



Bellarine Railway Rehabilitation Stage 2 Project Status Update

Reference: Update 02
Date: 29 August 2022

General

Following the project commencement notice that was published on Bellarine Railway's website (link here: [Bellarine Railway Track Upgrade | The Bellarine Railway](#);) monthly project status updates will be published to inform communities and local residents of the project. The latest project objectives can be found under **Attachment 1**.

Project Progress since last update

Following activities have been undertaken since April:

- More materials (sleepers, rails and fasteners) have been procured and delivered to Bellarine Railway.
- Preferred Head Contractor has been nominated to deliver the major track upgrade works.
- Welding works were not completed at Andersons Rd, this is to be completed together with the major track upgrade works.

Project Progress – Upcoming Works

Following activities are planned to be undertaken over the 4 weeks:

- Continuation of material procurement
- Site inspections and preliminary paperwork with nominated Head Contractor
- Testing of tamping machine
- Preparation works: rail plating along corridor and sleeper boring at Lakers Siding. NOTE: There will be no impact to vegetation or to rail trail
- Obtaining permits and approvals from relevant authorities
- Upon receiving approvals, welding of rails between Andersons Rd and Drysdale Bypass



Project Schedule

Following schedule is anticipated:

- Permits & Approvals: August/September
- Off-Track Preparation Works: September/October
- Main Track Upgrade Works: Commence in October

A more detailed schedule and location of proposed works will be shared once a specific start date for track works is confirmed.

Non-Project Related Activities

Please be informed that there are always activities happening at Bellarine Railway, these may be related to day-to-day maintenance activities, authority works, volunteer works and any other non-project related activities.

Project related activities and updates will be shared via Bellarine Railway's webpage.

Permits & Approvals

Accuraco and Bellarine Railway are working closely with local councils and DELWP to ensure appropriate permits and approvals are received prior commencing major works on the rail corridor. A number of discussions are currently underway with DELWP, City of Geelong, and Heritage Victoria.

Stay Informed

As the project progresses, we will keep the community updated via advertising, website updates, letterbox drops and signages.

We will endeavour to provide clear and transparent regular updates on the project, as well as providing sufficient notice to nearby landowners and community groups of upcoming works and of its potential impact to their everyday activities.

Any queries or questions can be submitted to: Projects@bellarinerailway.com.au

Regards

Geelong Steam Preservation Society

ATTACHMENT 1: BELLARINE RAILWAY REHABILITATION STAGE 2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Project Funding

The Geelong Steam Preservation Society, operator of The Bellarine Railway have received Victorian State Government funding of \$3.43M from the Regional Tourism Investment Program – Stimulus Round for the Bellarine Tourist Railway Strategic Infrastructure Project – Stage 2.

Project Scope

1. This rehabilitation involves sleeper replacement, upgrade to heavier duty rail, ballasting, and tamping.
2. Establishment of ballast receiving and distributing site at Mannerim (Active for the works delivery only)
3. Vegetation control, (including Native vegetation assessment and consideration) along the 16.5km reservation to enable work crews to access the rail corridor.

What the Project is not

For clarity, the project will not include the following:

- Works will not include any new railway lines or buildings. It is a like-for-like replacement of end-of-life existing rail line asset.
- There is no intention to increase/alter the railway tracks for commercial/modern rail. The track is a narrow-gauge rail, that is not compatible with modern gauge rail lines such as V/Line or Metro Trains. It is not to form regional or modern rail with high traffic and speeds.
- Increasing number of services outside the current operating times: Services will remain consistent with the current operating times and capacity of volunteers.

Benefits

The outcome of the objectives would enable GSPS to achieve the following:

- **Improve operations of Bellarine Railway Services. Improved operations will realise a number of benefits, such as;**
 - Quieter operation via smoother tracks.
 - Less maintenance and disruptions to the operation.
 - Combined with the shed at Drysdale, less trips for empty trains at the start and end of service, reducing cost, noise and environmental impacts.
- **Allow for expansion of train experience offerings, increasing visitation and providing broader economic benefits to the region:**

These offerings will be focused on the heritage and tourism elements of the rail line and its rolling stock (historic trains). Being a tourist railway, GSPS are always very mindful of their community impact. Schedules for the train operations to and from Drysdale Station are envisaged to be practically the same as those that were normal pre-Covid. Operations generally occur between 0700 and 0100, with noise after 2200 at an absolute minimum, as naturally, safe operational practice must always be adhered to, in accordance with National Rail Safety Law.

- **Improve track infrastructure to support long-term sustainability of Bellarine Railway:**
The delivered improved lines will provide lower operating costs, improved safety and enable improved service/use of the historic trains, enabling better economic parameters to sustain its operation.
- **Indirect jobs and economic benefits created to supply chain businesses that support rail services:**
This includes all community along the line and associated tourism activities and business on the Bellarine Peninsula, such as restaurants, cafes, accommodation, and local producers/suppliers.
- **Better riding experience – replaced sleepers and rails will provide a quieter and improved riding quality:**
Improved service for customers, enabling a better overall offering. Improved speed and quieter operation albeit still within the capability and context of historic railways and tourism will enable ease of scheduling, both operationally and for maintenance. The new rolling stock sheds at Drysdale also improve operating efficiency by storing key rolling stock close to the trip commencement and completion point at Drysdale station for the majority of the railways services. I.e. each engine and carriages will have 2 less trips per operating day.
- **Reduce maintenance cost for both trains and tracks:**
The benefits of this smoother track will realise operating and maintenance cost benefits, time for volunteers to maintain the trains, and noise via a smoother operation.