

IDA BAY Rail Line - Key Sections

SOUTHPORT



- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Lune River | 6 Greaves Point |
| 2 Ida Bay Junction | 7 Jagers Curve |
| 3 Donnelley's Gates | 8 South Port Narrows |
| 4 Cemetery | 9 Deep Hole Bay |
| 5 Check Rail Curve | 10 Major Honors Bay |

--- Railway Track

Ida Bay Railway

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WELCOME TO

IDA BAY RAILWAY

Ride with us to the end of the line.



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
VISIT**

**PLEASE COME AND VISIT
US AGAIN**

HISTORICAL IDA BAY RAILWAY

The Ida Bay Railway is the last operating bush tramway in Tasmania, and also has the distinction of being the most southerly railway in Australia.

The 2' 0" gauge (610mm) line was constructed in 1922 to carry limestone from the quarries southeast of Lune River to a wharf at Brick Point on Ida Bay. Here the limestone was transhipped to river craft for transport to Electrona.

At Electrona the limestone was used in the production of calcium carbide – a key component in the steel industry, the source of acetylene gas, and used in the chemical industry for the production of synthetic rubber and plastics.

Following World War II considerable changes were made in the operation of the railway. New workshops, engine shed, offices and workman's quarters were constructed beside the Cockle Creek road. These facilities now form the operational headquarters of the line.

Five Malcolm Moore petrol locomotives were acquired from the Army surplus that enabled the last of the steam locomotives to be retired.

In 1950 a new quarry closer to Lune River was opened. In the same year the silting of the Lune River made it impossible for vessels to reach the wharf at Brick Point and the line was extended five kilometers to a deep water anchorage at Elliott's Beach and the Deep Hole.

About this time the transport of limestone was changed whereby the limestone was loaded into steel or wooden boxes at the quarry and placed onto skeletal 4-wheel wagons for transport to the wharf - an early form of containerization. Loaded trains of about 12 wagons were kept in check on down grades by a curious 'over-ride' brake connected to the wagon couplings.

The carriage of limestone eventually went to road trucks, the last limestone train running in June 1975. In 1977 the State Government purchased the railway and rolling stock. In the following year tourist trains commenced running with the operators leasing the line from the government.

Ida Bay Railway was officially opened as a tourist attraction on the 20th December 1977 by the Honorable Mr Peter Hodgman, MLC.

Through lack of maintenance over the years, the Ida Bay Railway was considered unsafe and closed in 2002.

New ownership dating from January 2005 and an intensive maintenance program on the track, buildings and rolling stock has allowed the Ida Bay Railway to be re-opened as a tourist attraction with Rail Safety Accreditation.

The return trip to the Deep Hole affords many historical points of interest including aboriginal middens, the site of the old Ida Bay township, the remains of a river steamer, an old cemetery with a headstone dating back to 1883 and the remains of a number of old houses.

One block near the old township was purchased in 1863 by John Woodcock Graves, the composer of the famous English folk song "D'ye ken John Peel".

The King George monument, accessed from Southport Bluff, is a monument to commemorate the 134 people who lost their lives from the sinking of the convict ship, King George III in 1835. The monument overlooks the rugged sea scarred coast. *(This area is not accessible at the moment).*

Ida Bay, alongside the towns of Lune River, Leprena, Catamaran, Recherche Bay, Cockle Creek, Hastings, Hythe, Sisters Bay, Lady Bay and Southport share a varied history together.

All these small towns are the result of convict settlement and government need for timber product. At settlement the only means of transport was the use of waterways.