

# AUSTRALIA'S FIRST STEAM OPERATED RAILWAYS



An early photo of Serviceton station, Victoria c1895

SA Archives

## 1854, Victoria

The first steam powered railway line in Australia opened between Melbourne's Flinders Street Station and Port Melbourne, then called Sandridge, on 12 September 1854. Operated as a broad gauge line, it was converted to a standard gauge electric light railway in 1987, as part of the Melbourne tram system.



A sketch of Australia's first railway, which operated in NSW from 1831; the first steam powered railway began operation in NSW 24 years later. Sketch attributed to JC White, 1832

State Library of NSW, SSV1B/NEWC/1840-9/1 a128615

## 1855, New South Wales

In 1849, the Sydney Railway Company started building the first railway track in New South Wales between Sydney and Parramatta. The project ran into financial difficulty and was taken over by the New South Wales colonial government. The line opened on 26 September 1855.

Australia's very first railway was located in Newcastle NSW, but it was not steam operated, it was a gravitational railway built in 1831 by the Australian Agricultural Company. It worked via a cable system assisted by gravity; two empty wagons would come up, while two loaded wagons would go down. When the wagons reached the base of the incline they were pushed by hand, along a slanted wooden trestle to a loading area at which small ships could berth and be loaded with coal.



Two horse trams are seen at Middleton Station during October 1869

NRM Collection

## 1856, South Australia

While South Australia had a horse-drawn railway operating at the mouth of the Murray River in 1854, the first line carrying steam powered trains opened on 21 April 1856 between Adelaide and Port Adelaide. It was a broad gauge line and was built by the colonial government. The National Railway Museum stands on the site of the former Port Adelaide railway station, which was called the Port Dock Railway Station.



Port Dock staff

AA Stempel Collection



Opening of Queensland's first railway at Grandchester, 1865

State Library of Queensland

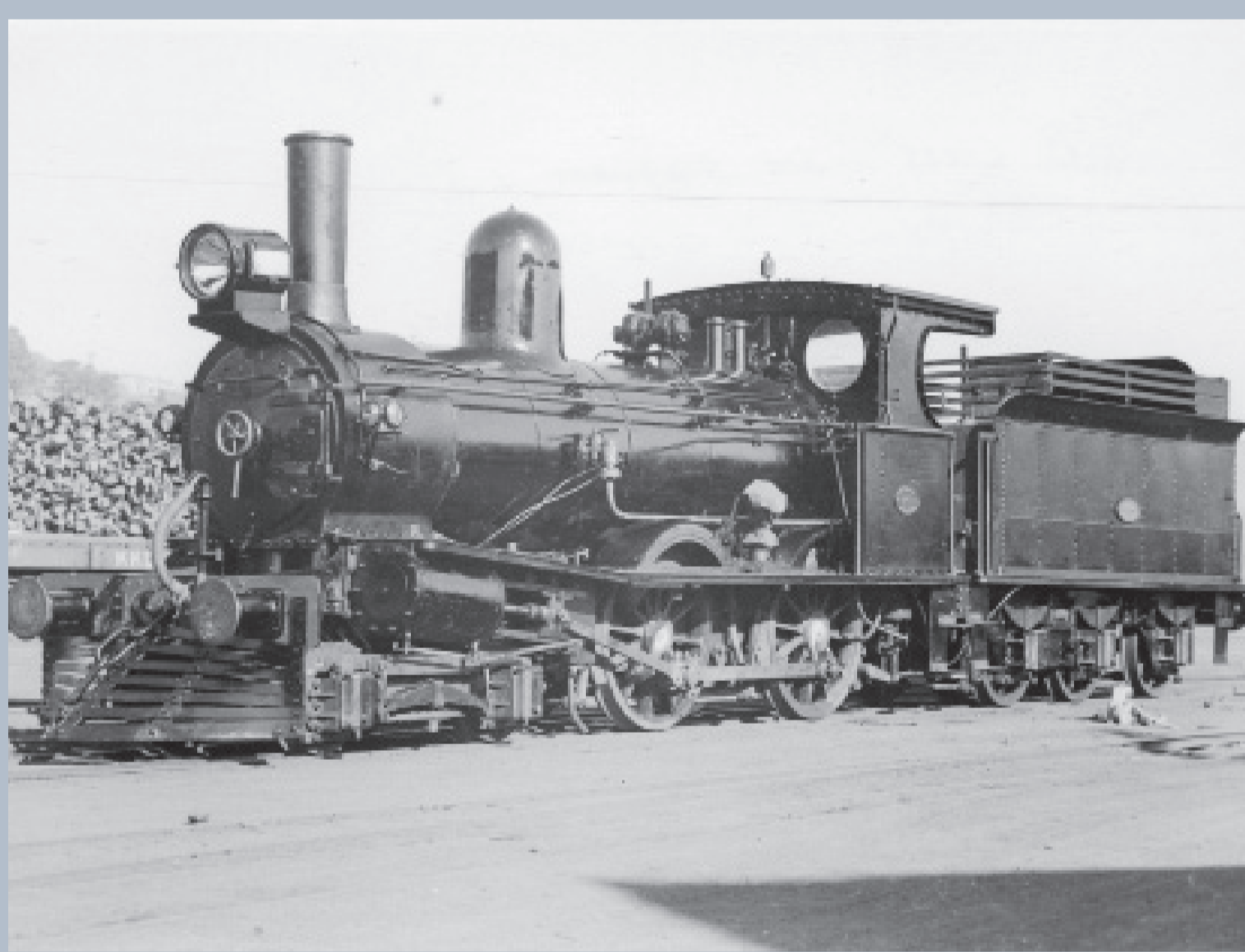
## 1865, Queensland

The first railway in Queensland opened on 31 July 1865, it was a narrow gauge line and ran from Ipswich inland to Grandchester. The system was extended further to the Darling Downs before being connected with Brisbane in 1875.



Commonwealth Railways NG class steam locomotive No.9, formerly QR B13 class No. 44, entered service in 1884 and sold to Commonwealth Railways in 1913

Commonwealth Railways



Tasmanian Government Railways (TGR) A class steam locomotive, in 1949. This class of locomotive was introduced in 1892 and saw service with the TGR until 1956

NRM Collection

## 1871, Tasmania

The first steam powered railway line in Tasmania opened on 10 February 1871. It ran for 72 km (44 miles) between the Northern Tasmanian towns of Launceston and Deloraine. Built as a broad gauge line, the operator was the Launceston and Western Railway Company.

Subsequently, the Tasmanian Government passed an act of Parliament incorporating the Tasmanian Mainline Railway Company. This company built the narrow gauge mainline between Launceston and Hobart.



The oldest surviving Australian built steam locomotive is Ballarat, built in 1871 by the Victoria foundry in Ballarat, Victoria. This locomotive became the first steam locomotive used in Western Australia. This locomotive was retired in 1900, and placed in a park in Busselton

Ian Domleo Collection

## 1871, Western Australia

Commencing in 1871, a private timber railway from Lockville to Yoganup, south of Perth, was the first railway to operate in Western Australia. The first Government railway opened in 26 July 1879 between Geraldton and Northampton.



WAGR G class steam locomotive No. 32 formerly SAR Y class No 152, c1895

A Lockyer Collection



SAR W class steam locomotive No. W41 was named Port Darwin on 19 July 1887 at Port Darwin during construction of the line

NRM Collection

## 1889, Northern Territory

A 235 km (146 mile) long railway between Darwin and Pine Creek became operational on 1 October 1889. The Australian Commonwealth Government took control of the Pine Creek Railway (from the South Australian Government) from 1 January 1911. It operated the railway until 1 July 1915, when the line became part of the Commonwealth Railways.



Z12 class steam locomotive No. 1210 was the first locomotive to work in Canberra in 1914. In 1962 it was plinthed at Canberra Railway Station from 1914 until 1984 when it was removed and restored to running order

Commonwealth Railways

## 1914, Australian Capital Territory

An 8.1 km (5 mile) long standard gauge branch line opened between Queanbeyan, NSW, and Canberra (the Australian capital) on 25 May 1914. Passenger operations commenced in 1923.