

THE WORKSHOPS RAIL MUSEUM

INFORMATION SHEET

PB15 No. 444



The PB15 No. 444 On Display at The Workshops Rail Museum

Queensland Railways has always been known for its small, but efficient, steam locomotives. The PB15 Class, introduced in 1900 was no exception. The rolling stock design staff of Queensland Railways was caught between what the civil engineering works (bridges, tunnels and track design) would allow with regard to axle load and dimensions, and the capabilities required by the traffic branch.

The PB15 Class was designed by Locomotive Engineer, Henry Horniblow and L W Piggott. The “P”, which was used to denote “Passenger”, was added to the classification of the new locomotives to distinguish them from the earlier B15 Class, which were primarily goods engines.

The first PB15 engines were delivered by Walkers Ltd, Maryborough in April 1900. Walkers Ltd built 92, Evans, Anderson, Phelan and Co. at Kangaroo Point in Brisbane built 70 in total and Toowoomba Foundry built a further 20. The English firm of Kitson & Co, Leeds also built 20. The Ipswich Railway Workshops built only one, in 1924, for the Aramac Shire Council’s Aramac Shire Tramway in Central Western Queensland. It was purchased by Queensland Railways in 1958 from the Council.

The original locomotives delivered between 1900 and 1912 were fitted with Stephenson’s Valve Gear. Walkers Ltd manufactured a further 30 improved PB15 Class locomotives between 1925 and 1926 and these were fitted with Walschaert’s Valve Gear.

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The PB15 Class became the most prolific single locomotive class on Queensland Railways if both the Stephenson's and Walschaert's types are included with more than 230 entering service. They could be found almost anywhere across the State and were used as branch line engines, for shunting and even hauling mail trains like the Western Mail west of Chinchilla.

The PB15s were commonly used for Brisbane south-side suburban trains, working out of South Brisbane to travel to places such as Southport, Tweed Heads, Cleveland and Beaudesert. In 1927, No.126 hauled a Royal Train, taking the Duke of York to Beaudesert. The class was even used on the air-conditioned Westlander services in the 1950s and hauled the "Flying Flea" between Charleville and Quilpie, which at the time, was one of the fastest trains in Queensland as it had very few stops and only a few of the Westlander carriages (another PB15 hauled the balance of the Westlander service on to Cunnamulla).

No.444, a Stephenson's type, built by Walkers Ltd in 1908, was used to mark the end of steam suburban passenger trains when it hauled the last steam train to Lota on the 27 June 1968. It is now preserved in the Moving Goods exhibit of The Workshops Rail Museum. A 1924 Walschaert's type, No.732, can be seen in the QR Workshops during the Behind the Scenes Tour.

Specifications for PB15 Class No.444

Builder	Walkers Ltd, Maryborough, Qld
Builder's Number	89
Year Built	1908
Wheel Arrangement	4-6-0
Date in Service	July, 1908
Date Withdrawn	October, 1969
Cylinders	15 inches X 20 inches (Diameter X Stroke)
Driving Wheel (Dia.)	48 inches
Boiler Pressure	150 psi (increased to 160 psi about 1928)
Weight	
Engine	32 tons 2 cwt
Tender	24 tons 5 cwt
	Total: 56 tons 7 cwt
Coal Capacity	4 tons
WaterCapacity	1,800 gallons
Tractive Effort @ 80% BP	11,250lbs (12,000 lbs with increased boiler pressure)

References: QR Steam Locomotive History Card No.444
Armstrong, John. 1985. *Locomotives in the Tropics Volume 1 (Queensland Railways 1864 – 1910)* Australian Railway Historical Society (Qld Division) Brisbane
QR Digest Vol2 No.6, October, 1968

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