

Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

www.cotma.org.au

News Update

April 2025



This photo, by Norm Cross, was left to the Melbourne Tram Museum in his will.

It shows what happens when the operator decides to recycle numbers.

Two Melbourne trams numbered 164 – c1981

**UPDATE IS FOR ALL OF YOUR MEMBERS.
PLEASE FORWARD IT TO ALL ON YOUR E-MAIL LISTS**

Your To-Do List

- ✓ *Mark 10th to 13th of October 2025 in your diary as dates to keep free for the 2025 COTMA conference.*
- ✓ *Prepare your submission for a COTMA Achievement and Volunteer awards in 2025.*
- ✓ *Review your need for Melbourne No 15 trucks and GE247 motors – ‘last call.’*
- ✓ *Give some thought about what you would like to happen to ‘your stuff’.*

From the President

As the days get shorter and the autumn leaves start to fall, hopefully we can all look back at another successful period of busy and trouble-free tram operations. For most of our members the summer months are our busiest times especially for revenue purposes.

What will happen to ‘your stuff’?

I have recently been involved with assisting the estate of a deceased member cleaning out a vast quantity of memorabilia that had built up over a period of many years. While the majority of this was in the form of books and magazines and not unique or uncommon, they were nevertheless important to the owner who no doubt took pride in his collection of tramway artifacts including many photographs of trams that he had taken.

It reminded me of the need for all of us to have a plan on how we disperse these items hopefully when we are still mentally able so that we can participate in where they end up. Unfortunately, many museum groups have a limited capacity to manage these sorts of donations which estates are often keen to pass on simply just to get rid of them. While some books may be sold through Museum outlets and photographs saved there are often other items that are probably destined for the rubbish tin.

While an estates intention may be well founded, the Museum people who are tasked with accepting and then sorting out a lifetime collection do not always have the space or inclination to accept duplicate copies of items already in their possession and many such things may be simply disposed of.

While this is just a fact of life it is becoming more frequent with our aging membership and I encourage individuals to discuss with their Museum Management or Archivist, what aspects of their collection can be identified for donation either before or after they pass away. Hopefully this will mean a more managed transfer of collections plus avoid instances of irreplaceable records being dumped by family members who have no interest in the items. It would be really great to leave some funds allocated to sort, transport and move onto other good homes in your will.

Conference coming up

We are fast approaching our October Conference and readers will see further into this newsletter, an outline of the conference agenda so I encourage everybody to start planning for this event so we can all enjoy our 50th celebration in Brisbane this coming October.

Henry Brittain, President

Conference details

The 2025 COTMA conference will be held in Brisbane. Here is the *draft* program:

Friday 10th Oct

- 8.58am Train ex Central then connecting bus
- 10.20am Ipswich Workshops Rail Museum
- Morning Tea
- Registration & Welcome
- Presentation by Director on Visitor Engagement
- Lunch (catered)
- Inspection of Qld Rail Heritage Fleet Maintenance Workshops
- Possible Presentation then return to City by train.

Dinner - Own arrangements

Saturday 11th Oct

- 9am conference at Qld Museum Southbank
- Presentations & Museum Updates
- Lunch catered
- Presentations & Museum Updates

Dinner - Own arrangements

Sunday 12th Oct

- 9am conference at Qld Museum Southbank
- Presentations & Museum Updates
- Lunch catered
- Presentations & Museum Updates
- Conference dinner and award presentations

Monday 13th Oct

- 13th Oct Train to Ferny Grove
- (Taxis from station for those unable to walk)
- Morning tea

- Conference General Meeting
- Lunch catered
- Inspection and Tram operations

This conference marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of COTMA in 1975.

Recently a photo from the 1977 conference was shared by Paul Nicholson. Some people have been recognized. Can you identify any more?



It is time to start thinking of your ideas and content for papers to be presented. If you have an idea, some research or an experience that you think will be useful to others, please email cotma@cotma.org and we will pass it on to the conference organisers at Brisbane Tramway Museum.

Achievement and Volunteer Awards

It's time to start to think about what your tramway will be submitting for your COTMA Achievement and Volunteer Award nominations. For details of the award see <http://cotma.org.au/awards.html> for details of the award and judging criteria.

The criteria for judging the Achievement awards are:

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

We welcome Tony Messenger of MOTAT to the judging panel, joining Dr John Radcliffe of AETM and Carolyn Cleak of MTM and BTM.

Volunteer awards are on the basis of recommendation from the home museum. Please give us some background information as set out on the web.

Before the Conference

Some COTMA members may like to take part in the New South Wales Transport Heritage Expo from Saturday 4th of October to Monday 6th of October.

Other options to fill in the days between could include riding the City and Southeast trams in Sydney, looking at the new Parramatta tramway and checking out the latest extensions to the Gold Coast tramway.

Canberra and Newcastle have installed new tramways since we last had a conference on the East Coast of Australia!

Sydney and Parramatta pics by Mal Rowe



Opportunity to have your say

RISSB has drafted a Code of Practice for Light Rail – Management of Rail Safety Worker Competencies which includes tramways. The link for the background and document is at

<https://www.rissb.com.au/news/code-of-practice-light-rail-management-of-rail-safety-worker-competencies/>

Closing date for comments is Friday 18/4/2025

Trucks & motors – last call

Up to the end of March, 31 pairs of trucks have been allocated to us with 25 of those sets passed on to museums, 2 more sets allocated and awaiting collection from Newport and 4 sets in storage at Bungaree or Newport awaiting allocation. We expect that a few more sets will become available at Newport.

The last trams will leave Newport by the end of June and allocated trucks will need to be collected by then.

WE NEED TO KNOW NOW THE REMAINING APPETITE (AND CAPACITY) FOR MEMBER MUSEUMS TO TAKE AVAILABLE TRUCKS OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS.

Please send an email stating your requests - based on your capacity to collect the trucks from Newport by the end of May 2025 – to Mal Rowe, COTMA secretary and secretary to the parts group.

Sydney Tramway Museum - 60 years of tram operations

On 23rd of February, Sydney Tramway Museum celebrated 60 years of operation and 75 years of preservation.

Local polities, local members, COTMA affiliated tram museum members (several in uniform) and a very large crowd celebrated the day with an all-Sydney heritage tram operation day.



Local MP, Maryanne Stuart presented an NSW parliamentary community recognition certificate.

New COTMA member



Yass Railway Heritage Centre was welcomed as an affiliate member of COTMA in December 2024. They had Melbourne tram 987 from Newport and hope to run it on street track in Yass. They have already received support with advice from Sydney Tramway Museum members and with parts from Newport. Tram 987 was found to be missing a lot of vital underfloor components. They have now been allocated an additional tram, one of the former "Art Trams" (No 824), which will be transported to Yass in the near future.

