

RAIL HERITAGE WA — STEAM LOCOMOTIVE RESTORATION AWARD

Statement by Member for Collie–Preston

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.57 pm]: Congratulations to Rail Heritage WA, which was the recent national winner of the Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia’s steam locomotive restoration award for 2023. This honour is in recognition of its restoration of the Western Australian Government Railways steam locomotive G233, known as the *Leschenault Lady*. Members of Rail Heritage WA travelled to Melbourne to accept the award at the Australasian Heritage Railway Conference.

The *Leschenault Lady* is a much-loved south west heritage icon, and its restoration was a labour of love for five years for a group of dedicated volunteers at the South West Rail and Heritage Centre. The *Leschenault Lady* was built in 1898. In the 1970s, when steam engine trains met their demise, she was retained in Bunbury as a “special train”. She is classified by the National Trust of Australia and is WA’s oldest operating loco. Restoration of the *Lady* began in order to have her ready for the WA rail 150-year celebration in 2021, and in 2022 she was ready for passengers.

The restoration project cost \$60 000, with \$20 000 contributed by the state government via a commitment in Collie–Preston at the 2021 election. Outstandingly, over 2 000 hours of volunteer time made the restoration possible. The efforts could not have happened without the expertise, financial contribution and kind support of Colin Piacentini, Piavanini Welding and Philippa Rogers and thousands of hours.