



e
emeraldcoaches

A TIMELINE OF SERVICE

1928-2026

*Nearly a century of family, heritage
and community – from the Victorian
Coast to Central, Western and
Northern Queensland.*



A Century in the Making

Emerald Coaches today connects Central, Western and Northern Queensland — but our story begins almost a hundred years earlier, on the Victorian coast.

From the Lucas, Hall, Prior, Berkman and Baulch families — to the Burdekin, Whitsunday and Pioneer Valley operators whose depots joined us in 2026 — this timeline honours the generations of operators who built the services we run today.

Every acquisition carries a family history. Every depot has a story.

HOW TO READ THIS TIMELINE



Emerald Coaches lineage

The Lucas → Prior → Berkman → Baulch family story, and the Emerald Coaches milestones that flow from it.



Northern Legacy

The North Queensland predecessor operators — Coopers, Hendo's/Mitchell's, Bowen Transit, Collinsville — whose services joined Emerald in March 2026.

96 years of continuous family-run service

VICTORIAN ROOTS

1930S - 1940S

The Lucas family begins a tradition of coastal passenger transport in Victoria.

1930

Flinders, Victoria
Sam Lucas and Jim Hopcraft
operate from Flinders.

1935

Peninsula Bus Lines
Sam Lucas and his brother-in-law Eric Marcus
Hall establish Peninsula Bus Lines, Victoria.

1936

Gideon James
Tom Lucas works with Gideon James,
operating from Flinders.

1945

Warrnambool Bus Lines
Tom Lucas purchases Wannon Bus Lines in Warrnambool with
the assistance of his uncle Eric Marcus Hall, and renames it
Warrnambool Bus Lines.

1947
Warrnambool
Bus Lines fleet



1947
Grumpy Lucas
with Robin Lucas



1940s
Warrnambool
depot



WEST & SOUTH

1950S - 1970S

The Prior family takes the story west;
the next Lucas generation steps up in Warrnambool.

1955

T & MM Prior — Cranbrook

Tom and Muriel Prior (T & MM Prior) purchase the Cranbrook to Tunney school bus service in Western Australia — the Prior family's entry into passenger transport.

1961

Expansion into Mt Barker & Kojonup

T & MM Prior expands with the purchase of seven school bus runs in Mt Barker, WA, and five services in Kojonup from Joe Rourke.

1977

South Western Roadways

Stephen Lucas returns to Warrnambool Bus Lines and purchases South Western Roadways from Alan Lane — marking the next Lucas generation's expansion.



Lucas family era — Warrnambool

THE BIRTH OF EMERALD

1980s

A Queensland beginning — and, quietly, the North Queensland story starts too.



1981

Emerald Coaches is born

Murray and Noela Berkman start Emerald Coaches with a single school service operating from Gindie, Queensland.

One bus. One route. A family legacy begins in central Queensland.

1983

Trans North Bus & Coach founded

The Paronella family begins operations in Ingham with one school run from Forrest Beach. This business would eventually own all four depots — Mirani, Ayr, Bowen and Collinsville — that Emerald Coaches acquired in 2026.

A parallel family story — unknown in 1983 that it would one day merge with Emerald's.

BUILDING SCALE

1990s - 2000s

Expansion across states and the beginnings of the Baulch-led group.

- EMERALD LINEAGE
- NORTHERN LEGACY

1996

Trans North expansion
Trans North acquires Forrest Bus Service (Ingham) and Panorama Coaches (Innisfail) — the first of many North Queensland consolidations.

2003

Mission Beach Bus Service
Trans North acquires Mission Beach Bus Service, extending its Far North Queensland reach.

2007

qconnect launches in Bowen

Urban bus services in Bowen commence under the Queensland Government's qconnect framework — later to be absorbed by Donric/Trans North.

2004

Australian Transit Group formed
Michael and Rachael Baulch form Australian Transit Group (ATG) with investor support and purchase T & MM Prior in WA.

2007

Transport Systems Australia
Michael and Rachael establish Transport Systems Australia (TSA), operating school contracts in the South-West of WA.

THE PIVOTAL DECADE

2010s

The Baulches take over Emerald; Donric consolidates North Queensland under Trans North.

- EMERALD COACHES
- NORTHERN LEGACY

JUNE
2010

Donric buys Trans North
Donric Group acquires Trans North from the Paronella family — the foundation of what becomes the 'southern division'.

JULY
2010

Cooper's Bus Service (Mirani)
B.F. & P.M. Cooper's Mirani business, running nine school routes across the Pioneer Valley, is absorbed into Trans North.

JAN
2011

Hendo's Bus Service (Ayr)
Shaunlyn Pty Ltd t/a Hendo's — inheritor of the earlier Mitchell's Coaches Ayr fleet — joins Trans North with all Burdekin school runs.

2013

Bowen & Collinsville
Donric completes its 'southern division' by assuming the Bowen and Collinsville urban, school and long-distance services.

2011

Bus Systems Australia (BSA)
Michael and Rachael establish BSA with mining contracts operating from Mackay, Queensland.

2014

Emerald Coaches acquired
The Baulch's purchase Emerald Coaches from Murray and Noela Berkman; EMC amalgamates with BSA.

2016

TSA divested
Transport Systems Australia is sold to Legh McGinty, sharpening the group's Queensland focus.

2019

Premier Mackay + Knights Buses
Emerald Coaches acquires Premier Mackay and the remaining six Knights Buses school runs in Emerald from Stan and Pat Knight.

CONVERGENCE

2020s

Zero-emissions leadership — and the heritage stories finally join the Emerald story.

2021

e-Mission Zero launches

First private Australian bus and coach operator to commit to a zero-emissions strategy.

2026

HERITAGE MEETS EMERALD

Acquisition of Trans North's southern division

Completed 27 March 2026 — bringing the Ayr, Bowen, Collinsville and Mirani operations, and decades of local family-run heritage, into the Emerald Coaches network.



2026 ACQUISITION • HERITAGE PROFILES

Four Depots, Four Local Legacies

Each of the Ayr, Bowen, Collinsville and Mirani depots carries its own family history — preserved here as part of the Emerald Coaches story.



MIRANI

Cooper's Bus Service
Pre-2010 → Trans North 2010

Operated by B.F. & P.M. Cooper from 68 Alice Street, Mirani. Handled nine school runs across the Pioneer Valley — Eton, Septimus, Eungella, Owens Creek, North Eton, Mount Martin and Finch Hatton. Sold to Trans North in July 2010.



AYR

Hendo's Bus Service
via Mitchell's Coaches → Trans North 2011

Shaunlyn Pty Ltd t/a Hendo's operated from Ayr, inheriting buses from the earlier Mitchell's Coaches Ayr (ex-Sydney PTC Mercedes O305s). Serviced all major Burdekin school runs — Giru, Brandon, Rita Island, Alva Beach, Mount Surround, plus Home Hill routes. Sold to Trans North January 2011.



BOWEN

Bowen Transit
qconnect since 2007 → Donric ~2013

Urban bus services in Bowen commenced under Queensland's qconnect framework in 2007, running town routes along Scott Avenue, Queens Beach, Rose Bay and the Harbour Loop. The business joined Trans North's 'southern division' under the Donric Group around 2013.



COLLINSVILLE

Collinsville Transit
Paired with Bowen operation

Paired depot providing school, mine and charter services for the Collinsville community, plus the Bowen–Collinsville long-distance link. Co-managed with Bowen Transit under the Trans North brand until the 2026 handover to Emerald Coaches.

LOOKING FORWARD

From a single
school run in Gindie.
**To depots across
Queensland –
and a zero-emissions
future.**

REINVENT THE WHEEL
TOGETHER

2014

Baulch family acquires
Emerald Coaches



2016

Knights join
Emerald Coaches



2019

Premier Mackay join
Emerald Coaches

2021

e-Mission Zero
launched



1981

Emerald Coaches
founded,
Gindie QLD



2026

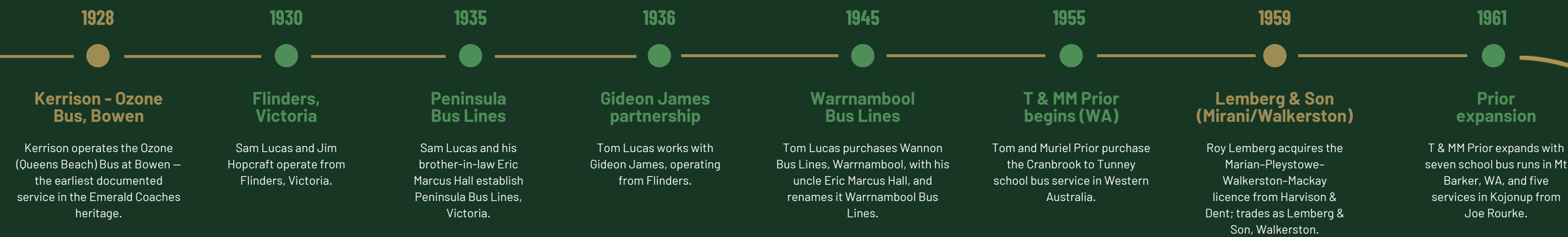
Four Trans North
depots join
Emerald Coaches

1928 – 1996

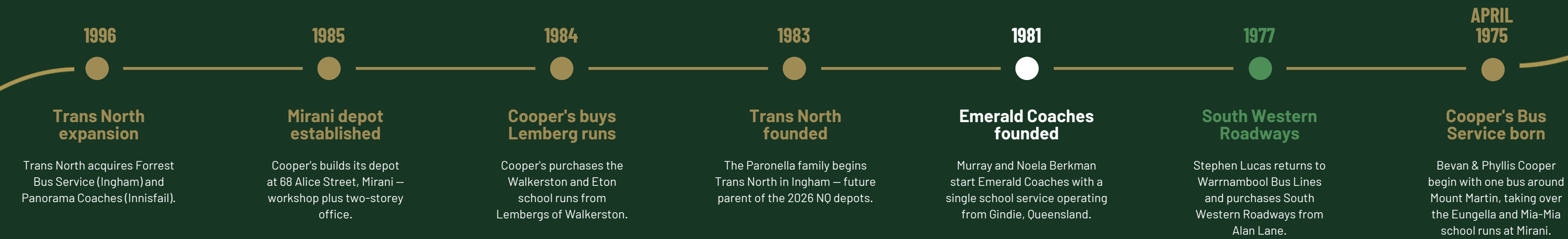
EMERALD COACHES TIMELINE

A straight chronological timeline, 1928 → 2026 including the Pioneer Valley, Burdekin and Whitsunday heritage and the March 2026 acquisition.

EARLIEST ROOTS & THE PIONEER VALLEY



EMERALD BORN, COOPER'S GROWS



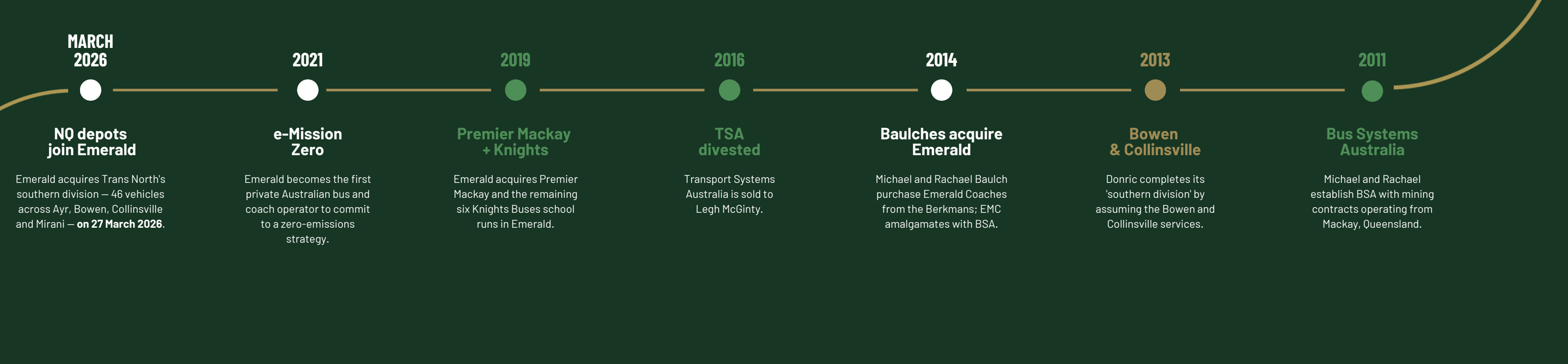
2003 - 2026

EMERALD COACHES TIMELINE

SCALE & NORTHERN CONSOLIDATION



EMERALD ERA & NQ ACQUISITION





REINVENT THE WHEEL
TOGETHER