Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia
Executive Officers Report

Introduction

In my report to the 2002 Conference I perhaps sounded somewhat jaded following two very traumatic years.

It is with great pleasure that I report that the wheel has gone a full circle and this current two year period have arguably been the most challenging and dynamic in the history of our organization.

The year has seen intensive work in my role as Executive Officer and I believe we have made significant gain in our quest for excellence in tramway preservation.

The Current Melbourne Scene

We live in a dynamic and continually changing environment and this is the case with the current Melbourne scene.

The past two years has scene a massive upheaval for the Melbourne tram system, which is still ongoing. National Express the operator of M Tram withdrew from ongoing operation and this led to the Victorian Government assuming responsibility for tram operations until the negotiations were completed culminating in Yarra Trams becoming the sole operator of the tram system. In amongst these dynamic changes and the resulting uncertainty we have however established some great contacts within Yarra Trams and the results speak for themselves.

Ownership of W & Z class trams has been transferred to Victorian Government Authority Victrack and we have been closely working with Officers of Victrack to identify the needs of tramway museums so that if and when surplus vehicles are released the needs of our member museums are met.

I thank Peter Stagg and Ian Cordwell from Victrack who we have worked very closely with over the past two years.

As at the date of this report no final decision has been made regarding the disposal of surplus W class trams at Newport Workshops or Preston Workshops. These trams have been declared surplus to requirements and as such the Minister for Transport has requested that a plan be developed for the future of these trams. Be assured that the needs of our member museums will be met.

Executive Officer's Achievements

Over the period under review I have been able to achieve significant gains for member museums. These have included;

1. The acquisition of scrubber trams 10W & 11W for preservation by the TMSV & STM
2. The acquisition of Z class trams for preservation by TMSV, STM & Bendigo
3. The acquisition of surplus MMTB No. trucks for MTPA & PETS
4. The acquisition of surplus DC high speed circuit breakers for PETS
5. The acquisition of surplus W class brake components for MTPA, Bendigo, STM,PETS & HCC

6. The acquisition of copies and permission to make drawings available of W & Z class tram drawings in electronic format
7. The acquisition of surplus points for STM
8. The acquisition of surplus overhead frogs, section insulators and splice ears
9. The acquisition of a complete set of instruction books for Z class trams to make them available to member museums
10. The acquisition of two surplus depot yard circuit breakers for Bendigo
11. The acquisition of surplus feeder cable for Bendigo
12. The acquisition of former BCC drain box cover lids for BTMS
13. The provision of a DH16 air compressor brush holder to MOTAT
14. Answering of numerous technical enquiries from many museums

I have also been able to personally visit Sydney, Wellington, Auckland, Haddon, Bylands, Ballarat and Bendigo during this period and have been very encouraged by what I have seen. This in addition to answering the usual high volume of emails, meetings and telephone calls.

A very busy period !

Executive Meetings

Since the last Conference the Executive has met on three occasions in Wellington, Melbourne and Sydney. Each of these meetings have proved useful and have ensured that the business of the Council has been transacted in a timely fashion. Minutes of each of these meetings have been distributed to member museums.

Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot

Following extensive discussions between the Department of Infrastructure, Victrack and COTMA a group to be known as the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot is currently being incorporated to operate the tram museum at Hawthorn. COTMA is playing a leading role in the development of this facility on behalf of all member museums and the concept is shaping up to be very exciting.

I would personally like to thank Dennis Sheehan from Rockhampton and the Rockhampton City Council for allowing him to fly down when negotiations were beginning in February last year.
Dennis was able to provide a wealth of background information to both Victrack & the Department of Infrastructure which lead negotiations proceeding.

Members of the Executive have been staffing the depot during open days since October last year.

Following the completion of incorporation we expect that this group itself will become a member of COTMA and membership will be open to the general public. This exciting venture will allow us to further expand our base whilst promoting the efforts of our member museums.

Permanent office facilities will also become available to COTMA. As part of this development it is hoped that the heritage tram fleet will be available for operation around selected parts eof the Melbourne tram network.

Website

Considerable effort has gone into the maintenance of this facility and I wish to thank Andrew Cox for his efforts. I wish also to note that not too many of our member museums have publicized the existence of our website in their in house magazines. Please let your members know of its existence. If you require further details then all you have to do is ask me.

Our address is www.cotma.org.au

Please bookmark this are we will be making greater use in communication with members through this facility in the future.

Resumption of Membership of Bendigo Tramways & Membership Application By the TMSV

It is very pleasing to record the resumption of membership of the Bendigo Tramways as of June last year.

Welcome back Bendigo and we look forward to your active participation.

This Conference also has before it a membership application from the TMSV. The Executive supports the application and hopes that the delegates also support the application. There have been problems in the relationship between COTMA and the TMSV, however we believe that through communication and good will these problems perceived or otherwise can be resolved. It is essential that we have all tramway museums as members of COTMA and support our common cause, thus the support of this application by the Executive.

Standards Australia Membership

Membership of Standards Australia has now ceased due to a lack of interest in purchasing standards through this scheme and the costs associated with membership.

We will remain vigilant particularly if the rail safety standard AS4292 is reviewed and perhaps may need to resume membership to ensure that our needs are met by future editions.

Financial

Our Treasurer Lindsay Richardson has managed the financial affairs of COTMA in a most efficient manner.

I wish to thank both Lindsay and our auditors Robert & Andrew Parossein for their work.

It will be reported at our Annual General Meeting to be held in June that we ran at a small loss for this current financial year.

I however strongly feel that we should review our membership fee structure in particular the fee paid by affiliate members.

I leave this issue for the Council to decide.

The Future

The future is both exciting and challenging. Over the next two years I see the following being achieved;

1. The disposal of some W class tram complete to our member museums
2. The availability of surplus W class tram components
3. The consolidation of our spare parts store at Bungaree
4. The availability of previous Conference proceedings and possibly all official historical communication electronically on compact disc
5. Regular meetings of the new Executive at member museums
6. The establishment of the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot
7. Further new members of COTMA

To name but a few tasks.

Remember the Executive serves the wishes of the Council. If your museum has directions it wishes us to head in then let us know.. One other point also yes we live in rapidly changing times. If however your museum has some internal problems please do no drag COTMA into them unless we are the source or can help.

COTMA is what you the member museums make of it. You get what you put in to the organization. My plea please get involved, don't sit back and wait to be asked. Come forward you help is valued. I wish to personally thank my colleagues on the Executive for their help and support since the last Conference.

In particular Chairman Warren Doubleday, and Deputy Chairman Henry Brittain both of whom through the trauma of the past two years has been a constant source of wisdom and encouragement.

My Assistant Executive Officer Rod Atkins, Australian Executive Member Ian Seymour and Treasurer Lindsay Richardson have also done a fine job.

I would also like to pay tribute to the efforts of Bruce Gamble who had to resign his position as New Zealand Executive Member due to ill health.

Mike Ryan Heritage Co-coordinator Department of Infrastructure has also been invaluable to my work on behalf of COTMA and assisted wherever possible.

Thanks are also extended to Paul Dillicar & Chris Cameron for organizing this Conference.

Remember it **is people and not trams or parts** that are the most important part of your museums. You will continue to operate without having just one more tram or one additional spare motor but without members this is difficult.

Such is also the case for COTMA.

All members of the Executive give of their time voluntarily and often at their own personal expense and that of their own individual museums in terms of time commitment.

Be proactive and become involved in COTMA. More importantly do not attempt to destabilize it for your own political motives.

Finally none of my efforts would have been possible without the co-operation and support of my wife Allison, and five children who I say thank you to.

I look forward with confidence to the forthcoming term full of hope and expectation of what is around the corner.

This can only be achieved through the work of our members who volunteer their time to our important pursuit, the preservation of Australasian tramway heritage.

Craig S. Tooke
Executive Officer
14 May 2004