



# Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

[www.cotma.org.au](http://www.cotma.org.au)



## News Update January 2017

### From the Chairman

Another year has flown by and again it has been a very significant year for the tramways of Australasia, particularly with the resurgence of the new generation of tramways/light rail continuing apace. Great to see Stage 2 under way on the Gold Coast, continuing progress (with a degree of controversy) of the CSELR in Sydney, a decision to proceed with light rail in Newcastle, an election result which saw confirmation of the Canberra Light Rail Project and an announcement of significant route extensions in Adelaide, as well as on going improvements to the Melbourne tramway system including the opening of the New Preston depot and greatly upgraded workshops and a further 20 E class trams ordered. I have also just heard that Bendigo will be doing a further six W8 tram conversions for the City Circle line in Melbourne. And on the other side of the Tasman there have been encouraging murmurings about early commencement of the first stage of a potentially extensive light rail system for Auckland.

For the tramway museums/heritage tramways the year has not been without its difficulties with challenges such as the runaway incident in Sydney, the lightning strike affecting the Wellington Tramway Museum's substation causing closure for most of the year plus some minor damage caused by the November 14 earthquake which devastated the Kaikoura area, and in a number of museums the issue of aging/declining membership being recognised as a serious issue for their future viability. The good news is that the Christchurch tramway has seen some progress towards completing a further stage of the long planned extension and in Auckland there has been a partial, Sunday only, re-opening of the Dockline tram and both Wellington and Wanganui (closed since July 2015 due to flooding) are both finally back in business. Other groups have been able to record good progress in such matters as track upgrades, passenger numbers and restoration progress.

The 2016 COTMA Conference is reported on separately below, but from my perspective I will just add that after the hard work in putting it together, it was a delight to see the good turnout of attendees, and their enjoyment and appreciation of what they experienced in Christchurch and elsewhere before or after the conference itself. Thanks to all who helped make it a success and in particular Deputy Chairman Mal Rowe who arrived early Christchurch to help with final preparations in addition to his COTMA Executive duties and Richard Gilbert for his always well-organised post conference tour. I caught up with the tour at their lunch stop on their last day (Steve & Lois Lea's house at Jacksons on the West Coast) and it was apparent that a great time was being had by all!

Finally a thank you to the COTMA Executive team for their efforts during the year, and also Warren Doubleday, now appointed as Communication Manager and who despite a recent medical issue requiring hospitalisation, preventing his attendance at the conference, continues to do much behind the scenes, including looking after the website and assisting in the preparation of this news update. I'm pleased to advise that Warren is making a good recovery.

Best wishes to all for the festive season and holiday period.

Dave Hinman

## COTMA conference in October

The biennial COTMA conference was generally agreed by all there to be an enjoyable, informative and challenging event.

Around 70 people participated in three days of seminars, tours and trips and socialising around food and drink. The seminars covered a broad range of topics including restoration and regeneration, technical aspects of preservation, history and transport planning for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Papers and presentations are now on the COTMA website.

It's hard to name highlights, but some could include:

- Several presentations on the theme of the recovery in post-earthquake Christchurch including planning, re-building and conservation – vividly supplemented by formal and informal visits to the central area of Christchurch which suffered so much damage. Two historical examples are the restoration of the wonderful Arts Centre precinct and the return of the heritage tramway operation. Both are examples of good practice and both have contributed greatly to the sense of well-being of the long suffering citizens of Christchurch.
- We were reminded by Stephen Ryan that museums are about stories at least as much as about objects. His presentation was a welcome reminder that we must 'think like a customer' to pinch the Yarra Trams theme. People come to museums to reinforce and revive memories and that's something we ignore at our risk.
- Presentations by Stephen Taylor and Graeme Richardson (with Daniel King) addressed the issues of use of new and sometime modern restoration techniques alongside traditional approaches.
- Henry Brittain and Ian Saxon looked at recovery from major problems and we were reminded that 'all that OHS manual stuff' about safe and effective procedures is not just for accreditation – it's what enables us to avoid major problems or recover from them.
- Mikael Lund of the Danish Tramway Museum inspired us all with a presentation of a vision for major expansion into a very large operation with substantial track length and multiple displays. It is not just a dream but something actively under construction now.

Our hosts at all venues and events were generous and whether it was riding a steam hauled tram, an electric train, a trolleybus or a gondola to a world class view (and meal!) we were well looked after. For a relatively small city, Christchurch has a remarkable range of transport related experiences to enjoy.



ChCh 1905 Stephenson trams 26 and 1 during the conference

Mal Rowe photo



Two Melbourne trams in Christchurch – W2's 244 and (restaurant) 411

Mal Rowe photo

All the COTMA Speaker and Museum presentations available have been placed the COTMA website have been placed on the COTMA Website – [www.cotma.org.au/proceedings.html](http://www.cotma.org.au/proceedings.html) Please do check out the presentations on line, and plan now for the next conference in Perth late in 2018. As well, the details of the Achievement Awards and Volunteer Achievement Awards can be viewed, along with the judges' comments on [www.cotma.org.au/awards.html](http://www.cotma.org.au/awards.html)

Most of the member museums produced informative and occasionally very entertaining reports of their progress over the last couple of years. It's well worth looking at them – some good ideas to use in your own setting are described.

Mal Rowe

### Change to the Rules of COTMA

COTMA is incorporated in Victoria and legislative changes in that state meant that we needed to update our rules. A new set of rules was approved by the conference general meeting and will now go to the Department of Consumer Affairs in Victoria for checking and approval. As far as possible we have maintained to the 'vibe' of the old rules, but brought them into line with the new requirements. The draft rules are on the website and will come into force once approval is notified.

### Pre-conference tour

A small number of COTMA conference participants made a pre-conference visit to Auckland. We were treated like royalty by the MOTAT and Dockline tramway people – especially James Duncan. Highlights included riding some of the 'prize possessions' of MOTAT brought out so we could enjoy them. There's something rather nice about sitting on the open top deck of Wellington 47 and looking out at early 20<sup>th</sup> century Brush cars and beautiful 'streamliner' 248. We also had the first passenger rides on the re-opened Dockline tramway in 'Auckland 257' aka X1 466 from Melbourne. Their newest acquisition is ex-Melbourne 881. Clinton Pearce has transformed a rather tired tram into a glowing showpiece of what can be done to provide an attractive experience. The new sliding



windows show what Melbourne SW6 cars could have been like if Melbourne had adopted the window design of Sydney's R1s.



Auckland trams 248 and 11 with Melbourne 321 in pursuit

Mal Rowe photo



Dockline trams – recently renovated 881 with 852 and X1 257

Mal Rowe photo

### Post Conference Tour - 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> October

The Post Conference Tour of the western region of the South Island was a great success supported by 22 passengers, all of whom enjoyed a great social time, brilliant attractions and were supported by good accommodation.

The tour coach left Ferrymead on the afternoon of Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> October at the conclusion of the 'free day' at our host attraction. The coach followed the road north to Hanmer Springs, allowing a view of the main railway north and the closed Waiau branch, as far as Culverden. From there we swung away from railways both open and closed, to journey to Hanmer Springs. This spa resort town is a great tourist spot and the night was enjoyed in quality accommodation. A momentous meal was held at the Monteith's Hotel.

Next morning the coach took us through spectacular scenery to Reefton where the local people took great pride in showing us their very historic town. It was the first town in the southern hemisphere to have public electric street lighting, all driven from a hydro plant where we viewed the remains of that powerhouse, which ran until 1947. A brilliant country farmhouse style lunch was enjoyed in the

restored 'Stationmasters House'. The day finished with our arrival at excellent accommodation in Westport.

Wednesday saw us board our coach for a most interesting tour to the nationally recognised historical site of the Denniston Mine and Incline. The tour was fantastic and the weather cleared, from what can normally be a fogged in situation, to a semi clear day for all on the tour to see "The Incline".

We escaped the rain to this point but on the Thursday it rained in typical west coast style, but amazingly this was while we were in the tour coach. When we arrive at Punakaiki Rocks, a world class natural attraction of sea weathered coastal rocks and blowholes, the weather improved to a sunny day. Similarly whilst at the Brunner Mine site for our picnic lunch the weather lifted.

Our visit to Hokitika crowned the tour with success. The tourist shops suited the ladies and some of the men, whilst the machinery museum enthralled the men and the day was well capped off with a grand dinner for our group, attended by three former telephonists, as our guests, from the former manual telephone exchange, on which Richard had worked in 1986.

When we thought we couldn't achieve any more quality on this tour, we were treated to a grand surprise for our lunch stop on the Friday at the holiday home of Steve and Lois Lea. The buffet meal was served in a home with a view that would easily line up on the TV programme 'Grand Designs'. As the Tranz Alpine Express rushed past and we savoured drinks on the balcony admiring the snow covered alps across the valley, this tour had achieved the pinnacle of success.



View from Steve & Lois's deck as the Post-Conference tour coach arrives.

Photo: Dave Hinman

We travelled home to Christchurch all satisfied and convivial, with the patrons questioning if the Western Australian Post Conference Tour could possibly emulate this one. Let's see.

Richard Gilbert - Tour Organiser



## Wellington and Wanganui updates

Allan Neilson writes:



"A hard year for me with the substation rebuild at WTM. All went live again on the 8th Dec, so we could de-commission the temporary generator set and commence running over the hill to the beach. See:

<http://www.wellingtontrams.org.nz/>

Photo shows Allan carrying out wiring on the new 11Kv switch.

Photo: Keith McGavin (*reprinted from Tramlines Dec. 2016*)

Also I have been helping Wanganui get up and running again, following flood damage in June 2015. They recommenced passenger operation on Sunday 18 December (their normal operating day) and will run some specials (e.g. for groups) and other occasional events such as twilight running on Saturday 21 January, Wellington's Anniversary weekend.

So both organisations up and running again for the summer holiday season."



Wanganui test run prior to Regulator approval to commence public operation

Photo: Allan Neilson

## Future of the stored Ws at Newport?

The Victorian Government is conducting a review of the stored W class trams. This is not primarily about the W8 program, but mostly about clearing space at Newport Railway Workshops where a lot of trams are stored. The space is needed for new transport projects. There is likely to be yet another call for tramway museums to indicate what we would like to keep.

## Perth Trams Century Celebrations

Perth Electric Tramway Society will be celebrating the centenary of Perth 66 & Fremantle No. 29 on the weekend of 22 and 23 April 2017. At this time plans are not finalised, but it is proposed that there will be an outdoor dinner on the Saturday evening. The arrangements for the dinner will be similar to that held last November at the Village Café and details will be available soon.

For catering it would be useful to know if you would like to attend the dinner and receive further information.

This is the same weekend as the Classic Car Show which is to be held on Sunday April 23rd at Mussel Pool.

A combined display with vintage vehicles, trolleybuses and buses alongside the two trams is to be set up as part of the display at Mussel Pool. It is hoped that a new Transperth bus from PTA will also be on show. The combined display will be about public transport in Perth from 1899 to the present.

For further details contact [pets1@iinet.net.au](mailto:pets1@iinet.net.au)

## Safety Issues

### Road Rail Vehicles – new draft standards

The Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board has released a draft for Consultation Guideline titled “Operating Road Rail Vehicles”. The document can be downloaded from the RISSB Website at:

<https://www.rissb.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Guideline-Operating-Road-Rail-Vehicles-for-Consultation.pdf> OR <http://tinyurl.com/hkwloe7>

The guideline is for the use of road vehicles in a rail environment. They have become ubiquitous in the heavy rail sector and there are some in use on the tramways in Australasia, though very rare in the heritage tramway sector amongst COTMA Members. The guideline is referenced for use in New Zealand as well. Road Rail vehicles have been involved in a number of significant incidents in the rail industry around the world and can be very hazardous if not used correctly. While such vehicles are seldom used in our Sector, Members should be aware of this document and any potential impacts.

The draft guidelines are now open for comment. Return your comments to the RISSB Project Manager, Sarah Bonnar, by COB Thursday February 16, 2017 by email: [sbonnar@rissb.com.au](mailto:sbonnar@rissb.com.au)

### Fire on a tram in Blackpool – lessons to be heeded?

On Saturday 24 September 2016, heritage tramcar number 272 operated by Blackpool Transport Services (BTS) caught fire. All passengers were evacuated, but the driver re-entered the burning tram to get a pole used to lower the trolley pole. This was achieved safely, but the safety audit questioned the safety of the procedure.

The short but useful report is available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gynn-square-safety-digest/fire-on-heritage-tram-at-gynn-square-blackpool-24-september-2016> OR <http://tinyurl.com/hzsqlur>

## Croydon UK – tram rollover

Readers will be aware of the Croydon tram that rolled over on November 9, 2016. An interim report can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/interim-report-fatal-tram-accident-croydon>. The information provided in the urgent safety advice on page 8, should be noted by tram operators where excessive speed is possible. COTMA will reference the full report when it is made available.

## The North Canterbury-Kaikoura earthquakes - Wellington impacts

Readers will be aware of the latest NZ devastating earthquake on 14 November. As well as the South Island impacts, including massive damage to the main road and rail line north and south of Kaikoura, there was damage in Wellington. From WTM's December 2016 edition of Tramlines.

"The Museum suffered some earthquake damage... The old refrigerator which is used to store paint fell over and some paint spilled. Shop stock in the kiosk fell off shelves and various other minor items fell over. In the workshop a toppling item fell on a saw horse and narrowly missed damaging tram 159. There was no building damage.

Outside the damage was more severe. Poles 50 and 55 both saw structural failure. At 50 the shorter of the two elements that make up the span wire let go. It has been replaced by Parafill. Thanks to Steve Porter, Allan Neilson and Russell Jenkins who repaired the overhead damage the day it occurred."

Tramlines also reported that Graham & Anne Stewart's recently built apartment was badly hit, with many of their valuable possessions accumulated over a lifetime (and including some tram models) were destroyed or damaged. Thankfully both Graham and Anne escaped unharmed.

## And finally, back at the COTMA conference.....



In bright sunlight, Christchurch English Electric Trolley bus No. 210 waits while the Paparazzi take their photographs during the COTMA Conference at Ferrymead. Photo: Rod Atkins – 15-10-2016.