# Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Incorporated

**Document pack for 26th Conference General Meeting**

## Notice of Meeting
## Notice of 26th Conference General Meeting
## Monday 13th October 2025
Brisbane Tramway Museum

The 26th Conference General Meeting (CGM) of the Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia will be held at 10:30am on Monday 13th of October 2023 at the Brisbane Tramway Museum, 20 Tramway Street Ferny Grove.

**The following business will be transacted during the CGM.**

1. Confirm the Minutes of the previous Conference General Meeting included in this package.
2. Receive and adopt Executive Committee Reports of the proceedings of the Council since the previous General Meeting.
3. Elect the Executive until the next CGM. It is proposed to elect people for the following positions:
    1. President – currently Henry Brittain who is not standing again.
    2. Deputy President – currently Rod Atkins
    3. Secretary – currently Mal Rowe who is not standing again.
    4. Treasurer – currently Tony Weston
    5. Australian Museum Liaison Officer – currently Peter Hyde
    6. New Zealand Museum Liaison Officer – currently Vincent Chan

    The meeting will determine how many Ordinary Board members shall be included and elect people to fill those positions.

    7. Ordinary Board Member – currently Warren Doubleday
    8. Ordinary Board Member – currently Roy Winslow

    Under COTMA rules, nominations are made and voted upon at the Conference general meeting.

    > *(1) Prior to the election of each position, the Chairperson of the meeting must call for nominations to fill that position.*
    >
    > *(2) A constituent of an eligible Member of the Association may —*

*(a) nominate himself or herself; or*

*(b) with the constituent's consent, be nominated by a representative of a Member.*

*(3) A member who is nominated for a position and fails to be elected to that position may be nominated for any other position for which an election is yet to be held.*

4. Consider a change to membership fee and fee period.
5. Consider a change to the Rules to move our financial year to end on June 30th.
6. General Business
7. Plan for future Conferences of the Council.

- All COTMA members are invited to attend.
- Full members of COTMA are entitled to vote.

If you are a full member but unable to attend, please complete a proxy form forwarded with this notice and forward to the secretary mal.rowe@gmail.com or by mail to Mal's home address (below). We may need your proxies to achieve a quorum.

**If your museum is a Full Member, please advise Mal Rowe who will be your formal voting delegate for the meetings.**

**If your museum is unable to attend, please nominate a proxy using the form in this package. We cannot be certain that on-line participation in the CGM this will be possible.**

Mal Rowe
Secretary, 0433 763 400, secretary@cotma.org.au
94 McPherson St, Essendon, 3040
11 September 2025

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**PRESIDENTS ADDRESS TO THE CONFERENCE GENERAL MEETING IN BRISBANE, OCTOBER 2025.**

Good morning everybody and welcome to this our 50th Anniversary of COTMA.

Who would have known back in 1975 that the foresight of those early tramway enthusiasts would have resulted in todays large group meeting here today.

I was recently appraising the proceedings of our inaugural conference held in Ballarat between 25 to 27 April 1975 and was interested to note that of the 12 different groups that had attended, 9 were still in existence but that our total membership had now grown to 24 which is a reflection of what we have achieved and recognises the merits of having a cohesive and effective organisation to oversee and look after our collective interests. I could not help but note a comment made by Bill Kingsley, one of the original proponents for forming an Association when he said at the time " This Conference is the initiator of a snowball about to roll downhill, a snowball called COTMA which would slowly grow and gain momentum. Again we are warned that snowballs sometimes melt"

Today we assemble here to recognise Bill and those early organisers who set this snowball rolling recognising that it has only got bigger and has an assured future.

Any voluntary organisation is only as good as its membership and I can confidently say that our current member organisations are held in high regard both here in Australia and in New Zealand for the professionalism they have brought to the Heritage industry by preserving and operating tramcars for people to enjoy.

At the 2023 Conference in Auckland, I had indicated that if I was re-elected to the position of President, it would be unlikely that I will be seeking re-election in 2025. This time has now arrived and I have decided to move aside and hand over the reins to somebody else.

Being President of COTMA has been a very enjoyable and fulfilling occasion and I have derived great pleasure in holding this position. The fact that I was awarded a Kings Service Medal in June 2024 that recognised my lifetime involvement in Tramway Preservation and Tourism does I believe highlight not only my involvement with COTMA but the far wider Heritage Tramway movement in Australasia.

Like any organisation I could not have performed in this role without the support and co-operation of my elected Executive committee. While everybody has played their part I must single out Mal Rowe who apart from being my main support person has been the leader of the small group who have organised and led the COTMA involvement in the acquisition of trams and parts from the derelict trams stored at Newport. While some of our members were able to get access to complete trams many of us were able to obtain required parts to assist with restoration. This was a mammoth undertaking by Mal and his team and means that a large stock of tram parts are available in our store at Bungaree for our members to access for many years to come.

It is sad to have to acknowledge the passing of many of our members many who have been the life-blood of our respective organisations however this is a fact of life with our aging membership and I encourage everybody to enjoy their hobby while they can.

Like many voluntary organisations, those engaged in the day-to-day management and operations of their groups get encouragement and support from their spouses and family and I can attest to this. Thank you Lorraine for your ongoing support in my chosen hobby.

In closing I can say unequivocally that I am leaving COTMA in a very sound position as it has met and continues to meet the expectations that our early tramway enthusiasts set back in 1975 and finally, I thank the Brisbane Tramway Museum for hosting this our 50th Anniversary Conference.

Henry Brittain KSM

President

# Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Incorporated

## Minutes of 25th Conference General Meeting
## Monday 9th October 2023
Maritime Museum, Auckland

1. Meeting opened at 10:30
   **Delegates present:**
   Paul Mong, Ballarat Tramway Museum
   Peter Hyde, Brisbane Tramway Museum Society
   Steve Porter, Wellington Tram Museum
   Tony Weston, Launceston Tramway Museum Society
   Stephen Taylor, Tramway Historical Society
   Rod Atkins, Melbourne Tram Museum
   James Reade, Bendigo Tramways
   Shane Parsons. Perth Electric Tramway Society
   Peter Kahn, Sydney Tramway Museum
   Graham Anderson, Western Springs Tramway (MOTAT)

   **Apology:** Stephen Tyrrell, Liston Transport Heritage Park

   **In attendance:**
   Warren Doubleday, Henry Brittain, Mal Rowe, Leyton Chan, Stephen Taylor, Vincent Chan, John Radcliffe, Richard Gilbert, Alan Curtis, Alan Smith, Alex Hunter, Brendon Carter, Dale Budd, Dave Hinman, John Radcliffe, Glen Dyer, Graham Stewart, Kyoichi Oda, John Cowper, Larry Day, Leyton Chan, Matthew Geier, Mikael Lund, Noel Ashley, Peter Beale, Robert Lee, Simon Green, Steve Lea, Tony Messenger, Trevor Bettany, Vincent Chan

2. It was moved by Henry Brittain that the minutes of the previous Conference General Meeting be accepted. Seconded by Peter Kahn. Approved
3. Henry Brittain presented a report of the proceedings of the Council since the previous General Meeting.

   Welcome to this year's Conference General Meeting. This is a significant event as it means that things have returned to normal after one of the most disruptive periods in the history of our organisation. Since the last face-to-face Conference held in Perth in 2018, a lot has happened in the intervening period.

   The impact of COVID has meant that most of our member groups were forced to close down their operations with a consequent negative impact of revenue streams. Members were unable to participate in their chosen hobby and many

projects had to be put on hold until their local authorities removed the various constraints they had imposed on their societies.

It was unfortunate that in many cases member groups still had to meet compliance and insurance costs from their own resources with very little income to offset these.

On a more positive note, it was very encouraging to see that COTMA members all came through this period without any serious effects and have been able to return to their pre COVID activities. Passenger numbers are recovering, and I hope that none of us will feel the effect of any financial down turns in the economy that may be threatening us.

While our Tramway Operations may have been curtailed, I am pleased to be able to report that the Spare Parts Committee have been very active and achieved some very positive results.

Members will be aware that in 2018, Vic Track-who own the Victorian transport assets-announced a process to re-purpose the large accumulation of redundant Melbourne W class trams that had been stored at the Newport Railway Workshops for many years. While some of these were accident damaged or had wheel profiles that no longer met the required standard, there were many parts suitable for onwards use by member museums.

COTMA members were given the opportunity to ask for complete trams and 10 trams were allocated under that arrangement. Subsequently some museums asked for and received additional trams in a round of public offerings.

COTMA then set up a Spare Parts Committee, spearheaded by Mal Rowe and lead by Tony Smith to address this issue and liaise with members as to what their wishes were. Unsurprisingly, the most sought-after item was running gear and motors in good condition and suitable for either placing under service trams with life expired items or else trams being restored.

My sincere gratitude is extended to Mal and Tony for the most competent and professional way that they have handled this task and made it possible for 21 sets of tramway trucks to be delivered to museums with more yet to be distributed.

In tandem with this, thanks to the Ballarat Tramway Museum who made available facilities for COTMA to store a number of containers at Bungaree that are stacked with spare parts for future access to COTMA groups. My thanks would not be complete without acknowledging the very generous offer from VicTrack on two accounts. One for their very generous financial support to the spare parts effort and secondly in making all of these items available to COTMA at little cost.

I must also acknowledge the large number of members who keep our Tramways operating day after day mostly on a volunteer basis. We could not operate without people such as tram crew, maintenance and restoration staff, track gangs, administration staff who collectively allow us to keep us in business and provide and demonstrate what a Heritage Tramway system is all about.

What lies ahead? Our museums are all facing the issue of an ageing membership and the question of how to attract and retain younger members

who are the lifeblood to keeping our Heritage tramway groups in business. This is a vexed question with no quick answer especially if there is a waning interest in Tramways with more competing interests in society combined with more leisure time. I encourage our members to continue with promotions such as open days, events on site, discounted prices for special occasions while at the same time maximising the use of social media to advertise coming events.

Increased compliance costs are another unavoidable fact of life and these combined with in some instances, safety and other legislative changes, can make for challenging times. I encourage all of our members to "work smarter" but at the same time continue to enjoy our chosen hobby.

I conclude in acknowledging Howard Clark who has elected to relinquish his position of Treasurer and thank him for his input over many years and welcome Tony Weston who has agreed to take over these duties and finally my sincere thanks to the COTMA Executive who have ably assisted and supported me during the past two years.

4. The meeting elected the Executive and the Auditor until the next CGM.
    - President – Henry Brittain returned unopposed.
    - Deputy President – Rod Atkins returned unopposed.
    - Secretary – Mal Rowe returned unopposed.
    - Deputy Secretary – Roy Winslow nominated by Shane Parsons, seconded Henry Brittain. Elected unopposed.
    - Treasurer – Tony Weston appointed unopposed.
    - Australian Museum Liaison Officer – Peter Hyde returned unopposed.
    - New Zealand Museum Liaison Officer – Vincent Chan returned unopposed.
    - Ordinary Board Member – Warren Doubleday returned unopposed.
    - Auditor – Hugh Ballment. Nominated Henry Brittain, seconded Peter Khan. Elected unopposed.
5. The committee recommended that we clarify that membership fees are unchanged and GST inclusive and thus New Zealand based members will be invoiced for a fee without GST. Agreed.
6. General Business
    - Stephen Taylor asked about the status of PC5 controller parts. Mal updated the situation, reporting that the parts sent in error to Bendigo have now been returned and the Committee is following up on the provision of a container (as approved at the COTMA CGM of 2014!) for storage. Arrangements will be made for a team to go to St Kilda to move and catalogue the parts.
    - Rober Lee, one of the new editors of Trolley Wire, asked people to think about providing input to Trolley Wire and offered to make arrangements for bulk distribution. The new editors are keen to widen coverage and subscriptions in NZ. Some enthusiasm was shown. Some members suggested a digital version would be popular.
    - James Reade moved, Peter Hyde seconded a motion of appreciation to MOTAT for an excellent event! Agreed with applause.

- A suggestion was made for the conference to be annual. The work load was mentioned as a limiting factor. The initial conferences were annual but the load was seen as too high. Mal noted that this would require a change to the constitution, but there was nothing to stop ant members running an event for tram fans as a commercial activity.

7. The next COTMA conference in 2025 will be hosted by Brisbane Tram Museum. Peter Hyde outlined the proposal. A change to the normal date is suggested. The winter months – June to October are best climatically. Noted that the FRONZ conference is usually first week in June – so best avoided. Could Gold Coast be a suitable venue – with a day trip to Ferny Grove as part of the program? It would be a cheaper location. 2025 is the centenary of BCC tram operation and of their drop-centre trams. The Brisbane Metro will be open and the Gold Coast extension could be open. Noted that Parramatta will also probably be open. This conference will mark 50 years of COTMA. Accessibility for participants should be considered.

Meeting and conference closed at 11:25pm

# Proposed change to Rules:

The Rules of COTMA specify that the date of end of our financial year, as required by the legislation we operate under. That date is set at 31 March in our current rules. That date was chosen to avoid the 'busy period' for an auditor. However, under the legislation we are not required to have our accounts audited as we are well below the turnover threshold for that requirement (AUD 250,000).

The date of 31 March requires us to hold an AGM no later than 30th of September. In conference years that usually means that we have to have an AGM before the conference. By changing the date of our financial year we can hold the AGM within the conference period.

The rules can be viewed at:
https://www.cotma.org.au/documents/cotma_admin/COTMA_Rules_2018_final.pdf

## Proposed change:

**Rule 3** of the Statement of Purposes and Rules of
COUNCIL OF TRAMWAY MUSEUMS OF AUSTRALASIA INC. (Association Number A0030417B) states:

> **Financial year**
> The financial year of the Association is each period of 12 months ending on 31st March.

It is proposed to change this rule to:

> **Financial year**
> The financial year of the Association is each period of 12 months ending on 30th June.

Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.
A0030417B
P.O. Box 6172,
Hawthorn West, Victoria, 3122
www.cotma.org.au
ABN 81 315 085 479

## APPOINTMENT OF PROXY

I,

(*name*)

of

(*address including name of museum*)

being the approved representative of a full member of The Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia (Registered number A0030417B), appoint

(*name of proxy holder*)

of

(*address of proxy holder*)

or in their absence

a member who is present selected by the Chair of the meeting

(*delete if not true*)

being a member of that Incorporated Association, as my proxy to vote on my behalf at the annual general meeting of the Association to be held on 13th of October 2025 and at any adjournment of that meeting.

Signed

Date _____