



Trainworks, NSW

## A business model for the New South Wales Rail Transport Museum to optimise the return on investment in exhibition infrastructure

### > THE CONTEXT

Over several decades an impressive collection of heritage locomotives and rolling stock had been accumulated at Thirlmere, near Picton. Australia's largest rail heritage collection was cared for by the New South Wales Rail Transport Museum (NSWRM), an independent Association, under an agreement with the Office of Rail Heritage. The Government determined that the collection should be shared with a wider public by developing the Thirlmere site and building a major exhibition hall to present and interpret key elements of the collection.

### > THE BRIEF

Positive Solutions was engaged initially to develop a sustainable business model for the Thirlmere site. A new company was established to operate the museum and exhibition elements of the site. This included identifying appropriate commercial and non-commercial products and services, appropriate governance arrangements, and assisting in implementation of necessary change management processes.

### > OUR APPROACH

To develop a sustainable business model, Positive Solutions interviewed Government officers, board members of NSWRM, and reviewed documentation provided by NSWRM and the Office of Rail Heritage. We undertook benchmark research with nine rail heritage facilities in Australia and four overseas, and took advice from the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, and the Ipswich Railway Workshop Museum. This informed the products and services at the Rail Heritage Centre and the financial and organisational modelling.

### > THE RESULTS

Positive Solutions' proposals for the organisation and finances of the Rail Heritage Centre were accepted by the Office of Rail Heritage. Subsequently, Positive Solutions was engaged to implement a series of follow-on projects:

- Recruitment of CEO and board members of Trainworks
- Undertaking a funding review of Trainworks
- Development of emergency and recovery plans for the site
- Preparation of an interpretive plan for the site (undertaken with Neil Anderson Consulting and David Hebblethwaite of Art of Fact Design)

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- > [Whitehorse Centre Business Case Development](#)
- > [The Arcade Business Plan Development, Melbourne](#)
- > [Castlemaine Art Gallery Business Case and Design](#)