



Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

www.cotma.org.au

News Update – June 2011

From the Chairman

During the Easter period and early May, I visited the south island of NZ and experienced great sunny weather on the west coast – isn't it like this all the time? I was very impressed in the recent work of the Department of Conservation in the investment of interpreting former industrial sites, such as [Brunner](#) near Greymouth and the [Denniston](#) Incline. Some excellent work here and the web sites are well worth visiting.

I visited the Tramway Historical Society at Ferrymead during their Monday work night to catch up with their activities recovering from the major February earthquake and their fund raising progress. Ferrymead itself is back operational. Their recent newsletter, [Tracts](#), gives the latest information on their progress towards this important goal. One matter that really struck home was the cost of putting up such a building, would be about 60% of the cost in Australia. Your support for this important project is certainly strongly supported.

Travelling around Christchurch the following day struck home the amount of damage incurred both to old and new buildings. The central part of the city, the size of the Melbourne CBD still remains locked down, though it is getting smaller. Damage is significant. For those COTMA Conference participants, the Windsor Hotel though was demolished on Friday 10 June, along with many other buildings in the vicinity.

Dave Hinman, Secretary of the THS advises that although the city itself is still out of bounds, the red zone is progressively getting smaller. There is a lot more work to do, including demolition of major buildings before the city can be re-opened, with significant aftershocks still occurring, even as this report was being written on Monday 13 June. The damage to the City Tramway itself, though relatively minor is low on priority for repairs when many people are still without working services such as sewerage. The reconstruction effort will be huge and at this time many residents, including THS members are still living in damaged homes awaiting insurance assessment etc.

The City of Christchurch is currently undertaking a community consultation process on what the city should be like in the future. One thing under consideration is a light rail project – have a look at their web site and in particular - <http://www.shareanidea.org.nz/move/>

At the THS itself, progress on the Birney tram continues and it is hoped to have it under test soon. There is the possibility that it may journey to Auckland Harbour side Tramway which the operators of Christchurch Tramways were awarded the initial operating rights for the new tramway loop being built there.

For the City Tramway staff many no longer have a job, though John Smith and Steve Lea are involved in setting up the operation of the Auckland City Tramway that is planned to be opened early August.

Other NZ news is that at the recent FRONZ Conference, Western Springs Tramway (MOTAT) were awarded the Tramcar Restoration Award for Wellington 147.

Also in the news has been Wanganui where a Project Team has been established by Council to get No. 12 operational and building a section of track for it.

Your support for THS's fund raising appeal is strongly encouraged and we wish all our friends in Christchurch the best for recovering from this major disaster. Thanks to all those who have contributed so far.

2012 COTMA Conference

The hosts of the 2012 Conference, the St Kilda Tramway Museum (AETM Adelaide) have advised that the conference dates will be Thursday 16th to Tuesday 21st of August 2012. Put these dates in your diary. Further details as they become available. As previously announced, Richard Gilbert and Simon Green of the Ballarat Tramway Museum are proposing to run the Post Conference Tour and Partners tour respectively.

Personnel in the News

Well known Bendigo Tramway personality Dennis O'Hoy was recently awarded the Ray Tonkin Award for protecting heritage. Dennis has spent over 40 years working on heritage projects in the Bendigo area. The award was created by the Heritage Council of Victoria to recognise the role volunteers play in preserving cultural heritage.

W Class tram Refurbishment

Readers of Government press releases and other tramway related documents may have seen an item about the refurbishment of the Melbourne W class trams. A firm of consultants have undertaken a safety refurbishment study for Yarra Trams. One of the City Circle Trams, No. 957 has gone to Bendigo Tramways for prototype refurbishment. The Chairman and Assistant Executive Officer, Rod Atkins was asked to give their view on the refurbishment as part of the consultation process undertaken by the Consultants. Our views mainly centred on what the historical appearance of the trams and what they should look like and not necessarily what they currently look right now after many years of modifications and repairs.

Disaster Recovery

The FRONZ Journal of May 2011 contains an item on a survey amongst Not for Profit organisations whether they had recovery plans following disasters. Only about half the organisations had such a plan. Recovery plans generally covered key contact, backup of important documents and procedures for restoring IT. Such plans are not often circulated to Board members or were tested for compliance. Something that COTMA Members should consider and ensure that appropriate plans are in place, circulated and tested.

International Rail Safety Conference – Melbourne

The 2011 International Rail Safety Conference is being held in Melbourne between Sunday October 16 and Friday 21. For the first time, it will include topics on heritage and light rail safety. The web site is: <http://irsc2011.org/>

Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission

Announced in the 2011 Federal Budget was the establishment of an Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission who will have the sole responsibility for determining charitable public benevolent institutions and other not-for-profit status for all Commonwealth (read taxation) purposes. Our New Zealand counterparts will say, ahh Australia is following again. For more information have a look at Mill Oakley Lawyers web news item at <http://email.tontomail.com/t/ViewEmail/r/AD14214130F266E4/52CB404474CA6EABF6A1C87C670A6B9F>

Next News Update – August 2011. (All links working at time of publication)

Photos from Christchurch – The Windsor Hotel Area, a place where many of us have stayed during COTMA events has gone. The first photo appeared in the Christchurch Newspaper, *The Press* on Monday 2 May – the Windsor is on the left hand side of the photograph. Some of the buildings in this photograph have since been demolished. The next two photographs were supplied by Dave Hinman on Friday June 10, the day the Windsor was demolished. Many other iconic buildings in Christchurch will sadly suffer the same fate. The Windsor's web site, advises that no injuries were received to staff or guests.

