

PANEL DISCUSSION: MUSEUM TRAMS ON COMMERCIAL TRAMWAYS

PANEL: **Bill Kingsley - Bendigo Trust**
 Peter Hyde - Brisbane Tramway Museum Society
 Rod Atkins - Tramway Museum Society of Victoria
 Howard Clark - Sydney Tramway Museum
 Dave Hinman - Christchurch City Council
 John Penwack - Australian Electric Traction Museum

Rod Atkins:

The TMSV have had up to four trams running on MET trackage in the street of Melbourne.

A number of matters needed to be considered. Maintenance requirements need to be addressed i.e. who is responsible, who performs, and who pays. The trams need to be transported to the MET from the museum, and again the question arises of who would pay for removal.

Some of the equipment on the heritage cars is no longer in use on the types of cars now remaining in regular use. Some heritage cars have self-lapping brakes, other are straight air. This means that present day drivers may not be familiar with the operation of the older cars, and thus the question of driver training and operating arises, along with the consequential question of who is to provide and pay for these services, and who is responsible for eventual accreditation.

Dave Hinman:

Experience with the Christchurch commercial operation has highlighted the need for compromise between the Safety Authorities and the Museum groups on the question of safety procedures with old vehicles being operated in today's traffic environment. The Museum groups would wish to see authentic operation and presentation, whilst the Safety

Authorities, in New Zealand at least, showed signs of nervousness at the implications of this type of operation.

The Commercial requirements of the operator also need to be considered, and this has been an issue in Christchurch, in particular the cost of operating two man as against one man cars, even though the cars were designed for two man operation. The commercial requirements are often at variance with the heritage type operation, particularly if the project is promoted as a heritage venture.

As a tramway had not operated in New Zealand for over 30 years, it was necessary to write new manuals for staff training, staff operations, and safety.

Peter Hyde:

A new venture is being planned for Brisbane - Briztram. The participation of the local museum will be only to provide vehicles and all training. Museum vehicles will operate only on Sundays and selected Public Holidays.

All changes made to museum trams to enable them to run in Brisbane must be reversible. There must be no structural changes, and there is to be no pantograph operation. The trams will only operate in the city centre and not in the outer route area. When museum cars are operating, they will do so along with the new trams, not instead of them.

The new trams will be low floor and wheelchair accessible. Museum cars will not be modified to meet this criteria.

Howard Clark:

Tramway museum operation must be partly commercial - not just a static display.

The Sydney Tramway Museum has been involved in two ventures with commercial operators. It has entered into a partnership arrangement with Christchurch Tramway Ltd to supply W2 No. 244 (which became available after the demise of the Newcastle Museum) and selling it for use as a restaurant car. It has also made its Rail Scrubber car available on a commercial basis for use on the Sydney Light Rail line.

In a partnership arrangement the Museum has obtained eight tramcar bodies with the aim of restoring these for operation on the SLR line. As yet no time frame has been set for this project.

The Museum enjoys a good relationship with Brussels and has obtained, with assistance from the TMSV, 3 trucks.

New tram services are proposed for Canberra and Hobart. Discussions on the Hobart proposal are underway, with the trams running along the Hobart waterfront, whilst in Canberra a new tram service is under consideration and discussions are being held with its proponents.

COMMENTS

Bruce Gamble (Museum of Technology & Transport):

In Auckland the future of light rail operation is still being discussed, whilst on the heritage scene consultants have under consideration a plan in which heritage cars would connect various tourist attractions. Purpose built cars would also operate.

Les Worthington (Tasmanian Tramway Museum Society):

Much care needs to be taken to balance the need to maintain authenticity against the needs of a commercial operator's requirements. Leases must be carefully worded to ensure that cars are returned to museum condition. The other option would be to sell old bodies to operators who can then rebuild and develop them for their own needs.

Dave Hinman:

Pointed out the groups must be aware of the question of safety and costs.

DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS:

QUESTION: Dr John Radcliffe:

What effect will heritage tramway museums feel by museum cars running on the streets ?

ANSWER: Peter Hyde:

Lease arrangements would partly offset gate loss at museums

Howard Clark:

Must also encourage travellers to visit museums.

QUESTION: Bill Kingsley:

Did use of museum cars suffer by increased use ?

ANSWER: John Penwack:

Problem was not as severe as first thought.