

Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

www.cotma.org.au

News Update July 2017



From the Chairman

Welcome to our third COTMA News Update for 2017.

In this issue we report on the recent FEDECRAIL conference held in Antwerp, Belgium and attended by Warren Doubleday, and the NZ FRONZ conference in Dunedin which I attended. As I write this I am preparing to travel to Melbourne for the COTMA AGM on Tuesday (25 July) and an Executive meeting which will follow. At the Executive meeting we have a number of important issues to discuss, including spare parts - note the references further below to Wellington (trolley bus closure), and PC5 equipment, as well as getting an update on Melbourne W's and equipment. All member museums will have received an invitation to the AGM and should by now have indicated whether they will be attending.

The annual conference of the Federation of Rail Organisations of NZ (FRONZ) was well attended by both railway and tramway groups from around N.Z. and included rail trips on the Taieri Gorge line and on the main line to Oamaru as well as visits to the local Gasworks Museum, the Ocean Beach Railway and Toitu Otago Settlers Museum which includes in its collection former Maryhill Cable car No. 106, Roslyn Electric tram No. 1 (restored at Ferrymead) and Dunedin Trolley bus No 10. The Settlers Museum was the venue for an informative talk about the Dunedin Cable car systems and proposals to set up an operating cable car museum using restored cable cars from Ferrymead. This was a public event and the small theatre was full to overflowing!

Other highlights/significant topics included a presentation by the Wheelwright Shop, Gladstone (North Island north of Wellington), currently restoring Wellington Combination tram no. 17 for the Wellington Tramway Museum, risk analysis and safety issues by the NZ Regulator, the NZ Transport Agency, and a presentation about draft "Moving Objects Guidelines" (see more about this on p. 5 below). There was also news of NZ's latest operating tramway - at the Whangarei Museum and Heritage Park, where former Lisbon tram No 520, at one time intended for operation in Henderson,



Auckland, has been restored, including its regauging from 900mm to 1067mm (3ft 6ins) and after being opened by the local mayor on May 20, is now operating as per Launceston,

towing a motor generator mounted on a railway bogie, on a newly built 1km line.

FRONZ has quite an array of awards presented at the Annual Awards Dinner and while for tramways there is only one specifically focussed award, no less than four awards were won by the tramway fraternity this year. The Dockline Tramway, Auckland won both the **Tramway Restoration Award** (for ex Melbourne SW6 881) and the **NZTA Tourist & Heritage Rail Safety Award** (for Proactive work in Fire Prevention Interventions in former Melbourne Trams - learnings from the Memphis W2 fires). The Wellington Tramway Museum was awarded the **KiwiRail Infrastructure Improvement Award** (for Power Supply Upgrade - substation rebuild following lightning strike in Jan 2016) and finally I was humbled to receive the **Paul Heighton Award for Excellence** (for services ensuring the survival of working heritage tramways).

Great to see the progress being made with both new and expanding tramway and light rail projects in Australia, notably the Gold Coast Light rail extension now almost complete, ongoing progress with CSELR in Sydney, rails being laid in Canberra and a just announced start being made in Adelaide, as well as Melbourne's latest project – the completion with unrivalled speed and efficiency of the Toorak Road deviation in Melbourne – see p. 4 below. Sadly on my side of the ditch the end of street electric traction in Wellington draws near, with its modern trolley bus system now confirmed to be closed on 31 October. See below (p.5) for what is likely to be the only organised farewell tour on August 10. Some good news however from Christchurch, where as a result of submissions to its Annual Plan, the City Council is having a serious look at completing the extension along High Street in the central city, with the intention of coordinating street repair works, including track laying, with the completion of the restoration of an adjacent block of heritage shops. In the meantime Christchurch Tramway Ltd received advice this week that it has achieved a Qualmark Gold award for its tourism business under the Sustainable Tourism Business criteria. As only five percent of tourism operations in New Zealand achieve such a grading this seal of approval signifies that the Christchurch Tramway experience is one of the most high-quality experiences New Zealand has to offer.

Dave Hinman

European Tramway Operating Group Meeting Notes

Warren Doubleday attended the European Federation of Museum and Heritage Railways (FEDECRAIL) conference in Antwerp during May 2017. At this meeting, the first meeting of the



Tramway Operating Group was held. The meeting on 4 May was chaired by Mimmi Mickelsen of Gothenberg and the President of the Swedish Tramway Society. Attending were representatives of tramway museums from Sweden, The Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and the UK.

Many of the Museums in Europe are city based and run their tramcars on their city network, some maintaining and driving their own vehicles on the city network or having the city maintaining and driving vehicles. However some have problems with their facilities, (buildings), the number of tramcars held and actually operating them within the varying operating environments allowed by the cities or the country in terms of legislation. The chair of FEBERAIL, Jeff van Olmen (the Belgium equivalent of ATHRA or

FRONZ) noted that there seems to be more interest in heritage tramways in Belgium rather than railways at this time. Belgium itself was the home of the once massive SNCV rural tramway system.

Warren introduced COTMA, the Ballarat Tramway Museum (noted the solar panels which was of interest) and the Melbourne Tram Museum.

There are a few stand-alone tram museums in the Continent, one being the Swedish Tramway Museum at Malmköping. They all have the same problems as us, regrowth of membership, that is the replacement of the aging membership. The Swedish Tramway is running a youth camp for 12 to 18 year olds which sees about 80% retention of those who participate at the museum. They have about 20 attendees a year.

The Heritage Railway Association UK has some 10 active Tramway Museum Members of the total approximately 250 membership including static museums.

It was noted that there a number of tram museums starting up in the former Eastern bloc, a lot of young people are involved in these new museums.

The meeting identified the:

1. The need for benchmarks, - best practice models and interchange of information.
2. How to get younger people involved, foster regrowth both as volunteers and customers.
3. Fostering school visits – teaching “mobility”. Dusseldorf teaches tram safety at the depot and school students learn about heritage.

One of the consequences of the Paris Climate Conference identified by FEDECRAIL is the community viewpoint in Europe of burning coal. This will have an impact on its use for heritage steam locomotives. FEDECRAIL has prepared a draft policy paper on this topic. It was noted that at the time of the conference, the Republic of Ireland has banned the burning of “smoky coal” and this has resulted in the reported cessation of steam locomotive operations. Dirty diesels are next. (See <http://www.steamrailway.co.uk/steamnews/2016/5/13/future-looking-black-for-irish-coal>), though I have not seen an update on this since my visit.

As part of his tour Warren visited Museums in Amsterdam, Antwerp, the SNCV Museum, ASVi at Thuin, Crich, Seaton, Birkenhead (Liverpool) and the Llandudno – the Great Orme Tramway. While in Liverpool, he visited the Liverpool Maritime Museum store to photograph the last minute book of the Electric Supply Company of Victoria who operated both the Ballarat and Bendigo tramway systems until 1934. The company was head quartered in Liverpool. As well visits were made to the large operating systems of Rotterdam, De Haag and Manchester.

COTMA Conference 2018 – Change of Dates

The dates for the Perth Conference have been revised by the Perth Electric Tramway Society, the host museum. The dates are now: **Thursday 13th to Tuesday 18th September 2018**. The post conference tour dates at this time are Wednesday 19th to Monday 24th September.

Further conference details will be made available on both the COTMA website and the News Update as soon as they are known.

WGR request for seats

The last edition of COTMA News Update asked for comment on a request from the Walhalla Goldfields Railway to purchase H type tram seats. Thank you to those who got back to us.

The Exec Committee has agreed to sell surplus seats to WGR, subject to a couple of sets being set aside as spares for a member museum and to WGR agreeing to return to us all leather seat coverings removed in good condition – as spares for all. Timing of the pickup from Adelaide is being negotiated and is likely to be in September.

WGR are also considering joining COTMA –as they will have two trams preserved!

Domain Rd tramway closes

Melbourne has seen the closure of the tramway in Domain Rd and Park St in South Yarra on route 58 (formerly 8) to Toorak. This tramway opened in October 1888 as a cable tramway, was electrified in 1927 and closed on June 30, 2017. It closed to allow work on a new underground railway station at the corner of Domain Rd and St Kilda Rd, and has been replaced by a new tramway along Toorak Rd to St Kilda Rd. The change is nominally temporary – for 5 years – but it is unlikely that the old tram line will be re-instated.

One interesting detail is that a section feeder box made for the MMTB (which ceased to exist in 1983) has been installed in the new section of track.



Disposal of Z1 trams

It seems that the last few remaining Melbourne Z1 class trams are being disposed of – for scrap.



WGR (referred to elsewhere in this update) are using trucks from these trams in their conversion of their X1 trams to railmotors. They have one set and are seeking another set. It will be interesting to many of us seeing an ASEA truck converted to 760mm gauge!

PC5 controllers

COTMA has several PC5 controllers (in a dismantled condition) acquired after the withdrawal of the Adelaide H type trams. The late Ian Seymour was the 'guru of PC5' and since his passing the effort to catalogue and allocate this equipment has stalled. We are now reviewing the stock and requests. It is clear that we will see competing interests for spare parts for operating H class trams vs equipment to re-build trams without control gear. It is already agreed that any strategy will need to ensure that components are restored rather than replaced – otherwise we will quickly run out of PC5 parts! Queries, requests and comments are welcome as we work through this issue. Email cotma@cotma.org.au

Preservation of Moving Objects Guidelines

At last year's FRONZ conference, concerns had been raised about a paper recently produced by a team of professional staff for Museums Aotearoa (MA) and presented at their Australasian conference, promoting draft guidelines for the conservation and use (or not!) of movable heritage objects. These included trams and trains and parts of the guidelines seemed to cut across some of the long held aims and practices of our membership. A combined and very detailed submission by FRONZ and COTMA had been forwarded to MA and they agreed to attend this year's conference and discuss the issues. One of the authors, Stephen Fox, fronted and explained the guidelines in his paper "Preservation of Moving Objects". Trevor Burling's paper "Care of Moving Objects" which followed referred to the FRONZ/COTMA submission, copies of which had been made available to all conference attendees. Given the differing views expressed in these two presentations, and an identified potential impact on future funding applications by operating museums, there is a need for further dialogue between FRONZ/COTMA and MA on this issue.

Wellington Trolley Bus Tour: Thursday 10 August 2017.

Announcement from Omnibus Society NZ (OBNZ)

Go Wellington have kindly allowed us to undertake an enthusiasts' tour of the system before it closes down on 31 October, 2017.

Bookings are essential. **Cost is \$NZ40 per person, payable in cash on the day.**

Start is at 10 a.m. from the Railway Station terminus and will finish at the Railway terminus no later than 4pm.

The Itinerary is as follows: to Kingston, to Aro Street, to Karori, to Lyall Bay, to Miramar and Seatoun, to Zoo, back to the Railway station via Hataitai. If any wired parts are missed we will endeavour to cover them in an Ansaldo (older dieselised former trolley bus) and then, if time permits, some of the closed routes will be traversed.

BOOKINGS must be made through Peter Rendall at obnz@paradise.net.nz advising name, number of passengers and contact details, as soon as possible, and no later than Friday 4 August.

There is no guarantee that intending passengers without a booking can be accommodated on the day.

This tour has come up at rather short notice, particularly for anyone from overseas interested in attending. Enquiries about the possibility of later tours, closer to the closing date revealed that this will be the only one being organised by OBNZ and it is doubtful that others will be sanctioned. The reason for the timing was to avoid the risk of some routes already being closed which could happen e.g. in the event of overhead damage or buses becoming unserviceable and not repaired.

The question of the obtaining of spare parts and equipment from the Wellington system will be a subject for discussion at the COTMA Executive meeting, and at this stage it appears that requests will be best channelled through the Wellington Tramway Museum. It is not yet known what equipment and parts are likely to be available and further details will be advised once known. In the meantime any groups interested in being informed about this should advise COTMA – email cotma@cotma.org.au

Happier Times – Earlier Tours



Above: Trolleys from all NZ cities in Wellington - 50th Anniversary Festival March 1999

Photo THS Collection

Below: Trolley bus tour – COTMA conference 2010

Photo Dave Hinman

