



Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

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News Update – July 2004

Introduction

One of the outcomes of the COTMA/FRONZ Conference in Auckland, was the need for more frequent information to our Member Museums. We are trialling a monthly or so News Update – which may only be one or two sheets, along with some enclosures such as minutes. These updates will also be emailed to each Museum, for internal distribution amongst their own members and will be placed on the COTMA website, shortly after publication. It will be distributed to all Member Museums and fellow liaison bodies such as FRONZ and ATHRA (Association of Tourist and Rail Heritage Australia). We will continue with the practice of sending two copies of all the reports and enclosures by mail for the time being. Please make these available to your Museum staff.

Vale Bruce Gamble

Bruce Gamble former General Manager for Western Springs Tramway, Director of MOTAT and until recently the New Zealand Museums Representative on the COTMA Executive passed away on Saturday July 3 in Auckland. Bruce played a vital part in the survival that has led to the revitalisation of MOTAT. At the Ballarat Conference in 2000, he spoke of the passing by the NZ Government of the MOTAT Act, which provides a funding base to the Museum of which the Western Springs Tramway is a vital part. His enthusiasm for the tasks he undertook and the skills he applied is shown in the tramcar rebuilding and restoration work that WST have produced.

At the Auckland Conference Awards night, it was announced that MOTAT had established “The Dr Bruce Gamble Conservation Fund” in his name. Bruce spoke at the event and took an active part in the Conference workshops. He will be missed at MOTAT and COTMA particularly for both his intellectual and physical input.

Chairman’s Notes

The 2004 Conference structured discussion forum “What can COTMA do for your Museum?” gave to the Executive the knowledge of where to point its efforts to in the next two years: Following discussion and filling six sheets of butchers paper, participants voted for their three most important views of what COTMA should be doing. Following the counting of the votes and collation of similar subject themes, these were in approximate order of importance:

- Knowledge of Museum Practices, a Knowledge Base and Ethics of Work
- Continue the Conferences
- Extend the Information Flow between Museums
- Strengthen Lobbying Powers
- Ageing Membership – Younger Membership – Succession Planning
- Museum Sustainability
- Community Relationships
- Insurance
- Foster Economies of Scale.

Some are easy, some are not. These outcomes give the Executive good direction and plenty of challenges. All ideas of how to implement these will be considered.

To promote and support excellence in tramway heritage in Australia and New Zealand

The 2004 Auckland Conference

KiwiTrax 2004 – a joint conference organised by FRONZ, MOTAT and COTMA was well attended with just over 70 COTMA delegates and 10 partners attending the event. Another 90 from the rail heritage organisations from within New Zealand attended as well making for good liaison between the various organisations. Thanks to Chris Cameron of Western Springs Tramway who put together the COTMA portion of the conference in association with Paul Dillicar of FRONZ and to all those who presented papers and assisted in the conference running and organisation.

COTMA Achievement Awards were presented at the 2004 Awards Dinner on Sunday 6th June.

- Perth Electric Tramway Society – Mainline resleepering project
- Ballarat Tramway Museum – The Ballarat Begonia Festival 2004
- Australian Electric Transport Museum – Northern Depot and Administration Building
- Boon Tram for Wanganui Society – Conservation Plan for the Restoration of No. 12.

Post Conference Tour

Some 30 of the Australian Based COTMA delegates participated in the post conference tour, which had surprisingly good weather, considering what followed them soon after they left the North Island or New Zealand itself. Visits were made to Palmerston North, Fielding, Wanganui, Foxton, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Ashburton, Oamaru and Pleasant Point. We were made very welcome by the various groups, often catching up with friends made at the Conference.

The visit to Wellington included a dinner to celebrate the 100 years of electric traction in Wellington and tours of the extensive trolley bus system and the operation of heritage trolley buses from Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Thanks to the Wellington Tramway Museum and the Omnibus Society who organised the weekend.

Reports

The reports of the Chairman, Executive Officer and Trolley Wire that were presented to the CGM can be viewed on the web site.

2004 AGM and Revised Rules of the Association

The 2004 AGM was held as planned on 25 June, with the financial statements being adopted. The revised rules of the Association approved at the CGM, along with the annual return have since been lodged with the Victorian Corporate Affairs Office.

Medical Examinations

In a newsheet published before the Conference, we included a copy of a letter that had been sent to the Federal Minister for Health regarding the costs of medicals and whether these can be offset by the Medicare system. A reply to the negative has been received and a copy enclosed for your information. Other avenues are now to be explored.

Liaison

Following the Conference, a meeting of all the Australian state heritage rail organisations was held at the AETM St. Kilda Museum at which the Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia (ATHRA) was formed, although as yet, the NSW based Rail Heritage Australia declined to join the new Association at the meeting. COTMA looks forward to close work with the new Association in matters that affect us, particularly in the national operational perspective.

Contact has been made with the Australasian Railway Association with regard to joining them as a member in order to obtain better representation on bodies who are developing codes of practice, often it seems without any knowledge of tramways, heritage and volunteers.