

Jenny Aitchison

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads



Media Release

Nambucca Heads Station marks 100 years

Wednesday, 29 November 2023

NSW TrainLink and Transport for NSW will join Nambucca Valley Council, Nambucca District Historical Society and community members at Nambucca Heads railway station to celebrate the centenary of the train station on Sunday 3 December.

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Jenny Aitchison said it was fitting to celebrate the station's 100th birthday and its ongoing significance over the last century.

"The opening of the station on 3 December 1923, connected the local community far beyond the Nambucca Valley, in a way that was accessible and affordable," Ms Aitchison said.

"Today we continue to see the importance of these rail connections to places like Nambucca Heads, with around 30,000 people using NSW TrainLink north coast services each month.

"Nambucca Heads station receives six NSW TrainLink services each day including five trains and one connecting road service to Macksville, providing accessible, affordable public transport for people to get to medical appointments and other essential services, as well as visit family and friends.

"In October, NSW TrainLink experienced a 44% increase in bookings above forecast for an advertising campaign on trips to the regions, including to places like Nambucca, helping grow our local economies and small business, and connecting families and people."

Convenor of the Nambucca Heads Railway Station Centenary Committee Rachel Burns said in the 1920s, the Nambucca Valley was a key area for sawmilling, ship building and farming and increasingly tourism, but there was no direct connection by rail.

"The North Coast line had a missing section from Macksville to Nambucca Heads and a fleet of cars conveyed train passengers between these points," Ms Burns said.

"In 1923, construction of a railway bridge over the Nambucca River at Macksville made it possible for the rail line to reach the newly constructed station at Nambucca Heads.

"The original Nambucca Heads station had a timber station building, a single side platform and infrastructure for steam trains including a 20,000-gallon water tank.

"Originally it was to be called Cedar Creek however locals successfully lobbied for the name Nambucca Heads. The name was changed to just Nambucca in 1925 with signage below saying

‘Alight here for Nambucca Heads’, until returning to Nambucca Heads in 1964.”

In 1942 a fire burnt down the station building, worth around 1,000 pounds, or about \$83,000 today. The blaze also destroyed the parcels office which contained about 50 pounds of goods ready for delivery. The heritage-listed brick station building was opened in 1945.

Many different trains have passed through the station, including World War II troop trains and the school steam train in the 1940s and 50s, nicknamed ‘The Misery Train’. It was later replaced by the mail train, which, in turn, stopped carrying students in 1963.

Due a restructure in the railways in the late 1980s, the Nambucca Heads station was closed in 1989. With the help of local lobbying, it reopened just months after.

A plaque unveiling and community event will be held at Nambucca Heads Railway Station on Sunday 3 December 2023 from 9 am to 2 pm.

There will be local musicians performing, a giant model train exhibit, historical displays, food stalls, a petting zoo, Clancy the horse with his cart, topped off by the visit of the North Coast XPT service which is due in at 11.47 am.