

1829



The *Swan River Colony* is established by Captain James Stirling. In 1832, the colony is officially named *Western Australia*. The small population and its poor economy leads to little public works being achieved for the colony.

1871



The Western Australian Timber Company Ltd constructs the first rail line from Yoganup to their company jetty in Geographe Bay. Its 19.3km in length.

1877



The Department of Works and Railways is established. This is the first government agency responsible for Western Australian railways.

1879



The first WA Government railway is opened. It runs from Northampton to Geraldton to transport lead from the mines to the port. It covers a distance of 55km.

1881



The Fremantle to Perth to Guildford line is opened. Fremantle is the site of the first Government Railway Workshops for the colony.

1886



The Midland Railway Company begins construction of a privately owned railway between Midland Junction and Walkaway (south of Geraldton). The company is granted land in exchange for every mile of railway built.

1889



The Western Australian Land Company builds a line from the port of Albany to Beverley. It covers 338km but is later purchased by the Government Railways (1896) to become part of the *Great Southern Railway*.

1890



C. Y. O'Connor is appointed Chief Engineer of the colony who persuades the government to spend more money on improving the WA rail system. The *Western Government Railways (WAGR)* is established.

1892-3



The Perth to Bunbury *South Western Railway* is completed to service the developing forestry and agricultural industry.

1897



The *Eastern Goldfields Railway* opens for service to meet the increased demand for transportation and supply for the gold mining industry in Southern Cross and Kalgoorlie.

1901



Federation of Australia. The six separate British self-governing colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia form one nation and establish a federal government responsible for matters concerning the whole nation.

1901



The *Western Australian Government Railways* commences work on building new workshops at Midland to replace the existing cramped workshops in Fremantle.

1904



The Midland Junction Workshop opens! It employs up to 3000 people who development and maintain the WA rail system. It is also a crucial training ground for skilled tradespeople.

1910



Midland Railway Company devises a scheme to create and sell "Ready Made Farms" from some of its land in Carnamah, Winchester and Coorow. The scheme was to sell the land as farms instead of vegetated country, and to market them abroad to encourage new settlement of British migrants along its railway line.

1912



The Midland Railway Company experiences thefts of 'food and goods packages' by bushranger Frank Thomas along the Carnamah line of the track.

(He is later captured in 1922.)

1912-17



The Trans-Australian Railway is built. It covers 1052 miles (1693km) across the Nullarbor Plain linking Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta in South Australia.

1927-28



Suburban Perth passengers buy over 13 million train tickets. New suburban carriages are introduced over this time to keep up with demand.

1930



Telephone services are installed in Perth to connect with Adelaide, and subsequently with the rest of Eastern Australia.

1940



Australia enters WWII. Midland Workshops manufacture defence equipment which accounts for a third of its production. As men leave to enlist, women are employed for the first time, making up half the workforce. However, they do not receive the same meal privileges as their male colleagues – no access to hot meals until numerous protests are made.

1942



Fremantle becomes a major submarine base and repair unit for US, Dutch, and British vessels. Damaged submarine propellers are sent to WAGR – Midland Workshops for repair.

1942-44



The Trans-Australian Railway plays a vital role in transporting troops and equipment for the war effort. In fact, dependence on all WA railways increases dramatically and some carriages receive military conversions including: ambulance trains, examination and recruiting cars.

1947



The inaugural trip of the *Australind* occurs. The luxury passenger carriage takes 3.5 hours to travel from Perth to Bunbury, covering a distance of 186km.

1953



The first mainline diesel locomotives are used in WA. Many of them are given names of Western Australian Aboriginal groups. (*Be sure to have a look at **X1001 Yalagonga** during your visit to the Railway Museum. You'll see its 'name badge'.*)

1964



WAGR takes over the Midland Railway Company. All diesel locomotives, carriages and other worthwhile rolling stock are absorbed into the WAGR fleet and reclassified where necessary. Those not deemed worthy of inclusion are scrapped.

1970



The *Indian Pacific* weekly passenger rail service that runs between Sydney and Perth commences. A one-way trip takes 75 hours. The route includes the world's longest straight stretch of railway track, a 478km stretch over the Nullarbor Plain.

1971



The Prospector railcar service begins commercial operation between Perth and Kalgoorlie. It is Australia's fastest train at the time with the typical 14 hour train journey being cut down to 8 hours. It's also the first train to offer an 'air-line style' full meal service.

1974



The Railway Museum in Bassendean opens to display trains, photographs, models, ephemera and to house a library and museum archives.

1979



The Fremantle railway line closed due to lack of passengers. It re-opens after a change of government in 1983.

1986



Transperth becomes the official trading name of the WA government public transport system that consists of 70 railway stations of the major lines: Midland, Armadale, Fremantle, Clarkson and Mandurah.

1987



The inaugural trip of the diesel railcar *Australind* occurs, taking 2.5 hours to cover 186km. (*Check back to 1947 for how long it took then via a steam locomotive.*)

1991



WA's suburban railway lines become electric, which requires erection of poles and wires along the lines. A completely new communication and signaling system is adopted.

1994



Midland Workshops close after 90 years of operation. Their closure ends not only an important industrial space but also a complex social community. Despite the harsh, dirty and often dangerous working conditions, many former workers regretted the loss of the traditions, camaraderie and pride in workmanship that characterised their Midland working lives.

2004



A 'state-of-the-art, high speed, *Prospector* commences service. Travelling up to 160kmh, the journey from Perth to Kalgoorlie is shortened to 6.5 hours. (*Check back to 1971 to see the difference in travel time between then and now.*)

2007



The Mandurah Line officially opens carrying 1500 passengers, including 1000 members of the public selected by ballot. To celebrate, all *Transperth* bus, train and ferry services are free on opening day.

2013



The *Indian Pacific* weekly passenger rail service between Sydney and Perth now takes only 65 hours to cross a distance of 4352km. Improvements in rail technology, communications, safety procedures and booking systems has increased rail efficiency.

20__



***Our class visit to the
Railway Museum!***