



Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

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News Update – February - March 2007

From the Chairman

The recent Executive meeting in Auckland was very useful in planning COTMA's future activities and in catching up on Western Springs Tramway's progress in the construction of their new line at MOTAT. Opportunity was also taken to visit our newest member at Wanganui and seeing the excellent progress they are making and also visiting Wellington Tramway Museum and discussing various matters. While in Auckland we had a ride on the excellent *Rainforest Express Railway* and also a trip to the well known and renowned Glenbrook Vintage Railway. For myself, it was a good trip in renewing friendships in New Zealand and for seeing where COTMA can work with our Members to support their activities. Two other former NZ tramway cities were visited too – Gisborne and Napier.

Executive Meeting – Auckland

The COTMA Executive meeting held in Auckland on 27 January 2007 was very successful. Attended by all the Executive Members, along with Chris Cameron, General Manager Western Springs Tramway, Paul Dillicar, President of the FRONZ and Greg Sutherland of STM. The meeting discussed a very full agenda including looking at the objectives of COTMA. Details on subjects will be discussed and explained in later news updates and a number of initiatives will be put in place over the next 12 months or so to help to improve our services to our Members.

The Executive inspected the new extension of the Western Springs Tramway to MOTAT 2. At the time of the visit, trackwork had been completed and the installation of the overhead was about to commence. The first test tram (Auckland 248) ran to MOTAT 2 on 27 Feb. It is anticipated that formal opening will be during Mid March. We met with a number of WST's volunteers on both days and had dinner with them on the Saturday evening at a nearby restaurant travelling by ex Melbourne tramcar SW6 906. Thanks to the WST for their hospitality.

Health and Qualifications – Sharing of Information

One question that was discussed at the Conference General Meeting was the sharing of information between COTMA Members about the health assessments and qualifications of members or volunteers who wish to drive trams or undertake other "rail safety work" for another COTMA Member. COTMA encourages the sharing of this information, upon of course, the formal request of the member or volunteer concerned. It is recommended that such requests should be in writing and that information provided be sufficient to enable the other Museum to make a decision about the person's capabilities, qualifications and how the decision then fits into their own Safety Management System requirements. It is up to the second organisation how they consider this information, what further information if any, is required, what recognition of prior learning is accepted and/or further training is provided to the person concerned and then finally what competency assessment is done.

Principles for Membership Relations

One of the documents that was considered by the Conference General Meeting in November 2006 was the *Principles for Membership Relations* which outlines Members expectations of COTMA, expected behaviours of Members and their people and expected aspirations of our Members. A copy of these is included in the mailout and also available on the COTMA web site.

Street Smart: Streetcars and Cities in the 21st Century

Greg Sutherland of the Sydney Tramway Museum has brought to our attention a recent publication of Reconnecting America's latest book, *Street Smart: Streetcars and Cities in the*

21st Century. Edited by Gloria Ohland and Shelley Poticha, *Street Smart* goes in-depth into the modern revival of streetcars in America, from Portland's modern Inekon-Skoda streetcars to Kenosha, Wisconsin's heritage trolley. Neighbourhoods and dense, vibrant development have traditionally followed the streetcar line, a formula that still works today. Packed with pictures and illustrations, *Street Smart* is full of nuts-and-bolts information from practitioners, builders, and streetcar fanatics. Copies are \$US25 and can be ordered on-line from:
<http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/html/TOD/StreetcarBook.htm>

Tram Driver Training

The Transport Distribution Training organisation's document regarding Tram Driver Competency is currently undergoing the final approval process. It is expected to be published late March early April. In the meantime, thanks to Mike Crabtree of Crich, the UK based document, more written from what the student is expected to learn rather than from a competency based system is available on the Internet. The Confederation of Passenger Transport UK Light Rail Operators Committee produced a National Occupational Standard for Tram/Light Rail. The standard is written so that it is flexible enough to enable it to be applied to both modern light rail or heritage systems. This is the first time that the UK industry has sat down and produced such a standard since Blackpool commenced electric tramway operation in 1885! They produced the standard as a challenge to the health and safety authorities who were otherwise likely to impose a main line railway driving standard on Light Rail/ Tramway operators. This standard is freely available on www.goskills.org, click on industry - light rail/tram and then on National Occupational Standards. That should take you to the 12 elements of the standard. Not all elements apply to all tramways so it is a bit of pick and mix to meet the requirements of individual systems (ie not all run in multiple, some don't have trolley poles etc.).

ATHRA Meeting

The Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia's (ATHRA) next meeting is in Perth on the weekend of 16 to 18 March at Whiteman Park, the home of the Perth Electric Tramway. The COTMA Chairman along with other Member museum representatives will be attending this meeting.

There have been two ATHRA Alerts issued since the last News Update:

Alert No. 28 – [Draft Rail Safety Acts and Regulations](#)

Alert No. 29 – [UK Rail Accident Report – loco blowback – NYMR 2006.](#)

The first is an update on the new Acts now being formulated by the various States to meet the Model Rail Safety Acts. At the end of February, only SA had commenced the consultation phase on its Act.

ARE Tour – The Best of Britain

Enclosed with the mailout are flyers for the Association of Railway Enthusiasts tour scheduled for July to August this year, titled *The Best of Britain*. The tour includes a number of tramways in the UK, such as the Isle of Man, Blackpool, Crich and Manchester Metrolink. If you are interested, please contact the ARE directly.

Contact List

The COTMA Membership contact list has been updated for new Member; *Tramways Trust Wanganui*, and *Glenreagh Mountain Railway* and the change in name from *1912 Boon Tram for Wanganui* to *Heritage Trams for Henderson*.

2007 General Meeting for COTMA will be held in Sydney on the weekend of 27/28 October 2007. This will be instead of a formal Annual General Meeting in Melbourne for the off-conference year. A low key statutory AGM will be held during June in Melbourne.