

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## TAILEM BEND PLAYGROUND'S MUCH-LOVED TRAIN TO GET \$30,000 SAFETY UPGRADE

The Coorong District Council will invest \$30,000 into a vital safety upgrade of the Tailem Bend playground's popular train structure, ensuring the 106-year-old authentic locomotive can continue to be enjoyed by children for decades to come.

The upgrade will comprise of various improvements, including fencing the boiler section of the train, installing soft fall around the base and a new set of access stairs to the back cab, and other minor modifications.

This follows the path of many other historic railway towns across the State, where councils are continually working to ensure the safety of children's play equipment, while also balancing the need to preserve and showcase local history.

Council has been provided \$17,000 in funding from the LGA Mutual Liability Risk Incentive Scheme, and will set aside the remaining \$13,000 from its budget to ensure the works can go ahead this year.

Coorong District Council Mayor Paul Simmons said this was an exceptional outcome for the community, after Council had initially feared it would have to remove the train altogether due to significant safety risks being identified.

"People across our community love having this historic train in the main street of Tailem Bend; it's really become part of our identity. The last thing we want to do is remove it," Mayor Simmons says.

"Fortunately, our infrastructure team has now put together a positive compromise, which means children can safely continue their play on board the train and only limited restrictions will be enforced.

"It also means visitors can still enjoy soaking up the sight of this historic landmark as they walk down the main street of Tailem Bend - all the while, local people can maintain visual pride in the town's railway history."

The RX201 locomotive was donated to Council in 1967 after being in service in Tailem Bend from 1913 to 1967. The train has always been popular amongst locals and visitors, however its condition has slowly deteriorated over the decades and now poses a significant risk to people who climb on it.

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Three options were put forward at the Council's formal meeting in May. The other two options included either completely removing the train from the playground; or restricting access to the entire structure.

"The decision to keep the train, with some simple safety modifications, is the best outcome for our community and for Council. It enables this historic artefact to remain right along our main street for everyone to enjoy," Mayor Simmons says.

Works on the safety upgrade are likely to start later this year, with hope that it will be ready to re-open to the public before peak visitor season from October onwards.

Council will keep the community updated on the project's progress via its Facebook page, community newsletters and media.

- ENDS -

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