



## **Blue Mountains' iconic Scenic Railway to undergo \$30M upgrade**

Tuesday 12 June 2012

Scenic World has committed to the largest tourist attraction investment in the history of the Blue Mountains with a \$30 million redevelopment of the world's steepest incline railway.

The Scenic Railway at Australia's most visited; privately-owned tourist attraction is being upgraded with works including a new train to transport visitors down to the ancient rainforest floor in the Jamison Valley.

Scheduled to open in December 2012, the new railway experience set within a World Heritage-listed region beneath the Three Sisters, will include new top and bottom platforms with historical interpretation in addition to a new rail track.

Swiss-designed carriages will comprise the fifth vehicle to operate on the former coal mine track since 1945. The existing train continues to operate, building on a history of nearly 25 million passengers delivered safely and spectacularly to the valley floor.

Overseeing the project are new Joint Managing Directors, Anthea and her brother David Hammon.

Miss Hammon (31), also Scenic World's Chief Engineer, said under the railway redevelopment, the character and history of the 52 degree incline will be retained.

"We want to maintain Scenic World's position as a unique international attraction, while ensuring visitor safety. This investment allows us to upgrade the Scenic Railway well ahead of schedule." Miss Hammon said.

"The sensitive redevelopment demonstrates the same depth of historical, cultural and environmental respect that our family has provided for three generations, but will now offer the visitor a fresh perspective with some new surprises that people will want to explore again and again."

A multidisciplinary team will deliver this significant tourism redevelopment lead by Miss Hammon, bringing together Swiss specialist railway designers Garaventa, Australian architects, project managers and builders.

Scenic World is experienced by almost one million visitors annually. Beginning in 1945 with Harry Hammon's entrepreneurial vision to transform an abandoned coal mine into an iconic tourist attraction, three generations of Hammons continue to pioneer Blue Mountains tourism.



“Whenever I tell people about my grandfather and the layers of history here, they are amazed. We want to make sure our visitors can engage with that story before experiencing the fun of riding the train” Miss Hammon said.

Scenic World is open every day of the year and also features the highest Skyway in Australia at 270 metres and the biggest cable car in the country fitting 84 people taking visitors to the Scenic Walkway spanning 2.4km, the longest boardwalk in the Southern Hemisphere.

### **Scenic Railway Facts**

- The historic railway was built in 1878 to service mining activities in the valley;
- Harry Hammon purchased the lease in 1945 turning the Scenic Railway into a major tourist attraction;
- The railway track spans 310m through a cliff side tunnel and through a rainforest corridor;
- The train takes 84 passengers and operates every 10 minutes;
- In 1945 the Scenic Railway cost 1 shilling to ride or Sixpence for children;
- Each train has been named “Mountain Devil’ after the native plant;
- The term ‘Scenic Railway’ dates back to late 19th Century England amusement rides.

**David & Anthea Hammon will be available for interviews today between 1.30pm – and 4pm.**

**For more information or to arrange an interview, contact;**

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