



Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Incorporated

Bill Kingsley award – 2023 Judges' Report

Judges

Carolyn Cleak, John Radcliffe and Graham Stewart,

(Note: Carolyn Cleak declared a perceived conflict of interest with a submission from the Ballarat Tramway Museum as Treasurer of the BTM, though not personally involved with the development of the project submitted for consideration, nor with the submission itself.)

Entries

- Ballarat Tramway Museum - “Building a new Museum Interpretative Centre”.
- Tramway Historical Society, Christchurch – “1881 Kitson Steam Tram overhaul and restoration”

Criteria

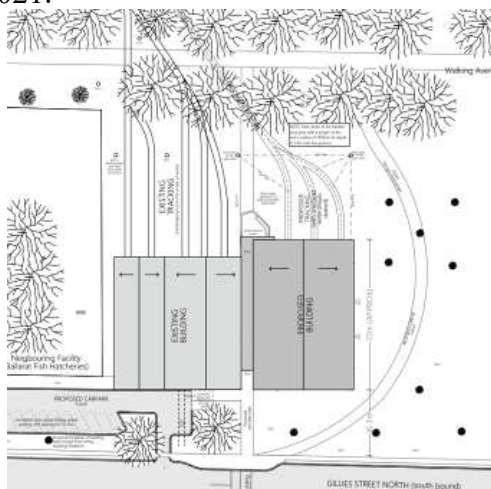
The criteria for judging the awards are:

- Degree of difficulty,
- Quality of outcome,
- Value to community,
- Historical accuracy.

Description of Entries

Ballarat Tramway Museum - “Building a new Museum Interpretative Centre”.

- Proposal built upon two previous attempts in 2013 and 2017 for an interpretive Centre.
- Donations (undefined) accumulated from community and members over a decade for the purpose.
- Concept developed for a 3 track depot extension, with offices, and generous exhibition space between each track, ground floor 900 m², first floor 200 m².
- Detailed consultation required with Heritage Victoria and local residents required many changes to the proposed landscaping, building exterior and carpark (later requiring protection of the tree root zones in the proposed car park)
- Building designed by MKM Constructions who later won tender to build. Cost not given.
- BTM Tender Committee and Board oversaw the project. Despite COVID constraints. building completed in September 2021.





Aerial view



Front façade



Interior displays (Illustrations from submission)

- At the same time, the Museum was awarded a \$1.2m grant from the State Government Regional Infrastructure Fund. This was a matching grant to \$1.25 received earlier from the Federal Government for track renewal in Wendouree Parade **and for the provision of tracks to the new building**. This grant was administered by the City of Ballarat on behalf of the Museum. The City did all the design work for the tracks with Museum input regarding standards and layout requirements. Under the Rail Safety Regulator's Accreditation document, BTM subsequently found due to an original administrative error that it was not permitted to build additional track, only maintain it. This required many more hours of work for new documentation to be prepared and approvals obtained. In July 2022, the State Government Regional Development Fund awarded the Museum a \$200,000 grant for further fitout of the new display area with an emphasis on visitor engagement and access. The BTM contributed a further \$100,000 towards the project. This work included a wheelchair accessible ramp, further displays including interactive displays, digital equipment, and lighting. This work was essentially completed by July 2023.

Tramway Historical Society, Christchurch – “1881 Kitson Steam Tram overhaul and restoration”

- This tram locomotive is the sole survivor of a fleet of 8 that were imported in 1880/1 by the Canterbury Tramway Company for its tram system., most scrapped after electrification in 1900s.
- There are three other known surviving examples of Kitson trams worldwide, however this is the only operating example. Saving and preserving this vehicle (along with horse tram 43) was the initial reason the Tramway Historical Society was formed in 1961.
- Restored to operation 1967, overhauled 1984, boiler condemned beyond repair 2017.
- Potential replacement boiler from tram 6 obtained in 1976, its rebuilding commenced 2007.
- Twenty THS members involved from 2017 in completing rebuilding of replacement boiler (details given), renewing mechanicals and bodywork.

- Lyttelton Engineering assisted with welding for the boiler repairs for a reduced rate.
- Air Rescue and Community Services Trust grant funded the purchase of the new boiler tubes and Water Sight glass fittings.
- The body preparation was a combined effort between volunteers on Saturday working parties and the staff of the Heritage Tramways Trust. The Rail Heritage Trust provided a grant to assist with the repainting and signwriting.
- Original hinged chimney, replaced in 1984, was repaired and reinstalled.
- Rooftop water tanks, fitted in 1929 and among earliest NZ examples of arc welding, were overhauled and refitted.
- Errors in previous valve timing were corrected after rebushing, vastly improving performance.
- The total expenditure was not provided,
- The completed restoration of Kitson 7 was re -launched on Saturday 22nd October 2022,



Sumner 1930



Survival in Christchurch yard 1960 (John Radcliffe)



Reclad replacement boiler



Official re-launch 22 October 2022 (most pictures from submission)

Judges' Comments

The Ballarat Interpretive Centre was considered to have difficult aspects for a museum management committee, even though construction of large steel framed buildings is relatively routine and the design work and construction was undertaken by an experienced commercial firm. Problems included securing a mix of funding, meeting requirements of a heritage location, preserving trees, getting Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator accreditation to lay new track into the building and coordination of the Museum building and Ballarat Council tracklaying projects. The quality of the outcome is excellent and the project is of very high value to both the local and visiting tourist community. The building itself is not of historical significance, though it has included some details reminiscent of the former Ballarat tramway depot.

However, its purpose is to enhance the historical value and appreciation of vehicles and exhibits held by the Ballarat Tramway Museum.

The Kitson restoration project was considered technically very difficult to be undertaken by a large group of physically contributing volunteer members, only made possible by the foresight of having acquired a replacement boiler nearly fifty years earlier for potential rebuilding. The quality of the outcome is excellent, though the broader community may not fully appreciate what has been achieved. The historical value of the project, both nationally and internationally, is unrivalled.

The selection committee was concerned that large, spectacular, “blockbuster” projects constructed largely by tender with very considerable external funding, while not underrating the managerial obligations borne by a small but very responsible group of volunteers, will inevitably tend to outshine smaller but historically significant museum restoration projects carried out with persistence largely from a museum’s own financial, membership and technology resources.

The committee therefore regards these projects, though very different, both very worthy of a Bill Kingsley Award and that they should share it for 2023.

The committee further recommends to the COTMA Executive that in future years, separate categories be developed for Museum Achievement Awards, the Bill Kingsley Award to be for a restoration or conservation project of outstanding historical merit, and an infrastructure project award for the development of a major new facility that underpins the long term viability of the museum’s operation and community appeal.

Carolyn Cleak, John Radcliffe, Graham Stewart
September 24, 2023.