



Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

www.cotma.org.au

News Update June 2015

From the Chairman

Hi everyone

Suddenly we are half way through 2015 and it's been quite a while since the last news update.

At the end of last month (Queen's Birthday weekend) I attended the annual conference of the Federation of Rail Organisations of NZ (FRONZ), this year held in Blenheim and hosted by the Blenheim Riverside Railway, a 2ft gauge line which runs some 5kms from the centre of town to Brayshaw Heritage Park and recently extended a further kilometre to the Air Museum at Omaka. Those COTMA members who were on the pre-conference tour from Christchurch to the Wellington conference in 2010 will remember the interesting ride on the railway much of which at that time was under water!. Not so this time because Blenheim has been suffering from a drought, (which may have been broken a few days ago with the severe weather conditions that have hit the whole country!). On that occasion we ran out of time to see Omaka, and I have to say that seeing it now, it has been worth waiting for. It now features an amazing, world class WW1 aircraft display, largely thanks to the efforts and generosity of film producer Peter Jackson and Weta Workshop. With over 100 (mainly railway folk) in attendance, the tramway community were well represented by attendees from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and as usual there was an interesting and useful programme of speakers and activities. Of some concern is the increasing emphasis (some would say over-reaction) on some elements of health and safety, in part a spinoff from the West Coast Pike River coal mine disaster in 2010 (29 miners lost) which is now having impacts for example on running passenger trains through tunnels, particularly heritage rolling stock. There are changes coming to the H&S legislation which may also place increased liability on volunteer groups and individuals, currently on hold while subject to internal debate within the governing National Party. The Heritage Tramways Trust (Ferryhead) was the FRONZ Tramways Award winner this year, with its refurbishment of Dunedin Box Car 11, now back operating on the City Tramway.

I have also been rather busy over the last while with the part of my day job I enjoy the most - project leader for the tram reinstatement and completion of a first stage of the tram extension in central Christchurch. Now successfully achieved but having to cope with the ongoing challenges in a city in the midst of a major rebuild, which won't be finished anytime soon! If not before, you will all have the opportunity to see this for yourselves in October next year, when Christchurch hosts the 2016 COTMA Conference (first conference bulletin below)

There have been a number of other Australasian tramway happenings and highlights since our last Update, and these are itemised below. I am looking forward to being in Melbourne again in August, for the COTMA AGM, as described elsewhere in this update.

Dave Hinman

Omission

In the December 2014 Update we listed the Achievement Award winners announced at the Sydney Conference....except we failed to mention MOTAT as an Achievement Award recipient for its restoration of Melbourne SW6 906. This error has also occurred on the Awards page of the COTMA website, but has now been rectified. Our apology to MOTAT.

COTMA 2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2015 Annual General Meeting of the Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia will be held at 94 McPherson Street, Essendon, commencing at 10.00 am, Saturday 22nd August 2015.

The following business will be transacted at the meeting:

1. Confirm the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.
2. Receive and adopt the Financial Statement and Auditors.

Rod Atkins
Executive Officer
19th June 2015

COTMA EXECUTIVE MEETING

A meeting of the COTMA Executive Committee will be held at 94 McPherson Street Essendon on Saturday 22 August 2015, immediately following the completion of the 2015 COTMA Annual General Meeting. Any items of business for the meeting are to be advised to the Executive Officer.

COTMA 2016 CONFERENCE - CHRISTCHURCH - Bulletin #1

From the Conference Committee: -

The date has now been set for the 2016 conference, to be hosted by the Tramway Historical Society and Christchurch Tramway Ltd.

Mark your diaries for: **Thursday 13 October - Monday 17 October 2016**. A conference planning committee is now in place and is currently investigating appropriate venues for conference sessions, the conference dinner and accommodation, as well as some interesting field trips. There is a shortage of venues in the city due to earthquake demolitions and we are looking at a combination of central city hotel and meeting options (near the tramway) and the use of facilities at Ferrymead Heritage Park (near the other tramway!)

Pre and post conference tours are also on the agenda. With the post-conference tour once again in the expert hands of Richard Gilbert, this is likely to be a South Island tour, featuring the West Coast. We are in discussion with our North Island colleagues about a pre- Conference tour which may start in Auckland, visit Wanganui and then Wellington. In addition to the tramway operations in those cities other attractions you may enjoy are the Auckland Rail Electrification (current and future), what seems likely will be the last months of the Wellington Trolley buses, and some great World War 1 displays at Te Papa (Gallipoli) and the former Dominion Museum (Great War Exhibition). The tour would conclude with a ferry trip to Picton and Coastal Pacific Train to Christchurch.

ATHRA NEWS

The Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia Inc. (ATHRA) advises that the Rail Heritage Conference 2015 will be held at **The Workshops Rail Museum, Ipswich, Qld, from 25-28 July**. For further details see page 8 below or go to the following webpage:

<http://www.theworkshops.qm.qld.gov.au/Events+and+Exhibitions/Events/2015/07/Railway+Heritage+Conference>

IATM NEWS

John Radcliffe advises: The General Assembly of the International Association of Transport and Communications Museums meets in Porto on 30 June. Andrew Moritz, Director of the Workshops Rail Museum, Ipswich QLD, is to join the Board.

WATTRAIN CONFERENCE

The World Association of Tourist Trams and Trains is planning to hold its second international congress in Japan from **24-30 October 2015**. For details about WATTRAIN and the congress go to: <http://www.wattrain.net>

BUY, SELL, EXCHANGE OR GIVE AWAY TO A GOOD HOME

Forest City Signals

The Brisbane Tramway Museum currently has in store almost all of the Forest City single line signalling apparatus (except overhead line contactors) ever used in Brisbane. It is the type that counts cars into and out of sections to allow following movements in the single-track area.

It is taking up valuable storage space and serving no useful purpose being locked away in the store shed. We would like to donate some of it to any kindred Museums who might be interested in using or displaying it. Please contact the Secretary info@brisbanetramwaymuseum.org

Melbourne W2 Step Brackets

The THS needs to activate both side entries to W2 244 for the City Tramway and needs 4 genuine (or close copies) hinged_step brackets. One side is currently fitted with fixed brackets. Hinged type that have been welded up may also be ok (if able to be "un-modified") Please contact: secretary@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz

RECENT TRAMWAY MILESTONES/ EVENTS

23 January- public announcement by **Auckland** Transport of proposal for light rail system comprising four lines. See: <https://at.govt.nz/projects-roadworks/light-rail-network/> and <https://at.govt.nz/media/1138513/LRT-background-and-investigation-report-May-2015.pdf>

Late January - Ballarat Tramway's new solar panels, installed last November, begin to feed power back into the network, making a significant difference to their power bills

12 February - opening of first stage of **Christchurch** Tramway Extension by PM John Key

13 March - The **Wellington** Tramway Museum to give to the Tramways Wanganui Trust, ex Brisbane dreadnought 133, alias the King Kong New York street car created by Peter Jackson

15 March - **Sydney** Tramway Museum celebration of 50 years of operation at Loftus. LP154, first tram on 13 March 1965, again did the honours, being driven through a gold ribbon by principal guest Howard Collins, CE of Sydney Trains.

18 March - Canberra - the ACT government has shortlisted two consortiums to submit detailed bids to build, own and operate the 12km tram line from Gungahlin to the city, including a price for a 3.2km extension to Russell. The first is Canberra Metro, led by Leighton subsidiary Pacific Partnerships, and includes Mitsubishi and John Holland, and German firm DB International GmbH, and the second is Activate, led by Downer EDI, which would design and build, and includes train-building company Bombardier and Keolis Downer, which operates the new Gold Coast tram and Melbourne's tram network. The line is expected to cost \$780M.

20 March - advice from Wellington Tramway Museum that the future of **Tramway Topics** is under review because of high production costs and the difficulties in finding a new editor

21 March - Bylands - Special General Meeting of TMSV leading to establishment of new Board under the chairmanship of Tony Sell. Trading name "Melbourne Tramway Museum" name has been relinquished and replaced by "Bylands Tramway Heritage Centre". Recent (June) edition of Running Journal indicates a number of initiatives to resolve issues and get the Society back on its feet.

13 April - Brisbane - Night operations at Ferny Grove to mark anniversary of tramway system closure. So successful it will be repeated on 28 September for anniversary of destruction of Paddington Depot.

15 April - Auckland -100th birthday of NZ's oldest tram conductress - Nellie Macown (Auckland)

22 April - Bendigo - ANZAC Centenary Tram no. 45 (previously no. 18) officially launched, ahead of 100 years of ANZAC commemorations, and now operates a one hour tour each day at 10:00am.

6 May - 5 million passengers on **Gold Coast** Light rail in first 9 months

12 May - Christchurch - Prince Harry has a tram ride with PM John Key.

- **Christchurch** - 100th birthday of Geraldine Bowman, oldest Christchurch tram conductress

21 May - Brisbane - 5 additional span poles erected at Ferny Grove in preparation for wiring of Workshop access track.

24 May - Dockline Tram (Auckland) suspended (for the second time) for road works etc. Expected to reopen late in 2016. Tram 258 (ex- Melbourne W2 421) is no longer required and has been returned to Bendigo.

24 May - Ballarat. "Tram Showcase", part of the three week National Trust Heritage Festival, saw every operable tram in the fleet out and running one or more trips during the day. Good progress is also being made on the refurbishment of the ex-Melbourne Restaurant tram No. 939, to convert it into a function tram and the extension of the upstairs area to form a new General Purpose room to be used as an office for the archives area and meeting room.

28 May - Sydney - detailed construction schedule released for the 12km CBD and South East Light Rail project - from Sept 2015 to completion in April 2018. "The full construction program is available on Transport for NSW's website at: <http://www.sydneylightrail.transport.nsw.gov.au/> "The project is on schedule to be delivered ahead of its original forecast and will be up and running in early 2019."

29 May- Sydney's 17 year old Variotrams have now all been replaced by 12 CAF Urbos 3 trams. Last to run was 2102 which ran a 22:30 service out of Dulwich Hill on 28 May. Together with 2107 it has now completed the move off site of the 6 surviving trams to storage in Paramatta pending sale by tender. See: <http://www.railwaygazette.com/tenders/details/show/sale-of-light-rail-vehicles.html>

4 June - Invercargill - Another Birney preserved? The body of another Invercargill Birney, believed to be No.16 was found a few weeks ago near Te Anau. It was seen in the same locality by John Radcliffe in 1960, but never later found by THS. It appears to be in remarkably good condition considering the time spent out in the open, and today its ownership has been secured by the Bill Richardson Transport Museum in Invercargill. The museum curator is in contact with the THS re. its future (probably static) restoration. Other than 15 (restored and operating) and New Plymouth 8 (body in storage at Wanganui), this is the last survivor of NZ's nine Birneys.

11 June - High Street Cable Car Society launched in **Dunedin**. First major task will be a fundraising drive for a \$2M museum building to include cable cars leased from Christchurch.

20 June - Devastating floods in **Wanganui**. Photos taken on 21 June showed flood waters all around the tram shed, and after finally getting access through the cordon to inspect the inside of the shed, the Tramways Wanganui Trust have advised (24 June) on their facebook page:

"Unfortunately due to flood damage we will not be running the Tram for the foreseeable future and the museum will be closed. A lot of mud has been found everywhere in the tram shed and the tracks are not visible due to river debris. Thankfully No.12 was not majorly damaged, mainly just a little bit dirty. Further updates will follow and hopefully we'll have some pictures to post." Check for updates on <https://www.facebook.com/wanganuitramways>

24 June - Report in Gold Coast Bulletin stating that the **GCLR** is driving \$6Billion worth of new development along the tram route. See <http://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/realestate/gold-coast-tram-drives-6b-development-boom/story-fnjdgobq-1227411432206> Still no decision on funding for extending the line to a heavy rail station in time for the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Meanwhile in Melbourne...

On the Yarra Trams front there have been some very noticeable changes around Melbourne since December. - In quick summary:

22 E class trams are in Traffic (6001- 6022) on Route 96 and 2023, 2024 & 2025 are in the running in stage in the streets.

E class trams have displaced a similar number of five section Combino's for running out of Brunswick Depot on Route 19 in Elizabeth Street.

The B class have cascaded to Essendon & Preston Depots and the Z3 & A class cars have moved to Glenhuntly Depot to replace Z Class cars. To date five Z class have been scrapped.

LaTrobe Street has gone the way of Chapel Street at Christmas time and is now run with A class cars. Only "City Circle" have W class cars. The plan to reduce the City Circle to one direction only as

been abandoned by PTV/Yarra Trams. This will put pressure on the need to do more W8 conversions. Still only two in traffic.

Kew Depot celebrated 100 years in May. W8 946 gave rides and E 6005 and W1 431 from Hawthorn Depot were among some special trams on display.

4 May - The latest Vic. State budget has provided future funding for a further 20 E class trams to take the order to 70. See <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-04/victorian-government-2-billion-on-trams-trains-budget-surplus/6441788>



Last of the Sydney Variotrams



Kew Depot Centenary



Prince Harry with PM John Key in Boon 152



Flood waters surround the Wanganui Tram Shed

DOES
THE PAST
HAVE
A FUTURE?



Railway Heritage Conference 2015

Coinciding with the 150th anniversary of rail in Queensland, The Workshops Rail Museum is pleased to announce that it will be hosting the 2015 Railway Heritage Conference.



About the Conference

Heritage railways and rail museums are a key heritage experience across the world. Yet they face constant challenges around funding, operation and perceptions of being only for trainspotters.

Exploring the theme 'Does the Past have a Future?' this conference puts the spotlight on the field of rail heritage and explores the challenges, enjoyment, engagement and opportunities for those involved in the sector.

Where: The Workshops Rail Museum, Ipswich QLD.

When: 25-28 July 2015

To find out more information, access the draft program or register your interest, please visit our website.

<http://www.theworkshops.qm.qld.gov.au/Events+and+Exhibitions/Events/2015/07/Railway+Heritage+Conference>

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