



**No!!! Austrains has not been sold. It is no secret that we want to retire and if someone makes us a reasonable offer and comes up with the cash Austrains is for sale. If it is sold our customers will be amongst the first to know. Meanwhile don't believe what you read on face a&e, sorry ... page.**

### **What happened in China?**

**The 81 / G / BL:** In January we began contacting customers who had ordered locos from the 81 / G / BL project. At the time things were going along nicely and the first of the expected product arrived by airfreight in late January in time for the Corio exhibition. This shipment consisted of three variations only ( 2 x Freight Australia and VR Blue G220). The factory then closed down for Chinese New Year holiday. We had been given a shipping schedule which would have seen all product arrive by mid-May. The factory went back to work after Chinese New Year for approximately thirteen days. Around the second week in March we were advised that there had been an 'incident' at the factory and that there would be a slight delay in production. The 'incident' turned out to be a full blown occupation of the factory by up to one thousand workers depending on what source you believe. The occupation lasted fifty days and was finally broken by the police who, apparently, physically evicted the striking workers and arrested the ring leaders. The first we heard that the strike was broken was when we received a call from our freight forwarder telling us that a pallet of G class which had been stuck in the factory for seven weeks was on its way from China to Hong Kong airport. This was followed by another pallet booked for sea freight.

The parent company acted quickly and immediately began closing the factory and moving all partly completed product, tooling and production equipment to another of their production facilities. Work is now underway to complete the assembly of the 81 / G / BL locos. We have been advised that all G and BL models will be completed by mid-July and the 81's by mid-August. We will begin distributing pre orders as stock becomes available to fill **complete** orders. Shipping a few pieces at time is going to confuse things and probably take more time in the long run. Please bear with us. Trying to deliver part orders will be a book keeping nightmare. Be patient. The situation has been beyond our control and we thank those who have given us support and encouragement during what has been a very difficult time.

As we have mentioned in previous newsletters not all the colour schemes we had originally intended to make will be available. Most China model railway manufacturers are now cutting down on the number of colour variations they will do in any production run. Where once we were able to have short runs of many different liveries this is no longer the case with two of our three suppliers. As a result the factory informed us that they were limiting the number liveries and numbers they would do and asked us to nominate those liveries we wished to drop. A commercial decision had to be made and we nominated those liveries for which we had least orders. We apologise to those whose favorite livery had to be cancelled but in some case we had as few as nine orders for some colour schemes. This is obviously not economically viable so the less popular liveries were cancelled. All those who have ordered locos which have been cancelled will be contacted but it would help if some of you answered your mobile phones.

**81 class Candy locos:** Because of the factory problems we still do not have an answer on what has gone wrong with the Candy 81's. We don't want to rock the boat while they are finishing production of the other models but we have told them not to assemble the Candy locos until we get a chance to inspect them personally.

Please do not ring us asking where your models are. This only delays things further and infuriates the staff who, at the moment, have a little more on their plate that they can handle. If you need to communicate with us an email in best however many of the computer generation seem to think that an email should evoke a response within ten minutes. When you are getting 150/200 emails a day this is not possible. Long complicated epistles giving your life story before getting to the point also cause delays. If you have a problem or a question please keep it succinct.

The price of the 81 / G / BL has now gone up to \$295.00.

**Shipment of G/BL models.** During the past three weeks we have received production samples ( that is random samples off the production line ) of all remaining G and BL class locos. We are now awaiting shipping details of these models. A small quantity will be shipped by airfreight with the remainder following by sea. We will start filling orders as soon as possible. Distribution will take some time, possibly months by the time the last order is sorted out. Please

be patient. If you have received a letter from us please **read it** and return to it to us. So far we have only received back around 30% of the letters posted out earlier this year. Don't blame us for delays in receiving your models if you do not return letters sent to you.

**81 class:** The 81 class models are still due for shipment from China by mid August.

**China Price rises:** The golden days of manufacturing in China may be coming to an end. The China government has mandated that workers will receive a 100% wage rise over five years commencing 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2014 and ending 2019. This will bring the wage of a Chinese production line worker up to US\$6,00 per hour. More than a base rate worker at McDonalds gets in the USA. Every little bit of detail applied to that model you just bought is applied by one of those workers. Imagine what that is going to do to the price of those fully detailed models the market now demands. So where does the budding model railway manufacturer of the future go? India?, Thailand?, Kenya? Already some US makers are pulling out and going to Mexico and the Europeans are heading for Bulgaria. Where does that leave Oz?

## Other new products:

**LHG Goods Brake Van:** At last the LHG Goods Brake Van has arrived and been distributed. Thanks for the kind comments from some who have been impressed enough with this model to let us know. Your comments are appreciated.

**Variations of the LHG.** We are doing two versions of the 49'3" LHG Brake Van. Firstly the as built version with two windows in the guards compartment end. These vans all had this configuration until the early 1950's when the windows were removed and they were rebuilt with solid timber planked ends. A further variation of the original version is the one off #7118 which carried advertising for the railways parcel service on both sides. One of these is included in pack B.

Some dispute has arisen in the councils of the wise about the OHG code applied in the early 1950's to some of the vans which retained their screw couplers while the remainder of the fleet was fitted with autos. The late R.G. Preston ( an author renowned for the accuracy of his writings ) in his book 'Day of the Goods Train' states that these vans were used on stock trains where the four wheeled Cattle and Sheep vans had not been fitted with auto couplers. However excellent documentation also exists showing that sixteen vans coded OHG with screw couplers were transferred to the carriage sheds at Central in the weeks before Easter and Christmas holidays for thorough cleaning for use as supplementary passenger guards vans during the holiday periods. A task to which they were ideally suited and regularly performed in country areas when the need arose. So the LHG is a multi purpose van.

The LHG are being sold in twin packs based on eras. Pack B is as built with end windows 1930's / 1940's era. Pack B will also contain the van with advertising.

Packs A and C will be early 50's with one LHG and one OHG. Packs D & E contain vans in their mid 50's through to the early 80's configuration.

LHG packs will be \$165.00.



**The Way and Works Train.** When many vans and coaches had finished their economic life in main line service they were transferred to service stock. Most of the larger stations had a few vans, wagons and coaches painted cream and silver lying around in the yard as storage or sleeping accommodation for the Way and Works crews who kept the system running behind the scenes. Many LHG Brake vans finished up in this role. Austrains will be releasing a two car pack consisting of an LHG van and LFX coach ( based on original photographs ) painted cream with silver roof. This will be a Limited Edition of 480 sets only selling at \$230.00 for the twin pack. It is a once only run and will not be repeated. When we have had the LHG on display at exhibitions interest in this set has been very high. A limited number of the Way and Works train have arrived by airfreight and most pre orders have been filled. We will be selling the remainder at the Epping MRC exhibition [early June](#).

**NSW Dog Box Coaches:** In something of a surprise the factory has shipped us limited quantities of packs B2, C3, D4 and E5. These will be available around 10<sup>th</sup> June. The two packs containing the ACX have been delayed as we have asked the factory to give priority to finishing the PL coaches to get them here in time for the AMRA Vic Caulfield exhibition.

We are making three versions of the Dog Box coaches all based on the 49'3" chassis. Two versions of the LFX ( Mansard and semi Elliptical roofs ) and one version of the HCX branch line composite Brake coach with semi elliptical roof. There were only two numbers of this particular HCX on the 49'3" chassis. All the rest were of varying

lengths so we are limited to this one type. The Dog Boxes will be sold as TWO Packs in both Tuscan & Russet and Indian Red liveries. Pre order prices are \$230.00 per pack of two. It has been decided to combine the ACX into packs with the LFX / HCX. A pack containing an ACX will be \$245.00.

**442 / 700 class:** in the Austrains 'Basix' range arrived late February. The Basix range is made from early Austrains tooling which does not meet the standards of modern day products in detail and electronics. They are however mechanically identical to newer Austrains products in that they retain the reliable 5 pole skew wound motor, all wheel pickup and drive of all other Austrains locomotives. The 442 / 700 is also fitted with an 8 pin DCC plug. The first loco in the Basix range to have this accessory.

The rerun is, by necessity, limited in its scope. The factory will no longer do numerous variations of colours and numbers so, this run consists of 442 class in Indian Red, Reverse and Freighttrail Blue and 700 class in SAR Mustard Pot, ANR Red & Silver and AN Green. While we had hoped to keep the Basix range under \$200.00 this is no longer possible. Massive factory price rises, particularly on the production side along with the devaluation of the \$A means the 442 / 700 will be \$245.00.



**And later in the year / early 2015:** We also have booked reruns of the **VR I – I/A Open Wagon** and the **B wagon** plus more of the very popular **M Cattle Wagon**. To round off the Victorian product there will also be a **short run of the JX – VPCX Cement Hopper** in both VR and V/Line but this will be delayed to later in the year. Unfortunately the JX comes out of the same plant involved in the strike but we have been assured that it will be produced.

**The ultimate S truck:** Well, our predictions were correct. We began the Epping MRC exhibition at Thornleigh with a wall of S trucks on the stand 2 mtrs long, 1.5 mtrs high and two boxes deep. ( Much to the hilarity of some of the other exhibitors. ) You couldn't see the customers over the top of the pile. By 11.00am on the Sunday they were all gone including a few reinforcements we had left in the warehouse. Fortunately the factory had enough components for around 200 more packs. These will be shipped from China with the first LFX's early July. Any which remain unsold will be piled up on our stand at Liverpool no doubt with similar results. Those who usually wait to purchase through retailers please note that we are unable to supply retailers from this shipment.

A rerun has been ordered but will not get here until early 2015 and will cost substantially more. Right now these S trucks are seriously good value.

One of our competitors has dug out some old S truck tooling, spent a bit on a few wire add ons and has released the aforementioned model. Before you rush out with credit card in hand check out the price and detail of the Austrains S truck and make your own decision. The super detailed Austrains model works out at about \$3.00 per unit cheaper.

**NR rerun:** Another victim of the strike was the NR rerun due August. The factory has now given us an amended delivery date of late 2014. [<link>](#)

**VR PL Coaches:** These three coaches are going down the production as you read this. Delivery of preordered items will begin around early August. The remainder will go on general sale at the AMRA Vic Caulfield exhibition. The pre order period for the PL Coaches is now finished. Price is now \$375.00 per set of 3 cars.

## **That's enough for new stuff for 2014. Now what have we got in stock.**

**Y class:** We still have very adequate stocks of the Y class in VR Blue and V/Line liveries is now in stock. If you ordered a model and have not yet received it please contact us. We have sufficient stock of the Y class to last some time. Despite massive factory price rises since the first production run we have been able to keep the price down to \$275.00. [< link to Y class order form >](#)



**CW Cattle Wagon.** We have very good of the NSW 1915/1921 CW Cattle wagon packs. These comprise four of the new 1915 version and two 1921 version wagons in a six pack. There are three different packs with new numbers on the 1921 version. When compared side by side the difference in the two types of vans is quite obvious. Photographic evidence exists some wagons of this version of the CW still being in service in the mid 1960's making them suitable for the steam /diesel changeover period. The price is \$240.00 per pack. < [link to Cattle Wagon order form](#) >



**NSW Four wheel wagons:** We still have very good stocks of the following four wheel NSWGR wagons:

SRC Refrigerated Van	3 pack ( 2 different numbered packs )	\$120.00
ICV Refrigerated Van	3 pack ( 2 different numbered packs )	\$120.00
MV Meat Van	3 pack ( 1 pack only )	\$120.00
LV Louvre Vans	4 pack ( 2 different numbered packs )	\$160.00
LV Louvre Vans Milk Van version	4 pack ( 2 different numbered packs )	\$160.00
CV Covered Van / PV Powder Van	4 pack ( 2 different numbered packs )	\$160.00



#### **4 Wheel Tankers: Most of the original run of Oil Tankers is now Sold Out.**

However we now have in stock the 'Shell' liveried tankers. These are the correct colours for this wagon as it is based upon the ex Shell version preserved at the RTM Thirlmere. Because of a resurgence of interest in steam era and diesel changeover period models these wagons are being sold in era packs with different coloured tanks to match a particular era approximately. These packs are Silver ( 1960's era ) and Black ( 1970's era ). The wagon packs of three are \$120.00. Unfortunately the 1950's Yellow pack is now **Sold Out**.



#### **The American End Platform Cars:**

There are only around forty six car sets left and these are now all Tuscan & Russet. We are sold out of all Indian Red sets. We are breaking up the 6 car packs we have left and selling the contents separately. ( That's separately, not cheaper. ) Unfortunately we can only do this at exhibitions.

#### **Other New Products:**

##### **Z-20 class 2-6-4 Tank Locomotive:**

Regretfully we have decided to cancel the Z 20 class. Increasing price rises in China and a lack of interest by potential buyers has made us decide to cancel the project.

##### **GME Original Container wagon.** < [link to GME photo](#) > < [link to order page](#) >

When the first dedicated container ships arrived in Sydney in early 1969 they discharged at the new container terminal at White Bay. In their wisdom the powers that be decreed that containers would be stuffed and unstuffed ( that's packed and unpacked to you non shipping types ) at a new depot at Chullora, some 20 miles distant. To transport these shiny new boxes the NSWGR converted 16 UME type Flat wagons to GME Container wagons each carrying two of the 20' variants. The usual load was MHG / 16 container wagons / MHG hauled by a single 44 class.

As containerisation progressed and more suitable wagons were developed the GME's were used as individual wagons for general container transport. A regular use was to transport 2 x 20' containers to any of the regional freight depots set up around the state. Some of the wagons were still in use in the mid / late 1980's.

Our MLE wagon was originally designed with a conversion to these two wagons in mind. Each GME will be fitted with two 20' containers of the original design with appropriate logos. ACT, OCL and ANL. The containers are also available separately with different logo variants.

**PMX 'Out of Gauge' Steel wagon.** [< link to PMX photo >](#) [< link to order form >](#)

With an increase in the early 1960's of the maximum sheet width coming out of the Pt Kembla Steelworks to 10'6" the railways needed a wagon to carry this width sheet without resorting to expensive well type wagons or difficult to schedule 'Out of Gauge' trains.

Perway Workshops were given the task of converting 13 wagons from HME type Flat wagons. Originally coded PME, they were later recoded PMX for bogie exchange. The support frame was designed to be removable, the load braces attached to the deck by clips. The support frame is set at an angle of 26.6 degrees. Some of these wagons are still operational under Pac. Nat. ownership.

Price for the PMX is \$160.00 for a pack of three. For the GME \$150.00.



**LHO Passenger Brake Van** and **KP Mail Sorting Van**. Both of these items have been designed to complement the FS / BS cars in the composition of mail trains. The LHO can also be used wherever a Passenger Brake Van is required for trains from the early 1960's onwards. The new vans are being sold in a three pack with an FS coach. **Retail price is \$330.00 per pack.**

We are breaking up the remaining sets into individual items but only at exhibitions.

[< link to order page >](#)



**WHX Wheat Hopper:** Now Sold Out of set W3 'Manildra Flour Mills'. All other sets W4 is decaled with the Sun Rice logo for Rice Traffic. These models are being sold in sets of four as per the order form. Price is \$220.00.

[< link to photo >](#) [< link to order page >](#)



## Bits and Pieces: We still have small stocks of the following:

**C class:** In stock available in VR – V/Line colours in the 'Basix' range. **Price \$195.00**

[< link to photo >](#) [< link to order page >](#)



**NSWR 80 class:** In stock available in Tuscan, Reverse and Freighttrail Blue in the 'Basix' range. **Price \$195.00** 8011 in Pac. Nat livery is Sold Out.

[< link to photo >](#) [< link to order page >](#)



**C35 / NN class:** The QSI sound versions are most impressive and while we will have good stocks of all C35 / NN variants most of the sound versions are almost Sold Out including preserved engine 3526. The price of the C35 / NN is **\$475.00** for the non sound version and **\$575.00** for QSI sound fitted. [< link to order page >](#)



**C36 class:** All listed items are in stock except for some DCC fitted engines which are Sold Out. We ordered enough C36 models to last some time however demand has increased substantially since the release of the FO coaches and NSWGR four wheel rolling stock. Some variations are now Sold Out and others are running low. 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 will ensure that the C36 remains the least expensive high quality Australian steam locomotive available for some time into the future. Please check availability on the web site price list before ordering. [< link to order page >](#)



**Repairs:** Austrains does not offer a repair service however if you are unable to repair or service a model yourself contact Paul Baker. 0439 566391 or email [prb287@hotmail.com](mailto:prb287@hotmail.com)

**Office Hours: And communication problems.** Austrains is a business like any other. Just because the office is at home does not give customers open slather to phone at all hours of the day or night. Although the situation has improved we are still getting calls at what normal people would consider to be ridiculous hours. If I have a reputation for being abrupt or grumpy is it any wonder when some lunatic phones at 6.30am to complain that his loco doesn't work because it fell off the layout last night, or another rings at 7.40am on a Sunday morning and continues to talk over the top of me despite me telling him that I was standing dripping wet after just coming out of the shower ( that ain't a pretty sight ) or another rings at 7.30pm just as I am sitting down to a much anticipated steak and wonders why he copped an earful. The most recent persistent offender started ringing at 6.02pm and finally gave up around 9.00pm ringing around every two minutes during that time. Then he was highly upset when I gave him a few choice profanities the following morning. Give us a break.

An increasing number of people appear not to have learned or been taught any social skills whatsoever. No, we do not work Sunday evenings or at 5.30am on Saturday mornings.

### **Our office hours are 9.00am to 5.00pm AEST/AEDT Monday to Friday**

If the office is unattended the phone is usually switched through to a mobile. If you can't phone during that period please, save me the stress and send an email or a letter or a carrier pigeon.

If the office is unattended the phone is always switched through to a mobile. We try to reply to all calls recorded on the phone but this is not possible if you ring from a private number or through a corporate switchboard were the young lady on the switch hasn't got the foggiest idea what a model train is, let alone who in the organisation would want to buy one.



### **Exhibitions:**

#### **Austrains will be attending the following exhibitions during 2014:**

Note that some dates are still awaiting confirmation:

##### **AMRA Vic**

August 23-24, 2014 at Caulfield Racecourse, Station St, Caulfield.  
9am-6pm (Sat) & 9am-5pm (Sun)

##### **Our Town Model Railway Club**

August: Date to be confirmed.

August 23-24, 2014  
Newcastle Racecourse, Broadmeadow, NSW

**AMRA NSW**  
4th / 6th October, 2014  
E.G. Whitlam Centre, Memorial Dr, Liverpool, NSW

**Croydon MRC. VIC**  
Saturday the 15th and Sunday the 16th of November, 2014.  
Sat – 9am to 5pm. Sun – 10am to 4pm  
**Dorset Primary School**, Prospect Hill Road, Croydon

Note that some dates are still awaiting confirmation - The above is subject to alteration but should remain firm. Any other exhibition organisers who would like us to attend we can try to fit you in but no guarantees.

### **Warranties:**

All Austrains products are covered by a 12 month Replacement warranty. In other words we replace rather than repair most items returned to us under warranty. This warranty only applies to items sold by Austrains or by an authorised Austrains retailer. We are currently disputing a warranty claim made by a customer in Queensland for a locomotive purchased in supposed new condition from a retailer who apparently claimed to be an authorised Austrains retailer. It appears that the loco was second hand and the retailer was most definitely not an authorised Austrains dealer. Nor are items purchased second hand over ebay covered by warranty. Be careful. Check the Austrains dealer list on this web site before purchasing a supposed new product.

### **Our arrangement with Retailers:**

#### **Please take note of this to avoid missing out on some models:**

For a peaceful life our preference would be to supply all our product to retailers from day one and allow them to do all sales while we disappear into a contented semi retirement. However this is just not a viable option for any manufacturer who wishes to expand their range and stay in business. The reasons for this are many and complicated. Suffice to say that the reason there are so few Austrains retailers usually relates to the inability of many of the retail trade to carry the amount of stock we deem necessary to promote the range as we wish to see it promoted. Current Austrains retailers have proven that they can do the job for us and we are happy to continue supplying them as we can. Surprisingly there are a few retailers who would probably qualify for an Austrains franchise but have never approached us. That is their loss.

The other part of this equation is that the cost of new tooling in China is horrendously expensive. To offset this initial cost we need a markup on cost better than we can get by just supplying retailers. This is why we direct market. Not all Austrains products, especially new tooling items, are available immediately to the retail network. Rolling stock items are especially expensive to tool compared to the retail return which can be made on them. So, while you may walk away with a happy heart after placing an order for a new Austrains product with your friendly neighborhood hobby shop that does not guarantee that you will get it. We have even had recent examples of orders being placed with retailers who are not Austrains authorised dealers. In these cases those placing the orders missed out completely. Austrains retailers are aware of these conditions when they accept a franchise. Please check availability before placing an order for advance delivery with a retailer.

**AUSTRAINS OFFICE PHONE NUMBER IS: 02-9817-2333 (Mon-Fri, 9am – 5pm)**

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