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News Update – June & July 2006

From the Chairman

The May 2006 issue of *Museums Australia* has an interesting article on the ethical perspective on collections, illicit traffic and ownership of Cultural Property. While the article is primarily about the acquisition of classical antiquities from historic archaeological sites, it has some warnings for all of us. If we collect objects without a knowledge of prior ownership or some due diligence and the possibility that they could have been illegally acquired originally, we could find problems in the future. The article refers to the International Council of Museums *Code of Ethics* which can be viewed on their website: http://icom.museum/ethics.html#intro

Meanwhile, the pace of change in the regulatory area that affects directly most COTMA Museums continues unabated. While we are contending with all the paperwork that comes out of these new requirements, we are foregoing time we could be spending on conservation or the active exhibition of our collection. It is important that in comments we make back to the Regulators about new regulations that we point this out to them in no uncertain terms and request remuneration in cost of doing this work. The cost of implementing the new Regulations in Victoria has been estimated by one Member to be about $24,000 and another in excess of it, due to its larger operation. This is based on the number of estimated hours at the average weekly earnings rate.

COTMA Conference November 2006

Bookings have opened for the 2006 Conference. Booking forms have been mailed direct to those people who have requested them from COTMA and additional copies to each Member Museum for distribution to interested members. The booking form and conference programmes, including that for Partners can be made directly over the COTMA site or downloaded for posting back. The organising groups are now in the process of finalising details. Please publish details of the Conference in your newsletters. Further forms can be obtained upon request.

Congratulations

Exciting news from Archer Park Rockhampton: they recently won two awards, organised each year by the ANZ Bank and the Morning Bulletin Newspaper "*The Best In The Business Awards*". It has twenty four categories and this year had four hundred and thirty business nominations. Archer Park took out the Tour and Travel Award and also took out the Overall Award for the night. The nominations come from around Rockhampton, Mt. Morgan, Capricorn Coast and Gracemere.

The Ballarat Tramway Museum was awarded Museum's Australia Award for the most meritorious achievement by volunteers in the Victorian Museum Sector at International Museums Day on 25 May. The volunteer's achievement in overcoming the failure of the substation in Oct 2004 and then publishing *The Golden City and its Tramways* in 2005 was recognised by this award.

NTC Model Act, Regulations etc.

The recent decision of the Australian Transport Ministers to accept the National Transport Commission proposals for a model Rail Safety Bill will affect all Australian COTMA members who operate their tramcars over the next two years. The Victorian Government, although ahead of the National process in already having their Act in place and published a Regulatory Impact Statement, have announced that they will pursue alignment as much as possible. The ARA is

most interested in having this alignment almost total for those railways who work in the various states. While none of COTMA Members are cross border operators in Australia, there could still be differences between the various states in approaches and wording.

The principal outcome of all of this is that we will have to revise our documentation again to keep up with these changes. Gone for example is the AS4292 references which many had to write their systems to. The Victorian Act allows exemptions and it is possible that the smallest of the heritage rail operators will be exempted. The COTMA Chairman is involved in a working group with the Victorian Department of Infrastructure in the strategy for the implementation of the new Victorian Act. This will be detailed by the DOI at the Association of Tourist Railways seminar in Melbourne on 29/30 July 2006. See the last COTMA News Update for details.

COTMA has responded to the Victorian Regulatory Impact Statement. Comment closed on 3 July. The Regulations will most likely vary in each state and various state members will need to keep a watch for the documents that will impact on them and that allow for comment. The COTMA Executive is more than happy to assist in preparing responses to them. We are working closely with ATHRA on these.

The National Transport Commission alerted to a National "road show" of the new Act and draft Regs at a meeting facilitated by the Australasian Railway Association held in Melbourne on 13 June, at which the Chairman attended. Your attendance at these future "shows" is strongly encouraged.

COTMA has also made a submission to TDT Australia regarding proposed draft competency units for tram driving. These will form the basis of units of competency that will need to be assessed under the new Rail Safety regulations and standards. Little input was received from Members on these standards, which is regrettable given the likely impact they could have on your operations.

AGM

The COTMA AGM was commenced as scheduled on 21 June, but had to be adjoined until August 16, to allow time for the finalisation of the accounts and their auditing. The meeting will be resumed in VicTrack offices on the 17th floor of 595 Collins St on 16 August at 12pm.

Web site

The web site for COTMA has been updated for our Members following the completion of the COTMA Statement of Purpose. Can Members please review their entries of the web site to see if we have made any errors in their listings. The web site is www.cotma.org.au On the web site link for this Newsletter are the comments provided to the Victorian Regulator on their recent draft regulations and those provided to TDT on the tram driving training units.

ATHRA - AGM and General Meeting

The Association of Tourist & Heritage Rail Australia is holding its Annual General Meeting and meeting in Brisbane on 8 to 11 September 2006. The meeting is open to all volunteers or workers of COTMA Museum Members. Details can be viewed on the ATHRA website at its Next meeting link http://www.athra.asn.au/next_meeting.htm The programme includes a visit to the Brisbane Tramway Museum at Ferny Grove and the Ipswich Rail Workshops Museum as well as other heritage rail venues and operations. It is a great opportunity for networking and seeing what others are doing. Your attendance is recommended as a precursor to the COTMA Conference.

Attachments – *electronic version only*

Attached to the e-mail or electronic version of this issue of the News Update is the latest Member address list, including emails and the link for the COTMA Statement of Purpose on the web site. As there have recently been new Associate members added, can Members please check their newsletter distribution lists.

Next News Update – August 2006.