



# Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

## News Update – January 2009

### From the Chairman

This year, 2009, will see many issues flowing out of the world economic crisis, which will affect our museums. Higher unemployment, less interstate and overseas travels, difficulties to borrow funds and the list goes on. On the other side, we will see other changes that may help us to achieve our goals; perhaps new sources of funding for labour intensive work. Staying up with all the grant funding opportunities can be difficult, especially when revision to update Rail Safety Systems are made mandatory by changes in legislation, often for little overall safety benefit.

Helping one another with information, equipment, and ideas is all part of being a COTMA Member. We have a good network amongst ourselves, which is one our strengths. This network has been forged through the ongoing COTMA Conferences, personal relationships and involvement in our other rail heritage networks. May this continue well during 2009.

### Wanted: - 33" Wheels

The Tramway Historical Society, Christchurch is looking for 33" wheel and axle sets with gears and motors to fit. These would enable them to build more Peckham 14D5 maximum traction trucks (as under their Boon 152) and the under construction double decker 26. To date THS have been using ex MMTB No. 9 trucks as the supply, but they have now exhausted them.

They would like to find out whether any other COTMA museum would have one or more such trucks (or the wheel/axles, gears, motors (MV 101AZ)) that they would be willing to sell or trade. Alternatively if any other 33 " wheel sets (spoked wheels), preferably with motors, from some other truck type could be acceptable. If necessary they would look at obtaining and fitting other W class motors and gears. Dave Hinman, Secretary of the THS can be contacted on [dave.hinman@ccc.govt.nz](mailto:dave.hinman@ccc.govt.nz)

### Executive Meeting

The next COTMA Executive Meeting is being held in Adelaide on Saturday 28 Feb. at the St Kilda Tramway Museum. A draft copy of the Agenda is forwarded with this newsletter. If you have any items you would like included on the agenda, please contact the Chairman or your Museum Liaison Officers, Ian Seymour or Clinton Pearce.

### A Single Rail Safety Regulator for Australia

ATHRA's submission to the National Transport Commission, prepared in association with COTMA can be viewed on the NTC's web site at:

[http://www.ntc.gov.au/rfcDocuments/Rail\\_RIS\\_Submission\\_8\\_ATHRA2009011212004030.pdf](http://www.ntc.gov.au/rfcDocuments/Rail_RIS_Submission_8_ATHRA2009011212004030.pdf)

### COTMA Conferences

Bryce Pender has been appointed by the Wellington Tramway Museum as the Convenor for the 2010 COTMA Conference, with Henry Brittain providing an oversight role. A committee is being arranged and the first steps to arrange the conference administration is underway. More details will be provided in the next News Update, as to dates and preliminary arrangements.

### Incandescent Light Bulbs in NZ – an Update

The new NZ Government has rescinded the previous Government's plan to phase out incandescent bulbs. Thus they may be available for a while, as long as there is a demonstrated worldwide market need for them and before they become hard to get like some wood screws.

## Youth Groups

A topic often discussed either formally or informally amongst COTMA Museums, and many other volunteer based groups, is: Where are the younger people going to come from? David Critchley of the Sydney Tramway Museum at the 2008 Launceston Conference presented an excellent paper on this topic of starting and running a Youth Group. The Paper, titled *Setting Up a Youth Group* and subsequent discussion can be downloaded from the COTMA web site: <http://cotma.org.au/Conference%202008%20Papers%20List.htm>

The UK Heritage Railway Association's (HRA) Youth Volunteer Adviser, Geoff Evens recently wrote in their newsletter:

"Young Volunteers are the future and unless Heritage Railways make a big effort to understand how to encourage a consistent flow of them into the ranks of volunteers the heritage railway movement may have to pay for more and more of its key skills – which in the long term will become non sustainable. When railways analyse their recruitment flow line it is suggested that they ask the following questions:

- Where do our volunteers come from and how do we help them fit in?
- What is the average volunteer age?
- Are Young Volunteers a viable option, how do we recruit them and how do we make them welcome.

There are of course a number of factors that need to be identified in order to maximise on the positives and to control the negatives. Heritage pursuits are in direct competition with a wide range of leisure and volunteer activities which is why railways need to vigorously market the opportunities on offer, taking into account the proximity to population centres, access routes and industrial centres.

More than ever before it is noticeable how many volunteers are reaching an age where they will have to retire from operational and safety critical activities. It is not necessary to carry out expensive surveys relating to the demographic profile of volunteer organisations – the crisis is now very visible and approaching far too quickly. Heritage railways need to put in place robust and inclusive youth volunteer programmes that will encourage young people to come and take an interest. When considering activities fit for young people a railway should ask itself a number of simple questions focussing on the organisations view of what is a Young Volunteer:

- Are they nuisance to be discouraged?
- A problem to be ignored?
- Or an important resource to be developed?

For a youth volunteer programme to become viable there has to be a core of adult volunteers that are supportive and proactive because once a positive choice has been made then it is crucial that suitable areas of volunteer work are identified to train and develop young volunteers' skills. Young volunteers should never be allowed to carry out activities that are uncontrolled and not supervised as everything they do should be part of a structured training experience. It is important to remember that if there is the negative message then it may not only apply to the young – be aware of exclusion and the cosy club scenario.

The HRA can provide advice and support to railways considering a youth programme and has prepared a Youth Policy template that will allow any member railways to adopt a tried and tested formula. If your railway is still considering starting a youth scheme it may be worth considering contacting other Heritage Railways that already have Youth Schemes in place. Arrange a visit and see how these various schemes work, but take care when setting up your own programme; build on experience; seek advice and think about how the railway should develop the infrastructure to support both the programme leaders and the young volunteer."