Federation of Rail Organisations of New Zealand

Grant Craig, President
About me

NZ Railway, NZ Rail, and Tranzrail - 1979 to 1999:
- Clerical Cadet
- Clerk
- Section Officer
- Stationmaster
- Train Controller
- Traction Control Officer
- Network Planning Officer

Dunedin Railways - 1999-2021:
- Operations Manager

FRONZ President 2011 to - present
The network in its heyday...
And what it is now:

Freight services versus passenger services
In Festival Week 1963 the Ocean Beach Railway opened for the public and in doing so was the first operating preservation railway in New Zealand.
In the decades since, dozens of groups have launched around the country. Many use original railway buildings and stations, or run with locomotives and rolling stock that was part of the New Zealand Railways network.

All our members face common challenges:

- Finding skilled volunteers who know how to fix antiquated machines
- Getting passengers through the gates
- Keeping up to date with legislation and regulator requirements
- Rising costs
- A global move away from the fossil fuels that locomotives need to run
- Adapting in a constantly changing world.
FRONZ first met in 1972 to help navigate challenges, but in the 70s, the issues were a bit different!

They included getting access to the mainline after the Government’s “ban on steam”, securing carriages to run excursions with, setting up training and having a united voice.

Twelve organisations were the founding members of FRONZ, now, more than 70 groups make up the Federation.
Tramways

- 2 street tram operators
- 6 street tramway museums
Mainline operators

- Three running steam excursions
- One running railcars
- Two running diesel locomotives
- One running a mix of steam and diesel
Heritage operators

Scattered around the country, there are plenty of heritage groups to see.

They run railcars, steam locomotives, diesel engines, and have a number of rare and unique items of rolling stock.
Other operators and organisations:

- Tourism railway operators
- Rail carts
- Heritage precincts
- Service providers
- Vehicle owners
- Museums
We’re here to help…

- Not every heritage operator is a member of FRONZ, but a majority are
- Our 70+ members are scattered across New Zealand, and Rarotonga and Australia
- FRONZ works between groups and key agencies such as KiwiRail, or Waka Kotahi - the rail regulator. We work to make sure our members’ voices are heard
- FRONZ does the heavy lifting on behalf of groups
- Stakeholders like KiwiRail have one point of contact
- We fund this work through levies on Mainline Operators, subscriptions, and issuing Public Liability Insurance
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The FRONZ Executive

Prior to COVID, the Executive would meet in person about four times a year, but now we meet on a monthly basis, through Zoom.

General topics cover:

- Engagement with Government
- Issues facing members
- Climate change
- Training
- Delivering workshops for member groups

Pictured here is our planning meeting in August when we were setting out the work for the year Ahead.

The Executive is elected at the annual conference, which alternates between the North and South Island.
Award-winning restored locomotive joins Waihi's Goldfields Railway fleet

Glenbrook Vintage Railway recognised for innovation and safety
The BIG challenges…
COVID

● Executive kept in touch with groups, and communicated advice to them
● Payment plan for members struggling to pay FRONZ fees
● Sent groups details on getting financial help from Government
● Conference was cancelled and during the height of the pandemic, the Exec met twice a month in
Network access

- KiwiRail has removed some key infrastructure such as triangles, turntables and platforms
- FRONZ has been working with NZTA, KiwiRail to improve relationships and have our members’ needs considered
- Network operators have to meet a higher bar now, which FRONZ endorses
Getting more people involved!

- Lots of retirees, not many young people
- Skilled members can be hard to find
- FRONZ is producing standard manuals for the likes of track work, so members have a fit-for-purpose guide
- RAIL, and the HTC provide training and technical advice for groups that request it
- More work needs to be done
Climate change

- FRONZ members have identified climate change and related legislation as the biggest risk to their operations
- We have been surveying member/organising Zoom meetings with groups
- Investigating alternative fuels, and cleaner energy such as solar.
- Urging members to engage with local government, and make submissions

![Bar chart for what members want FRONZ to pursue work on.](image1)

![Bar chart for what FRONZ members are willing to do.](image2)
See for yourself:

Visit this link to watch a video of FRONZ member organisations in action.
Thank you for your time…