



Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

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News Update – November 2007 to January 2008

From the Chairman

In November 2007, the NSW Rail Regulator, ITSRR, sought comment on a paper titled "Safety Regulation of Heritage Railway Operators". COTMA worked closely with the Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia (ATHRA) on our responses to ITSRR. The paper discusses the barriers that Heritage Rail Operators encounter in trying to meet the ever increasing demands of the regulators and the problems of representation by umbrella bodies, particularly in NSW. Tramway Museums that operate heritage vehicles are faced with the same barriers. Copies of the submissions are available on the COTMA and the ATHRA www.athra.asn.au web sites. One of the concepts that was put forward by ATHRA was a "Deemed to Comply" safety system, in lieu of the existing regulatory system. This follows the Building Industry regulatory system. Copies of both papers have been distributed to those responsible for Rail Safety Management systems.

The overbearing regulatory system is robbing Museum personnel of the time that should be put into either preparing funding submissions, working on restoration etc. The continued existence of heritage rail organisations is threatened purely because of the impact of these regulations on the few that have the skills to prepare such documents and the resultant volunteer burnout. COTMA along with ATHRA is trying to mitigate the effects of these ever increasing demands. It is slow going, but we have made some headway over the last two or so years.

2008 COTMA Conference

Planning for the 2008 COTMA conference to be held in Launceston is continuing. The Launceston Tramway Museum Society (LTMS) had hoped to have information out before Christmas, but delays in finalising costs have occurred. Information should be available by early February 2008.

The dates however remain the same, opening Friday 21 August 2008 in Launceston and finish with the Conference General Meeting on Tuesday 26 August. A post conference tour finishes in Hobart on the weekend of 30 – 31 August. This tour will visits to the Wee Georgie Wood railway, the Wilderness Railway and Hobart. As soon as details are available, they will be placed on the COTMA web site, www.cotma.org.au

Call for Papers

We have received already some great proposals for papers for the forthcoming 2008 conference. We could do with some more however. This is an excellent opportunity to show and explain to other conference participants what your Museum is doing and transfer the skills and benefits to other member Museums.

A copy of the "Call for Conference" papers is attached to this News Update and the electronic Version. The closing date of 1/2/2008 has been extended to 15 Feb. but if you need a further extension, please advise the Chairman by e-mail as detailed on the enclosed sheet.

Executive Meeting

The next Executive meeting will be held at the Steam Tramway and Railway Preservation Society depot at Valley Heights on Saturday 9 Feb. 2008. If any Members have any matter that they wish to raise, can they please advise the Chairman by the 6th of Feb.

Uniform Caps

David Critchley of Sydney Tramway Museum has advised that a source of Uniform caps is Hills Hats of New Zealand. They are located in Petone near Lower Hutt, Wellington. The company was founded in the 1870's and it has a long tradition of quality. Their web site is <http://www.hillshats.co.nz>

Achievement Awards

An important part of each conference are the COTMA Achievement Awards and following the success of the 2006 Conference, an "EAR Award" (Excellence and Recognition) will be awarded again, subject to sufficient entries and will carry a cash prize of \$500. Entries will close with the judges on 30 June 2008.

The Awards are not competitive, but are to set standards of achievement that their fellow peers can recognise and inspire others to equal or better. Most importantly they offer an opportunity to recognise the achievements of your workers. For the first time in 2006, a formal "EAR Award" (Excellence and Recognition) was made to the organisation that the judges considered had made the most significant achievement.

Submissions can be for tramcar or other vehicle restoration, infrastructure, management, special events or any field of endeavour that you would think suitable for an award. Submissions are to be sent to the COTMA PO Box 61, Carlton South Vic 3053 and/or by email cotma@cotma.org.au giving details, up to three pages of the achievement with photographs etc, attaching any supporting documents that you feel are relevant. Details of past winters can be seen on the COTMA web site - <http://members.optushome.com.au/cotma/awards.html>

Congratulations to Wellington Tramway Museum

The Wellington Museum received a great Christmas present when they were advised that they were successful in an application for \$317,000 from the NZ Lottery Grants Board. This will enable them to rebuild the 1981 rear storage building, renovation of 1974 barn and most importantly, the provision of a new Library /Archives / administration building which would, amongst other things, replace the Palace. For those who have not visited Paekakariki, the "Palace" is a rather run down small building that serves as meal room, members room and a host of other tasks.

Personal Moves

Jeff Constantine has taken an opportunity following the completion of his contract with Portland Cable trams to move onto another challenging community volunteer management job, as the Manager of Coal Creek Heritage Village, Korumburra. We wish Jeff the best in his new job. Alan Rees has been appointed to the Manager's position in Portland.

COTMA members were saddened to learn of the death of Canon Lewis Nyman on 1 January. He attended a number of conferences and was a well known tram enthusiast, as well as an Army and Police Chaplin. Bob Merchant's cousin attended his funeral and a report is attached to the electronic copy of this New Update.

Blackpool Tram Fire Report

Worth reading is the UK Rail Accident Investigation Branch investigation into a rather spectacular fire on 24 January 2007 in Blackpool. Tram 611, a prototype City Class tram, caught fire at one end and was substantially damaged. The cause of the fire has not been conclusively determined but appears to be possibly an electrical wiring fault. For the report, use the following link http://www.raib.gov.uk/cms_resources/071127_R412007_Blackpool.pdf