

Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

www.cotma.org.au

News Update

May 2023



Bendigo's 610 in a promotional livery in January 2023

Photo: Mal Rowe

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

Your To-Do List

- ✓ *Put the COTMA conference dates in your diary and start thinking about what activities you might add before or after the conference.*
- ✓ *Book your attendance when booking open.*
- ✓ *Write up your achievements over the last couple of years for submission for the COTMA achievement awards and prepare your Museum Report to share with other COTMA members before August 24th*
- ✓ *Check out the post conference tour and talk to others about doing the mini tour that it involves.*
- ✓ *Send details of your members who have passed on to Mal Rowe by September 8th*

From the President

As those of us in the South move into winter and the effects of colder weather on our operations, it will be a good time to undertake all those routine and non-routine maintenance jobs that need doing during what can be a quieter time. This should ensure that when patronage starts picking up, our tramcar fleets are fit for purpose and will not experience any unexpected mechanical or electrical faults that could occur from lack of surveillance.

With our aging trams and aging traffic staff, we must ensure that we all maintain a safe operating environment not only for ourselves but those members of the public who visit and ride on our trams.

This means that our trams must be safe to run, and that tram staff meet the medical standards required of them.

Accidents can happen and sometimes in the most unexpected way. Modern communication practices often swing into play and bystanders will be showing the event on twitter, face book or any of the numerous portals that exist. Often things are sensationalised leading to unwanted and unwarranted pressure being placed on Tramway groups.

COTMA is tasked with ensuring that its members operate their tramway systems in a safe and responsible manner and although COTMA has no direct responsibility for day-to-day activities, we owe it to one another to uphold the image that we have created of offering a safe and enjoyable Heritage experience to the public.

I look forward to meeting up with you all at Auckland in October, 5 years between face-to-face conferences is too long.

Henry Brittain, President.



Conference plans – latest details and draft program

The 2023 COTMA conference will be held in Auckland in October 2023, hosted by The Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT) and the Western Springs Tramway. The main venue will be the New Zealand Maritime Museum and the program will include visits to MOTAT and other places of interest.

The current draft programs is:

- Thursday, 5th October – Registration, drinks and canapes
- Friday, 6th October – Conference sessions/Presentations, drinks and dinner
- Saturday, 7th October – MOTAT: Storage excursion; Conference sessions/Presentations
- Sunday, 8th October – MOTAT Excursion; Conference Dinner
- Monday, 9th October – Conference sessions, General meeting and closure.
- Prices and further details will be posted on the COTMA website soon.
- **The closing date for registration will be August 24th, 2023.**

Partner Tour

MOTAT will provide information on various activities for partners around Auckland and it is likely that local partners will be involved to support partners in planning each day and finding the way.

COTMA Awards

It's time to start to think about what your tramway will be submitting for your COTMA Achievement Award nomination and any of your volunteers who you think should be recognised by COTMA for individual volunteer work at a level superior to that which is recognised at a local museum. **The closing date is August 24th, 2023.** For details of the awards see <http://cotma.org.au/awards.html> for details of the award and judging criteria.

Post Conference Tour

Richard Gilbert is finalising the details for a post conference tour in New Zealand, commencing the day after the conference on Tuesday 10th of October. Participants will need to stay on in Auckland on the night of Monday 9th and the tour will conclude in Christchurch on the evening of Tuesday 17th of October.

- Tuesday, 10th October – 9.35am train to Hamilton then Charter bus to Rotorua.
- Wednesday, 11th October – Touring in Rotorua.
- Thursday, 12th October - Charter bus to Hamilton, then train to Wellington.
- Friday, 13th October Day in Wellington. Visit Cable Car, optional morning train run to Masterton.
- Saturday, 14th October - Train and bus to Wellington Tramway Museum.
- Sunday 15th October - ferry to Picton arrive then train to Christchurch.
- Monday, 16th October - Visit City Tramway. Evening tram restaurant (own expense)

- Tuesday, 17th October - Visit Ferrymead, evening Gondola Restaurant (own expense)

Bookings are being managed by Stefany Knight of Wellington Tram Museum. Thanks Stefany!

More details, bookings arrangements (through Stefany) and the price will be on the COTMA website as soon as we finalise them.

Interactive map of Adelaide tramways

The Adelaide Tram Museum has produced an amazing interactive map of the former Adelaide tram system showing the location of every stop and linking to photographs at many of these stops. It is well worth a look and can be found at: <https://www.trammuseumadelaide.com/interactive-map>

Ballarat Tramways Museum work for VicTrack

Ballarat Tramway Museum have completed the re-alignment of some track at Newport East Block to allow some more trams to be moved out to storage at Bungaree. The work is a great example of the good level of cooperation between BTM and VicTrack.

More safety alerts

Wellington Tram Museum has been receiving safety reports originating from the Tramway Museum Society in the UK. They are following up options to share relevant safety information between the UK and COTMA as there are often common issues with heritage equipment.

Two recent reports were about brake failure, in one instance caused by damage to a quick release valve and in the other by excessive wear on a brake adjusting nut resulting in loss of force when the adjuster slipped after a brake application.



Photo: TMS Urgent Safety Advice Notice

Brake adjuster nut with worn thread

MOTAT accident

On April 16th MOTAT Tram 257 failed to stop in time and hit Tram 11 causing the tram to jolt forward and hit double decker tram 47. One minor injury was sustained, to a 6-year-old girl on 257. MOTAT team members spoke to the tram conductor who does not believe that driver was using excessive speed.

NZTA have advised that they will not investigate. MOTAT will conduct their own enquiry and identify any improvements to their maintenance and safety systems.

Damage to the trams is reported to be minor, but they will be thoroughly inspected.

Ferny Grove Robbery: Considerations of Security

Peter Hyde writes: Just after closing time on Sunday 30th April this year, a person armed with a sharp bladed kitchen knife attempted to steal the cash takings from the Shop/Ticket Office at the Museum in Ferny Grove.

In the ensuing struggle, the shop attendant received a stab wound to the face which thankfully missed his eye but required several stiches in hospital. The offender managed to get hold of the attendant's car keys and succeeded in locking himself in the car which was parked in the grounds behind the Shop, before speeding off and crashing through the closed gates of the Museum.

It was discovered later that the person had earlier entered the lunchroom and stolen the keys to the motorcycle of the day's tram driver and placed his helmet adjacent to the bike. It seems that this vehicle was the thief's originally intended getaway means. Video footage from Ferny Grove Railway Station showed the suspect arriving by train earlier in the afternoon.

No cash was actually lost as the till had just been emptied for the day and the takings placed in a box (with a convenient carry-handle!) for transfer to the safe. This was sitting on the counter unbeknown to the thief throughout the robbery attempt.

Needless to say, certain changes to operating practices have been instituted and the installation of various security devices is in progress.

Previously at Ferny Grove the lunchroom was left closed but unlocked, as that was the location of the First Aid kit, the Defibrillator, and the switch to shut off traction power if required.

This a warning to all – perhaps even to Museums where conductors collect cash fares onboard trams – that the world is now a different place and serious attention needs to be paid to personal as well as physical security.

Police have apprehended the suspect and recovered the stolen car.

Any News?

Museum News in COTMA News update is always of interest. If you have something to tell us, then we would be delighted to hear at cotma@cotma.org.au