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Trains, trams and miniatures; Dave's personal passenger rail

By Anneke van de Vusse

Tasmania does have passenger rail. It's just a bit on the small side and not open for all the public.

Dave Webb has been energetic about trains since he was a child and is now living the dream of having a miniature railway in his backyard.

With a small group of friends and like minded rail enthusiasts, Dave has been building the 1.6km track since 2008.

So far the 7 1/4 inch gauge track features a bridge over a dry creek bed and a tunnel under the driveway to their home.

"The tunnel is a great feature of the track, but was an engineering nightmare," says Dave.

The 22 metre curved steel pipe tunnels under their driveway and is strong enough to support cars overhead.

Dave enjoys riding the trains, but the building and engineering aspects are what interests him the most.

While working at a wilderness railway on Tasmania's west coast he met his partner Caz Hodge, who shares his love for locomotives.

Caz and Dave have a one year old son, Jared who has been playing and riding trains since he was 10 weeks old.

For his first christmas his dad built him a third scale miniature of one of the early diesel locomotives that used to run on Queensland sugarcane railways.

Dave's favourite model is the first one he built; a small Malcom Moore.

He finished it in 2002, six years before starting the railway track.

The Malcom Moore is a replica of one of the locomotives that runs on the Ida Bay Railway in southern Tasmania.

Jared is just small enough to sit in the miniature drivers seat.

"Toot, toot," says Jared.

When Jared starts school, Dave and Caz wonder if his classmates will believe him when she says he owns a train and has a railway in his garden.

Caz says, half jokingly, that she is going to have to limit the number of friends he can bring home.



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