

Submission by Tim Fischer AC 1 Nov 2018
Ex DPM and Former Chair Tourism Australia

To the Legco Tasmanian Parliament Enquiry re the L and NER

Introduction:

Never in the field of rail heritage tourism, which is booming in France, Germany, UK and even in parts of the UK; has so much potential been too long overlooked in Tasmania and ignored. This submission seeks to correct this state of affairs by showing that the L and NER rail component is feasible.

1. Ffestiniog.

Why would any tourism oriented state such as Tasmania turn its back on developing a brilliant Ffestiniog type railway heritage jewel. The L&NER will be a hallmark attraction in North East Tasmania that showcases the natural splendour of the region. It heralds the future for Tasmanian Tourism, as it represents a significant advance on the products available to tourists and is environmentally very "low impact".

Indeed it has all the hallmarks of the brilliant Ffestiniog based in Wales and its two subsets. The Ffestiniog has two dimension, both steam locomotive driven, the L and NER can also have two dimension, steam and special bike friendly trains to convey bike lovers to the start of new networks in N E Tasmania.

2. Gourmet Aspect.

Experience in Australia and overseas has shown that tourist and heritage railways such as Puffing Billy contribute significantly to the overall tourism experience by showcasing the local scenery, food and wine.

Puffing Billy carries over 500,000 tourists annually in an environmentally friendly "low impact" manner. It links up with local markets and offers gourmet experiences from local / regional products.

3. Rail and governance already in place.

The L&NER proposal to reactivate the railway has been shown by the detailed studies, undertaken by reputable and knowledgeable experts, to be achievable with manageable risk. L&NER are well managed with very sound governance, they have galvanised local support, and they have secured significant resources.

4. Branch Infrastructure.

L&NER will springboard off the legacy of significant investment over 100 years in rail infrastructure. That legacy has been shown to be in very good order and capable of serving the future. Not casting the legacy aside, but using it to provide a better future for the North East and Tasmania makes sense.

Starting from a new hub will save millions but be close enough to Launceston or Greater Launceston to allow branding L and NER, a brand that will draw international attention.

5. Strategic Vision.

Tasmania is renowned for its vision when matters related to tourism are considered. As tourism numbers grow, opportunity exists to utilise Tasmania's extensive rail infrastructure as the backbone that supports an environmental friendly "low impact" sustainable tourism strategy. It must be possible for future visitors to the Island State to travel extensively without having to use a motor vehicle.

Further there is a need for tourism spread and not just concentration in say Hobart and Devenport / Deloraine areas, this project helps achieve this spread in spades.

6. I strongly support L&NER's proposal to re-establish much of the line to Scottsdale. This can be done in a way that is also pro bike trail, not to the exclusion of one or the other.

The Hon T. A Fischer AC