

Letter to Editor – Lithgow Mercury

May 13, 2010

Dear Editor,

I wish to point out to your readers that it was a decision of the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator (ITSRR) to alter the accreditation of the Lachlan Valley Railway Society (LVRS), not RailCorp, as stated by your article dated 8.5.10.

LVRS was engaged by the event organisers to operate trains for the Great Train Weekend at Mount Victoria on the weekend of 30-31 May 2009.

On Thursday 28 May, ITSRR amended LVRS's accreditation, limiting its permitted operations to the branch line between Cowra and Harden. The amended Notice of Accreditation was emailed by ITSRR to LVRS and RailCorp was advised by LVRS on 29 May that it would not be able to operate the planned train services on 30-31 May as it no longer had accreditation for main line operations.

Options, including use of other accredited heritage operators, were explored but could not be implemented at such short notice. LVRS' accreditation for mainline operations was later reinstated on 21 August 2009.

It is regrettable that the trackwork will be staged on the Blue Mountains Line during the Great Train Weekend, however, RailCorp meets with each of the rail operators who use the network on a regular basis and discusses operational issues. These discussions include upcoming trackwork, which is planned well in advance.

As the organisers of the Great Train Weekend are not an operator, the organisers deal with RailCorp's Special Events Unit, who manage RailCorp's special event calendar. This calendar is critical in the trackwork planning process.

The organisers of the event did not approach RailCorp until after the 2009/10 trackwork calendar had been locked in. However, it is now included in the calendar for future years.

RailCorp has long been a supporter of Mt Victoria's Great Train Weekend and we are confident that we can continue to work with the LVRS and the even organisers to ensure these misunderstandings do not reoccur in the future.

Rob Mason
RailCorp Chief Operating Officer