



Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

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News Update – September / October 2006

From the Chairman

A topic that is often discussed in the volunteer based tramway and railway heritage organisations is who is going to replace us when we have gone to the great tram depot. Succession planning is one of those areas that can still be thought about without having to go to print or prepare a document for a regulator. A good source of information about the topic and how to go about it can be found on the NSW Museum and Galleries web site - <http://www.mgnsw.org.au/> and in particular a paper which has some clues on the 2nd page - <http://www.mgnsw.org.au/files/resources/VSP-resources.pdf> It is a subject that often gets overlooked, but a topic that should be on your strategic planning agenda.

COTMA Conference November 2006

Bookings for the Conference are rolling in. A \$50 fee late booking fee applies after Friday Oct. 20, so get in now. The trouble with late bookings is that we cannot guarantee accommodation at the conference venue, The Batman Hill on Collins, due to a U2 concert in Melbourne that weekend. Booking confirmation letters for those bookings received by Oct. 17 should be sent back by post or e-mail by the end of the week of 20 October. We had hoped to have done this by now, but the pressure of Rail Safety and other representative work and people on holidays has delayed this.

Arrangements are well advanced. The on-line booking form, the programme and the papers list can be accessed on the COTMA Web site – www.cotma.org.au

So far we have representatives from virtually every operating Member, with a particularly good roll up of New Zealanders. The Conference should certainly fulfil one its goals of enabling people to meet each other and network. With the Rail Safety systems in both New Zealand and Australia coming into force, it is an opportunity to cry in your beer, vent your spleen and maybe find a way forward.

Don't forget to make your booking for a "brag" session. Places are limited due to time restraints.

On Tuesday morning, the Conference General Meeting will be held. A copy of the draft agenda is enclosed in this mailout. If you have any comments, additional items or items of General Business to be placed on this agenda, would you please advise the Chairman by 17 Nov. so the agenda can be finalised before hand so appropriate time can be allowed for. Items which involve papers for discussion at the CGM will be handed to delegates on arrival at the Conference, so they can review them prior to the meeting. This will include the minutes of the last CGM. These [Minutes](#) can be accessed from the COTMA web site: under the Auckland Proceedings tab.

NTC Model Act, Regulations etc.

Following on from the last newsletter, the biggest impact of these model regulations, for which the comments are currently being considered by the National Transport Commission will be competency requirements. If not planned and correctly handled by the various state regulators, it could result in rail heritage groups closing down with volunteers walking away in exasperation. The draft regulations as written could result in inordinate costs with little gain in overall safety.

Given the vary wide definition of a “Rail Safety Worker”, almost everyone involved in running a rail Museum group will need to formally assessed for competency using a Registered Training Organisation. This is a major concern to COTMA and to ATHRA (Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia (ATHRA)).

Discussions have taken place with the NTC and the chair of the Rail Safety Regulators Panel. Further work is to be undertaken. However, each Australian COTMA Member should be reviewing their situation and expressing concern via their state based Tourist and Rail Heritage body directly, so they can reinforce it locally to their Regulator. COTMA is working closely with ATHRA on this subject. It will be a topic for discussion at the Conference and no doubt at the CGM. Your knowledge of the likely impact on your organisation and what skills you already have within your organisation is essential.

TDT Australia - Tram Driver Competency Assessment Criteria

Following a meeting on Monday 9 October with the Transport Distribution Training Staff, work on the finalisation of these is nearing completion. The [comments](#) that COTMA made have been taken on board and we will see a document that will be useful for both the current tram/light rail operators in Australia and Museums as well. The finished documents should provide a very good guide as to the competency based assessments that you will need to undertake in the future. They do not provide a training package, just the end point. It is up to you how you do the training etc. Not all elements will need to be used, just the ones that are applicable to your operation. All going well, final draft copies will be available by the Conference.

ATHRA Meeting

The Chairman attended the ATHRA meeting held at the Workshops Rail Museum at Ipswich during early September. The meeting was well attended with representatives from the various Queensland organisations, the Australasian Railway Association (ARA) and for part of, the Queensland Rail Safety Regulator. Prior to the meeting, visits were made to a number of rail heritage operators, including the Brisbane Tramway Museum Society. Competency training was the liveliest topic of discussion during the meeting.

The building of relationships at the National level amongst the various state based rail heritage bodies, COTMA, the ARA and others has been a positive aspect of the push to have a national rail safety approach. We can only trust that the regulators enter into a constructive approach that allows for community based organisations preserving our rail heritage to thrive into the future and not to wither away.

Congratulations to Launceston

The formal opening of the Launceston Tramway Museum Society’s new display area within the Inveresk precinct took place on Saturday 23 September and was attended by the COTMA Chairman. The official opening was carried out by the Mayor of Launceston, Alderman Dean who spoke highly of the work done by the volunteers and that it would help to promote and acknowledge the role trams play in Launceston’s history. The area is within the former railway workshops and yard at Inveresk, which has been converted into a formal museum – Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery and also a university precinct.

The display area is a credit to the skills of the volunteers and gives an excellent presentation of the trams themselves and the working life of those who crewed and maintained the service. It is probably one of the best displays of a tramway museum has yet done in Australia. The display shows many aspects of the working on the tramway, including two trammies playing cards. The next hurdle that the organisation needs to overcome is that of formal Accreditation to operate the tram.

Melbourne Centenary Celebrations

As readers and watchers of news groups and other news information will have seen, Melbourne is busy celebrating 100 years of electric trams. The Yarra Trams web site is well worth visiting and they have positively promoted the celebrations throughout their trams.

The Yarra Trams 100 years website is: <http://www.100yearstrams.com.au>

Victorian Member organisations took part in *Tram It 2006*, Sunday 8 October, organised by Yarra Trams at the Docklands. MMTB V class 214 made its first public re-appearance as *The North Melbourne Electric Tramway and Lighting Company* tramcar No. 13 after a repaint and some modification work. The windscreen remains. The day was fine, although the wind was cold. The event was well attended by the public.

Craig Tooke, the Executive Officer, has been on TV and radio recently, beating the tram preservation drum on behalf of COTMA.

The most recent event was Sunday 15 when Essendon Depot celebrates 100 years of electric tram operation. The Chairman was wearing an Essendon Historical Society top hat and some period clothes.

Thornbury Depot

COTMA has been working with VicTrack to recover usable materials, such as point work, overhead fittings etc from the former Northcote Depot. The Depot on the opposite side of St Georges Road, to Preston Workshops will soon be demolished to make way for an aged care development.

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NMETL 13 at Docklands 8 October. 2006. Photo Warren Doubleday