

# FARES PLEASE!

August 2025

\$2.50 inc. GST

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum



*Tram No. 14 departs from the museum with another load of hot chocolate sipping passengers, July 2025.  
Photo: Benjamin Boehle-Mitchell*

## ANYONE FOR HOT CHOCOLATE?



*Pam preparing the chocolate, whilst Bernie is getting the cups ready for the next batch*



*Gabrielle helps with the drying, whilst Rohan checks his waybill at the end of another trip.*

*Photos: Peter Waugh*



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Ballarat Tramway Museum Inc. (Association No. A0031819K) will be held at the Ballarat Tram Depot, South Gardens Reserve, on Saturday 29 November 2025, commencing at 2.00pm.

Nominations are called for the following positions on the Museum's Board of Management which fall vacant on that date:

- President
- Vice President
- Honorary Secretary
- Honorary Treasurer
- Ordinary Board Members (six positions)

Any financial member aged 18 or over and who is entitled to vote at a general meeting may nominate himself or herself; or with the member's consent, be nominated by another financial member.

Any nomination must be in accordance with the Rules of Association. All nominations are to be sent in writing to the Returning Officer, to reach them not later than 5:00pm on Sunday 9 November 2025.

Nominations may be sent to:  
The Returning Officer  
Ballarat Tramway Museum Inc.  
P.O. Box 632  
BALLARAT VIC 3353

Alternatively, nominations may be placed in the Ballot Box at the tram depot. Envelopes forwarded by mail should be endorsed Ballot Material on the back of the envelope. Any nomination must be consented to in writing by the candidate. Nominations may be accompanied by a statement (of not more than 500 words) setting out the candidate's policies and record of service.

A member may be nominated as a candidate for more than one position on the Board, provided that upon election to any position on the Board, the member's nomination for any other position shall not apply.

The traditional tram ride for members and friends and afternoon tea will follow the conclusion of the meeting.

### **NEW MEMBER:**

1157 Peter Biilmann of Maiden Gully



# AROUND THE MUSEUM

## HOT CHOCOLATE TRAM

A hot chocolate on a cold day is a pleasurable thought. This year Ballarat held the 'Hot Choc Showdown' with 25 venues offering 'decadent, creative and comforting hot chocolate'. BTM offered a mug of hot chocolate on an illuminated night tram ride. Bookings opened early and much to our delight the 750 places on offer were fully booked!

Then the work started. No. 14 was fitted with extra batteries/wiring, strip lighting and a neon sign. Insulated mugs were obtained and chocolate and milk ordered. Each night the we needed 30 litres of milk and three kilos of chocolate powder. The hot chockies were enjoyed by the passengers on the tram. The kitchen team of Peter, Pam, Bernadette and Gabrielle ran a very smooth operation delivering the mugs to the tram for each trip.

As a promotion for the Museum it was a most successful exercise.

## WORKSHOP REPORT

No. 12: The truck has been taken back to Harrybilt Engineering to be modified to allow for the brake rigging and resistance grids to be mounted on it. The plan is to extend the top so that the weight can be distributed on the truck rather than loading up the tram body frame.

No. 14 has been fitted with illuminations, extra batteries for the Ballarat Winter Festival. It was dedicated to the chocolate tram operations for the three weeks of the festival. New Perspex windows have been purchased for two more single truck trams to give protection to passengers from the winter elements whilst travelling on the end platforms. Currently Tram 14 has a set of these new windows.

No. 18 has been lifted and the bogie removed to do some upgrading and overhaul of the drive mechanism. Whilst it is under repair the opportunity will be taken to rewire the tram and fit low voltage lighting.

No. 34: Work has begun on Tram 34 which is now at the Bendigo Tramway Workshops. The bogies require a fair bit of work and have been sent to a separate rail-based engineering firm to be overhauled. The body appears to be in good condition.

No. 671 has had roof repairs to make it fully weather proof.

L 103 and W2 407 have had new piston buckets fitted to their brake cylinders.

No. 1029 continues to be the tram we are using over winter. Its heaters are appreciated by the visitors and crew alike. It has also had some work done on the roof to fix a crack. Minor works have included replacing a defective relay valve and fitting a new carbon skid bracket.



## RECENT ACTIVITIES



*Top Left- No. 34 stripped and being assessed in Bendigo  
Photo: Paul Mong*

*Top Right- Don preparig resistor grids for No. 12.  
Photo: Tony Smith*

*Centre - Karl fitting perspex screens to No. 14.  
Photo: Tony Smith*

*Bottom - Wedding photographer trying to muster a wedding party for a photograph!  
Photo: C. K. Tang*





### VALE PETER (ROBBO) ROBINSON

1958 - 2025

The Archiving team was very saddened by the recent passing of one its key volunteers Peter (Robbo) on 24 June. We first met Robbo at the Archive Awareness Day during October 2023. Robbo soon became a very valuable team member. He was very handy in providing new shelving for our boxes, sorting through boxes, photographs and was learning cataloguing.

He commenced his working life as a fletcher with the NSW Government Railways and worked his way up through the rail infrastructure maintenance teams. Obtaining qualifications in building systems, event safety management and general workplace site safety; he certainly knew his stuff.

Robbo also knew his rail history, ran a small fleet of model trains and was great to chat to. We will miss him.

Warren Doubleday



*Photo: Peter Waugh*

### ARCHIVES REPORT

We've recently added a special 16-page newspaper supplement about Ballarat, printed by The Sun Pictorial on September 30, 1924.

This supplement includes a lot of information and small stories about Ballarat's industries and local personalities. One interesting photo shows an Electric Supply Co. tram turning from Lydiard Street North into Sturt Street, where it appears to have struck the back of a car.

You can view the paper on Victorian Collections at: <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/68535352ad73480cc6092865>

Rail Heritage WA, sent us a box of colour slides taken by WA Rail Enthusiast Ron Hood, who had passed away during January 2025. One of the photos shows the SECV welding truck, complete with a trolley pole at work while tram 43 passes on its way to Lydiard St Nth. The truck was used to repair damaged rail or joints. Trams roughly clattered over the rails at this level crossing, resulting in rail damage.

You can view this and other Ron Hood photos in Victorian Collections by searching for Ron Hood at [www.victoriancollections.net.au](http://www.victoriancollections.net.au)



## LYDIARD STREET NORTH RAIL CROSSING



*A rare view of the SEC welding truck preparing to work on the rail crossing whilst No. 43 passes by. Note the trolley pole on the top of the canopy of the truck.  
Photo: Ron Hood*



*A different view of the Lydiard Street crossing. Locomotive C7 being propelled to Ballarat North Workshops by N476 for scrapping, 6 April 1962.  
Photo: Wal Jack*



# DAVE'S PROPOSAL

BY PETER WAUGH

The planned closure of the SEC Ballarat Tramway in 1971 led to many discussions and ideas on how to preserve the city's historic trams and tramway. One such plan was devised by tram and train enthusiast Dave Macartney.

Dave was a member of the Tramway Museum Society of Victoria (TMSV), which was established in 1962 to preserve Victoria's tramway history. In 1970 the Society purchased the old station master's house at Bylands, on the closed Heathcote Junction-Bendigo railway line to establish a transport museum. They were able to lease (and eventually purchase) the surrounding land as well as a one-kilometre section of the old railway line. In the early days the Society operated a horse tram, finally electrifying the track in 1982.

Dave's plan was straightforward, the TMSV needed to reevaluate their decision to move to Bylands and instead establish the transport museum using existing parts of the Ballarat Tramway. He detailed his plan in a letter to the president of the TMSV, Mal Rowe in either late 1970 or very early 1971. He wanted to continue to use the original tram depot and extend a new tram track along the south side of Lake Wendouree.

*Dear Mal*

*With the closure of the Ballarat System now virtually inevitable, I would like to give some of my thoughts on the matter, which you may think worthwhile to consider. I will send a copy of this to the museum with a letter requesting the board to at least have a look at it.*

*Having been with the Museum (TMSV) since the A. E.T.A. days, I have been as pleased as anybody to see the site at Bylands acquired, and something definite to look forward to after all these years. Although Ballarat was one of the first places looked at for a site, and was rejected for various reasons, I feel that conditions have changed drastically, and that something might now be achieved. The Historic Park (ed. Sovereign Hill) at Ballarat appears to have started off with a bang, and you can hardly pick up a copy of the Ballarat Courier these days without finding some reference to tourism as a desirable thing for that city, while numerous proposals have been put up to retain parts of the tramway system, most of these proposals, unfortunately, taking no account of the need of maintenance.*

*I think that the Museum could make a go of it and would suggest the following route. Retain the existing depot, (the scheme includes, hopefully, a realistic price from the S.E.C. to lease or buy the depot area), then along the existing route to the gardens, where the passenger section would begin, the first bit being for empty car movements.*



*Wendouree Tram Depot and sheds viewed from Gregory Street. Photo: Lil Butler.*

*The passenger section could run from the Gardens, along the existing route to the corner of the lake and then on reserved track, along the lake parallel to Wendouree Pde. south, and would terminate near Mill St., View-Point.*

*The advantages that appear obvious are a depot: already built and with a workshop attached, and sufficient land out the back to make ourselves completely self-contained. It would be worth spending a lot of money to obtain this facility, as it must be the cornerstone of any museum project to have a proper storage facility as soon as possible. Ballarat is an established area, is becoming increasingly tourist conscious, and has a population of 56,312 waiting to stand by their tramway. Public transport is available from Melbourne, and it is a popular day trip for motorists as well.*

*The main jobs to be done would be construction of track along the south side of the lake and probably rebuilding of the track from the Gardens to the new section. I can see little point in running a passenger service between the Gardens and the Depot, as most tourists would rather go between the two beauty spots on the lake; the Gardens and View Point. At some stage the Council or a preservation society may even see fit to re-introduce the Paddle steamers to provide a round trip. The depot fan would probably have to be redesigned to take the four motor cars, though they shouldn't have any trouble on any of the main line curves.*

*Income-producing running could start almost immediately, which would ease the financial strain...*

## 10 FARES PLEASE!



*...These are basically my thoughts now, for what they are worth. I'm not suggesting that Bylands is inadequate, but as far as I can see Ballarat has much more to offer, and I feel that it is in the members interests to have a try for the best. The time to have a look at these ideas is now; in twelve months, the depot will not be available, the cars will be dispersed and the tracks covered over. I would hate to find in five years time the cars in or around a half built depot at Bylands, a handful of members struggling week after week with no sign of the job ever coming under control; and with the old hands feeling bitter because no attempt was made at Ballarat. Even if we can't do any good, let's at least be able to say "Well, we tried."*

Looking back over 50 years later, many of Dave's ideas were realised, but not by the TMSV, but by the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society (now the Ballarat Tramway Museum). Unfortunately, not being

able to acquire the SEC depot meant building a new depot in the gardens. The electric tram service began in December 1974. And extending the track is still an ongoing discussion. Dave Macartney spent well over 40 years as a volunteer with the Ballarat Tramway Museum until retiring in 2020.



*Once a familiar face around the Museum, Dave Macartney in 2016.  
Photo: Peter Waugh*



*Mill Street site of Loop prior to 1960.  
Photo: Lil Butler*



*SEC Wendouree Depot in 1970.  
Photo: Lil Butler*



## HIGH TEA - CUTHBERTS

By Alan Bradley

In 1990 I hired No. 38 for my 30th birthday. No. 38 was fitted with a table for drinks and decorated with balloons and streamers – this was okay back then. After that my wife and I had dinner a couple of times on the former Colonial Tramcar Restaurant. (NOTE: The CTR operated from 1982 to 2018 when it ceased operation due to safety concerns.)

In April 2020 I celebrated my 60th birthday. I hired Cuthberts 939 for a high tea - a real step up from a table in No. 38. But two weeks before the event the Museum cancelled it due to Covid 19 - one of many events Australia-wide that were cancelled at that time.

Five years later the pandemic was over, and Cuthberts 939 was available again for hire, this time to celebrate my 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Peter Waugh welcomed guests by telling them that 939 was now the only restaurant tram running in Australia, and the only espresso tram in the world! He pointed out that we were travelling on a 1.3-kilometre track on speeds approaching 10 kph. He assured them that while 939 had been withdrawn from service in Melbourne due to poor brakes, it would (hopefully) stay on the rails during the high tea.



Our guests were impressed with the experience of a high tea on a tram. One guest, Lileen, told me that travelling up and down the Gardens reserve on the tram felt like being transported back to a distant time. She said: “I love the details of the tram” – and took some great photos of small features of the interior.

My two sons made speeches at my expense while 939 waited at St Aidan's Drive. Peter Waugh's advice beforehand was sound - don't provide too many choices for wine, and don't provide a birthday cake (as the guests would be full enough from the food). All too soon the two hours were up, and I had my cup of tea while 939 was on the access track. Despite Peter Waugh's apocalyptic warnings 939 stayed on the rails and ran smoothly, due to the skill of motorman Alastair Reither. I must thank Peter Waugh and the staff onboard 939, motorman Alastair Reither, and Saltimbocca Catering for the food.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

The article on accumulator or battery trams by Chris Phillips in the June 2025 issue of Fares Please! was very interesting. It was good to see details from many cities brought together.

The information about the battery house on The Spit line in Sydney was not quite correct. None of Sydney's trams had regenerative braking, so they could not feed power into the overhead line when descending grades. The batteries in the battery houses were charged from the overhead wire, whose supply was from a remote substation or powerhouse - at Ridge Street in the case of the early electric operations at North Sydney. The batteries had to be replaced or replenished from time to time; the photo shows sulphuric acid containers, known as 'carboys' being unloaded for the battery house.

I have not checked for full details across the Sydney system, but there was another battery house on the Willoughby line near Flat Rock loop. Another example was the battery house near Watsons Bay, opposite Park loop, which was commissioned with the line's opening in 1909. By 1914 it was equipped with two 500 amp. batteries: it closed about 1930.

In Canberra the wire-free section will extend eventually from the existing city terminus at Alinga Street to the start of Adelaide Avenue. Stage 2a

extends only to Commonwealth Park; the line down Adelaide Avenue and on to Woden will be stage 2b. There may also be an unwired section at Woden terminus. The 14 original Canberra trams are currently being taken out of service one at a time to have batteries fitted. They were designed for this, with space provided on the roof of each end module. The battery for each car is in two sections, each weighing 2.7 tonnes.

Finally, a small correction. The handsome photo of car 2167 at the foot of page 13 is not at Westmead but in the heart of Parramatta.

Thanks for an outstanding issue of Fares Please!

Dale Budd



*Two 'C' trams at Mosman wharf hauling a trailer which is being loaded with the 'carboys' of sulphuric acid for transportation to Ridge Street battery house.*

*Photo: NSW Archives*



## WELLINGTON TRAM MUSEUM

By James Proctor

Our trip to New Zealand, earlier this year, included a visit to the Wellington Tramway Museum. The museum is located in Queen Elizabeth Park, about 50km north of the Wellington CBD. Although the Kapiti suburban rail line goes past the entrance, the nearest station is 3.5km away in Paekakariki.

The museum opened in December 1965, a bit over a 18 months after Wellington's (and New Zealand's) last tram ran, in May 1964. The museum has about 2km of track, running from the depot and museum, at the entrance to the park to the beach. The track runs on its own reservation for its full length, with a couple of road crossings that generally don't see traffic on the weekend.

Wellington's first trams were steam hauled. The first line opened in 1878 using the same gauge as New Zealand's railways, 3'6". It was the first city steam tram line in the Southern Hemisphere, predating Sydney's steam trams by about a year. The steam trams were not entirely popular and were replaced with horse trams in 1882. This was due, in part, to the poor financial state of the operating company. The steam tram system reached a maximum length of 4.5km, which was extended to 16km with horse trams. Presumably the horse tram system didn't extend far into the

suburbs, which have anything but horse tram friendly topography.

The system was taken over by the Wellington City Corporation in 1900 and electric trams began to operate in 1904. The electric trams used the unusual gauge of 4' as standard gauge was too wide for double track in the city centre's narrow streets. The electric system reached a maximum length of 53km.

The City Council decided to replace trams with trolley buses in the 1940s. While a single trolley bus line had operated between 1924 and 1932, low patronage saw it abandoned. The conversion from tram to trolley bus occurred between 1949 and 1964. Auckland and Dunedin also converted from tram to trolley bus during this period.

The trolley bus system was due to close in 1978, however, the oil shortages of the 1970s saw Wellington retain and update its system with a new fleet, where the Auckland and Dunedin systems closed by the early 1980s. A third generation of trolleys buses was delivered from 2009, however, a decision was made in 2014 to close the system, with the final service running in 2017.

I first visited the museum in 1995. It was a wet Saturday morning and I was the only visitor. After a ride from the depot to the terminus and a long chat with the driver, I was offered to opportunity to drive the tram back to the depot, my first ever tram drive (see Fare Please June 2023). The weather was much nicer on this visit.



I was given the full VIP treatment by volunteers Allan, Aaron, Oli and Spencer with a full behind the scenes tour, tram ride and tram drive. The museum's collection includes 10 ex Wellington trams. Four were operational, with another operational but yet to be certified for passenger service. There are also the bodies of a couple of trolley buses as well as a former Wellington Cable Car.

The tram I drove was their workhorse tram, double saloon 159, built in 1925, the same tram that I drove in 1995. There is also a Lego model of this tram for sale in the gift shop. After my drive, I had the opportunity to ride on tram 17. This was one of Wellington's original electric trams, built in 1904. It had

only recently been restored to running condition and was awaiting certification for passenger service at the time of my visit. As this is hand rather than air braked, only select drivers are permitted to drive this tram; a case of look but don't touch.

Also of interest was Fiducia 260, the last tram built in New Zealand. The Fiducias were designed in the 1930s and feature several art deco touches. It appears they were designed with one man operation in mind, with power doors, dead man controllers and trolley pole switches, similar to those on W7 tram 1029.

It is a wonderful small tram museum with a very friendly team of volunteers. I thoroughly recommend a visit.



*Double saloon No. 159, which James drove on his visit to the Wellington Tramway museum. Photo: James Proctor*

## WELLINGTON TRAMS



*Newly restored Tram No. 17, one of Wellington's original electric trams.  
Photo: James Proctor*



*Fiducia Tram No. 260, the last tram built in New Zealand.  
Photo: James Proctor*

# MUSEUM BY NIGHT



*The warm glow of Geelong No. 2 welcomed visitors waiting for their ride on the hot chockie tram July 2025.*

*Photo: Peter Waugh*



Fares Please! is published by the Ballarat Tramway Museum Inc. (A0031819K) six times a year in alternate months commencing in February. It is distributed to members and friends.

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