



Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

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News Update – December 2004

Season Greetings

The Executive Committee of COTMA wishes all our Members and their supporters a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Chairman's Notes

At the 2004 Auckland Conference General Meeting, the draft *COTMA Code of Ethics* was distributed to Members. The draft has been prepared by John Radcliffe. It has been derived from the *Code of Ethics of Museums Australia Inc.* Museum's Australia Code is written for a small to medium size institution with a salaried Director and salaried staff. The COTMA Code has been drafted for a Volunteer Managed organisation with an emphasis on relationships and participation of the volunteers in the management and running of the Museum. It provides guidelines for good governance and overcoming conflicts of interests.

Code of Ethics are important to today's Museums. It provides a basis of making ethical decisions within a museum environment. Inherent in any Museum such as ours, are potential conflicts between the personal interests of the members that run or are a part of the Museum management teams and the interests of the Museum itself. It is essential that those who govern museums consider the many possibilities for conflict of interests within the institution.

It is proposed that feedback on the draft be received at the 2005 AGM with the plan to adopt it at 2006 Conference General Meeting. Please consider the draft code carefully and make comment. Feedback would be welcomed to be received at the March 2005 Executive Meeting as well as the 2005 AGM.

The *Code of Ethics* draft document is available in electronic form and has been included in the "e-version" of this News Update along with the COTMA Rules and other documents.

In the October 2004 News Update, I wrote about being an active member of your local or Regional Museum Community. Membership of the national peak professional body is also definitely recommended. In Australia, it is *Museums Australia* and in New Zealand *Museums Aotearoa*. While some of our Member Museums will already be a member of their national peak body, many are not. Enclosed is a Museums Australia Membership Application form. Just to show the wide variety of member museums, a photo of a group of volunteer workers clustered around Melbourne Scrubber No. 8 on the day of its delivery to Ballarat is included in the application form. (The BTM was pleasantly surprised to see its inclusion).

COTMA Rules

Enclosed in this mailout – is a copy of the *2004 Rules of the Association* as agreed to by the last Conference General Meeting and incorporating the additional rules required by the Victorian Consumer Affairs Office. We must now include the procedures for the disciplining of members and their ability to be heard, grievance procedures, whether they can vote by proxy and a revised regarding the Register of Members. In effect these rules have been deemed to be included by Consumer Affairs at the time of their approval in order for them to comply with their current requirements for associations.

Liaison

At the Tramway Heritage forum meeting of 8 December, with representatives from the Victorian Museums, STM, Dept of Infrastructure and VicTrack a number of issues were discussed. These included:

- Distribution of complete trams ex Melbourne to COTMA Museums, including further requests for Z class cars. Noted that three Z's will be taken to Newport for stripping for parts and then the bodies disposed of.
- The need for a new custodial or disposal agreement between VicTrack/DOI and the Museums who receive trams and spare parts.
- Public Liability Insurance update for Victorian Museums – The Victorian Government will continue to back if necessary, but would prefer that alternatives be examined – eg the ATHRA based group policy through Willis Australia Pty Ltd
- Newport Workshops site – the Department of Infrastructure, through its Major Projects property development body, VicUrban is reviewing the whole of the site for Government and is providing options for the future of the site.

We are forwarding to Members and nominated contacts by email within a short time of receipt, the various meeting minutes, papers, documents and notices from the various railway organisations, such as the ARA, NTC, DOI Vic, ATHRA etc as part of our joint liaison work. If you would like anyone from your Museum to be added to the email list, please advise.

Drawings ex Preston

Recently delivered from Preston Workshops to Hawthorn depot were a number of wooden and steel plan drawers containing drawings, both originals and prints and other drawing office files. It will take some time to properly position the cabinets and understand what is there. However, it is a great step forward and given time we should be in a great position to provide information not just on Melbourne trams, but on the various common parts and equipment that were used on Australasian trams.

COTMA Membership Renewals

Invoices for your COTMA membership have recently been sent to Members. Membership fees are those that were set by the June 2004 Conference General Meeting. These are for the year of 2004. Invoices for 2005 will be sent mid year.

Next AGM

One of the outcomes from the Auckland Conference was the wish of participants for an expanded off-conference year AGM in Melbourne with some social events and seminars and tours. Planning has commenced for such a weekend, 25 and 26 June 2005. Further details in the next News Update

Incident Reports

From the UK HM Rail Inspectorate 2003-2004 Annual report comes the report on the following incident which may be of interest:

“On 12 February 2004, at the Summerlee Heritage Park in North Lanarkshire, brake failure led to a tram, travelling at between 10 and 15 mph, running off the end of the line and crashing into an overhead power line support pole. The impact caused bruising to the driver’s shoulder and ribs, damaged the tram and pole, and brought down the overhead power line. Since the incident, the electrical brakes have been overhauled and additional safeguards have been added to the air braking system. The tram stop has been brought back a short distance from the end of the line and an emergency sand trap constructed at its end.”