



Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

www.cotma.org.au

News Update – November 2010

From the Chairman

This News Update is primarily focused around the most important event on the COTMA calendar, the bi-annual Conference. Although the September 2010 Conference is now passed, a lot of things are happening which is keeping us well occupied. This News Update has been delayed due to the Chairman's ongoing involvement in the move towards a Single Rail Safety Regulator in Australia. However, over the next few months, a number of the outcomes of the recent Conference General Meeting (CGM) will be implemented.

One of the interesting outcomes of the CGM was how COTMA will deliver news to our members in the future and how our various Museum members are moving to the digital era through no longer posting newsletters and placing them on web sites etc. Some are moving towards the digital era in other ways as well – using Facebook and Twitter. This will have impacts on those Members and those workers who are not on the Internet, though we notice more and more are becoming connected. Adjustment to the various communication mediums will be a challenge that we have to take on. (See also Item titled – Future Distribution of News Updates)

COTMA Conference 2010

The COTMA Conference 2010 hosted by the Wellington Tramway Museum, ably lead by Bryce Pender, was very successful and enjoyable. Although New Zealand itself was experiencing extreme weather events, for virtually all the conference, we avoided them. Participants who journeyed to Christchurch, about a week after the major earthquake there enjoyed the great hospitality of the Tramway Historical Society and Christchurch Tramway Limited. The Post Conference road trip from Wellington to Auckland via Wanganui and New Plymouth was very enjoyable. While at Wanganui, we viewed progress by the Tramways Wanganui Trust on work on Wanganui No. 12, discussed with them, their future proposals and featured in the local newspaper. The final event for those who travelled to Auckland was the launch of Wellington Double Deck Tram No. 47 by the Western Springs Tramway at MOTAT, where the Chairman was honoured to do the formal launch and cut the ribbon. Thanks to Richard Gilbert for doing some excellent planning and arrangements for the trip.

For a detailed report, visit www.cotma.org.au/news/cotma2010.html for the Chairman's report written initially for the Ballarat Tramway Museum. It contains a number of photographs as well.

Feedback on the conference itself is always welcomed. Some feedback has already been gathered and fed back to the Wellington Tramway Museum. The COTMA Conference Guideline has been updated as well. Feedback, please to Warren Doubleday, Chairman at warren@wads.id.au

COTMA Conference 2012

Forward planning for future COTMA Conferences had the 2012 Conference scheduled for Sydney. The Sydney Tramway Museum advised that they would like to delay the Conference to 2014 to give time for further expansion both at Loftus and tramways in the City itself. They suggested that AETM, St Kilda Tramway Museum, Adelaide consider taking 2012 on instead of 2014 as currently planned. After consideration by the AETM Board, they have advised that they will run the 2012 Conference in Adelaide, though the timing is yet to be determined. Thanks to AETM agreeing to do the swap. Further details as they become known.

Conference Proceedings

Ten of the papers presented to the Conference have been placed on the web site. The remainder will be done as they are completed. Discussions about individual papers will also be placed on the web site as soon as they are written up. Visit www.cotma.org.au/proceedings.html The Conference reports and the group photograph of the Conference participants at the Wellington Tramway Museum are also available at the same web link.

The Executive

The COTMA Executive remains largely the same as previously. Henry Britain of the Wellington Tramway Museum stepped down as Deputy Chairman after eight years in the position. Many thanks to Henry for his work and advice. Dave Hinman of the Tramway Historical Society (Christchurch) has taken on the job and we welcome him aboard.

Executive Office Details are:

Chairman	Warren Doubleday
Deputy Chairman	Dave Hinman
Executive Officer	Craig Tooke
Assistant Executive Officer	Rod Atkins
Treasurer	Howard Clark
Australian Museums Liaison Officer	Ian Seymour
New Zealand Museums Liaison Officer	Clinton Pearce

The web site has been updated for these changes and changes to contact arrangements.

Conference General Meeting

Saturday morning during the Conference was set aside for the COTMA Conference General Meeting where the Executive presented their reports, past and future planned activities were discussed. Major outcomes were:

- Proposed changes to the Rules were accepted
- Future COTMA News Updates and documents will be issued electronically, that is not by mail. Each Museum to print off for the meal rooms.
- Museum Members are to be encouraged to send their newsletters to each other via email rather than hard copy.
- Review at the next Conference the name of the Council itself.
- COTMA Achievement Awards to be reviewed to include Recognition of our volunteer workers.
- Approval to purchase a storage container for parts held at Bungaree by the Ballarat Tramway Museum on behalf of COTMA.

Conference – Excellence and Recognition “EAR” Awards

An important part of any Conference is the recognition of the work that COTMA Members undertake. For 2012, the following Certificates were presented:

- Australian Electric Transport Museum – Restoration of Bogie Open Combination Tram No. E118
- Ballarat Tramway Museum – Community Partnership – Horse Tram Operations
- Tramway Historical Society – Christchurch Tramway Board Electric Tram No. 26
- Western Springs Tramway – Wellington Double Decker Tram No. 47 “Big Ben”

The winners of the 2010 Excellence and Recognition “EAR” Award was:

“Both the Ballarat Tramway Museum and Western Springs Tramway”

For PowerPoint presentation of the Awards and associated photographs see the COTMA web site, www.cotma.org/awards.html

Future Distribution of News Updates

As noted elsewhere in this News Update, was the decision to move to electronic distribution rather than physically mailing copies to each Member. The Newsletter is already e-mailed to Members, those who have attended past conferences and have provided an e-mail address and to others who COTMA liaises with.

As part of this decision, this issue will be the final to be mailed out, unless we are requested specifically to continue to mail it to a specific Member Museum. For arrangements to ensure that the newsletter are received by a Member, just in case your service provider falls over or something else goes wrong, we would like to have a second email address for each Member. We already have many covered by two or more contacts at each Member, so we will individually request a second address where necessary.

One of the reasons why we have continued to physically send mail by post was to assist those who are not on an e-mailing list was to actually see our News etc. on the meal room table or notice board. We will be asking that a copy of each News Update is formally printed by the nominated person and placed on the Notice Board or meal room table.

Another way of distributing our News Updates is on-forwarding the News Updates to your worker distribution lists. COTMA strongly encourages this method.

If any reader would like to be placed on the COTMA e-mail list, please advise the Chairman, Warren Doubleday, warren@wads.id.au

Sydney 50 years celebration

Sydney Tramway Museum will be celebrating at the annual Sydney Tramway Festival on the last weekend of February 2011, the 50th anniversary of the closure of the Sydney system. Event details given in the attached press release of 19 November 2010.

Odd Spot?

The reproduced newspaper clipping on page 4 is a story about an Australian Tax Office ruling and Fringe Benefits Tax. Probably does not apply to too many of us. Item courtesy of Alan Bradley – Ballarat Tramway Museum.

www.archive.org

John Smatlak of the Orange Empire Railway Museum California, recently sent to us a copy of an article from the Electric Railway Journal of 1918 about the Sydney Tramway system. The web site, www.archive.org holds a great number of items about electric tramways (streetcars, electric railways). The Australian version, www.archive.org.au (Pandora, Australia's Web Archive operated by the National Library of Australia is also another web site well worth visiting and searching for tramway items.

Next News update – all going well – January 2011

ACTIONS:

1. Advise in writing please, that if (Museum Members) need to continue to receive News Updates by mail.
2. Make arrangements for the future distribution of News Updates to your workers and/or print the emailed file for the Depot Noticeboard or mess room table.



Tram tax exemption off track

Michaela Whitbourn

The Australian Taxation Office has ruled what many engineers already know: a tram is not a car.

The ruling means that trams aren't covered by an exemption to fringe benefits tax that applies to company-owned cars.

Adding to the annals of obscure tax decisions, the Tax Office said that "a flanged-wheel passenger-carrying vehicle which runs on a tramway" — that is, a tram — is not a motor vehicle. Giving workers the keys to the tram for pre- or post-work jaunts is a one-way ticket to fringe benefits tax.

Trams were "propelled by a motor", sure, but to meet the hoops-of-fire statutory definition of a motor vehicle they needed to travel on roads.

"A tram is by design a *rail* vehicle," the Tax Office noted. In a metaphysical moment, it added that the existence of trams that travelled on tracks laid on roads did not a road vehicle make: "This co-existence only arises from the sharing of that public space," it said. "Outside that shared space trams do not travel on roads and road vehicles do not travel on tramways."

KPMG tax partner Andy Hutt appreciated the logic of the decision, if not its application.

"It's quite hard to think about the context in which [the taxpayer] is asking about this," Mr Hutt said. "It appears to be about a tram driver getting to use a tram on the weekends to do recreational trips up and down the line, with family or something."

"It seems quite unlikely."

Mr Hutt said the tax exemption in dispute was more commonly used when employees such as delivery drivers used work vehicles taken home each day for personal errands.

"The effectively private use of that [vehicle] can be exempt from FBT. What you see more commonly is employees of tram companies getting to ride for free."



The preconference group photo at terminus of the narrow gauge (600mm) Blenheim Riverside Railway. The bridge in the background is the Picton to Christchurch main rail line which was closed due to land slip. Our tour group had to travel by coach instead. Photo Bill Cox, who made our Blenheim visit very worthwhile and enjoyable.



Colin Zeff (Western Springs Tramway) and Simon Green (Ballarat Tramway Museum) with their certificates and the EAR Award itself. Standing alongside is the Chairman Warren Doubleday. A second EAR Award trophy was needed this year. Photo Peter McCallum.



Dave Hinman at the keyboard of the Grand Piano at the Grand Hotel Wanganui. Photo Warren Doubleday