



Eyre Peninsula Railway Preservation Society Inc.

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A “Port Lincoln Museum”

Port Lincoln currently has four museums, so why do we need another facility? All four are specialised niche operations:

- Axel Stenross Maritime Museum
- Port Lincoln Railway Museum
- Mill Cottage/Settlers Cottage
- Port Lincoln RSL Museum

Each make a valuable contribution to the preservation and display of Port Lincoln’s rich heritage, but there is a gap in the general history of the district.

The Opportunity

With the cessation of grain haulage by rail in 2019, the rail operator (One Rail Australia, formerly Genessee & Wyoming Australia) has significantly reduced its presence in town. The stone railway station building is heritage listed, and the Railway Museum currently occupies almost all of the ground floor. With One Rail vacating the top floor, the Eyre Peninsula Railway Preservation Society (operators of the Railway Museum) have taken up a lease on the whole building, commencing on 1 October 2020. The Railway Museum doesn’t need all the space which is becoming available.

The Concept

The suggestion is that the **top floor of the station building be dedicated to a general Port Lincoln Museum**, to cater for all the aspects of Port Lincoln’s history which are not currently represented.

Expanding this concept a little, there is an opportunity to create a “history precinct” here. The Railway Museum is working towards building a display shed for the locomotive and grain hopper which were donated to the museum by GWA, and this shed will be located between the station building and the freight shed (which is already an annexe to the Railway Museum). Having two museums in the one heritage-listed building, adjacent to the loco display shed, would encourage visitation to both museums and give Port Lincoln another significant tourist attraction.

How Might it Work?

The top floor of the station building is divided into multiple rooms of varying sizes. Rather than trying to establish a new organisation to set up everything, it has been suggested that a number of existing community groups and industries might like to take responsibility for just a room or part of a room and be responsible for setting up and maintaining displays related to each group's area of interest. We would encourage each group to refresh or update their display every now and then.

It is expected that a diverse range of topics would be covered, touching on all aspects of life in and around Port Lincoln over the years. Possible displays could cover:

- Aboriginal history and culture
- Agriculture industry
- Aquaculture industry
- Churches and their congregations
- Clubs and societies (hobbies, special interests)
- European settlement
- Fishing industry
- Port Lincoln township evolution
- Service clubs
- Sporting clubs and competitions
- Tunarama festival
- *Any other suggestions – please come forward! This list is only a starting point.*

There would need to be a collective, co-ordinated arrangement for volunteers to open the museum on a rostered basis. With multiple groups involved, this duty can be shared around so that it would not be necessary for representatives from each group to be in attendance every time the museum is open.

Some Specifics

The lease on the premises allows us to use the top floor for “museum purposes” only.

The top floor has its own entrance off the street via a wide staircase, and is not accessible from within the Railway Museum. There is no lift, but we have in-principle agreement from One Rail and the Heritage Branch to install a chairlift on the stairs. Disability grant funding can be obtained for such facilities.

Separate Ladies and Gents toilets are on the top floor. There is a small work area with sink and refrigerator, suitable for tea and coffee making but not full catering.

A long corridor runs through the centre of the top floor, with multiple rooms of varying sizes opening off the corridor. Some of the rooms also open through to an adjoining room. The whole building is State Heritage-listed, so we cannot make any structural changes. All displays must be free-standing and cannot be attached to the

walls. A limited number of office desks are available for use. Groups will be responsible for providing their own lockable cabinets for valuable items (but see below for possible assistance with this).

Operational Arrangements

In time, the cooperative arrangement may evolve into its own operating entity with responsibility for income and expenses, but this may not be workable in the first few years.

Initially we are suggesting that the Railway Museum sells tickets for the upstairs “Port Lincoln Museum” at the Railway Museum ticket counter downstairs. We already have cash register and EFTPOS/credit card facilities, and the programmable cash register can print dated entry receipts. This would relieve the rostered “upstairs” attendant(s) from having to collect and manage cash.

Under this arrangement the EPRPS would retain the attendance income to help offset some of the lease costs. In return, the EPRPS would be making display space available free of charge to the “upstairs” groups. These groups would only be responsible for their own display costs and for participating in a shared roster for opening days.

The EPRPS can also use its registered charity and tax-deductible status to assist groups by auspicing fundraising and grant funding for public museum purposes.

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