

MEDIA RELEASE



Hunter region's railway past, the star of new documentary

STEAM ON THE MAIN NORTH, PRODUCED BY NFSA, IS AVAILABLE FREE ONLINE NOW

Climb aboard this railway journey, and discover the NSW Hunter region's history as a major transport network, with a new documentary [published online \(http://bit.ly/SteamMainNorth\)](http://bit.ly/SteamMainNorth) by the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA).

Titled *Steam on the Main North*, the 15-minute film is a sequel to *Steam on the Harbour* released last October (<http://bit.ly/SteamontheHarbour>), and features footage from the Hunter region shot by transport enthusiast and cinematographer Roger McKenzie and his friend Bernie Kent in 1968.

The film features footage from three locations around Maitland: Fassifern, Hawkmount (between Awaba and Dora Creek), and Thornton.

NFSA Curator Jeff Wray said: '*Steam on the Main North* reveals a fascinating snapshot of the region's history, as many of the rural areas featured were heavily transformed by the suburban sprawl. The film also explores the wide variety of passenger and goods steam trains that undertook the journey along the Main North line, which was particularly unique for this era.'

By 1968, regular use of steam engines had stopped in many parts of NSW; however, in the Hunter the historic trains continued to be a transport source in large numbers, and the area became a magnet for steam enthusiasts. Connecting past with present Jeff says that, similar to today, the major commodity moving up and down the line was coal, with the films providing a historical context of delivery from the railways to the port.

Highlights include:

- Joyful interactions between the cameramen and the train crews.
- A passenger train departing a suburban station, providing an historic glimpse of a railway stop in 1968.
- And, for the train enthusiasts, the footage shows double Garrets 6017, 6037 working hard uphill on a fully loaded coal train.

Steam on the Main North has been published in time for this week's Hunter Valley Steamfest, which celebrates Maitland's rich steam and industrial heritage. The film is now available on the NFSA's YouTube channel: <http://bit.ly/SteamMainNorth>

Curator Jeff Wray is available for interviews. For more information, please contact Miguel Gonzalez (NFSA National Media Manager), (02) 8202 0114, miguel.gonzalez@nfsa.gov.au

THE NFSA'S TRAIN COLLECTION

The footage featured in *Steam on the Main North* comes from the Roger McKenzie Collection, and was shot by Roger McKenzie (d. 1992) and his friend Bernie Kent, from 1965 through to 1985. The collection also includes footage of the Sydney rail network, as well as transportation more widely including ferries, trams and container ships. The collection has been marked as unique in that it doesn't just showcase transportation, but also includes the workers who operated them and the surrounding areas.

Alongside the McKenzie collection, the NFSA holds a number of interesting and historic clips featuring steam trains, including *Steam Train Trip from Richmond to Clyde Yards* and *Steam Train Trip Sydney to Gosford*.

More information can be found on the NFSA's [Train Curated Collection](#).