



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF **LIVE STEAMERS**

AALS Web Site

www.aals.asn.au

Limited

ACN 107 882 404 - ABN 81 107 882 404

AUSTRALIAN MINIATURE BOILER SAFETY COMMITTEE

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AMBSC CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, 2013-2014

Gentlemen,

2013 has been a year of some progress in AMBSC affairs, with all of our revised codes being accepted in all State WorkCover departments except Victoria.

There has only been one boiler inspector express his dissatisfaction with a few fairly minor clauses in the copper code; however I am sure that the majority of our members will agree that it is impossible to satisfy everyone all the time.

The new Duplex code has been included in the NSW, SA and WA WorkCover legislation. All of the codes including the Duplex code have been included in the WorkCover Australia Plant Equipment legislation that is currently being finalised for presentation to all State Authorities.

The situation in Victoria is a different matter.

It appears that during the 1995 year, WorkSafe Victoria revised their legislation and through an oversight of their making, neglected to include the AMBSC exemption from their Pressure Vessel regulations. This effectively means that for the past eighteen (18) years or so all AMBSC boilers operated in Victoria were done so illegally. If there had been a serious incident involving a steam locomotive it is most likely that any resulting insurance claim would have been denied.

This omission in the WorkSafe regulations came to light when the AMBSC secretary, Les Irwin, presented the revised copper and steel codes along with the proposed new Duplex code to the department. The responsible people there admitted their error and negotiations were immediately begun to rectify the situation.

Les acquired a great deal of technical evidence to support the new Duplex code and sent it on to the relevant public servants. All seemed to be going well and progressing nicely with all codes when a few Victorian club members who were passionately opposed to the introduction of this new Duplex code, approached the WorkSafe people and deliberately cast doubt on the ability and competence of the current AMBSC executive. The reason for this action has been difficult for Les and I to fathom as the

proposed code was supported by a great deal of technical and scientific information such as has never before been presented to support any previous code.

This proposed new code was also voted on and accepted by the majority of AMBSC boiler inspectors. The action that has been taken by these disgruntled persons could be interpreted as a slight cast upon all AMBSC boiler inspectors who were in favour of the proposal. It appears that some will go to any lengths to derail any proposal that they are not in favour of despite the fact that the majority has voted in its favour.

This meddling has resulted in the current situation at the time of writing this report. As I type this report it is illegal for any AMBSC steam boiler or pressure vessel to be operated in Victoria. This includes any visiting steam locomotives or equipment fitted with an air receiver that has an AMBSC stamp.

There has to date been a good deal of misinformation concerning this situation appearing on the internet and I will take this opportunity to strongly deny any responsibility on the part of the current AMBSC or AALS executive members for the current state that the Victorians find themselves in. The tendency is to always blame the messenger.

Speaking personally I am totally disgusted with the amount of negative aggression directed towards Les Irwin and myself over the last three to five years. Les over the past three years has been a tower of strength in his position as AMBSC secretary and has proved to be a real dynamo when it comes to ferreting out any information or finding and dealing with any individual that may be of assistance to the hobby. The production of the Duplex Code was done at some considerable personal expense to him and the future will prove that it will be of great benefit to the hobby as a whole. **ALL HE HAS GOT FOR HIS EFFORTS TO DATE IS ABUSE FROM THOSE THAT REFUSE TO ACCEPT CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT TO THE HOBBY.**

Between us, Les and I have amassed a great deal of experience in the field of miniature steam locomotive boilers; however, it appears that some, who believe that experience comes second to personal vendettas, will not let anything stand in the way of their prejudices.

On another matter, we have been informed from time to time of the failure of a number of circulating coils or devices in Briggs boiler fireboxes. Some of these failures have resulted in burns to drivers. I must remind all that failures such as this cannot be ignored and must be reported in full to the AMBSC secretary.

It has also been rumoured that there has been a firebox wall that has been observed to be red hot. If true this could result in a very serious accident as the pressure in such a vessel would be far in excess of our permitted limit. Any event such as this must be reported to the AMBSC secretary.

Barry Potter,
Chairman AMBSC.