

Open Forum

OPEN FORUMOBSERVATIONS AT FERRYMEADA CRITICAL ANALYSISCHAIRMAN: DR. J.C. RADCLIFFERECORDER: MR. B.J. DALE.

The areas for discussion by this Forum covered such things as Site and Track Layouts, Operations, Restoration, Maintenance, Use of Buildings, Relationships with Other Groups, etc.

As an introductory comment, the Chairman emphasised that it must be borne in mind that the Tramway Historical Society has been in what is probably the most difficult position of any tramway museum organisation in Australia or New Zealand from the point of view of the long gap between the closure of the tramway services and the opening of the museum line at Ferrymead. He asked members to keep this thought in mind when commenting on the progress of Ferrymead.

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS:

i.e. As a general member of the public sees Ferrymead for the first time.

Dr. J.C. Radcliffe: Commented that because of the lack of large accurate and informative signs at the entranceways to the site, the visitor arriving for the first time was immediately faced with the need to make a decision about the type of ticket to purchase - whether this should be merely an admission ticket, or a "Hall of Wheels" Special, etc. This impression is bad and needs to be improved. Dr. Radcliffe also considered that insufficient effort had been made to show that the Truscotts Road site exists and to set before the patron all the amenities that this site contains before he enters the gates. Dr. Radcliffe suggested that the site admission charge could well be raised and that the public could be given only the option of obtaining a "Hall of Wheels" special ticket as an alternative to admission. He pointed out that persons attending such a venture as Ferrymead do expect to pay for admission. Dr. Radcliffe further commented that, although the present state of the site development can be excused because of the development which is patently taking place, there are points where a feeling of depression can be created. He felt that insufficient was being done to cultivate the local market for Ferrymead and to promote it to local people as a project which was developing all the time.

Mr. M. McAulay: Considered it essential that a large signboard be erected outside the entrance to the site, if possible providing an indication of the length of the ride which was available.

Mr. P. Kahn:

Considered that the public address system needed to be used both for Trust announcements and to announce tram departures.

Mr. G.B. Claydon:

Suggested that a large finger-post sign should be erected at each entrance, pointing out the various amenities and in particular indicating the direction to the toilets.

SITE AND TRACK:

Mr. T. Griffin:

Commented upon the tightness of the curves on the tramline but observed that he accepted the necessity for this because of existing site conditions. He emphasised that these curves highlighted the problem of planning museum tramlines round existing obstacles. As a result of the tightness of curvature, maintenance on these curves will need to be accorded a high priority and it will also be necessary to recognise that considerable wear and tear will take place on the cars.

Dr. J.C. Radcliffe:

Commented upon the location of buildings on the site in relation to the tramline and some of the curves and observed that in places there existed a real visibility problem which needed to be recognised. He considered that paved pathways would help to keep the public where they were wanted, although at times it might prove necessary also to fence certain parts of the track to restrict unintentional public access.

Mr. G.B. Claydon:

Considered that loading the tram at the square shelter with the track visibly available in both directions tended to confuse visitors and should be clarified with signs. He commented further that the entrance point to the site was confusing but appreciated that it was provided as an interim measure only.

Miss E. Butland:

Stressed the need to explain to passengers and the public about the presence of the rubbish dump and that it was most important to outline the future proposals for relocating this dump to these people.

Mr. M. McAulay:

Commented on the need to keep a track such as that at Ferrymead fully check-railed, in particular at special work. He also observed that the bolt heads of the check-rail bolts need to be checked regularly as there is a likelihood that they may fracture.

Dr. J.C. Radcliffe:

Expressed concern at the ease of public access to the Traverser contact wire and suggested that an overhead contact wire system could be contemplated.

OVERHEAD:

Dr. J.C. Radcliffe: Considered that the reporting of defects noted by motormen should be carried out on a special form and considered that attention should be given to this matter urgently. He further suggested that it may be prudent to earth steel poles to the track and that triple insulation of the overhead could also be considered.

OPERATIONS:

Mr. G.B. Claydon: Commented on the relative slowness of car turn-around and suggested that an "on demand" service could be instituted, although this would require very considerable care and planning.

Comment was also passed on the possibility of introducing Inspectors or Dispatchers.

RESTORATION AND MAINTENANCE:

Mr. D. Rawlings: Commented favourably upon the standard of restoration and maintenance achieved by the Tramway Historical Society as did other Conference Delegates present.

In return, members of the Society offered to provide advice where appropriate to other museum groups if this was desired.

In the ensuing discussion, the view was expressed that, in view of the high standard of restoration achieved by the Tramway Historical Society, this Society should consider very seriously the possibility of acquiring what was described as a "Hack Every Day" car, such as an ex-Melbourne W2 class, for week day operations.