

News Flash: After four years of trying we have finally obtained permission from QR National to use their paint scheme and logo on Austrains models. The first release of models in this livery will be a rerun of the CLP / CLF series in the first quarter of 2011. This will be followed by a rerun of the X class in second quarter. The quantity of QRN locos in each run will be limited and at the moment our permission from QRN extends to one run only.

CL / CLP / CLF: While doing the QRN livery we will also take advantage of the opportunity to rerun some of the more popular liveries from the first run and to add sound to part of the run. The CL series was originally built with space for sound speakers and we are discussing this possibility with the factory and QSI. No advance order deposits will be taken. As usual with reruns it will be orders backed up by a cheque or credit card which will not be processed until the models arrive. Expected price for the CL series rerun will be \$275.00 standard and \$385.00 with sound. We are also contemplating the idea of a twin pack with one sound and one non sound loco perhaps with a factory fitted DCC chip.

X class: Following the CL series will be a rerun of the X class series 2 and series 3. This will incorporate a run of X53 and X54 in their QR National livery. The X class was never designed with sound in mind and we are not going to invest in an update of the chassis. The cost can just not be recuperated. The previous VR Blue and V/Line colour schemes will be rerun with a new mix of numbers for those who missed out on the previous two runs. Expected price for the X class will be \$275.00 per unit with delivery in time for the Hobsons Bay MRC exhibition at Easter 2011.

And before we receive a torrent of mail and phone calls, Yes, we will be doing a QRN livery on the forthcoming **G class** but not in the first run. There are already too many colour / number combinations in the first run of that project.

The next Newsletter:

After fourteen years and forty three mailouts we have decided to at least try to catch up with the twenty first century before the twenty second arrives. The next newsletter will be the last general posting we will conduct. In it will be a questionnaire asking whether you wish to remain on the snail mail list or be advised by email every time an update is done to the Austrains web site. We realise that many of our customers are elderly or have not caught up with the computer age and we will maintain a twice yearly posted newsletter for them. On the questionnaire will be a few non compulsory questions which we hope will give us an idea of the changing demographics of our customer base. The results of this survey will be shared with other manufacturers and the model press should any care to ask.

New selling arrangements: Long term readers of this epistle will know that I have always believed, despite what contributors to various newsgroups may think, that there is a life other than model railways. The continued growth of Austrains business has made it impossible for me handle everything by myself. As such research on future projects and many other aspects of the business have suffered. The business has grown to where it is too big for one person and I have no intention of employing a second. For many years all sales of Austrains products have been handled from home. This is no longer a satisfactory situation.

From the first week in March direct sales of Austrains products will be undertaken through what will basically be an Austrains section of Toms Hobbies at West Ryde, NSW. The complete range of Austrains products will be on display in their own showcase and a full range of Austrains products will be available over the counter. Although you will be served by Toms Hobbies staff there will be a separate Austrains till and credit card machine. Toms Hobbies will also handle any phone mail order sales. They will not, however, take advance orders for future products or orders mailed direct to us. These will still be handled by Austrains. The present Austrains retailer network will remain in place. The new arrangements are meant to complement rather than compete with current Austrains retailers. All other enquiries about Austrains products will still be handled by Austrains.

New Products:

The 81 / G / BL: Readers will be aware that during the last eighteen months there have been major problems with one of our suppliers in China. During this time most of the engineers who had been handling our (and others) projects either left the company or were fired. Things have now sorted themselves out but it left behind a mess which is only now being resolved. One of the casualties of these problems was the 81 /G / BL project which for some inexplicable reason some engineers at the factory decided, without informing us, to divided into two separate projects with two separate design teams. The resulting shambles resulted in neither team consulting with the other and effectively two separate and largely different models being designed with no account being taken of common parts. The resulting verbal explosion when we found out about this shamoze shook windows in buildings from Hong Kong to Guangzhou.

A new design team has now been appointed to sort the resulting mess out but this will involve a major redesign of many components. This is now underway but unfortunately the project will be further delayed. In the meantime if anyone wishes to cancel their order this will be done without question. Delivery of the 81 /G / BL project is now expected late 2010.

Order forms are now available for the first run of the 81 / G / BL. The 81 / G / BL has been designed around a state of the art die cast chassis and will be fitted with working head, marker and ditch lights where applicable. Interior cab detail and a crew will also be included. There will be two different variations to the sides of the early 81 class. The original version with single access door and the rebuilt double door version.

Passenger Coaches: Toolmaking is now underway for the American End Platform Cars generically known as the FO's. The factory has promised us test shots around the end of April. These will be put up on the web site as soon as they are available. The FO's are arguably the most versatile coaches on the NSWGR. There were numerous styles and roof shapes for these coaches and they were hauled behind most types of steam locos generally available in model form and a large percentage of early diesels. For a complete history refer to Coaching Stock of the NSWGR volume 2. (Still in print from Eveleigh Press). We are doing the Mansard roof versions of the FO. All cars will have full interior detail and will be lighted. Our original plan was to fit each coach with a DCC chip to operate the lights in each individual car. This however would add substantially to the cost of each set and restrict this feature to DCC users only. Instead the lights will be individually controlled by switches on the underside of each coach. A two tiered advance order list has been established. A six car set of FO's will cost \$595.00. This price can be held by a deposit of \$100.00 and will hold for orders fully paid by 31st August, 2010. Additional two car sets of FO's will initially be \$200.00 rising to \$220.00. A premium of \$20 will apply to the price of FO two car sets ordered separately to six car sets. This premium does not apply to two car sets containing CCA cars.

Expected delivery of the FO's is late 3rd quarter 2010.

Stock Items:

The VR - V/Line – Freight Australia – Pacific National JX -VPCX Cement Hoppers: A rerun of the Cement Hoppers arrived late last year and already we have had our first sellout. **Pack G & Combo Pack N are now Sold Out.** We have good stock of all other liveries. There are two packs of VR and two of V/Line livery (**with new sets of numbers**) and Pac. Nat Blue and Freight Australia Green. One pack is entirely Freight Australia Green with a small logo. Not leaving NSW out we have made two packs of the recently repainted cement grey Pacific National versions, mostly numbered 50 or less which are now operating in NSW. **Retail price will remain at \$149.50 per pack of three.**

NSWGR MLE Flat Wagon & variants.

The NSWGR MLE Flat Wagon and its variations the TME Pipe Carrier and the FME LCL container wagon are still available however the TME sales have surprised us and this version is almost sold out. The feedback we have had so far on these models has been very positive. The LCL containers on the FME have each been individually numbered and have small accurate brass etched hooks to simulate the real thing. Melbourne – Sydney and Sydney – Adelaide versions of the containers have been made along with insulated versions. Two different packs of three are available. Pack D has all yellow containers as used on the Sydney - Melbourne service. Pack E is an assortment of Silver insulated LCL's, Yellow Sydney – Adelaide and original Green LCL's. Still nobody has yet come up with a photo showing lettering for a Sydney - Brisbane LCL although they definitely operated to Brisbane.

The MLE and its variants are moulded in diecast zinc alloy with plastic detail components. This gives them plenty of rolling weight which makes them sit on the track a lot better than previous all plastic or resin examples. Interestingly the best sellers so far have been the TME's.

The retail price for a three pack of FME's with a six container load is now \$195.00. A three pack of unloaded MLE's is \$145.00 and a three pack of TME's with a pipe load is \$149.50. For those who have seen the photos, yes that is a real chain holding the pipes down. We will also make available the LCL containers off the FME, with different numbers, in a separate six pack for \$30.00.

Other MLE variants. The MLE flat wagon was the basis for a seemingly endless variety of other wagons, both new building and rebuilds. Thus the tooling was designed so that an infinite number of variations can be done on and above the deck of the wagon. Work has commenced on two new variants of the Flat wagons. These will be **PMX** Out of Gauge Steel wagons and the original NSWGR ISO container wagon, the **GME** with accurate, ie. original design (1969) ACT, ANL & OCL 20' containers.

DL: The DL class Co-Co Diesel Electric is in stock in good quantity except for the AN Green locos which are running short. There are four colour variations of the DL. Original Australian National Green, National Rail Light Grey, National Rail Charcoal and the relatively new Pacific National Blue and Yellow. **DL models are \$260.00.**

In the Pipeline:

ELX Open Wagon and variants.

Production run of the ELX Rib Sided versions and the rerun of the ESX Steel Carrier is now underway was delayed by the factory shutdown for Chinese New Year. They are due to ship mid June. The first public release will be at the AMRA Vic. Caulfield exhibition late August.

The Ribbed sided version will be made in **VR - V/Line** and **SAR Grey and ANR red** version will also be made. Price for this run of the ELX / ESX will be \$ 160.00 per pack of three.

Reruns for 2010: Early 2010 will see the release of the VR – V/Line C class in the ‘Basix’ range.

The rerun of the 442 / 700 class has been postponed until late 2011. There is just too much happening in the next two years.

Flat Top T / P class:

Research on this project is now complete but we are not rushing this project. There is enough new product coming on to the market during the next few years to keep everyone happy and we want to stretch our remaining projects. Being realistic it is unlikely that this project will be delivered before late in 2011 but this will probably stretch to 2012. The T / P is underway and will happen all in good time. In our last newsletter we raised the possibility of doing the QR 1400 class at the same time. The response was deafeningly quiet so that part of the project has been canned. We can only assume that those north of the border are still more interested in American N scale.

Z19 / Z20 class: A third quotation has been received for the Z-19 0-6-0 tender loco and the Z-20 class 2-6-4 Tank. This quote is by far the most reasonable we have yet received but the project is still marginal. It is uneconomic to do one loco without the other but we have talked the factory into splitting the project into two parts with the Z-20 as first release. So let us have your opinion. We don’t want deposits. Just tell us if you are interested and how many units. We have to make a decision before end April. If we don’t get enough response the project will definitely be cancelled.

WHX Wheat Hopper: First engineering samples of the WHX Wheat Hopper are now available: See photos in the WHX section of the web site. There are some minor modifications still to be done but these should be finished when the factory returns after the Chinese New Year shutdown.

We have received permission from the Manildra Group to use their names and logos on these wagons. One set will have ‘Manildra Flour Mills’ on one side and ‘Manildra Starches’ on the other as per the prototype. Another set will be decaled with the Sun Rice logo for Rice Traffic. These models will be sold in sets of four as per the order form. Opening price will be \$220.00 for advance orders rising after the models arrive. No deposit is required, just an advance order. Credit cards will not be debited or cheques banked until the models are ready for delivery. Delivery of the WHX will likely be September 2010.

NR class:

After a false start late in 2008 we have now received permission from Great Southern Railway to do the ‘Southern Spirit’ livery on the NR class. Production will commence immediately after CNY and should be finished around June 2010. 1200 pieces only of the Southern Spirit will be made as a Limited Edition. This will be a guaranteed one off run only. Each model will be certificated. If you order more than one model you will receive consecutively numbered certificates’ if you want a specific number between 1 and 1200 please ask but we can’t guarantee it. Nos 1 & 1200 have already gone. So have nos. 84 & 85 (very popular). Sorry. At the same time we are rerunning the Pac. Nat NR with Stars in two new numbers. NR 1 and NR 54.

During early March the two Southern Spirit livery NR class have been fitted with name plates. The two locos are now named :-

NR 84 ‘Southern Cross’
NR 85 ‘Southern Spirit’

A last minute modification has been done to our artwork without delay to the delivery date:

Shipment will be mid July. As with all reruns **no deposit is required**, Just an advance order. Credit cards will not be debited or cheques banked until the models are ready for delivery. The new retail price remain at \$275.00.

Austrains Basix: Some Austrains models are now well into the 11/13 year age bracket and starting to show their vintage. While they are mechanically very sound (the basic chassis and bogie design has not changed much during that time) they lack the panache of most of the more recently released models. The original Austrains releases of the **80 class, C class and 421 class** certainly fit into that category.

The 80 class are selling for \$195.00 per unit and are fitted with Kadee type couplers only. No cosmetic upgrades have been made to the 80 class or any of the Basix range except for the fitting of Kadee type knuckle couplers. Next in the Basix range will be the **C class in VR and V/Line** livery in mid 2010.

Future Product: In recent times the market for Australian ready to run models has become more competitive and the situation is now bound to happen where there is an overlap of product between manufacturers. This almost happened very recently. We try to talk to our competitors to ascertain their plans and avoid any expensive conflict. In a couple of cases we have pulled out of a project when we have found that another manufacturer was well advanced on the same one. Until recently this has worked well in most cases. Recent events though have changed the situation somewhat. We continue to exchange information on new and planned products with those with whom we are on speaking terms but we will no longer announce planned releases to the public until we have test shots from the manufacturers or in some cases until we drop the finished product on the table at an exhibition. While in China we accepted quotes for another set of coaches and a new wagon. Quotes have already been accepted for two single passenger coaches and eight new goods wagons. 4 x VR, 4 x NSW. We have a pretty good idea what most of our competitors are doing and try to stay clear unless there is a deliberate attempt by someone to jump in on one of our projects. Nor does thinking about something constitute going to do it. There are a lot of dreamers but few who put things into action. As we said before if we tread on someone's toes, well they should have talked to us. Yes, we are also doing a wagon which is neither Victorian nor NSW. It is well advanced with test shots due around August.

And we are very well advanced on another set of coaches. (Not the FO's) with test shots also due in August.

Stock Items:

C35 / NN class: We still have a few people we have not been able to contact. If you have ordered but not received a C35 please contact us. It is likely that we are waiting to hear from you for some reason. The QSI sound versions are most impressive and while we will have good stocks of all C35 / NN variants it is likely that the sound versions will sell out first. Some sound versions are getting very low. The price of the C35 / NN is now \$475.00 for the non sound version and \$575.00 for QSI sound fitted. Some items of sound fitted locos are now Sold Out but in general no problems.

C36 class: All listed items are in stock except for two DCC fitted engines which are Sold Out. We have ordered enough C36 models to last some time. A working headlight has being fitted, the rods and valve gear have been upgraded to stainless steel and provision has being made in the tender for a DCC decoder. Kadee #5 clone couplers are fitted to the tender and the fitting of longer couplers, if required, is made simple by having a standard coupler box moulded into the tender. The C36 is available with the option of a factory fitted decoder for an additional \$45.00. Price for the C36 will be **\$395.00** standard and **\$450.00** with decoder. This pricing should ensure that the C36 remains the least expensive high quality Australian steam locomotive available for some time into the future. 750 units of the rerun have been made with the factory decoder which works quite well.

Exhibitions: During 2010 Austrains will be attending the following exhibitions:

Hobsons Bay MRC, Easter weekend.

Collingwood College,
Campbell St. entrance.
Collingwood, VIC.

Saturday 3rd April to Monday 5th April from 10 am

Epping MRC. Queens Birthday weekend.

This year the Epping Model Railway Club exhibition moves to a new location:

Thornleigh Brickpit Stadium,
Dartford Rd,
Thornleigh, NSW.

Saturday 12th June to Monday 14th June from 10 am.

AMRA Vic.

Caulfield Racecourse.

Station St, Caulfield, VIC.
Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd August 9 am to 5 pm

Our Town Model Show.
Newcastle Racecourse,
Newcastle, NSW.
Saturday 4th September & Sunday 5th September from 9 am.
Represented by Barnes Hobbies
[Note the revised date.](#)

AMRA NSW.
E.G Whitlam Leisure Centre,
Memorial Ave, Liverpool, NSW.
Saturday 2nd, Sunday 3rd & Monday 4th October from 9 am.

POSTAGE AND INSURANCE. With the change of distribution arrangements comes a change of policy with regard to Postage and Insurance. All items posted by Austrains now have compulsory receipted delivery and insurance. Too many people were opting out of insurance with a lot of subsequent problems. **Compulsory** receipted delivery now costs \$5.00 per order. Insurance is \$6.00 per loco.

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