



PUFFING BILLY RAILWAY

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PUFFING BILLY RELIC OF OUR MORE LEISURELY DAYS

The world famous steam train, The Puffing Billy Railway, is Australia's favourite train and one of the finest preserved steam railways in the world.

The railway which commenced operation in Australia on December 18, 1900 and operates every day except Christmas Day, is a genuine relic of our more leisurely days.

An historic steam train which runs regularly in the Victorian mountain district, it was built to serve at the turn of the century, and was used to transport goods and passengers throughout the district.

The line was opened by the Victorian Railways in 1900 between Upper Ferntree Gully and Gembrook, however, there was a struggle to keep the railway alive. From the early 1930s the Gembrook railway earned the reputation for being a financial liability on the Victorian Railways and due to a landslide in 1953, a subsequent decision was made to close the line in 1954.

It was during a series of farewell trips in 1955 that led to the Puffing Billy Preservation Society being established - to keep the train running, and it has been a success with figures of over eight million passengers now carried on the historic railway since re-opening in 1962.

Tourist services resumed between Belgrave and Menzies Creek in 1962, and were progressively extended to Emerald in 1965, Lakeside in 1975 and Gembrook in 1998.

The railway travels 25kms through the forests and fern gullies of the magnificent Dandenong Ranges to Emerald Lake Park and Gembrook- -the original terminus of the line- - and is one of two survivors of five experimental narrow gauge lines used to develop rural area in Victoria during the early 1900s.

Trains depart from Belgrave which is only 40kms or one hour east of Melbourne by car or coach. Easy access is also available by electric train from Melbourne in around one hour with a short walk from the electric train station to the Puffing Billy station.

Together with the traditional train journeys, Puffing Billy also offers a range of unique “First Class” travel and dining experiences in up to four luxurious, fully enclosed, saloon-style carriages, each seating up to 20 passengers. Choose from Lunch, which is available seven days a week or Dinner, on most Friday and Saturday evenings. Other evenings are available for groups of 60-80 passengers.

Group bookings on all scheduled trains may be made and special charter trains for groups of up to 250 are available. “Special Interest” groups can also be catered for with escorted tours.

Annual patronage to the railway is approaching 270,000 people annually and in addition to the well-known excursion train services, its unique products include:

- The Dinner Special – most Friday & Saturday evenings
- The ‘**Steam & Cuisine**’ luncheon train– daily first class service
- Days out with Thomas the Tank Engine
- Other activities such as Murder Mystery Trains, Jazz Trains and Drive an Engine experiences.
- External contracting in niche markets (e.g. steam locomotive overhaul and repair, timber bridge maintenance)

For further historic information please visit: www.puffingbilly.com.au

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