

JOURNAL

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CONFERENCE EDITION



IN THIS ISSUE

03 - PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Update from FRONZ president Grant Craig.



05

CONFERENCE FAQ

Details on how to register, where to book accommodation, and what price you'll pay.

07

PROGRAMME

What's in store for the 50th anniversary celebrations in Christchurch.

10 - NEXTGEN DETAILS

A special programme for younger volunteers of FRONZ groups, who want to attend conference.



11 - FRONZ AWARDS

There are prizes to the value of \$7000 up for grabs - make sure you enter by the April 30 deadline!

12 - FRONZ IN PHOTOS

A small selection of images from over the years, and an appeal for more.



18

HELENSVILLE'S 150TH

FRONZ isn't the only one celebrating a milestone! Helensville celebrates 150 years of rail in October

22 - ECMOT UPDATE

Exciting things have been happening ahead of the next Live Day in April 2025!



President's Note

Conference is coming!

All the pieces are coming together nicely for FRONZ's big 50th anniversary celebration, thanks to the good work of the exec and our Canterbury members. We have a full weekend planned, which includes visits to our Canterbury members' sites and celebrating our past. Christchurch is where the very first conference was held in 1975, and it's fitting that we return there for this milestone. This is FRONZ's golden anniversary, and we can't wait!

Clark has been leading efforts to locate photos of conferences in the 1970s and 1980s, but there aren't too many around! If you have any that you can share with us, please let me know!

You will see we are tabling a revamped constitution at the AGM, bringing FRONZ in line with the obligations under the new Incorporated Societies Act. The new constitution will introduce time-frames for the President which will have a term of a maximum of 7 years.

This is a good opportunity for me to step aside and let somebody else have a go. I've been privileged to be in this position for 14 years now and have experienced the good times and not so good times that come with leading such a large organisation. I feel like I accomplished what I set out to do, but won't be stepping away from FRONZ fully and am happy to put my name



forward as an Executive member. Fifty years is a massive milestone, and I encourage all member groups attend the conference and take part in the celebrations. Every group and all their members have helped make FRONZ what it is today.

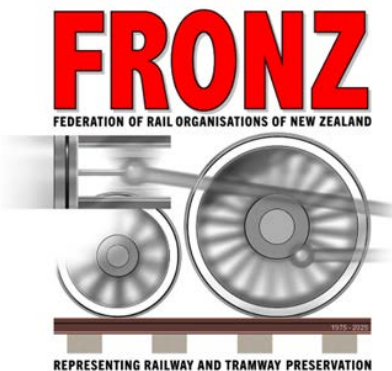
The happenings for the first quarter of 2025 have included finalising the new constitution, an executive meeting in Christchurch to concentrate on conference planning, and meeting with KiwiRail in Wellington to discuss leases, land use and other issues. KiwiRail is also keen to publish news from FRONZ members in its in-house newsletter,

Express, so send any submissions to secretary@fronz.org.nz and we will pass them on.

Out in the railway world, Mainline Steam are close to completing their paperwork for a trial run with

Jb1236 and the carriage fleet, which is an exciting development and we can't wait to see them back on the mainline.

Down south, it has been announced that Dunedin Railways will be funded and stay under the control of





Salutations and libations: The late Russell Paul (Pleasant Point), watched closely by his wife, Joan, pours a wine at a conference at Pleasant Point. Supplied: Mark Denne

Dunedin City Council. We're watching these developments closely.

Meanwhile, GVR's DC 4818 is out seeing the world on Steam Inc charters – it's great to see the cooperation between the organisations, and to see a fruit salad loco on South Island rails.

Oamaru Steam and Rail have taking on the not-so-small task of converting a DM English Electric loco to battery power, and anyone wanting to follow progress can follow OSR's Facebook page.

Back to FRONZ, and you all should have the criteria and application forms for the 2025 FRONZ Awards. We couldn't make this happen without the generosity of our sponsors, and I urge every group to consider which of the amazing projects and people you can nominate for an award.

These awards are an acknowledgment of the great work our groups and members carry out, and a chance to celebrate that! If you have any questions about the awards, don't hesitate to contact me.

Finally, I hope you can make the trip to conference at King's Birthday to celebrate 50 years of achievements. FRONZ isn't just a national body – it's a collective of member groups and every one of their members. It's as much about people as it is about trains, trams and museums.

Every one of you, and the people before you, have played a part in this organisation, and all that hard work is worth celebrating.

Conference is coming, and we'll see you in Christchurch!

Grant.

WANTED: FRONZ SECRETARY

After eight (pretty enjoyable) years, FRONZ Secretary Jeff Tollan is standing down from the role, leaving a gap that needs to be filled.

This is an important role in the organisation and if you, or someone you know, has a penchant for words (or can string a sentence together and use spellcheck), please get in touch with us and we'll walk you through the day-to-day business the role entails.

Please email president@fronz.org.nz for more information.



Registering for conference

You can register now! Click on this link and fill out the details; and yes - you can book for two or more people: <https://forms.gle/n5HGp34fdhP5aGHC8>

If you strike any issues, please email treasurer@fronz.org.nz

Please note: Bookings made after Friday 23 May will incur a higher charge of \$30pp.

Booking accommodation

Our indefatigable treasurer, Bruce, has secured a **special FRONZ rate at Rydges Latimer**, with accommodation from **\$209 per room** for stays between 30 May 2025 and 2 June 2025.

To access your special rate, please visit www.rydges.com. This link is also in the booking form.

1. Select "Rydges Latimer" as your hotel, enter the dates and number of people and click 'GO'
2. Click 'I have a code'
3. In the 'Block Code' field enter your booking code: R-FRO300525
4. Click 'UPDATE'
5. Your special rates will appear on the rates screen
6. Valid for stays 30 May and 2 June

Expressions of interest

FRONZ is offering two extra curricular trips, but these are contingent on numbers:

FRIDAY: Leaving Christchurch Airport about 10am, a coach will travel to Little River and onto the Plains Railway in Ashburton, returning to the Rydges Hotel by 5pm.

SATURDAY: A partners' trip to Little River and onto Akaroa.

If you would like to attend either of these, please register your interest via the [registration form](#). We ask that people register sooner rather than later!

Tram pass

Thanks to Christchurch City Tramways, a **three-day pass** is included when you book the full conference option!



Conference costings

Registration for the full conference: \$345 (includes transport)

Hotel rooms: From \$209 per night.

Not attending the full conference? You or your partner can also book for specific days or events:

- Saturday conference sessions (excluding Awards Dinner) - \$110
- Awards Dinner - \$85
- Sunday AGM - \$20
- Sunday AGM + field trips and lunch - \$100
- Monday field trip to Weka Pass + lunch (supplied by Star Hotel Waikari) - \$55

For those not attending the full conference, costs for the Friday trip to Little River and the Plains, and the Saturday partners' trip to Little River and Akaroa will be finalised depending on demand.

Members we have lost

If your group has lost a contributing member, please email secretary@fronz.org.nz, their name and a photo, so we can honour them with a moment's silence at the AGM.

Thank you to all members who have provided feedback on the new FRONZ constitution, which will be tabled at the 2025 AGM.

We have had numerous submissions with very helpful feedback, which Guy Wellwood has reviewed and incorporated into the document. The Executive ran through the near-final product during our meeting in Christchurch in March and we're nearly there!

Some late-breaking feedback has landed and once that is reviewed and incorporated, we will be sending the final product out to you to review.

Expect that in your inbox by mid-April, to meet the constitutional deadline for alteration to the federation's rules.

On that note, we want to remind all groups that if you haven't started reviewing your constitution, now is the time to do it!

If you are uncertain about what you need to do, look at the [Incorporated Societies website](#) for more information.

If you're still stuck, get in touch with us and we'll endeavour to put you on the right track.

CONSTITUTION
UPDATE



PROGRAMME



The 2019 conference crew, pictured in Timaru. Photo: DLA Turner

For a golden anniversary, you've gotta do something special, so for FRONZ's 50th, we've revamped the programme to maximise excursions and give time to explore the place where FRONZ began!

We will be visiting Little River and the Plains Railway on Friday May 30, if numbers allow, while Ferrymead and McLeans Island are on the planner for Sunday. Closing the weekend's festivities is a trip to the Weka Pass Railway on Monday, June 2. You can signal your interest for the Friday trips on the booking form.

Also included in the full Conference fee is a pass for the city trams - which will give you the chance to explore Christchurch in the comfort of a tram.

There will be special guest speakers, and a presentation celebrating the history of FRONZ along with our annual Awards Dinner.

And, because the next generation are going to carry on the work we are doing, FRONZ is once again offering the opportunity for young volunteers to take part in a special conference programme that includes a tour of the Waltham depot. The NexGen programme can be viewed on page 10.

Now you've got all the information, we urge you to get booking, especially if you're interested in the Friday trips and the Saturday partners' trip.

We'll see you in Christchurch!



Friday, May 30

Friday's trip subject to expressions of interest - please email treasurer@fronz.org.nz

10am	Bus departs Christchurch Airport
11.15am	Arrive Little River
12.45pm	Depart Little River for Plains Railway
2.30pm	Arrive Plains Railway
4pm	Depart Plains Railway for Christchurch
5.30pm	Bus arrives at the Rydges hotel
6pm-7pm	Registrations

Saturday, May 31

8.15am	Registrations continue
9am	Welcome and housekeeping - <i>Grant Craig, FRONZ president</i>
9.15am	Conference opening - <i>COTMA representative Peter Hyde</i>
9.45am	Morning tea
10.15am	Operational seminars: Each runs for 20 minutes. Each attendee can attend three of the four seminars: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What to know when Netflix calls - <i>with Harry Andrews</i>2. Security cameras that make a difference - <i>with Peter Jenkinson</i>3. Media management - <i>Speaker TBC</i>4. Safety moment - <i>with NZTA</i>
12pm	Lunch
1pm	KiwiRail update - <i>David Gordon</i>
1.30pm	TrackSafe update - <i>Megan Drayton</i>
2pm	NZTA presentation: Updates and insights
3pm	Afternoon tea
3.30pm	Introduction to KiwiRail's new DM locomotive - <i>Douglas Medlycott, KiwiRail</i>
4pm	Discussion groups: Mainline; Museums and Non-Mainline; Tramways

Saturday evening

6pm	2025 FRONZ awards and celebration dinner at Rydges Latimer
	The beginnings of FRONZ and why it all started – <i>Grant Craig and Clark Simmonds</i>
	The FRONZ years – <i>a video presentation by Lindsay Benbrook</i>
	Rail tourism and the benefits in a worldwide context – <i>Chris Le Marshall of Wattrain</i>
7pm	Annual FRONZ awards

Sunday, June 2

8.40am	AGM sign in
9am	AGM
10am	Rail Heritage Trust update – with Murray King
10.30am	Coach departs Rydges Latimer for Ferrymead Railway Station (lunch included in full fee)
3pm	<i>Optional side trip:</i> <i>(incl in full conference fee)</i> Coach departs Ferrymead for McLeans Island. Coach returns to Rydges from McLeans Island at 5pm.
5pm	Coach departs Ferrymead for Rydges.
5.30pm	Dinner break
7pm	Coach returns to Ferrymead for night running and photo sessions.
9pm	Coach departs Ferrymead for Rydges Hotel.

Monday, June 3

8.30am	Coach departs Rydges for the Weka Pass Railway in Waipara – lunch supplied
2pm	Coach departs Weka Pass Railway for Christchurch Airport
3.30pm	Coach arrives at Christchurch Airport
3.45pm	Coach departs Christchurch Airport
4pm	Coach arrives at Rydges Latimer

NextGEN programme

This is a chance for younger members of FRONZ groups to take part in conference – without all the seminars. This is targeted at those under 35 who aren't taking part in the full conference. Register your interest by emailing courtneykkilner@gmail.com.

Friday, May 30

Friday's trip subject to expressions of interest - please email courtneykkilner@gmail.com

10am	Depending on demand: Coach tour departing Rydges Hotel with site visits to Little River for morning tea and then onto the Plains Railway Ashburton for lunch returning to the Hotel at 5pm.
1pm - 4pm	Head to Plains Railway, where JA1260 will be in steam.

Saturday, May 31

2pm	Make your way to KiwiRail's new Waltham yard depot for a tour of the brand-spanking-new facilities. (No cost, but you must organise your own transport.)
7pm	Annual awards dinner (\$85 per person).

Sunday, June 1

10.30am	Coach departs Rydges Hotel for the Ferrymead Railway Station.
3pm	Side trip to McLeans Island. Please email Courtney if you'd like to attend and require transport.
5pm	Coach returns to Rydges Hotel
7pm	Coach returns to Ferrymead for night running and photos
9pm	Coach leaves Ferrymead for Rydges.

Monday, June 2

8.30am	Coach departs Rydges for the Weka Pass Railway in Waipara
9.30am	Workshop tour and train ride. Lunch is supplied by the Star Hotel Waikari
1.30pm	Coach departs for Christchurch via the airport

2025 FRONZ Awards

Entries now open: Prizes to the value of \$7,000 up for grabs!

Entries for this year's FRONZ Awards are now open!

Winners will be announced at the Awards Dinner at the Rydges Latimer Hotel in Christchurch, on Saturday, May 31.

The awards recognise and celebrate the hard work being done by FRONZ members around New Zealand and \$7000 is up for grabs across the categories!

[Download the criteria here](#), or email the secretary for a copy.

Entries close at 11.59pm on April 30.

Achievement awards

- MOTAT Steam Locomotive Restoration Award
- Glenbrook Vintage Railway Young Achiever of the Year Award
- KiwiRail Infrastructure Improvement Award
- Tramway Restoration Award
- Pounamu Tourism Group Carriage/Guards Van Restoration Award
- Goods/Service Wagon Restoration Award
- Dunedin Railways Motive Power Award
- Glenbrook Vintage Railway Volunteer of the Year Award
- Rail Heritage Trust Restoration Award
- NZ Transport Agency Tourist & Heritage Rail Safety Award

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FRONZ IN PHOTOS



Clark Simmonds is on the hunt for photos of FRONZ over the last 50 years!

If you have any photos of conferences past, please get in touch with us at secretary@fronz.org.nz

In the meantime, enjoy a small selection of shots of previous conferences. Pictured above is a train robbery during one of the conferences at Pleasant Point, featuring Russell Paul, Paul Dillicar and Paul Heighton. Photo: DLA Turner



L. A. Turner

A trip on the Blenheim Riverside Railway during the 2015 conference. Photo: DLA Turner



Conference 2015 gets under way in Blenheim. Photo: DLA Turner



A throwback to 1979, during a field trip to Ashburton at the Pleasant Point conference: Back row: George Emerson; Bruce Shalders; Donald Goodman (Pleasant Point); Ken Henderson (possibly GVR); Tom McGavin; Clarrie Blackwood (Pleasant Point); unknown (BTC); Eric Tutt; Brendon Carter (white pullover, Pleasant Point); unknown; unknown; Arthur Rockliff (obscured possibly by Dave Hinman); unknown; unknown (behind brown pullover); Doug Bailey (brown tie, Pleasant Point); unknown; Bob Struthers (tie, Pleasant Point); unknown (DR or OBR); unknown (DR or OBR).

Front row: Ross Dixon (Pleasant Point); Michael Ross (Plains Railway); Bob Anderson (Plains Railway); Paul Heighton; Paul Dillicar; Ian Wylie; John Quinn (Pleasant Point); unknown; unknown; Brian Poulsen; Russell Paul (Pleasant Point); Bryan Blanchard (Pleasant Point). Photo: DLA Turner.



National Railway Museum chair and FRONZ secretary John Peterson talks with Campbell live at GVR, during the 2016 conference. Photo: DLA Turner

Paul Dillicar, FRONZ chair and “Group Ogre” on the Yahoo rail page, speaks at the 2010 conference in Palmerston North. Photo: Jeff Tollan





Riding the trams at MOTAT at the 2016 conference in Auckland. Photo: DLA Turner



Conference 2016 in Auckland. Photo: DLA Turner



Conference 2016 in Auckland, at the venue in Ellerslie. Photo: DLA Turner



Palmerston North, 2010.
Photos Jeff Tollan



Wellington, 2018. Photo: Jeff Tollan

150 YEARS OF TRAINS AT HELENSVILLE



The Helensville Railway station remains, but the scene has changed over the last century-and-a-half.
Photo: Scott Osmond

The Helensville Railway Station Trust has been a member of FRONZ for many years and is planning to celebrate the 150th anniversary of trains running to Helensville on October 4 and 5 this year. Scott Osmond details the rich life of Helensville's transport hub.

A small group representing the Railway Station Trust, Te Awaroa (Helensville) Museum, and North West Country Business Association is in the early stages of planning for the event. Watch this space!

The railway from Riverhead to Helensville was opened in October 1875, with direct rail access from Auckland to Helensville in 1881, when the Awaroa Stream in Helensville was bridged and a new

railway station and yards opened on the present station site. Helensville remained the terminus of the line until the route to Kaupakakapa was opened in 1889.

The present station was built in 1880, further west of its present location. In 1881 a Post Office was added which operated until 1911. The station was moved east to its present site in 1927, and the main line was also moved further east, which

removed a curve. In 1980 it was closed as an officered station when the last passenger train to Auckland stopped running.

In 1983, part of the southern end of the building was unfortunately demolished. All of the expected ancillary structures once existed at Helensville, including Goods Shed, Engine Shed, Coaling and Water facilities, stockyards and also timber loading facilities. A turntable was in place from 1908 until a turning triangle was built in 1942.

This triangle is no longer used due to storm damage and is disconnected from the KiwiRail network. Refreshment Rooms were added in 1923, and 12 railway cottages were also built nearby.

The Helensville-Dargaville ferry service continued until the railway went through to Dargaville in 1942 and the Port of Kaipara was officially closed in 1947.

The Northland Express ran on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from when the line was opened to Whangarei in 1923 until 12 November 1957, after which Fiat railcars

ran a daily service until they were withdrawn on 31 July 1967.

A commuter train to Auckland ran Monday to Friday until it too was withdrawn on 18 August 1980. An unsuccessful attempt at restarting a commuter train ran for 18 months in 2009-2010 was made but was cancelled due to lack of patronage. Sadly, it was very slow due to the work being undertaken on the Western Line at that time and other issues including the once only daily service.

It is fair to say it was ahead of its time as the areas between Westgate and Helensville have grown considerably, as have traffic problems, during the intervening years.

An efficient rail service would be well used no doubt should it be re-instated.

In the early 1990s, local County Councillor, the late Arnold Gosling, knew the value of the station to the local heritage.

Mr Gosling and began to preserve it and develop it as a place for passing tourists to call for refreshment and information. He



arranged for the station and a significant amount of surrounding land to be subdivided and purchased outright from the then Railways Corporation.

The ownership is now in the hands of the Helensville Railway Station Trust, which aims to preserve it, and keep the community informed and involved with the life of the station.

Visiting excursion trains were, until recently, also encouraged and there have been visits from several rail heritage operators either passing through while heading north or staying over in town.

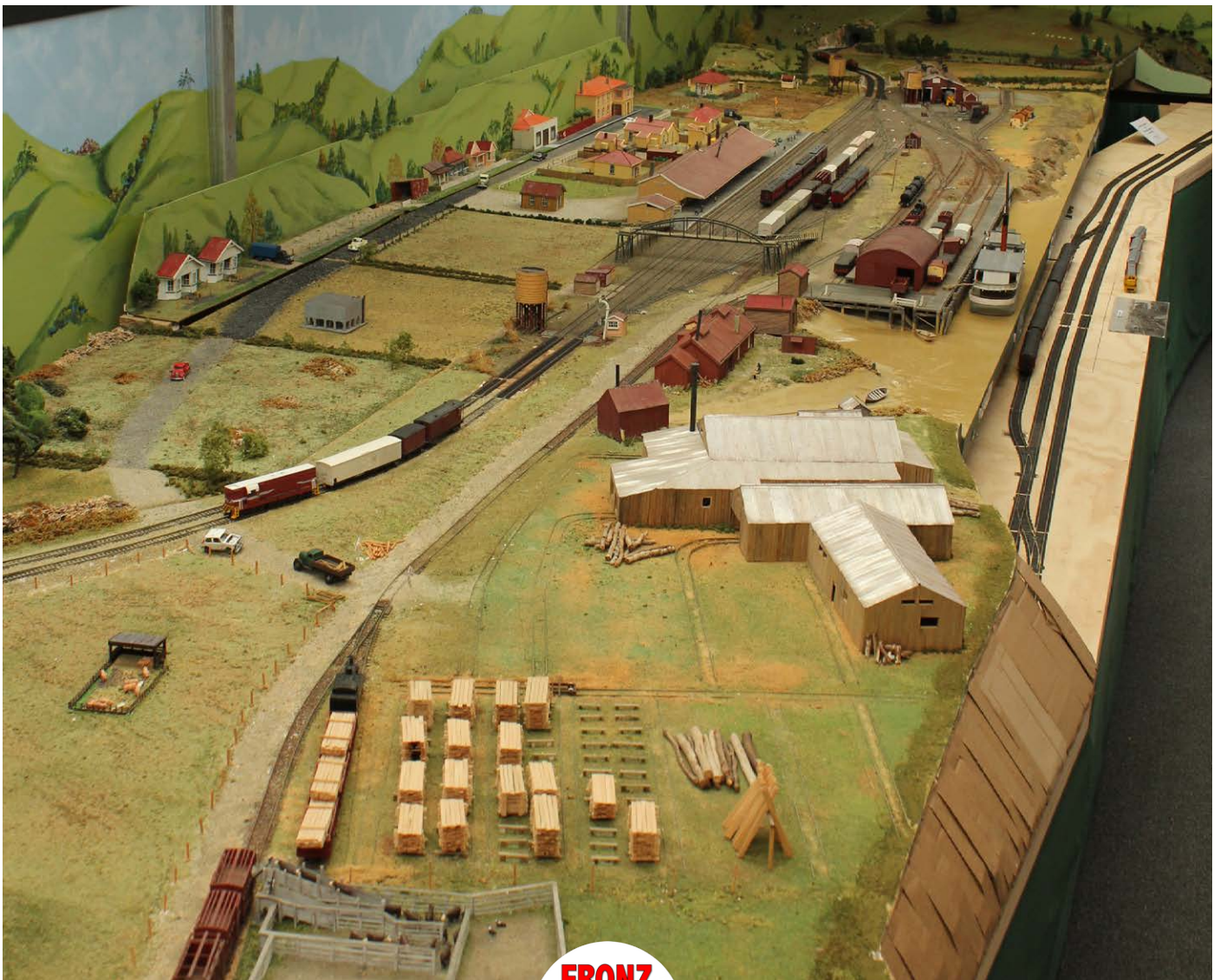
For a number of years, a special train was run to the annual Santa Parade in Auckland using the now redundant suburban

diesel units.

Unfortunately, the demise of the turning triangle has limited access for steam engines and KiwiRail has also stopped the use of the entire North Auckland Line north of Swanson for passenger trains, despite spending a lot of money and effort in upgrading the line.

Much work has taken place including repiling, painting, replacement of the platform and parts of the station roof. Also drainage, fencing and kerbing around the access road, sealing and marking the parking area. In order to fund the necessary maintenance and running costs the Trust has leased parts of the building out.

The model railway, showing Helensville as it used to be. Photo: Scott Osmond



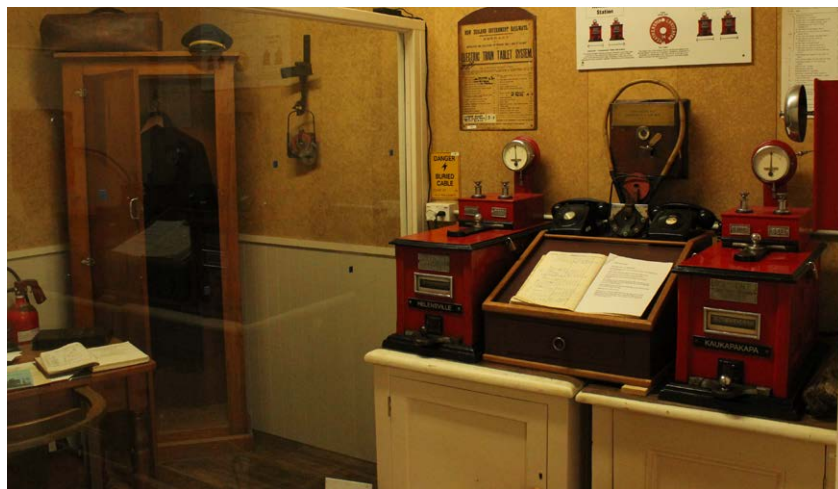
At present, the railway station building (which dates back to 1881), houses tenants comprising of a Cafe, Local Arts and Crafts Gallery.

The Trust has been gifted a large working railway model, which was constructed by the late Mr Ross Hughes of Auckland, and depicts the railway station and its environs including many heritage buildings as they were in the 1950s and 1960s.

and as such is a true and accurate replica of this historic era. All items of this model were constructed by hand by Mr. Hughes over many years and it is his wish that it be made available for public display.

The Trust, in 2013, built a new building as a museum to house this model and also our historical collection of railway artifacts and information including working train control Tyers Tablet Machines.

For any traveller north of Auckland wanting a change from State Highway One, the route via State Highway 16 with a call at Helensville is a pleasant diversion. The museum currently opens Sundays from 10.30am to 3pm and the café and shops are open Tuesday to Sunday.



Want to buy, sell or exchange? Now it's even easier!

We've made "[FRONZ Reclaim Online](#)" easier to access on Facebook. This is the page where you can buy, sell or swap items, or get help tracking down parts.

Simply search for the group on Facebook, or use the QR code on the right.

Once you're accepted to the group you can get posting.



Exciting things at ECMOT



The old and the new: The platform of the Matawhero Railway Station at ECMOT has had a recent spruce-up. Photos: Harrison Hill

Volunteers at the East Coast Museum of Technology are working hard ahead of their next Live Day, writes president Harrison Hill.

Last year we celebrated 40 years of being an incorporated society!

Over the past few months, we've made significant progress on our railway infrastructure as part of our ongoing site upgrade programme: Recent upgrades include the full asphaltting of the Matawhero Railway Station, with new rubber ramps set to be installed soon for improved accessibility access.

Additionally, both track crossings leading to the station will be upgraded, making the railway site more accessible for visitors and volunteers alike.



We have lifted our Davenport locomotive onto our main tracks after being on an isolated line for some years, in preparation of moving it under cover.

Our Model rail section has been making progress with their 3 main layouts while upgrading the interior of the Railway Station

After the success of our first Live Day since 2020 last year, we're excited to be gearing up for our next Live Day on Sunday, April 20th, 2025, from 10 AM – 4 PM at 67 Main Road, Makaraka.

This is a fantastic opportunity for visitors to experience working heritage machinery, classic vehicles, and of course, to showcase our big and model railway!

If you're in the region, we'd love to see you there. For updates check out our website: ecmot.org.nz

Above: Matawhero Station in its original location.

Below left: Davenport during its relocation from an isolated line.
Below right: The model railway at ECMOT, which members have been working on.



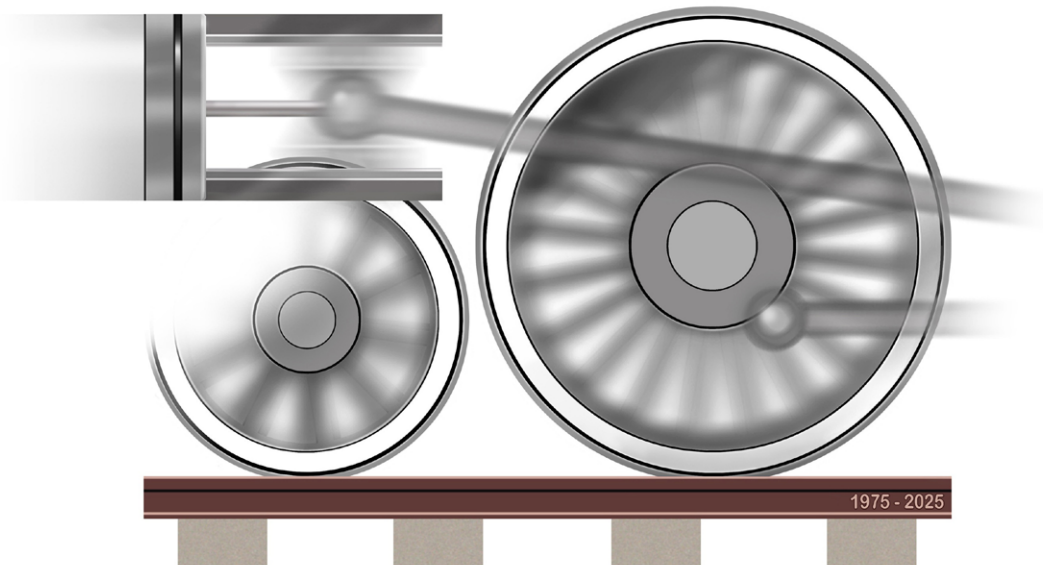
WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

- Enter the awards
- Select the delegate to represent your group
- Talk with delegates about the programme
- Think about issues to raise at discussion groups on Saturday evening
- Register for conference
- Book your accommodation
- Book your flights!

For guidance or support with your bookings, please email treasurer@fronz.org.nz

FRONZ

FEDERATION OF RAIL ORGANISATIONS OF NEW ZEALAND



REPRESENTING RAILWAY AND TRAMWAY PRESERVATION

1975-2025