

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

The overall impression on opening the Southern Rail Models box is one of quality. The 2300 class models come neatly packed in a stout cardboard box, with a warranty card, assembly diagram and part number list, plus an information booklet that describes how to maintain the model and operate the ESU DCC decoder. The model itself is packaged in the now-familiar clear plastic wrap-around shroud. Small sections of black foam slip behind the handrails to support these more-fragile parts during shipping.

The models follow a familiar construction pattern, with plastic shells that attaches over a separate mechanism. A centrally mounted 5-pole motor drives universal couplings to drive all six axes. The result is a smooth running and very quiet mechanism. Bogie details vary appropriately for the different gauges, including narrower spacing of the sideframes for the 3'6" gauge version. Bogie and underframe details are very neat, with free-standing piping and very crisply-cast surface detail.

The plastic shells are also extremely well-detailed. Grilles and vents are neatly cast, and the roof-mounted fans feature see-through grilles with fan blade detail underneath. The handrails are already mounted to the model, and are particularly fine and straight.

The paint scheme is neatly applied, and safety placards and other labels are printed cleanly. Many of the cautions can be easily read under a magnifying glass, such is the quality of the printing!

We tested both a 16.5mm gauge version in maroon "Broncos" livery, and a 12mm gauge "banana scheme" version. We started by running both locos on 'traditional' direct current. Both samples run smoothly and relatively slowly, and responded smoothly from about 3 volts through to 12 volts. Electrical pick up is provided from all 12 wheels, so the locomotives should run smoothly even across complex trackwork.

Directional lighting is included for both models. The headlight comes on for the selected direction of running, and classification lights switch from red to white depending on the direction of travel. The cab and number boards are also neatly lit. The lights don't appear to receive a constant voltage, and glow brighter as the locomotive's speed increases.

The 12mm gauge sample engine was equipped with an ESU Loksound decoder that includes Southern Rail's "Sound of Power". This feature allows the throttle knob to be switched using function-5, to control the tempo of the diesel engine sound rather than the engine's speed. A more-experienced operator - probably on a longer stretch of layout than our test track - can use this feature to simulate how prototype locomotives "notch" the diesel engine up or down in preparation for changes in speed and load.

The ESU decoder offers very nice prototypical sounds, from the throb of the diesel engine, a selection of horns you can choose to match the particular 'donor' locomotive's equipment, and effects such as dynamic braking hum, coupler clash and air brake system noises.

A neat feature of the sound decoder is a volume control using function-1. This allows the operator to cycle through five different volume levels without the need to resort to changing CVs on the decoder. In a busy operating session with multiple locomotives moving around, this is sure to be a convenient feature to manage background noise!

The Southern Rail Models 2300 class QR locomotives should provide reliable and good-looking power for modern-image modellers, as the prototypes have across the Queensland network.

Versions without sound are available at a recommended price of \$369; sound-equipped versions are \$489. These engines are equal in detail, equipment and operation to any current ready-to-run diesel models - they are simply superb. Gavin Hince





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### **QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS/AURIZON 2300 CLASS LOCOMOTIVE**

*HO Scale, available in 12mm and 16.5mm gauge*

#### **SOUTHERN RAIL MODELS**

*Available to order directly or via hobby shops*

*[www.southernrailmodels.com.au](http://www.southernrailmodels.com.au)*

The current crop of 12-wheel diesel electric locomotives of the Queensland Railways (and its various corporate successors) originate from 1969, with the release of the 1550-class engines. Over time, these 1650-horsepower engines were joined by similar designs comprising the 2400, 2450 and 2470 classes.

Like grandfather's axe, the engines in these classes have evolved significantly, with air conditioners gradually becoming standard equipment in Queensland's warm climate. Other significant changes include equipping the engines with controls for driver-only operation; some engines also received enlarged cabs to improve crew comfort.

In 1997 a further re-building program commenced, converting engines from each of the different series. Modifications included the fitting of a turbo charger that added 50% to the power rating, and a QR "Maxi Cab". The changes were deemed sufficient to warrant re-classifying the upgraded engines as the new "2300 class".

Over time, some 60 engines joined the 2300 class, although departures also include seven locomotives sent to Western Australia between 2007 and 2011, becoming the WAGR "DFZ" class.

Over time the 2300 class have been assigned to much of the Queensland network, both on standard gauge and 3'6" lines. The program of modifications has continued also, with a toilet enclosure added from 2008 at the rear of the engine canopy, under the radiators. The end handrails were also revised to accommodate the extended hood length. Larger 7200-litre fuel tanks were also fitted, together with revisions to the traction management systems.

Changes to the operation of Queensland's rail system has meant that the 2300 class have appeared in a wide range of liveries, including the 2005 QR National livery, the 'banana' yellow scheme, and a maroon scheme saluting the Brisbane Broncos rugby team. The engines have also been re-lettered for the private operator, Aurizon.

Southern Rail offer HO scale models of the 2300 class in both 16.5mm standard gauge and 12mm narrow gauge. Specific details and colour schemes are provided to faithfully depict individual members of the class. These detail variations include the toilet compartment and extended hood; the arrangement of fans and cooling equipment; air conditioners and grille enclosures. Together with options for DCC and sound, no less than 17 different variations are available! Each variation has been produced in limited numbers, and some have disappeared quickly.

