the next 100 years the Institute was the railway's focal point for the majority of employee training, apprenticeships and scholarships for the large number of trade and non-trade personnel required to maintain and run the continually expanding railway system. Men and women from all back grounds and cultures were employed and trained at the Institute not only in the general educational syllabus of 'reading, writing and arithmetic' it also trained employees in the peculiar and in some areas the unique aspects of railway systems, plant and equipment. In 1919, when the Railway Commissioner of the day, realised the Institute's potential value to the Department he decided to take it over as a Departmental Branch.

Prior to this the organization was still controlled by the Council. In their wisdom the Commissioners appointed a Director and then instituted a system of collecting subscriptions through the pay-sheets. By 1928 membership had grown from 5,565 to 28,000, and by 1960 the numbers were well over 34,000 representing approximately 60% of the staff.

As training requirements grew, in 1926 the Institute moved the administrative staff into a five storey rented building in Hay Street, and later moved into the 'Wills Building', 267-273 Castlereagh Street, where it occupied the greater proportion of the six-storey building.

The Institute created branches in major country towns throughout the state so training could take place locally, reducing the need to come to the city. These buildings with their own library became the town library in many cases. They were not only the local focal point for training and education, but became the meeting place for the community to participate in various sporting and social activities in the town with many dances and dinners being held regularly in their halls.

To further train and educate railway employees in remote areas the Commissioners provided the Institute with special carriages fitted out with equipment for training in the uses and applications of Safe Working, Westinghouse Air Brakes and Locomotive Instruction as well as other training syllabuses peculiar to railway working, including books, work manuals, instruction papers and field instructors or teaches.

The carriages would be dropped off at outback sidings in NSW where no major towns or Institute buildings were nearby, instruction and training would be carried-out. At conclusion the carriages would be coupled to a train and moved on to the next remote location to continue further training.

### DIVERSIFICATION

In the mid-seventies an executive decision was made to establish special training facilities with instructional workshops at Strathfield that later moved and became known as the Apprentice training College at Chullora, further training venues were established at Petersham and Belmore Colleges which came under the control of Staff Development. From that point in time the Institute was no longer involved with training and had to address its own future and direction.

It turned its attention to improving and developing better social, life style, leisure, and sporting pursuits for members; while not straying from its original directive the Institute maintained the employees social aspects.

In the late eighties staff proposed an ambitious plan to Management to purchase a holiday cabin and make it affordable for members to rent while on holidays. The idea was a huge success particularly for employee members on minimal wages who could not afford to take their family on holidays.

Since then the Institute has gone on to successfully purchase more and more cabins including properties.

To date it now has 10 self-contained mobile homes in 6 locations, together with 2 \* 3 bedroom townhouses, 1 \* 2 bedroom villa, 1 \* 2 bedroom apartment and 2 \* 2 bedroom units in 3 other locations.

Mobile Homes: Bateman's Bay (2), Soldiers Point (2), Port Macquarie (2), Nambucca Heads (2), Woolgoolga (1), Byron Bay (1).

Housing: Coolangatta (3), The Entrance (1), Forster/Tuncurry (2)

A member card program offering discounts to hotel/motels, restaurants, family attractions, leisure activities, health and wellbeing programs, movie and theme park tickets, not only available for use at point of sale but including an online shopping program.

Other discount programs have also been introduced over the years providing a highly valued membership package.

## CHANGE

In the late 90's with rationalisation and cost saving programs in the Railways, the powers in control deemed the Institute to not be cost effective in the modern rail era and would be closed.

Through strong lobbying by members a Deed of Agreement was finalised on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1998 between the State Rail Authority and the Institute, as of that date the NSW Railway Institute, was registered under the Incorporations Act as an Incorporated not for profit incorporation.

On Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1999 the Institute staff finished up with the SRA and on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January signed on as employees of the Institute.

The outgoing SRA Board gave the manager the authority to continue running the Institute on a day-to-day basis until a new board of members was elected.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1999 an "Inaugural Special General Meeting" of members was called to elect members as officers to represent the newly incorporated Railway Institute Board of Management. That resulted with the Institute turning full circle back to its inaugural first opening in March 1891, exactly 108 years to the month with members taking control and managing the Institute as the then Commissioner Mr. Eddy had stated in his address at the first opening all those years ago, *"that the best way to ensure the success of the Institute would be practically to allow the management to fall into the hands of the men themselves"*.

## TODAY

The Railway Institute is a member funded incorporated body, independent of Transport NSW, although still maintaining strong ties to transport and their employees as well as Institute members.

While the Institute's administration no longer has access to the original building on the corners of Devonshire and Chalmers streets, it operates out of the Old Railway Station at Petersham (as part of the agreement reached with the SRA and Institute in the deed). Petersham does not have the room as was in the Old Institute building too entertain the many activities that took place in the big hall and rooms.

However, the Institute still provides a diverse range of benefits and services more active with social and leisure pursuits for its members that include:

- Holiday Accommodation in NSW (Institute owned and managed)
- Member reciprocating privileges with other states Institutes & New Zealand
- Discount saver card programs (Entertainment & Spendless Cards)
- Discount Insurance programs (Aon online discount insurance & AIG travel and accident insurance)
- Auto Search Facility (nil agent fees or commissions to members)
- Mantra Group Resort Accommodation (Australian and International packages)
- Theme Park and movie tickets
- JR Turks Electrical
- PPG Paints
- Lawrence Dry Cleaning Services
- Airport Shuttle Services
- H2O Hotwater
- Nicscape Landscaping
- Free Online Shopping Vouchers
- Castle Hill Travel Agents

The Institute still actively promotes and fosters sports by providing annual funding and trophies to the various sports bodies associated to it, along with supplying sporting equipment, board games, cards, snooker and table tennis tables, gym equipment, and various other social items to Rail Entity work locations and depots throughout NSW.

The Institute attends and sponsor annual Christmas picnics and railway events throughout the year, donating, prizes, show bags, holidays, monetary donations and BBQ's to assist in managing on the particular day.

Major events include:

"NSW & Sydney Trains event days" - "Annual Safety Day" - "City to Surf" - "Annual picnics"

Individual and group sporting events

Consideration and donations are given too many charitable events that members are involved with annually

The NSW Railway Institute Inc., its staff, and board of management are proud of what's been achieved to date and look forward to the future longevity and sustained growth of the membership and services that it provides to members, the railway, and the non-member community.

Our Mission Statement is and will continue:

***To provide a range of quality benefits and services to the members on a non-profit, value for money basis.  
To encourage social relationships for members through sports, leisure and recreational activities.  
To foster personal development of health and wellbeing in life style pursuits.***