

Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

www.cotma.org.au

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 Tram 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 Tram 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