

Elgar Park, Box Hill, Victoria, is home to The Box Hill Miniature Steam Railway Society. The Society's founding members joined forces in 1981 to build and maintain a dual gauge (5 and 7¼ inch) Miniature Railway.

The track now winds its way through a picturesque, landscaped area of the park. The locomotives operating on the Box Hill track are mostly powered by steam, but petrol, diesel and electrically powered units are also to be seen.

The railway was opened to the public in 1985 with one and a quarter kilometres of track laid on red gum sleepers. As these sleepers deteriorated over time it was necessary to replace them.

Rather than continue to use timber the society decided to look at a more environmentally sustainable solution when replacing the miniature railway sleepers. In the end they chose a recycled-plastic product from Replas, an Australian company that specialises in reprocessing plastic waste into high quality products. This not only reduces the amount of plastic going to landfill, but also saves natural resources.

Recycled plastic is easy to fabricate and considerably cheaper than the red gum alternative and it also has the advantage of being environmentally sustainable. The results of the sleeper replacement program has ensured the overall look and functioning of the track is improved. It has an expected lifespan of more than forty years and so will outlast timber considerably. Maintenance is minimal as it will not split, rot, crack, or ever need painting. It is also resistant to termites, microorganisms and moisture.

The work was carried out by the Track Team, led by superintendent, Graeme Newgreen. Other club members also got on board to help and it took about 20 months to replace in excess of 7,000 sleepers. The society can now be proud not only of their beautiful new track, but also of the fact that they have made such a positive contribution to the environment.

The Box Hill Miniature Steam Railway Society is a non-profit organisation and its members provide their labour in a voluntary capacity. Proceeds from fares charged on Public Run days are used to administer the club, improve and maintain the railway and to assist Charity groups mainly within the City of Whitehorse.

