

Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

www.cotma.org.au

News Update April 2020



After many years in Victoria, Sydney R class 1845 has returned to NSW where it is in storage for Sydney Tram Museum

From the President

Welcome to our Update for April 2020.

How the world has changed since our last Update (October 2019), particularly in recent weeks. Until then we were living in the comfort of booming economies with international tourism a major export earner and in our museum and heritage rail sector, high expectations of and planning for continuing growth and prosperity.

In Christchurch where we had lived through and were coming back from the horrors of the 2010-11 earthquake sequences and then the mosque shootings a year ago, we were welcoming the rebirth of our devastated central city. This included a new vitality in retail, hospitality, visitor accommodation and attractions, better public transport and with a new convention centre due to be completed with its first large international conference booked in for October.

And then came COVID-19 and all the other new words we have learnt associated with this real life disaster movie, and the impacts we are all experiencing. We will get through it but we don't really know when, so please in the meantime we need to keep in touch, share experiences, and continue to plan for our future, including that of our museums and heritage tramways. COTMA will be there to assist, using all the means as our disposal to maintain contact and continue towards achieving our common goals.

The COTMA Executive Committee, following cancellation of its intended meeting in Bendigo on 20-21 March, met via Zoom video link last Thursday. This edition of Update will advise of the decisions made due to COVID-19, as well as reporting on the progress we have been making in a number of areas. We will report some of the actions that members groups have already advise that they are undertaking in response to the pandemic, and we are keen that you share with us all your concerns and ideas and solutions.

In both Australia and New Zealand a common mantra now coming through the daily messaging from our governments, and being picked up by many is: "we are all in this together". The COTMA community needs to think and act the same way. So, stick to your local lockdown rules and while physical distancing is likely to remain the order of the day for some time to come, we have plenty of modern communication tools to keep in touch with each other and our group members in the weeks and months ahead.

Dave Hinman

COTMA PRESIDENT

Your To-Do List

- ✓ Note the deferral of COTMA Conference in Bendigo.
- ✓ Keep in touch with us and with your members – share your experiences and lessons being learnt.
- ✓ Plan for your re-opening of services.

COTMA conference deferred to 2021

The 2020 COTMA Conference has been cancelled due to the travel and health safety restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Bendigo team had almost completed their planning and were ready to launch the conference and take bookings.

Bendigo Tramways hope to be able to offer the conference in 2021 – around the same time of year.

We will probably run the following conference two years later – in 2023 - when the conference will be hosted by MOTAT in Auckland.

COVID-19 pandemic



The rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus has affected almost every activity involving people to people contact. Virtually all tram museums have closed their doors temporarily, with no clarity on when they may re-open.

This is of course having significant impact on 'the bottom line' – especially for museums who have a significant income stream from tourism activities.

This may be the time to get on with the task of sorting through those long-neglected archives, but NOT as a group activity!

Operating Museums will need to plan a re-start to ensure all your equipment and infrastructure is safe to be used and all your operating crews and staff have current medicals and qualifications as needed.

The pic shows how Melbourne reduces risk for tram drivers.

New Zealand and COVID-19

At midnight on Wednesday 25 March the country entered a stage 4 level Alert. This effectively closed the Country down apart from essential services for an initial period of 28 days.

All of the Tramway Museums were closed as from this date and members banned from attending. Apart from security checks nobody is allowed on the premises.

This curtailment of tram operations will have an effect of all Museum finances especially as a return to opening status is unknown and when this does happen, it will take time before patronage levels pick up.

FRONZ conference cancelled for 2020

The Annual conference of The Federation of Rail Organisations of New Zealand, our associated rail heritage body across the Tasman, has also been cancelled. It was due to be held in Gisborne over Queen's Birthday Weekend 29 May -1 June, and has now been rescheduled for the same time, same place next year.

Trevor Burling

Many of you will have heard of the unexpected passing of Trevor Burling, Past President and life member of the Wellington Tramway Museum, active with THS Christchurch in earlier years and also a Past President and current Executive Officer, of FRONZ. Trevor had attended many COTMA conferences and with his wife Marlene had intended to come to Bendigo in September and to celebrate his 80th birthday while there. He died on 25 January, following surgery after a major medical (heart) event earlier the previous day. Detailed tributes have been published in NZ tramway newsletters, Tram Lines and Ferrymead Tram Tracts.

Michael Vash

Prior to Trevor's passing, Wellington had another unfortunate death in December when Michael Vash, a member since 1965, was killed when he was involved in a motorcycle accident on the way home from the Tramway.

Peter Letherby and Ron Fluck

Australian Electric Transport Museum at St Kilda near Adelaide have lost two of their members. Peter Letheby passed away on 1 November 2019. He was an active member involved in restoration work, including E118 and the "Bib & Bub" set. Ron Fluck was one of the first members of AETM. He was also heavily involved with the National Rail Museum. Ron passed away on 9 December.

(with thanks to Trolley Wire for the information)

Peter Kahn gets a gong

Peter Kahn, who has been involved with Sydney Tram Museum since 1960, was awarded the Medal of Order of Australia (OAM) in this year's Australia Day honours for service to community history. COTMA joins others in congratulating Peter and thanking him for all he has contributed over 60 years.

Peter is well familiar with tram gongs, and now has a well deserved 'gong' of his own!

Parts Management

A policy on managing the parts owned by COTMA and those given to us for allocation by VicTrack has been agreed and is available on the COTMA website at: <https://www.cotma.org.au/documents.html>

The policy provides for parts to become the property of museums on completion of their installation into a heritage tram and expressly forbids commercial sale of any parts. A template for application for parts is also on the COTMA website.

Parts recovery at Newport

Trams allocated to various community and commercial groups are steadily moving out of Newport East Block.

Key components from the cabs are being removed from many trams and crated up for the COTMA parts program.

Two 40' containers have been placed on site for storage of all recovered components.

These will eventually be moved to a COTMA storage site, probably at the Bungaree off site storage facility owned by Ballarat Tram Museum.



Controllers are being stored in a locked 20' container and access to them will depend on an accredited asbestos removal process.

Tony Smith leads the Parts Management Group and has negotiated a process for removal of underfloor components, including trucks with good wheels, before trams are shipped out. We are very grateful for the active cooperation of VicTrack and the contractor handling the process.

PC5 parts

COTMA holds a stock of parts for PC5 controllers. This is a limited resource and the need for spares for existing trams plus parts to make old tram bodies operational will demand careful management. The COTMA committee has accepted a kind offer from Alex Hunter from Christchurch to audit and catalogue the stocks and work to set up a management process. We expect that the parts will be managed by the Parts Management Group.

Z1 / Z2 parts

Yarra Trams and VicTrack are disposing of their stores of spares unique to the Z1 / Z2 trams. COTMA members who have trams of this type have been advised of what is available and the VicTrack heritage registrar is working through allocation with Yarra.

Tramway News

Melbourne 685 to find a new home

Melbourne's W5 685 was allocated to COTMA member "Tramcar W2 568 group", but they indicated that they were unable to accept it, so it was offered to other museums by COTMA at the request of VicTrack.

685 is one of the few W5s to not be converted to the SW5 format. Body alterations stopped at the stage where the centre doorway was removed.

COTMA member Liston Transport Heritage Park (formerly "T-mates") will take 685 and give it a new home alongside two Z1s and two Brisbane trams.

685 was due to leave Newport on March 30, but restrictions on interstate trucking due to the COVID-19 pandemic have caused a delay.



Christchurch

It had been hoped that construction of the new extension of the Christchurch Tramway to a turnaround loop at the High-Tuam-Poplar intersection would have commenced by now. However, delays in finalising some necessary land purchase and a decision to do the tram works at the same time as the refurbishment of three blocks of High Street, have delayed the projected start until late 2020. The onset of COVID-19 is likely to result in further delays.

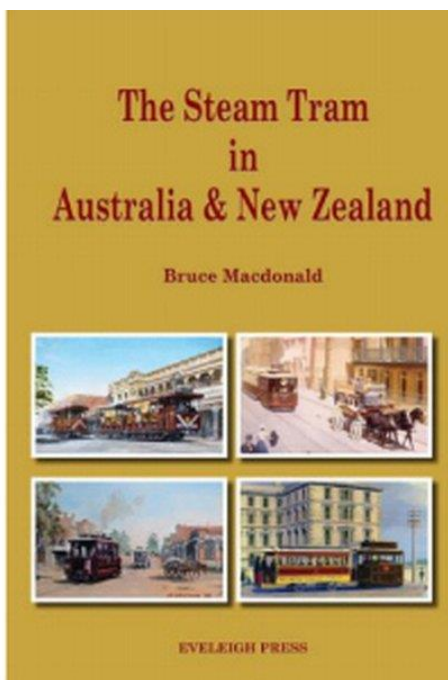
Meanwhile both the City and Ferrymead tramways have currently suspended operations because of the COVID-19 lockdown. We are all working from home on tramway as well as other matters with some THS members having taken home some smaller items under repair or restoration to work at in their home workshops.

(The pic at right by Ron Scholten shows Christchurch's 244 in what the COTMA secretary reckons are the right colours.)



A couple of our younger members (ie under 70) are doing drivebys and checking security of the THS Ferrymead site a couple of times a week.

“New” book



The Steam Tram in Australia and New Zealand is the title of a book by Bruce Macdonald, published late in 2018 by Eveleigh Press. ISBN is 978 1 876568 64 1

In its 184 pages printed on fine quality gloss paper are comprehensive details of the locomotives that served on steam tramways in Australia and New Zealand. That's the key focus of the book.

That's not surprising as the author was apparently the major force behind the retrieval and restoration of Sydney 103A - now at Valley Heights.

It has broad details of the systems and services, is profusely illustrated, and the maps are magnificent.

One shortcoming is the lack of an index. There's not even a contents page that lists all the cities covered – contents are listed by state / country only.

It is a must have for anyone who wants to know about Australasia's steam trams. Cost is around \$A70

More books on the way

Here is some advance notice of the pending publication of a couple of what will be interesting and useful titles by well-known and highly respected senior authors on either side of the Tasman.

- In Australia Hugh Ballment & Carl Segnit are now in the latter stages of completing their Illustrated Trolley Bus Atlas of Australia and New Zealand, companion to their Tramway Atlas published one year ago. Hugh advises that it is likely to be ready in the second half of this year. And this won't be all from Hugh – there are several more in the pipeline, and not only about trams and trains.
- Meanwhile in NZ, Graham Stewart's latest book, titled "Crossing Ahead – when Trams met Trains in New Zealand" is getting close to being ready to go. Graham says that this is definitely his last book!

More details, including publication dates will be advised in due course. There may be some delay due to COVID-19.

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

Template for application for parts from the COTMA parts stock.



**Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia
Inc.**

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Application for parts from COTMA stock

COTMA holds stocks of tram parts as a shared resource for all members. In general, these parts have been gifted to COTMA or purchased at scrap prices.

This template sets out information required from members who apply for parts and is part of the COTMA Tramway Parts and Equipment Policy.

Each section outlines information required. A set of notes explain how that information is used in the assessment of the application. The template is designed to be filled in using Word and sections will expand to accommodate information provided. There is a section at the end where additional comments may be made.

Once completed, the document should be sent to the COTMA secretary, who also acts as secretary to the Parts Management Group. Only the content of this application will be considered in assessing the application. Please be brief but don't assume that the Group knows all about your needs.

- 1. What is the name of your Museum / Group and where are you located?**

- 2. What tram or trams will the equipment be used in?**

- 3. What equipment are you requesting?**

- 4. How soon do you expect to start using the equipment and how long do you expect the project to take to complete?**

- 5. Is the equipment you are requesting a replacement for existing parts? If so, how will you refurbish the replaced parts for future use?**

- 6. Is the equipment to be held in stock for urgent repairs on a tram used in heavy traffic? How often is/are the tram(s) used? How will you refurbish the replaced parts for future use?**

- 7. Is the equipment to be used to make a non-operational tramcar body operational? What issues do you foresee in keeping the tramcar operational into the longer term?**

- 8. Who is the contact person at your museum / group for any queries or discussion related to this application?**

- 9. Are there any other comments you wish to make in support of the application?**

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News Update August 2020



Builder plate for the world's newest Brill 22E truck

From the President

Welcome to our update for August 2020. You should be receiving this just in time for our AGM on the 21st, and it is timely to reflect on the happenings of the past 12 months, since our 2019 AGM just over a year ago. We published Updates in October 2019 and April 2020, together with this current issue. As reflected in our April edition, the arrival of COVID-19 has seen the world change in ways that no one could have anticipated this time last year, affecting our heritage and tourist tramways/museums along with every other aspect of life as we know/knew it.

Your To-Do List

- ✓ *If you are a voting member, nominate a representative for the COTMA AGM*
- ✓ *Put September 2021 in your diary as the likely date of the COTMA Conference in Ballarat.*
- ✓ *Print and display the cross promotion poster at your museum.*

We have had to adjust from where we were planning for the 2020 COTMA conference to be held in Bendigo in September, to having to postpone if for a year. And now, with a second wave of infection rife in Victoria and threatening to expand elsewhere in Australia and now in NZ, there seems to be no ending of the pandemic in sight. As reported below, we are now faced with the need for a change in venue for the conference, and no doubt there are further challenges yet to come. Along with our friends and associates around the world, all of our Members have been impacted, often needing to defer plans and activities and having to make hard decisions about their immediate and longer term futures.

However, it's not all doom and gloom and in particular it is very pleasing to note the very real progress continuing to be made with the Newport trams and parts disposals project, also updated below. The excellent relationship that COTMA has developed with Victrack is very much due to the ongoing dedication and sustained hard work of Mal Rowe and Tony Smith, with support from the Ballarat Tramway Museum and COTMA's Parts Management Group. Positive outcomes and opportunities are now apparent. The disposal and allocation of parts and equipment from the former Wellington Trolley bus system has also progressed during the year.

COVID has also resulted in the world adopting new communication techniques and skills, and "virtual" meetings via ZOOM or similar have become commonplace. We have had several COTMA executive meetings, formal and informal via ZOOM and you will see that our AGM this year will also be via this medium. Other member groups have also taken to ZOOM for contactless (and inexpensive) communications, including for social occasions. One example that I have been involved with is a THS (Christchurch) initiative in developing what has become an Australasia-wide monthly get-together for socialising and discussing/viewing topics of tramway interest.

Dave Hinman, COTMA PRESIDENT

Annual general meeting

The 2020 AGM will be held via the Zoom remote conferencing application due to COVID-19 issues in Victoria. It will commence at **6.00 PM on Friday, 21st of August 2020.**

A formal notice has been sent to all members.

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.,.

Please advise the Secretary, Mal Rowe, to secretary@cotma.org.au that you will be attending and Mal will send you an invitation to 'virtually attend'.

A catch-up chat will be held following the meeting. Bring your own beverage of choice!

COTMA conference changes for 2021

Bendigo is struggling with the downturn in revenue due to the Victorian COVID restrictions. In addition, the deferred date for the conference (Sep 2021) would clash with the major works period in their new depot / workshops project. This has brought them to a reluctant decision to withdraw their offer to host in 2021.

Ballarat Tramway Museum have offered to host the 2021 conference to align with their 50th anniversary celebrations on Sunday 19 September 2021 and with the support of Melbourne Tramcar Preservation Association. It would most likely be a shorter format conference over 4 to 5 days (Wednesday evening to Monday lunchtime). There will be opportunities to hear museum presentations.

Partners tours and any pre and post conference activities will be investigated. This is all subject to the Travel Restrictions being lifted by early 2021 in order to arrange the event.

Details will made available early in 2021.

We will probably run the following conference two years later – in 2023 - when the conference is expected to be hosted by MOTAT in Auckland.



Parts Management

This project is proceeding well, with the following outcomes to date

- most cab equipment from trams stripped and placed in containers for our use.
- underfloor equipment stripped from around 47 trams.
- around 45 sets of good trucks are hoped to be made available to tram museums.
- 6 museums have applied for trucks so far and all applications have been approved, for a total of 18 truck sets
- 2 museums so far have applied for equipment other than trucks. We have deferred processing these until the other components are off site and in storage. We anticipate having plenty of items to distribute as per the list.



Tony Smith and Mal Rowe have retrieved some components on an 'opportunistic' basis for special requests including route number boxes, various spare windows and other small items. We have also secured two sets of the 'modified number 15' trucks and anticipate getting another set plus the related underfloor control equipment.

A storage site

VicTrack have indicated that they will move the containers of parts from Newport to Bungaree and prepare foundations for them at their cost. Ballarat Tramway Museum are assisting in this process.

In addition to the trams in storage at Newport, a substantial collection of tramway materials including destination boxes, conductor bags, seat swabs and parts are stored in containers in another part of the old workshops. VicTrack have agreed that they will take the tram related equipment to Bungaree in another one or two containers and that it will be allocated under the protocol we agreed.

We anticipate there may be seven 40 foot containers of tram parts on site!

Work on this project is mostly on hold during the current travel restrictions in Victoria.

Incident Reports

There are two tram related incident reports that have been received from UK Rail Accident Investigation Branch that are worth reading and consideration of the safety issues.

The first report was about a person struck by a tram departing from a tram stop on the Croydon Light Rail line, London. This report highlighted the need for appropriate design and risk assessments for existing and any new pedestrian and vehicular crossings. It also identified the need for appropriate driver training and tram stop departure routines after the tram leaving the tram stop struck a person who had alighted from the tram. The tram driver may have accelerated faster than normal and the pedestrian possibly assumed that they would have time to complete their crossing of the tram line.

The report can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/raib-reports/safety-digest-04-2020-gravel-hill>

The second report concerned a Manchester Tramway incident when a tram passed through a platform that the tram should have stopped at and then a signal at stop at a complex junction. This tram could have struck another tram leaving the tram stop in the same direction. The driver had a temporary loss of awareness. While only a few of us have tram signals on our lines and tramway junctions, the report highlighted the need for ensuring medical fitness to address possibly loss of awareness or alertness and other human factors when driving trams.

The report can be viewed at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f23ffcbd3bf7f1b1593c16d/R062020_200803_Deansgate-Castlefield.pdf

Post COVID cross promotion

Even when travel restrictions are lifted in Australasia it is likely that further international travel will still be limited. FRONZ have seen this as an opportunity to cross promote between our museums and have put together a poster to assist in this. A copy is being circulated with this newsletter, and it can also be downloaded from: www.cotma.org.au/documents/misc/poster_A2.pdf

Thanks to David Maciulaitis of FRONZ for his design work.

We encourage all members to print the poster as large as possible – it is designed for A2 paper – and thus to help and be helped in post COVID recovery.



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