

## **State occasions**

From 1884 Railway Commissioners did annual tours of inspection, using specialist engines such as No 100, the first to be built at Williamstown North in 1871, and in use until 1916. From 1900 Commissioners used State cars, fitted with sleeping compartments and a dining area. State cars were also used on royal tours, by State Governors and by Cabinet members on country tours.

### *Royal Trains*

The first Royal train in June 1867 took Prince Alfred Duke of Edinburgh to Western Victoria including Ballarat, and then to Castlemaine and Bendigo on the Northern line.

In May 1901 following the opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament, the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (later King George VI and Queen Elizabeth) left Port Melbourne by train for Brisbane after a brief tour to Healesville and other Victorian highlights. The royal couple again travelled by train for the opening of Federal Parliament in Canberra in 1927.

In grateful recognition of Australian support in the First World War, the Prince of Wales (later briefly King Edward VIII) arrived in May 1920, touring Victoria by train in June. In October 1934 his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, came for the centenary of Victorian settlement.

The Australian visit by the reigning monarch Queen Elizabeth II, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, in 1954 included a train tour of Victoria, 3-6 March. The Queen Mother in 1958 and the young Princess Alexandra in 1959 also used the State cars.

State Car No 5 hauled by a diesel electric engine from his home station of Berwick was Governor-General Lord Casey's chosen vehicle for his first official visit to Melbourne on 18 October 1965.

The last Royal train was run by the railways in 1988 taking Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh to Geelong and back.

### *State Specials*

During the Clapp era the Reso (Victorian National Resources Development) trains were introduced to promote city-country links. Businessmen on tour were provided with meals and accommodation on board. The first Reso tour was to Swan Hill and Mildura in August and September 1922.

From 1924 to 1936 Better Farming Trains, designed in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, traveled the network to promote the latest farming techniques. Country women were offered advice on cookery, home nursing and childcare, as part of the effort to stem the 'drift to the cities'. The birth of the

Country Women's Association in 1928 was another step. CWA demonstrators staffed the Wool Train during the autumn of 1933 and 1934, augmenting the Better Farming Train's Infant Welfare and Cookery cars with demonstrations promoting the use of wool.

A Commonwealth Jubilee Exhibition train toured the State from February to June 1951. In 1966 the Gippsland Industries Train carried a trade and industry exhibition to the Latrobe Valley. In the 1970s and 1980s Trains of Knowledge offered full accommodation for about 100 high school students and their teachers on week-long tours.

### *People Specials*

Sailors from the American Great White Fleet in 1908 who were invited to visit country Victoria traveled in style with locomotives festooned with greenery, bunting and welcome signs.

Regular specials ran for Race Days and Agricultural Shows (complete with horse boxes and cattle wagons), for Wirths Circus which toured by train from 1906 until 1963, for thousands of Annual Picnics and Back To celebrations. Polishing and decorating the train was part of the fun; engine buffers shone like silver, brass fittings like gold, bunting and greenery fluttered in the slipstream, people sang and waved from the windows.

The tradition is carried on by tourist railways and Railway Historical Societies, many founded in the 1970s at the close of the steam era. The Puffing Billy Preservation Society led the way, reopening the narrow gauge line from Belgrave in 1962 and progressively restoring it to Gembrook.