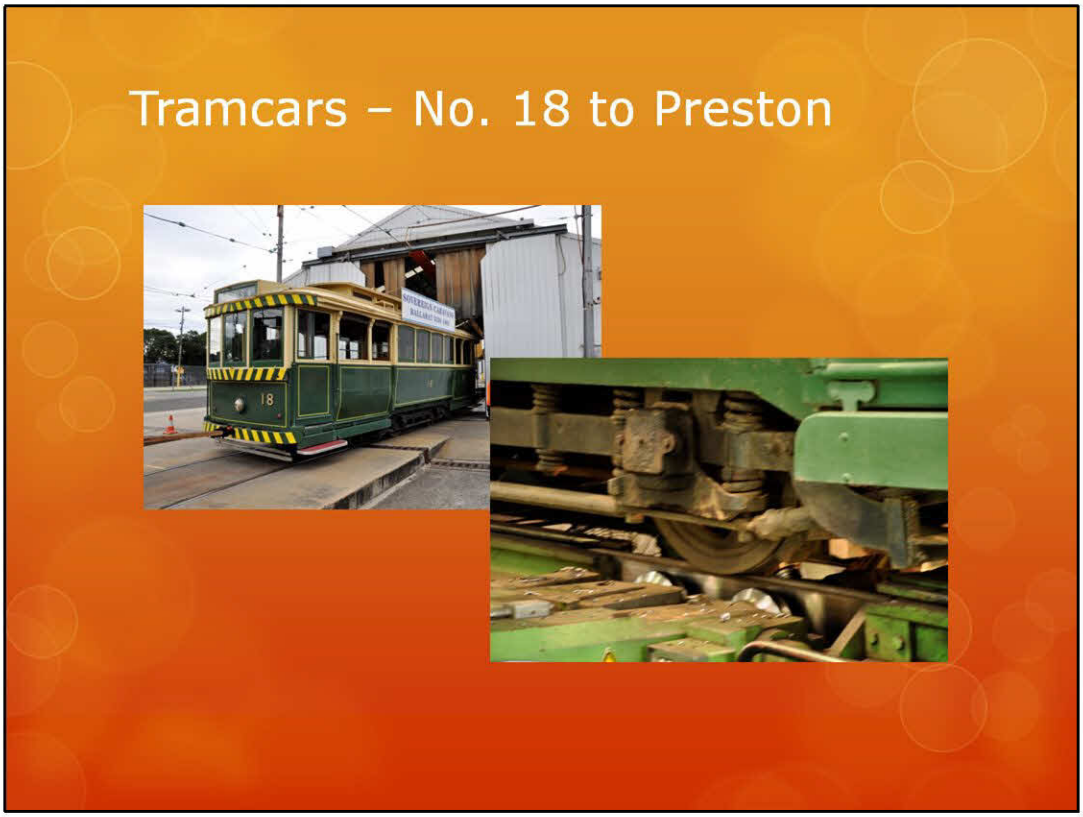
Ballarat Tramway Museum

COTMA 2014 Conference Report

Part 1 – Since the last conference



Just after the Adelaide conference tram 18, now over 100 years old, made a quick trip to Preston Workshops in October 2012 for wheel profiling on the wheel lathe. Its first visit to Melbourne since it left there in 1931. The tram left on a Monday and returned the following Wednesday.

In an article in the August 2014 issue of Fares Please!, "This is your life 18 and 40"; No. 18 noted that no are more cable trams in Melbourne, but now big bendy trams, no air brakes on trams but they have heating and cooling, lower steps, no trolley poles and that there are something called super stops, because passengers don't like high steps or steps at all!.

No. 40 remarked "The passengers and crews have gone soft" and that both of them (18 and 40) belonged in a museum, where the passengers seem to like us for being old fashioned!



The City of Ballarat enabled 1 for 1 grant funding of $5000 each during late 2013 for re-construction of Electric Supply Co tram No. 12. The central section of this tram began its life in North Sydney as a cable trailer. This grant enabled us to restart the work after a few years of hiatus.

Unfortunately at this time we do not have volunteer workers who are to undertake the detailed joinery on this tram. The Museum employed a specialist joiner from a local firm Ludbrookes to undertake the work. He normally makes specialist windows.

They have completed the lower framing on both the saloon sides of the tram, commenced work on one of the driver's bulkhead, fabricated new saloon windows, the open end seats and under seat panels. It is planned for work to recommence later this year.



Tram No. 13, on permanent loan from the Lake Goldsmith Steam Preservation Association had its second repaint under the Museum's care. The work was undertaken during early 2013. The tram sides were spray painted by Bendigo Tramway's painter Les Woodford. The tram was returned to service during October 2013. . It was decorated as the 2013 Christmas tram.

During late 2012, the leaf springs were replaced giving No. 13 a much improved ride.

Another major tramcar project was the remedial work on bogie tram No. 671's No. 9C trucks. This involved some heavy engineering work to straighten the leaf spring supports and other repairs. This work was undertaken at United Group's workshops in Ballarat at a very low cost. They normally rebuild the similar No. 15 trucks of Melbourne's W class tramcars.

This meant for the first time, the Museum had all its 13 operable trams actually operable. During August 2014, No. 18 was withdrawn from service and work to overhaul the truck, motors was commenced. The work will involve a repaint of the tram as well.



Public Transport Victoria, again through the agency of The Registrar of Tourist and Heritage Railways made available to the Museum a large quantity of worn 94lb. Rail and other materials. The rail allocated to us was at Bowser, adjacent to the standard gauge line. Recovery work undertaken in November 2011 involved cutting the rail into 13m lengths and then stacking it ready for transport.

Working with the Victorian Goldfields Railway, we recovered over 2km of rail during the four days at Bowser which enabled loading of four semi trailers. The rail was transported for storage at Bungaree where it has been stacked.

During Feb. 2013, the access track between the king points and the start of the curve across Wendouree Parade was relaid using the recovered 94 lb rail. Prior to work commencing, track panels were built adjacent to the depot and then towed into position. Paid staff from the Victorian Goldfields Railway assisted in the work. The track was tamped using their small excavator that can be fitted with a tamping head. At the same time, a large number of sleepers were replaced in the depot fan.

During the last few years, the Museum has been rebuilding failed joints in Wendouree Parade. This involves cutting out the failed section and welding in a new section of rail. When the rail work is completed, the section is filled with concrete. We have become quite adept at undertaking the work in a day.



During Springfest 2013, we supplied two trams for a Young Rotary Tram Pull, where two teams from various clubs or industries pit themselves against each other by pulling a tram over a set distance. This is held in the loop. We try to ensure the trams roll equally. Young Rotary have made a very welcome donation to us following the event.

In the Museum area, a number of mannequins have appeared – one dressed as a conductress during WW2 – note the packet of cigarettes sticking out of the pocket just above the cash bag. This has drawn some "ohhh" comments from visitors. When volunteer staff is available, we undertake free guided tours of the display area and the depot. These have been very successful and we often have more people than travel on the tramcar. We encourage visitors to do both of course.

During the Ballarat Heritage Festival Weekend of 2014, the Museum provided an extensive display at the Ballarat Mechanics Institute. We had lots of visitors and queries.

Another event held during 2014 was an "Australia's Biggest Morning Tea"; part of the Australian Cancer Council's most successful fundraiser.



The Museum celebrated the 100th anniversary of tramcars 18 and 40 entering service in Melbourne. No tramcars or people were hurt in this staged photograph.

We operated the horse tram on Boxing Day 2013, 125 years since the Ballaarat Tramway Co. horse tram service commenced. To assist with our operations at the loop, Richard Gilbert has loaned us a portable tent a number of times.

We had planned to operate the horse tram on Australia Day this year, but the sudden and tragic death of the horse owner just before the day prevented this.

The 4th photograph is of Wendouree Parade with the trams parked up for the Begonia Festival Parade on the Monday of the Victorian Labour Day weekend. Services are suspended for about two hours. The City of Ballarat continues to sponsor a free tram service during the Festival.

We have also finalised Interface Co-ordination Plans with Powercor and the City of Ballarat – required under Rail Safety Legislation and maintained both Museum and Rail Safety Accreditation.



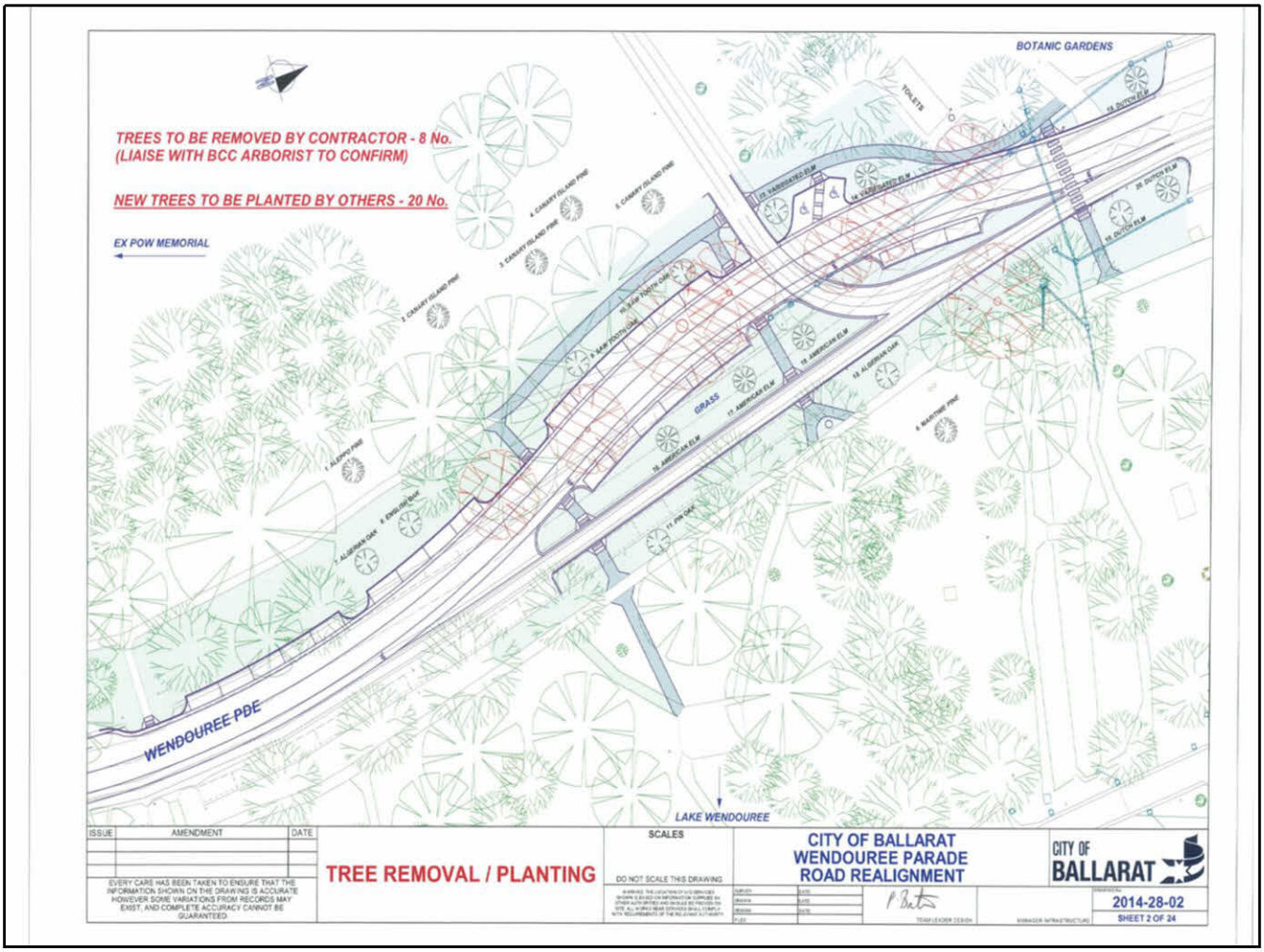
Since the last conference we have obtained two motor trucks from PTV, through the Registrar of Tourist and Heritage Railways; one a former Metro trains tray truck fitted with a small crane unit and a former Yarra Trams bucket truck. The first required considerable expenditure to get it roadworthy, but the second very little.

$100,000 from the City of Ballarat for the commencement of reconstruction of tracks in Wendouree Parade.

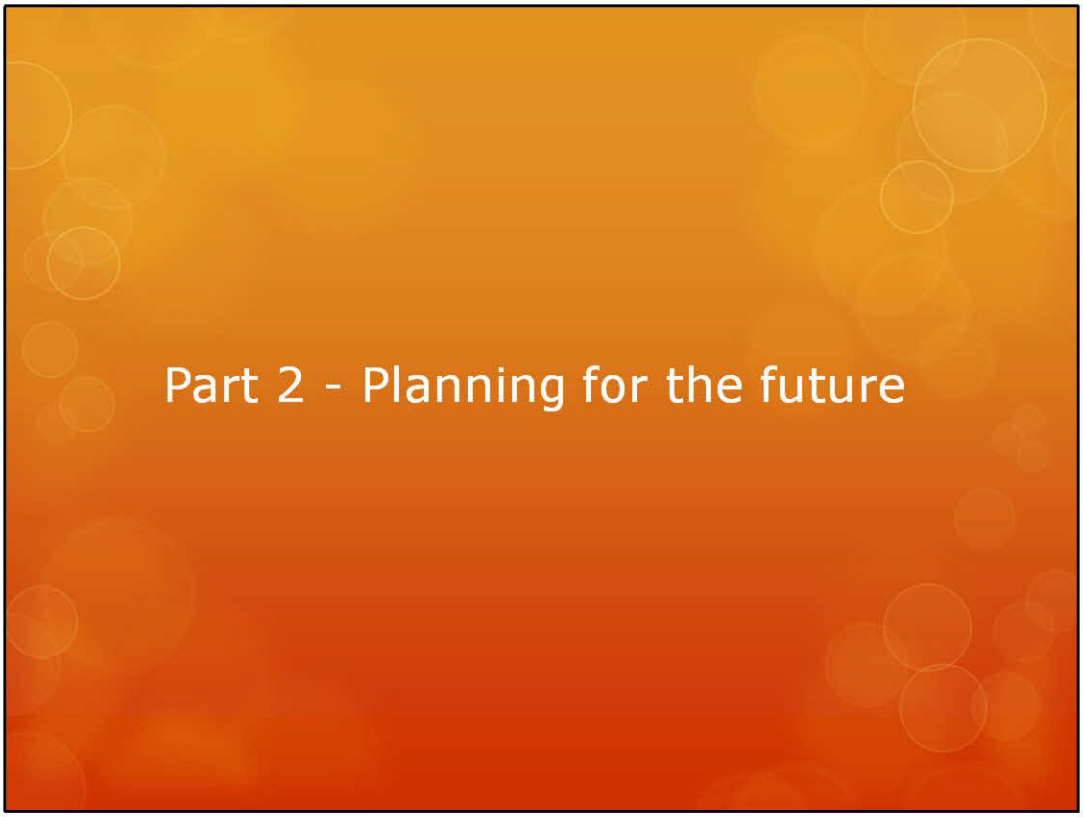
While not a grant, the City of Ballarat is about to relocate the roadway at Depot Junction. The red arrow shows new western kerb line. None of our poles have to move.

Other grants obtained not noted already noted during 2013 and 2014 are:

- $10,000 from the Federal Government Community Heritage and Icons Programme for reconstruction of No. 18.
- $2000 from the Federal "Grants to Voluntary Environment, Sustainability and Heritage Organisations (GVESHO) Program for each of the years 2013 and 2014.
- $5000 from the Public Records Office of Victoria , a Local History Grant for provision of new display panels for the horse tram and the electric power.

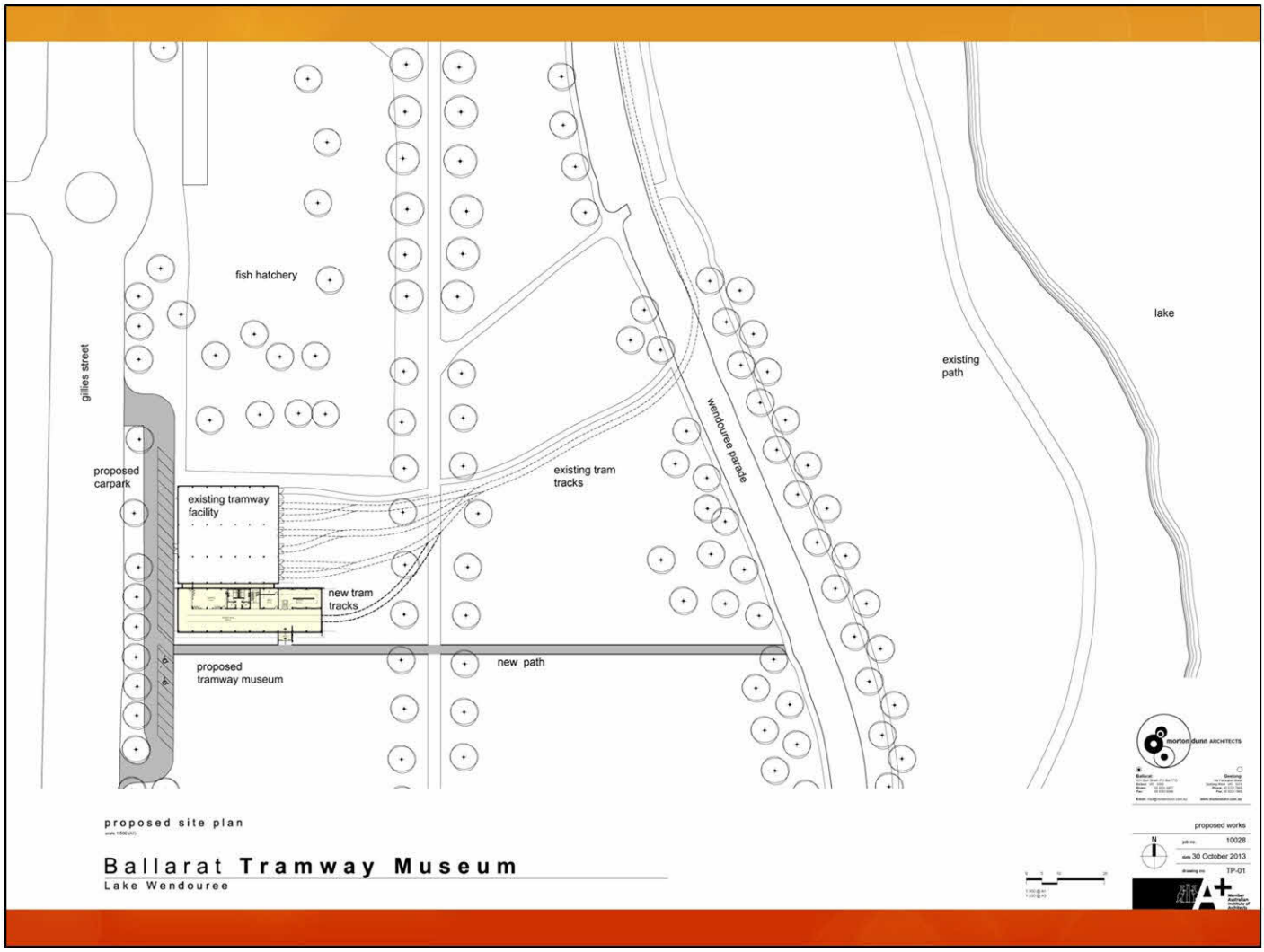


This drawing shows the extent of the road relocation to address the issue of cyclists slipping on the rail head at depot junction. There is no change to the tramway infrastructure.



The Museum over a number of years has held a planning workshop with Board Members and volunteers every three years. The June 2013 workshop identified many possible projects and strategies to go forward.

One project that has been explored from a previous workshop was an extension to the depot on the south side to form a new exhibition and interpretative area.



The proposed extension is on the south side of the depot as shown in yellow and involves new paths, car parks and an additional access track. The next slide shows an architectural view of the proposal.

Since 2012, the Museum has consulted with the stakeholders, the community and has received very positive support for the proposal. Heritage Victoria has also supported the proposal and has granted the necessary planning approval. The project is currently valued at over $4m.

Planning for the Future











It became apparent to the Board that to obtain any significant funding for the major projects, such as the development of the extension of the depot to enhance our display, the rebuilding of the existing track or any extensions, it was an imperative to develop a comprehensive business case for it and ourselves. These do not come cheaply. With the help of Ballarat based people who prepare business plans, have a good knowledge of the area, government and how it works, a formal business plan was developed.

It identified that given our current visitor numbers, an extension would be hard to justify in order to obtain funding. The best way to go forward would be to partner with local Government and or another organisation. This is now being explored.

The dot points above show the major elements coming from the business plan itself.

Business Plan cont.

- In the short to medium term improve visitor facilities
- Upgrade front of the depot area
- Improve the space and visitor areas within the depot
- Improve signage and promotion activities
- Have a business plan to achieve grants
- Improve volunteer work areas.



The above projects either originated in the 2013 planning workshop or were additionally identified in the 2014 Business Plan.

The sub-station upgrade/reconstruction has been developed with the planning of the solar panel installation. We will join Bad Schandau in south eastern Germany as a tramway that will use such panels. On the basis of an average year, we will generate about the same power as we currently use.



The Museum has sufficient funding from either grants or bequests to undertake virtually all of these projects.