



Steam Locomotive 3642

Locomotive 3642 is a fine example of the penultimate design of express passenger steam locomotive in NSW. As a class, these locomotives accelerated long distance passenger timetables, with shorter journey times, leading to new levels of service in the pre World War II period. The locomotive was built by Clyde Engineering, Granville as works number 376, and entered service in 1926. Clyde built all but 10 of the class of 75. On introduction, 3642 was placed - with the rest of the class - on mainline passenger service displacing the older 32 and 35 Classes.

Mail trains were an important feature of the NSW Railways for nearly 100 years. These trains ran to deliver the mails to country areas, generally travelling overnight, and offered passenger accommodation as well. Most mail trains stopped at all stations en-route. Particularly later in the life of the 36 Class, when they had been substantially displaced on major express passenger trains by the 38 Class, they featured prominently on mail trains, and 3642 is displayed here on a representation of a 1940s to 1950s mail train.

Following the withdrawal of 3642 from revenue service in 1969, it was used for heritage steam tours operated by the NSW Rail Transport Museum until 1973. Since then it has been in the Museum's care and permanent custody. Between 1979 and 1981, the locomotive was overhauled and fitted with a replacement boiler at Goulburn Loco Depot on a 'spare time' basis under an agreement with the Museum, who then operated the locomotive on steam tours until 1996, when its boiler was found to need major work. It is now normally on display at Thirlmere. Its current lined green paint scheme was applied during its 1981 overhaul at Goulburn, and is a representation of the green livery carried by several of the 36 Class in the 1930s and 1940s.

The 36 Class were designed for long distance non-stop running, with reduced maintenance needs and long-range



tenders. They were the first NSW main-line engine to be fitted with Walschaerts valve gear, which became standard on all subsequent NSW steam locomotive classes. The class was substantially rebuilt in the 1950s, 3642 in 1956. This included a new boiler with Belpaire firebox, higher steam pressure at 200 lbs psi, an enclosed cab and some technical improvements including more superheater elements and a smokebox regulator as fitted to the 38 Class. In the late 1960s, some of the class, including 3642, were also fitted with a power reverser.

In the 1950s and 1960s, being displaced on major passenger trains by the newer 38 Class and on secondary services by diesels, the 36 Class increasingly worked fast goods trains, in turn displacing the slower standard goods classes, until general withdrawal in the late 1960s.

Locomotive 3642 is part of the NSW Rail Transport Museum collection, housed at the Rail Heritage Centre, Thirlmere, and operated by the NSWRTM's train operations group, Heritage Express.

Information compiled by Heritage Express.

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