

Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

www.cotma.org.au

News Update March 2019



COTMA on Australia's newest heritage tram ... with thanks to Matthew Geier and STM

From the President

Welcome to our 1st Update for 2019 and hello from disaster-weary Christchurch at the end of a week of roller coaster emotions ranging from the shock, disbelief, fear and anger following the brutal terrorist attack and horrific slayings at two Christchurch mosques, to the upsurge of strong political, community and individual demonstrations of unity, love and support for those affected, and nonstop media saturation not yet abated. Also disturbing has been the news of the killings in the Netherlands, on board an Utrecht tram, three days after the NZ event. I commenced writing this after attending a 20,000 strong and very moving memorial service in Hagley Park on Friday afternoon. With similar gatherings being held all over the country and beyond, and set to continue over the weekend, NZ has reaffirmed to the world its intentions to remain and foster a community identity that is inclusive, multi-cultural and peace-loving.

This was just three weeks after the 8th anniversary of the devastating 22 February 2011 earthquake, and three weeks before that, for the wider THS family, the sadness of the unexpected passing of loved and respected founder John Shanks.

I am also heading into the uncharted waters of retirement at the end of the month, after 50 years working in local government in Christchurch. I seem to have been busier than ever over recent weeks trying to complete some unfinished business, having a massive tidy up/clean out and endeavouring to pass on information and knowledge and in the case of the city tramway, encouraging interest and enthusiasm amongst younger colleagues. Incidentally this will mean my contact email address will be d.hinman@kinect.co.nz as my work address, dave.hinman@ccc.govt.nz will cease to exist.

Quite a wide variety of information, news and updates in this issue, and my thanks to Mal Rowe, Richard Clarke, Warren Doubleday, Howard Clark, Tony Smith, and any others I may have missed for their contributions, work and support for COTMA and our Members.

Some late *good* news from New Zealand - as reported in the March issue of "The Controller", after a decision in late November by the Auckland Council not to abandon the Dockline tramway, track is being re-laid in Daldy Street and there are goals for the ½ loop to be completed and back in operation by August 2019 and the full line operating in January 2020.

And finally, it is great to record some modern tramway milestones with the opening of the wireless Newcastle Light rail, the test running of the new Canberra "Metro" with the trams now due to enter commercial service at Easter, and continuing progress including some test running in Sydney. This is future history in the making, with the modern era now being ably represented by Variotram 2017, the first operable modern low floor tram in a museum environment. Well done Sydney Tramway Museum. I am looking forward to seeing some of this progress when in Australia in April.

Dave Hinman

Passing of John Shanks



John Shanks as brakeman on the Christchurch horse tram at Papanui in September 1964.

Photo: D. L. A. Turner.

Stephen Taylor, President of the Tramway Historical Society, wrote in their journal "Ferrymead Tram Tracts":

"John Shanks passed away on Friday, the 1st of February. Each of us who have met John and experienced his enthusiasm for our hobby will have their own memories of him, and I think I echo the rest of the Tramway world in expressing our sadness at his passing."

John Shanks was founder member and "Father" of the Tramway Historical Society, a pioneer of the tramway preservation movement, a dear and respected friend to many and above all a devoted and loved family man. John's life was celebrated at his memorial service, at the Cashmere Presbyterian Church, MacMillan Avenue, in Christchurch on Thursday 7 February.

His legacy is one of the most outstanding instances of tramway preservation in the world, combining outstanding restoration work, careful attention to history and a successful commercial partnership with the Christchurch city tramway.

Vale

Bob Vanselow

COTMA sadly records the death of Bob Vanselow, on 18-2-2019 in Cobden. Bob was a Puffing Billy worker, a Track Engineer firstly for the MMTB and then Hamersley Iron; and had assisted the sector in Victoria and Tasmania a number of times recently. Bob was a member of the Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board sub-committee for rail track and the wheel rail interface.

Peter Ford

- on 19-2-2019 – Train driver, mechanical equipment specialist and President of the Association of Tourist Railways of Queensland. Peter was a member of the Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board sub-committee who prepared the boiler code and was working on a brake equipment guideline for heritage railways as well.

Both will be missed.

Asia Pacific Heritage and Tourist rail Organisation – Jordan 2019

The next conference of APHTRO is being held in Amman Jordan 8 Oct. to 11 Oct. 2019. Full details can be found at <http://www.aphtro.info/news/?cat=4> Conference fee excluding accommodation is US\$300. Hotel details and some travel information are provided on the conference pages, along with a great YouTube Video of a steam hauled train passing through an open level crossing. Worth watching. Bookings are now open.

Membership Renewals

The Treasurer has recently sent out membership renewals. Your early renewals would be appreciated. Arrangements have been made for NZ renewals in local currency.

Use of our new mailing software

When our Communications Manager sent out the last issue of the COTMA News Update, we had a lot of bounces detecting it was SPAM, particularly in New Zealand - which turned out to be a NZ issue.

The use of the MailChimp software, allows us to manage lists better. All that is stored on the software database is the person's name and email address. If you know someone who like to be added to list, please send us an email – cotma@cotma.org.au

Sydney Tram Museum takes delivery of 2107 – the world's only operable heritage low floor tram



2107 at Loftus, for STM's members' day and Transport Heritage NSW 'sector volunteers Christmas party'.

Photo by Matthew Geier

Sydney Tram Museum took delivery of Variogram 2107 in November 2018. The car is on loan from Transport Heritage NSW. In early December 2107 was bought out and shown to the volunteers present. STM members have spent several weeks cleaning off the graffiti the tram acquired when stored at Penrith and generally getting the tram into a presentable condition.

2107 is not the only preserved low floor tram; two German museums have low floor prototypes, but neither are operable. 2107 came down to the park for display under its own power.

It will be some time before 2107 becomes part of the regular running fleet - STM have a lot of repairs and touch-ups to do - and infrastructure upgrades to support its pantograph.

What is amazing is not that the tram has things wrong and broken, it's the number of things that still work after its 3½ years sitting in a trucking yard being a home to spiders.

Launceston and Swindon UK looking for parts

Tram part application to COTMA from LTMS

The role of the Launceston Tramway Museum Society Incorporated is the restoration and operation of former Launceston trams at the Launceston Tramway Museum in Invermay, Launceston. A bogie drop centre tram with two motors (No 29) is already operating powered by a rail mounted generator set, and a single truck California combination tram (No 1) is close to operating condition, only requiring controllers, cabling, and installation of suitable braking. Another single truck California combination tram (No 8) has been restored but still requires a truck, controllers, cabling, and installation of suitable braking. The track gauge is 3 ft 6 in (1067 mm).

The tram parts of interest are four GE K35JJ controllers similar to the two currently installed in tram No 29. If this model is not available then the preference is for direct controllers without braking notches, a latch requiring the operator notch back to stop before notching up again and the ability to isolate one motor while operating with the other. We would also like 16 brake blocks suitable for 660 mm (26 in) diameter wheels, one trolley pole and four cab manual handbrake assemblies.

The tram parts would be used to commission tram No 1 in the near future and tram No 8 over two to three years. We would like two controllers and eight brake blocks within the next three months and the remainder after two years.

Swindon – COTMA recently received an e-mail from the Swindon 13 Tram Trust of the UK. They are looking for English Electric / Dick Kerr controllers, type DB1. If anyone can assist, please let us know.

Newport tram re-purposing – update

Groups who have been successful in their request for the trams from Newport are being offered the opportunity to inspect the tram allocated to them. So far, other than some privately owned trams not part of the EOI process, only one tram has left Newport – 907, which went to Channel 10 to be used as part of the set for the “Neighbours” TV program.

Tony Smith and Mal Rowe have prepared work instructions for stripping some key parts from trams not intended for operational use (most of them!). These have gone to the VicTrack contractor. The procedure for managing these stripped parts is still to be decided by VicTrack, and COTMA is preparing proposals for discussion (see below).

Parts Management – update

Issues and directions – Mal Rowe have prepared a draft document on the management of tram parts coming out of Newport into the future. The Tram Parts working group has seen an early draft and the topic will be discussed by the COTMA committee in April. The intention is to have a general policy that will also be the basis of management of other COTMA owned parts.

Some COTMA owned parts were recently accidentally transferred between two member museums without realising that they were COTMA parts. After we became aware of this the parts were ‘quarantined’ until such time as allocation is formally decided. The Committee is very grateful for the cooperative attitude of all involved. It is a good reminder of the need to get proper processes in place.

Future Australian Tramway or Light Rail Standards

The Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board held a workshop in Sydney during mid-December to assess the possibility of preparing Standards/Codes/guidelines for the growing Australian Light Rail (or tramway) industry. Richard Clarke of the Sydney Tramway Museum attended the meeting. The first document likely to be prepared is a “Light Rail Urban Design Safety Guideline”. There are similar guidelines for the UK, Europe and the USA. COTMA will maintain a watch on these documents to address any possible negative aspects on our Museum operations.

Tram (Light Rail) Level Crossings

COTMA as reported to members in previous issues of News Updates has taken an active interest in the definition of Level Crossings on tram (light rail) in the National Rail Safety Legislation. Proposed changes to the Act were introduced during Feb. 2019 by the South Australian Government who are responsible for managing the National Act. The change addresses the issue that every time a tramway crossed a road, it was defined as a level crossing under the National Rail Safety Act. It also defines pedestrian crossings on tramways.

Operating Heritage Workshops

Richard Clarke has been representing COTMA in an Operating Heritage Group forum formed last year to bring together for discussion those groups and collecting organisations of transport, farm and machinery equipment. It is considering the issues associated with declining numbers of trades people with the necessary skills to maintain and repair equipment, issues with compliance from accreditation bodies, insurance, production of new parts that meet current standards and attracting the next generation of custodians.

Another area of interest is the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act, its implications and application to heritage equipment in Australia to overcome issues of illegal export of items.

If any member would like further information on this forum and its activities, please contact us at cotma@cotma.org.au

Warning Devices on Trams

A recent Rail Accident Branch (UK) Safety Advice into a death in Edinburgh during September 2018 after being struck by a tram found that the warning horn did not provide a sound pressure in line with current industry guidance. The report also considered the appropriateness of the warning devices on the higher speed sections of the track which are reserved for trams only.

See: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/778369/190214_USA_012019.pdf

Dunedin progress



Roslyn Cable 95 inside the new depot building, while Mornington Trailer 111 is outside on show. Photo Warren Doubleday 11/2/19

Our Communications Officer, Warren Doubleday called past the Mornington Cable Car Museum and depot during Mid Feb while travelling in the South Island of NZ. The new depot nearby the former terminus is located alongside the former cable tram terminus and very near the original depot building. The Dunedin Heritage Light Rail Trust has built a small depot currently housing two cars with a further being rebuilt at the Ferrymead Tramway Workshop in Christchurch. The Museum is well presented with many photographs and objects. Opening times from their website is 10am to 1pm.

See: <http://www.dunedincablecars.co.nz/volunteer.html>

“Room with a View”

This double bed has been squeezed into the former “Bach” tram 194 of Christchurch.

The cottage fitout and furnishings installed in the tram when it was used as a holiday cottage have been retained and a photo exhibition interprets the story as a “tram in waiting” to Ferrymead visitors, rather than being stuck in a “crock” shed.

Photo Warren Doubleday 17-2-2019.



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News Update October 2019



Retired trams at Newport awaiting a new home

From the President

Welcome to our Update for October 2019. A very busy period has meant that we have had limited time to get the update together, so there is a lot to report.

As I am currently overseas I have not been in a position to write much for this Update. My thanks to Mal Rowe and Warren Doubleday in particular for putting this issue together and to those others such as Henry Brittain who have also contributed.

Your To Do List

- ✓ *Note the Bendigo Conference and advise if any papers*
- ✓ *Advise Secretary of need for No. 15 trucks*

This is just a small part of what Mal does for COTMA and as you will be aware that he continues to devote much time and energy working with Victrack and other stakeholders on the Newport disposals and spares project, now being assisted by Tony Smith and the Spare Parts working group as well as his other COTMA secretarial duties. Thanks Mal and others for this most important work on behalf of us all.

Some of you will be aware that together with Steve & Lois Lea and his brother and wife, Dot and I are currently in the UK enjoying another form of heritage transport - two weeks on a narrow boat on the Trent-Mersey, Staffordshire- Worcestershire and the Shropshire Union Canals, with some time to disembark and visit places of historical interest including canal side pubs, ideal for the occasional meal and a cleansing ale or two. After this with Steve and Lois we will be going to see a number of local heritage (and modern) tramways, railways and museums, including the Isle of Man, Crich and Sandtoft to name just some. It will be a chance to meet up with some old friends and make new contacts for the mutual benefit of our respective groups and COTMA. We return home in early November

The COTMA AGM was held on Saturday 10th of August this year. This is a formal event at which the financial returns and auditors report were received and accepted.

An Executive Committee meeting was held at Hawthorn depot earlier in the day. Matters discussed at that meeting are covered in various sections of this newsletter.

Henry Brittain has been very active in liaising with NZ tramway museums.

Wanganui Tramways Trust have reactivated their Affiliate membership. Dunedin Heritage Light Rail Trust have established the Mornington Cable Car precinct with a new shed and two restored Cable Cars and Henry has written to them encouraging them to join COTMA as an Affiliate member

MOTAT have gone through a re-organisation of staff resources and some of the operational issues that had previously existed have been eliminated.

James Duncan has resigned from the Auckland Dockside Tramway and has accepted a position with MOTAT as Tram Project Co-ordinator.

Wellington Tramway Museum have two brand new Brill 22E trucks fabricated by Prices at Thames for WTM's restored 1904 tram,



In 2018, Wellington Museum purchased a large amount of unused trolley bus overhead made surplus from the closure of Wellington's system. This was made available for purchase to COTMA and UK based Heritage organisations and response has been good with many groups taking up the offer to acquire.

COTMA Members will be saddened by the news of the death of Gus and Win Weir of the Wellington Tramway Museum. Gus passed away on 27/8 and Win a week later. Both were well known attendees of the COTMA Conferences for many years and visitors may have accompanied Gus in driving a tram on the Queen Elizabeth Park line.

We are advised that long term SPER (Sydney Tram Museum) members John Shoebridge and Peter McCallum have passed away.

Our condolences to all those grieving for these losses.

Standards Australia request

COTMA has been invited by Standards Australia to provide feedback on a proposal they have received from the Rail Industry Safety Standards Board (RISSB) to expand the scope of the current accreditation agreement between Standards Australia and RISSB. We have indicated that we would like to be involved in that process.

COTMA conference 2020



The next COTMA Conference will be hosted by the Bendigo Tramways from **Thursday noon 10th September to 1 pm on Tuesday 15th September 2020.**

Planning is well underway and includes delegates being picked up by tram from hotels along the tramway each morning. The program will include opportunities to discuss relevant issues and some interesting industry and heritage site visits.

Watch out for an invitation to propose a paper on the topic of your choice and start preparing your ideas for a submission for a **COTMA achievement award** and your report on activity over the past two years. You will be asked to send your presentation material **BEFORE** the conference, so please plan ahead!

It is intended that there will be pre-conference informal opportunities for activities in Melbourne and possibly Ballarat. A post conference tour is in the planning stages – with the always reliable and creative Richard Gilbert setting the pace.

Parts Management

At the 2018 COTMA conference we established a Parts Management Working Group. This group consists of Henry Brittain (Wellington), Richard Clarke (Sydney), Steve Lea (Christchurch), Luke Treble (Bendigo) and Roy Winslow (Perth) with Tony Smith (Haddon) leading the group and Mal Rowe (Secretary) providing secretarial and communications support. The group has a broad responsibility encompassing COTMA owned parts

stored in various locations, but our main work in recent times has been dealing with recovery of as much as possible from the 'retired trams' being removed from Newport. We will recover the following items:

- good trucks with motors,
- air compressors and associated governors, brake cylinders and valves including air gauges and brake valves
- controllers, contactors and resistor boxes
- line breakers and switches
- windscreen wiper motors
- handbrake staves



Large items which are not difficult to manufacture (like brake rigging and air reservoirs) will not be removed. The parts now being recovered will be managed after all the trams are gone. This is estimated to be in around two years.

VicTrack indicated that the parts will be handed over to COTMA for us to collect, store wherever we see fit and allocate according to whatever fair and reasonable process we develop. This will require that we agree to see the parts as an asset to maintain and restore heritage trams – not as a commercial stock for sale for profit.

VicTrack will not want any input into that process nor into the allocation. They basically want to 'draw a line' under the project and have confidence in COTMA and our integrity.

Some museums who have received trams are already seeking more parts (notably Ballarat who found some seriously corroded wheels on both trams they received - see pic at right).

In general, that's being handled with direct requests to VicTrack, but it may be that VicTrack ask us for advice. Such requests are prior to and outside the planned COTMA parts management process.



There may be a buildup of material before the end of the process - especially large items like trucks. Tony is suggesting we plan for this eventuality, and it would be helpful for us if **museums wanting complete MMTB No 15 trucks advise us of their needs**. Please communicate via Mal Rowe as secretary to the group.

The parts request log

Many museums assisted the parts process by advising Mal Rowe of potential parts needs last year. That information has been helpful in the process of deciding what we would prioritise (the list above). However, please don't see that as your formal request for parts. One decision already made is that we will try to maintain a central store rather than each museum having their own spares store. Some parts will be plentiful (Westinghouse brake valves etc). Others will be in limited supply.

Working Alone?

Often our Members have people working alone within a depot building or on the track. In many respects this is similar to farms or even at homes. Worksafe Victoria recently published an information sheet on this matter and it is well worth reviewing and providing guidance to your workers. See:

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/working-alone-farms>

Rail Safety

The Australian National Rail Safety Regulator recently produced a short video presentation explaining rail safety regulation for heritage railways and tramways in Australia. Well worth watching, just to spot people you perhaps know. Please send if not already done to your Board or Committee members and workers, as it explains how and why regulation is applied. It can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/YlLmGCzeuuA>
During late October or early November, our Victorian Members will be transferring from the Victorian Rail Safety Regulator to the National Rail Safety Regulator. This will mean that all our Australian Members will be regulated by the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator.

Fatal Collision between tram and Pedestrian in Edinburgh

In a recent accident report from the UK Rail Accident Investigation Branch concerning the death of a pedestrian at an uncontrolled pedestrian on the Edinburgh Tram system in September 2018, the investigation found that:

- Audibility of the tram warning device should be improved.
- Review the risks associated with such crossings regularly
- Improve training for drivers in the use of the audible warning device
- Development of industry guidelines for such equipment.

The report can be seen at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/820366/R092019_190725_Saughton.pdf

Overseas Information Requests

During recent months, COTMA has received queries about tram equipment from the Isle of Man, San Francisco, Spain and Dallas. The Sydney Tramway Museum was able to help the Isle of Man tramway about Brill 27C bogies including supplying some 27G drawings. Again, this shows the benefit of COTMA to the wider tramway museum fraternity.

Tramway News

Ballarat

Following the successful grant last year from the Victorian Government's "Pick my Project" funding for the reconstruction of 300m of track from Carlton St to Depot Junction; the work was undertaken by Fulton Hogan of Ballarat with tramway track expertise from Melbourne during September. The City of Ballarat provided the majority of the funding for this project and contract management. The track laying carried out is the same as that currently being done in Melbourne. The ride is superb, so much so that you can hear other noises from the trams that you could not hear before. The Museum is very grateful for the Victorian Government and in particular the City of Ballarat for this renewal project.

This project happened because of extensive networking with Council and community over many years to promote this project and the Museum. It didn't 'just happen'.



A by-product of the Ballarat trackwork has been excess fill enabling the track to the depot to be filled and look a whole lot better.

Perth – 50 years and counting

PETS marked their 50th anniversary with a dinner on Saturday 31st of August. The closure of the last electric trolleybus routes to Wembley and Floreat occurred on the 29th August 1969. Following a chartered tour of both routes on Saturday 30th August 1969 by members of the Australian Railway Historical Society (WA Div.) - now known as Rail Heritage (WA), a group of those members discussed the formation of a new Society with an interest in preserving and operating electric street transport in the form of trolleybuses, and trams, in a museum environment. The original Society evolved in later years into two separate Societies viz. Bus Preservation Society of WA (Inc); and Perth Electric Tramway Society (Inc), with both groups now based at Whiteman Park, situated approximately 16 km north-east of Perth city. PETS now operates two restored WA trams - Fremantle Tram 29 commissioned in 1992; and Perth Tram 66 commissioned in 2017 plus some ex-Melbourne trams.

PETS are seeking funding to renew their track using 80lb rail given to the Museum by ARC Infrastructure, the track manager in Western Australia. The first job will be cut the rail, currently welded into long lengths, and transport it to Whiteman Park.

Sydney

Sydney's City and South East light rail line has reached Circular Quay with regular testing underway. The NSW government plans to have the service operational before Christmas.

Tim Boxsell caught the super long trams on test on October 9th.



New Book – Ryde (Sydney) Tramways

The Ryde District Historical Society have advised that they are launching their new book *Ryde's tramways and tramway monuments* on Sunday 17 November. The A4 sized book will cost \$25 (plus postage) and will be available for purchase through their web site (www.rydehistory.org.au) after the launch. The book is around 80 pages. The first 20+ pages cover the history of the trams in Ryde. There are then around 15 pages on the history of Ryde's tramway monuments and around 30 pages of photographs of trams in the Ryde district through time.

We expect that it will be available from other bookshops as well soon after.

Melbourne

Around 20 trams have so far been shipped from Newport Workshops as part of the Retired Trams Strategy of the Victorian Government. Trams going to some sort of heritage operation are going in their current condition, while those intended for non-heritage use are having some key components stripped as noted earlier in "update".

Christchurch

Christchurch City Council have agreed to extend the City Tramway to the south – building a curve at the intersection of High Street, Tuam Street and Poplar Lane to connect tracks laid pre-earthquake.

It is hoped that the trams will be running the full extension in May next year.

The City Tramway has required double ended trams while the south terminus was a stub in High St. This loop will enable a return to single ended operation.



Walhalla has tram cabs for sale!

Member Walhalla Goldfields Railway has an offer for you! See:

<https://www.facebook.com/walhalla.goldfields.railway/>

COTMA and the trams currently held by TMSV at Bylands and Melbourne Tram Museum at Hawthorn.

The Melbourne Tram Museum at Hawthorn tram depot holds 5 trams owned by the Tramway Museum Society of Victoria (TMSV). The TMSV have requested that these trams be transferred to their Tramway Heritage Centre at Bylands. VicTrack want to determine the future allocation of 5 trams owned by the Victorian Government and currently on loan to the TMSV and located at Bylands.

Background: the 5 TMSV trams at Hawthorn

The TMSV was formed in 1963 to care for heritage trams owned by the Australian Electric Traction Association (AETA) and establish a Victorian tram museum. At that time, four trams were stored at the back of Malvern Tram Depot. They were:

- Bendigo No 3 – a California Combination car acquired by the AETA in 1956 after withdrawal at Bendigo. This car had been built as Hawthorn Tramways Trust (HTT) No8.
- MMTB Nos 164 and 180 – both built for the Melbourne Brunswick and Coburg Tramways Trust.
- MMTB No 217 – a Birney Safety Car purchased from the USA by the MMTB in the early 1920s for use on lightly trafficked shuttle services.

Over the years these trams were maintained in operable condition and restored to greater or lesser extent. The most substantial work was done on HTT 8 which was fully restored to an operable condition by the Public Transport Corporation (PTC) in 1994.

In 1995, there was a plan by the Victorian Government to have a heritage tram service in Melbourne, operated on the regular tramway system by a commercial operator. In support of that plan, the PTC entered into a loan agreement with the TMSV for these 4 trams over a period of 25 years. No heritage service was established, but the 4 trams and other heritage trams set aside by the PTC and successors have operated sporadically for special events. The last such event was the COTMA conference in Melbourne in 2006. The TMSV loan agreement expires in March 2020.

The TMSV had also acquired two semi derelict cable tram bodies – dummy No 28 and trailer No 256. They were restored to original condition in 2002-03 by a Federal government funded employment scheme managed by the TMSV. A condition of the program was that the cable tram was to be put on public display in Melbourne for a number of years. They have been on display at Hawthorn Tram Depot since its official opening in January 2003. There is no formal agreement covering this tram set.

Background: the 5 Victorian Government owned trams at Bylands

Under the 25-year loan agreement of 1995 the TMSV were loaned 5 trams to boost their operational fleet at Bylands. They were:

- SW5 739 – a W5 converted to sliding door configuration
- W5 795 – a W5 converted to a 2-entrance tram by filling in the centre doorway.
- SW6 902 – an SW6 with ‘bus style’ tubular steel framed seating
- W6 996 – one of the post-war trams and
- W7 1001 – the first of the final design of W class trams built for the Bourke St tramways

The loan agreement states that all these trams (in Melbourne and at Bylands) are to be kept intact and returned to their respective owners at the end of the agreement.

Recent developments

In mid-2018, the TMSV wrote to the MTM requesting the return of the cable trams. Shortly after they wrote to VicTrack (the successor to the PTC with whom the loan agreement was signed) requesting that the 4 electric trams be returned to them. There have apparently been several letters on this and other topics back and forth between the TMSV, VicTrack and others but COTMA has not seen any of these.

On 9th of July 2019, VicTrack wrote to the TMSV advising that VicTrack had no objection to TMSV collecting the cable tram set and that the loan agreement for the 4 electric trams would not be renewed – with the trams to be removed from Hawthorn as mutually agreed between TMSV and MTM.

This letter also said that the 5 trams on loan to TMSV would be re-allocated, saying: “VicTrack intends to run an Expression of Interest process through the Council of Tramway Museums Australasia (COTMA).” COTMA did not seek this role and became aware of this through receiving a copy of the letter.

On 6th of August 2019, MTM wrote to VicTrack advising that they had no objection to all the TMSV owned trams being removed from Hawthorn and requested that the removal be expedited. This will allow a new tram exhibition to be facilitated.

What next?

The COTMA committee has no desire to set itself up as mediator, but we take seriously a request from VicTrack to assist them in running a fair and well-informed process. We believe that the process we participated in for the re-purposing of the 200+ trams stored at Newport has been handled well and we appreciate the value that VicTrack have put on our advice.

The 5 trams at Bylands are owned by the Victorian Government and VicTrack are required to have a proper process in determining their disposition. VicTrack have stated that their intention is that the trams will be held for preservation.

We are considering what criteria we should recommend to VicTrack for re-allocating the 5 Bylands trams. It could include, for example, a requirement that they be preserved as Melbourne trams in their as-withdrawn (current) condition, must be stored under cover and that priority should be given to Victorian applications, all else being equal.

In practice this could mean they stay at Bylands should the TMSV participate in the process. The process will be open to any tram museum meeting the eventual criteria – not just COTMA members.

The committee will welcome written comments from members – and from the TMSV as a non-member – in preparing the advice on criteria.

COTMA remains ready to do all we can to ensure that the final outcome is the best outcome for the preservation of these significant trams in good condition.

Report – from a COTMA perspective

Victorian Tourist & Heritage Railway sector forum #1 24 May 2019

Rod Atkins & Mal Rowe attended the first forum for the Tourist & Railway sector in Victoria on Friday 24th of May 2019.

This report will primarily be of interest to Victorian groups, but there may be some interesting parallels in other jurisdictions.

The prime driver for the forum and related processes being conducted by VicTrack is to clear the Newport Railway Workshops site of all heritage activities. As such, this is the next stage of the process begun with the “Retired Trams Strategy” which VicTrack sees as successful.

We were told that there is no intention to sell or privatise the site, but that it is needed for railway operational requirements, the most pressing of which will be the decommissioning of the ComEng train sets as the new Metro (“HCMT”) trains enter service.

A full set of the presentations is available for download. It comprises 175 pages and this introduction aims to point to some key issues – with page numbers!

Background History - in the early 1980's the Victorian Government started to rationalise its rail system. Melbourne was becoming a "rusty" city; now it's the fastest growing capital in Australia. This rationalisation made the mid 1880's era East and West blocks of Newport Workshops (refer page 40, areas A, B, E and F redundant. The workshops were consolidated to area D. Steamrail first moved to area F in the late 1980's and then to West Block (Area B) along with R707 Ops and DERM PAV groups in the early 1990's. Area F was subsequently redeveloped as an electric train stabling yard.

Program

Pages 1 to 4 are the program – with page 4 listing the Workshop groups conducted late in the day. The reports from those groups are at the end of the document.

Welcome

Pages 5 to 12 cover the welcome speech, introductions and outline of key issues from the CEO of VicTrack, Cam Rose. He makes the point that Newport needs to be cleared, but that VicTrack want to consult with groups about how the sector can continue with a ‘bright future’. He also noted the consulting work being done including interviews with groups and examination of best practice in other countries. MOTAT gets mentioned and Mal Rowe has suggested that the Christchurch groups and FRONZ would be worth investigating.

Current Operators

Pages 17 to 30 are Brad Murnane’s summary of the sector in Victoria – comprising 16 Tourist and Heritage Railway operators, 4 mainline, 4 broad gauge branch line, 4 tramway (Ballarat, Bendigo, Haddon & Portland), 4 narrow gauge branch line, Puffing Billy (Listed separately as it has its own Act), 6 static organisations (Including TMSV and Melbourne Tram Museum at Hawthorn) and smaller community organisations with vehicles preserved.

Mainline Access

Pages 31 to 49 outline the emerging problems with providing mainline access for heritage train operation. Increased traffic at all times including weekends makes getting a ‘path’ problematic. This is a strong point of concern for the operators of steam hauled trains out of Newport. The arguments are strong, obviously driven by the VicTrack agenda to clear the heritage trains out of Newport – and probably out of Melbourne altogether. It will be interesting reading to those looking at the future of regional train operation in Victoria.

Consultation

Pages 50 to 126 are an initial report on the consultations with the heavy rail sector by the consultants from Deakin University. The interviews with the tramway operators are not included – primarily because the forum was for the rail sector and they had to prioritise that part of the report. No tramway related recommendations are included at this stage. Home location of the volunteer base was noted for some groups – showing that many volunteers come from well outside Melbourne. It was also noted that many volunteers were members of multiple groups. Skill retention and development was a strong theme. A coordinating body was suggested – with ATHRA being the name mentioned, but not all groups are ATHRA members. This is a clear contrast with tramway groups and COTMA. VicTrack have been impressed with the COTMA model.

Regional bases were suggested – Bendigo, Ballarat and Castlemaine being described in rough detail, as well as mention of the possibility of a Melbourne metropolitan base.

Government support was briefly described – based on some form of coordinating body. ATHRA would see themselves as being able to provide that service.

Some comments from Deakin included:

- “You are all divided; there is no strategy”
- “There is no future in the way you are working today”

Safety

Pages 127 to 144 outlined the emerging ONSRR takeover of rail safety regulation in Victoria. The message was one of support in developing appropriate safety management systems based on the ONSRR 29 elements and there was an indication that the idea of ‘appropriate’ could mean that some elements might be covered with some simple processes or statements – we are not all mainline mass freight of passenger operators.

ONSRR are considering exemptions for ‘static railway museums’ to enable movements of empty rolling stock with a much-simplified SMS

Dementia is an emerging safety issue in the T&H sector – needs to be addressed.

Workshops

Pages 145 to 175 covered the workshops:

- Workshop A The Future of Mainline Operations
- Workshop B Preserving our Heritage
- Workshop C People, Communities and Committees - Governance
- Workshop D Remaining Safe

Two groups worked in each area, with members allocated by VicTrack, not self-selected.

Each group came up with a short list of issues and solutions based on the questions given to them and listed on posters. The groups then ‘voted’ on the importance of each issue/solution using green dots placed on the posters outlining the issues and solutions.

On return to the plenary, the forum members as a whole voted on the issues and solutions that mattered to them most using red dots. It is interesting to compare the items that have very large numbers of dots with those receiving very few.

Mal Rowe