

THE WORKSHOPS RAIL MUSEUM

INFORMATION SHEET

BLUE BABY: DD17 No.1051



Photo courtesy of QR.

Twelve tank locomotives, for the Brisbane suburban network, were designed and built at Ipswich Railway Workshops between 1948 and 1952. These were built in two distinct batches: Locomotives numbered 949 – 954 and locomotives numbered 1046 – 1051.

Classified as DD17 and weighing 62 tons with a 4-6-4T wheel arrangement, these locomotives were capable of hauling eight coaches compared with the seven coaches of the earlier D17 class tank locomotives.

The use of tank locomotives on the longer suburban runs such as to Ipswich had been a problem due to their restricted water and coal capacity.

The earlier D17 class locomotives would take water at an intermediate station such as Wacol or Redbank, when operating on the line to Ipswich. The new locomotives were capable of travelling to Ipswich without stopping for water as they carried almost 300 gallons more water and 4 tons of coal instead of the 3 tons available on the earlier D17 class.

THE WORKSHOPS RAIL MUSEUM

The second DD17 made, No.950, was the 200th locomotive to have been built at the Ipswich Railway Workshops and was displayed at the 1949 Queensland Industries Fair held at the Brisbane Exhibition Grounds as an example of modern design.

No.950 was painted a deep blue colour with red trim whilst its earlier sister had been painted black with red trim. Eventually the whole class was painted in a brighter, mid-blue colour scheme with red trim, prompting railway staff to refer to them as “Blue Babies”.

The last locomotive to be built at Ipswich Railway Workshops was No.1051 which entered service in July, 1952.

They were popular locomotives with a reputation for rapid acceleration from stations, ideal for suburban train services. All were based at Mayne locomotive depot and were a common sight on north-side suburban services, often being seen working train services to Ipswich, Petrie, Ferny Grove, Shorncliffe and Pinkenba.

Towards the end of steam locomotive operations, they finally began working some services on the south-side suburban system as more diesel electric locomotives were introduced on the north-side.

No.1051 was placed in the Redbank Locomotive Museum as a static exhibit in 1970.

The Museum closed in 1992 and No.1051 was taken to Ipswich Railway Workshops where it was restored to working order. No.1051 re-entered service with QR in 1993.

The name “The Blue Baby” is carried on a headboard above the smokebox. The Blue Baby continues to be used by QR on heritage excursion trains around Brisbane.

Specifications (as built)

Builder	Ipswich Railway Workshops
Builder's Number	210
Year Built	1952
Wheel Arrangement	4-6-4T
Cylinders	17 inches X 24 inches (Diameter X Stroke)
Boiler Pressure	180 psi
Driving Wheels (Dia.)	51 inches
Weight	62 tons
Coal Capacity	4 tons
Water Capacity	1,475 gallons
Tractive Effort (@ 85% BP)	20,800 lbs

Date Issued/Revised: 21/10/2005

Compiled by D. J. Mewes, Assistant Curator

© The Workshops Rail Museum – a campus of the Queensland Museum