

# The Bellcord

*Journal of the Melbourne Tram Museum  
Number 56 – December 2022*



**Front cover**

Z3 class tram 224, driven by Victorian Premier and Member for Bundoora, John Cain, arrives at the new Bundoora terminus at McLeans Road on 23 April 1987. Photograph by Dale Budd.

## In this issue

Geoff Brown explores the story behind the extension of the East Preston tramway, from the first tangible proposal in the mid-1960s up to the start of construction in 1982.

Few people know that the Heatherton Sanitorium once had its own electric tramway. Brian Weedon traces the history of the Sanitorium's tramway, which ran for around fourteen years.

Want to know more about the status of the museum's digitisation of our collection of plans and drawings? Kevin Taig provides an update – scanning will be starting in earnest during December.

Warren Doubleday outlines the construction of the La Trobe Street tram line, completed in 1951, accompanied by some striking photographs from the Peter Duckett collection.

And finally, we were saddened to hear of the passing of Ian Brady, well-known tramway historian and long-time member of the Melbourne Tram Museum.

Best wishes to all our readers for the holiday season, and we hope to see you at the museum soon.

Melbourne Tram Museum  
8 Wallen Road  
Hawthorn Vic 3122

Postal address:  
PO Box 6172  
Hawthorn West Vic 3122

E-mail:  
[editor@trammuseum.org.au](mailto:editor@trammuseum.org.au)

Website:  
[www.trammuseum.org.au](http://www.trammuseum.org.au)

*The Bellcord* is published by the  
Melbourne Tram Museum Inc,  
A0048167Z,  
ABN 11 293 508 607.

Copyright © Melbourne Tram  
Museum Incorporated 2022.

Editor: Noelle Jones

### Contents:

Museum news	3
Bundoora's tramway: the backstory	4
The Heatherton Sanitorium tramway	14
Scanning our collection of plans & drawings	19
Building the Latrobe Street track	21
Vale: Ian Brady	24

We were extremely delighted to discover that the Melbourne Tram Museum was rated one of the top ten most loved buildings and events of the 2022 Open House Melbourne. The museum came in at number seven out of a total of 217. Of course this result wouldn't be possible without our wonderful team of volunteers. Many thanks to all the people who participated in the Open House weekend.

The museum was invited to participate in *Trolley Festival 2022*, an international convention held by L'Associazione Torinese Tram Storici (ATTS), the Historical Trams Association of Turin (Italy), on 3 December 2022. The aim of the conference was to showcase best practices worldwide in historical tramways. Museum members Mal Rowe and Warren Doubleday gave a Melbourne perspective on the convention's theme, "the tram as cultural heritage".

Thanks to a grant from Boroondara City Council, the museum has purchased a portable defibrillator to improve our ability to provide a safe environment for visitors and volunteers. Boroondara's grant has also enabled us to upgrade museum signage.

The office bearers of the Melbourne Tram Museum for 2022-23 are:

- Chair: Kevin Taig
- Deputy Chair: Rod Atkins
- Secretary: Mike Ryan
- Treasurer: Shána de la Rue
- Committee members: Carolyn Cleak, Warren Doubleday, Russell Jones and Alan Scott.

*Tramcar in Turin, Italy, 30 April 1975.  
Photograph by Warren Doubleday.*





## Bundoora's tramway: the backstory

It is forty years since work began on the East Preston tramway extension in late 1982. By 1995, tram services had been extended 7.9km to the southern boundary of Mill Park – a fast growing suburb on what was then Melbourne's northern fringe.

The timing for this start of construction is significant. It was the year of a landslide state election that installed Victoria's first Labor government in 27 years. The new premier was the Member for Bundoora, John Cain.

Furthermore, this timing also illustrated the influence that the government of the day now had over tramway capital works. Since 1970 the once semi-autonomous tramways had become increasingly dependent on government subsidies. This influence enabled the new Cain government to use tramway renewal works as part of a stimulus package aimed at pump priming a depressed Victorian economy.

However the idea for an East Preston tramway extension did not come from the new Labor government. Its origin dates back decades. This article looks at the backstory of this extension, which today forms part of the Bundoora RMIT to Waterfront City Docklands tram route 86.

### Growing pains – a first proposal

*Above photograph shows Tyler Street terminus (c1970), which had become a congestion point for motor vehicle traffic during peak periods. Note the Y-shaped terminus installed in the mid 1960s to help improve traffic flow. Photograph by Richard Youl.*

The 1923 General Scheme for tramway expansion had included a short northerly extension from the terminus at Tyler Street, East Preston. However the tramway had only opened in 1920 and this extension was little more than a potential project for future years.

The first serious proposal came in the mid-1960s as Melbourne's population doubled between 1950 and 1973 from 1.33 million to 2.66 million (ABS). The

motor car fuelled construction of suburbs beyond the reach of public transport, including northwards along Plenty Road.

The decision in 1964 to establish La Trobe University on Plenty Road raised the question of extending the tramway to that point. In 1965 the Preston Chamber of Commerce and the City of Preston proposed a shorter extension to Boldrewood Parade to solve the growing traffic congestion at the Tyler Street terminus. In addition, a residents’ committee supported by a petition of 3,700 signatures proposed a much longer extension to Settlement Road, Bundoora.

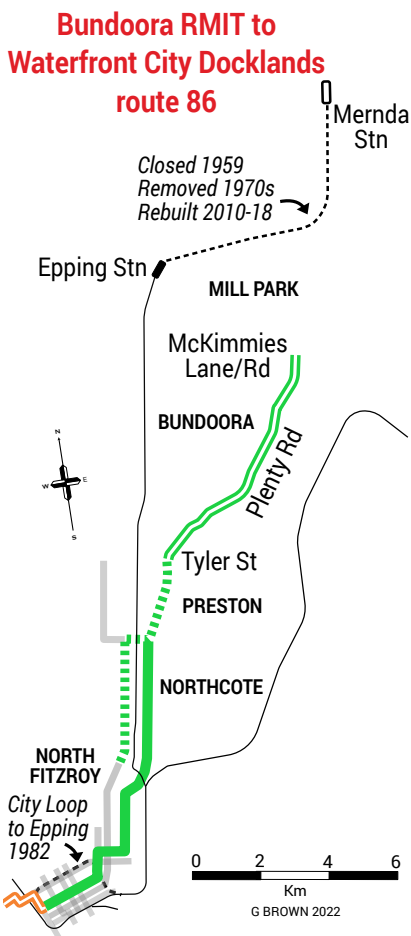
In response, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board (M&MTB) undertook a study of these options and endorsed the extension to Boldrewood Parade. It concluded that this extension would provide increased transport facilities for the population both along and beyond the route.

As a requirement of the M&MTB Act 1958, in 1967 the Parliamentary Public Works Committee examined this proposal, receiving submissions from many groups and government bodies. In his submission M&MTB Chairman Robert Risson outlined the financial costs and losses that were projected for all three options. He explained that the Board received no financial assistance from government for such capital works and that losses would be significant due to the sparsity of population at that time.

Nevertheless, documents suggest that the Board was prepared to carry the construction costs of the extension to Boldrewood Parade (\$225,000, later raised to \$238,000) and the annual operating deficits of between \$2,400 and \$900 over the first five years.

Many submissions were strongly against any extension, arguing that current transport was adequate and that the funds would be better spent elsewhere. It was also noted that the traffic congestion at the Tyler Street terminus had been reduced by recent road widening, parking restrictions and the realignment of the terminus to a single track in the centre of the roadway.

In December 1967 the all-party Public Works Committee Report to the Governor-in-Council concluded that “there is insufficient evidence to indicate patronage in the immediate future that would justify the expenditure”. It added that when La Trobe University was fully operational and development trends more established, a tram or tramway bus extension to Grimshaw Street, Bundoora should be considered.



- East Preston tramway (opened 1920) ⋯⋯⋯
- City-Northcote electric tramway (1955) —
- Bundoora extensions (1983-95) —
- Docklands extensions (2000-05) —
- Other tram lines —
- Railways —

**New funding opportunities – a second proposal**

Melbourne’s booming population led to the Metropolitan Transportation Committee’s 1969 plan for an extensive and highly intrusive network of freeways across Melbourne. The resulting public backlash saw the state government reject many of its recommended freeways and turn to tramway and railway renewal works to shore up electoral support. These would be



*Sir Robert Risson (1901-92), the third Chairman of the M&MTB (1949-70) was a civil engineer with a distinguished military career. He fought strongly to retain Melbourne's tramways system but political and economic factors hampered his efforts. He was succeeded as Chairman by his deputy, Francis Kirby. Image from the collection of the Melbourne Tram Museum.*

partly funded from Commonwealth government initiatives such as the State Grants (Urban Public Transport) Act 1974.

In 1975 new Z class trams began entering service. In July 1976 a tramway extension to Middleborough Road, East Burwood was recommended by the Public Works Committee and opened in 1978.

Both were initiatives of the Liberal government led by Rupert 'Dick' Hamer. More detail of these initiatives can be read in the [September 2021 issue of The Bellcord](#).

Within days of the East Burwood recommendation, the newly appointed M&MTB Chairman, Dudley Snell, presented the East Preston Tramway Extension Feasibility Study. This 85-page submission included detailed maps and statistics, some of which are shown in Table 1.

The study discounted the shorter extension from Tyler Street to Boldrewood Parade examined by the 1967 Inquiry and presented three longer options – to La Trobe University at Kingsway Drive, to Settlement Road and to Preston Institute of Technology at McKimmies Lane (later McKimmies Road).

The study concluded:

A tramway extension to Settlement Road would be warranted immediately. This extension would provide improved opportunities for travel for residents of adjacent areas in East Preston, Reservoir, Kingsbury and Bundoora. The extension would also allow for a rational re-organisation and development of bus services in the area, with a major point of interchange at the tram terminus.

...Land use patterns north of Settlement Road are not consistent with tram operations and ... the extension would not blend well with a bus network. ... Transport needs in the developing areas north of Settlement Road would be better served by buses in the near future [and perhaps] by reconstructing the railway beyond Epping. [Feasibility Study, p 72]

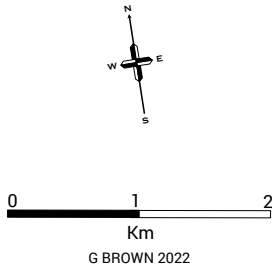
*Table 1: Details of the three options. Source: M&MTB East Preston Tramway Extension Feasibility Study (1976), from the collection of the Melbourne Tram Museum.*

<b>From Tyler Street to:</b>	<b>La Trobe University</b>	<b>Settlement Road</b>	<b>Preston Institute of Technology</b>
Length of extension	3.1km	5.8km	7.9km
Construction costs	\$3.6 million	\$6.725 million	\$8.4 million
Extra trams required (1978)	4	7	10
New substations required	1	2	3
Patronage (daily 1978)	7,700	9,200	10,300
Annual surplus (deficit)	\$33,000	(\$324,000)	(\$628,000)

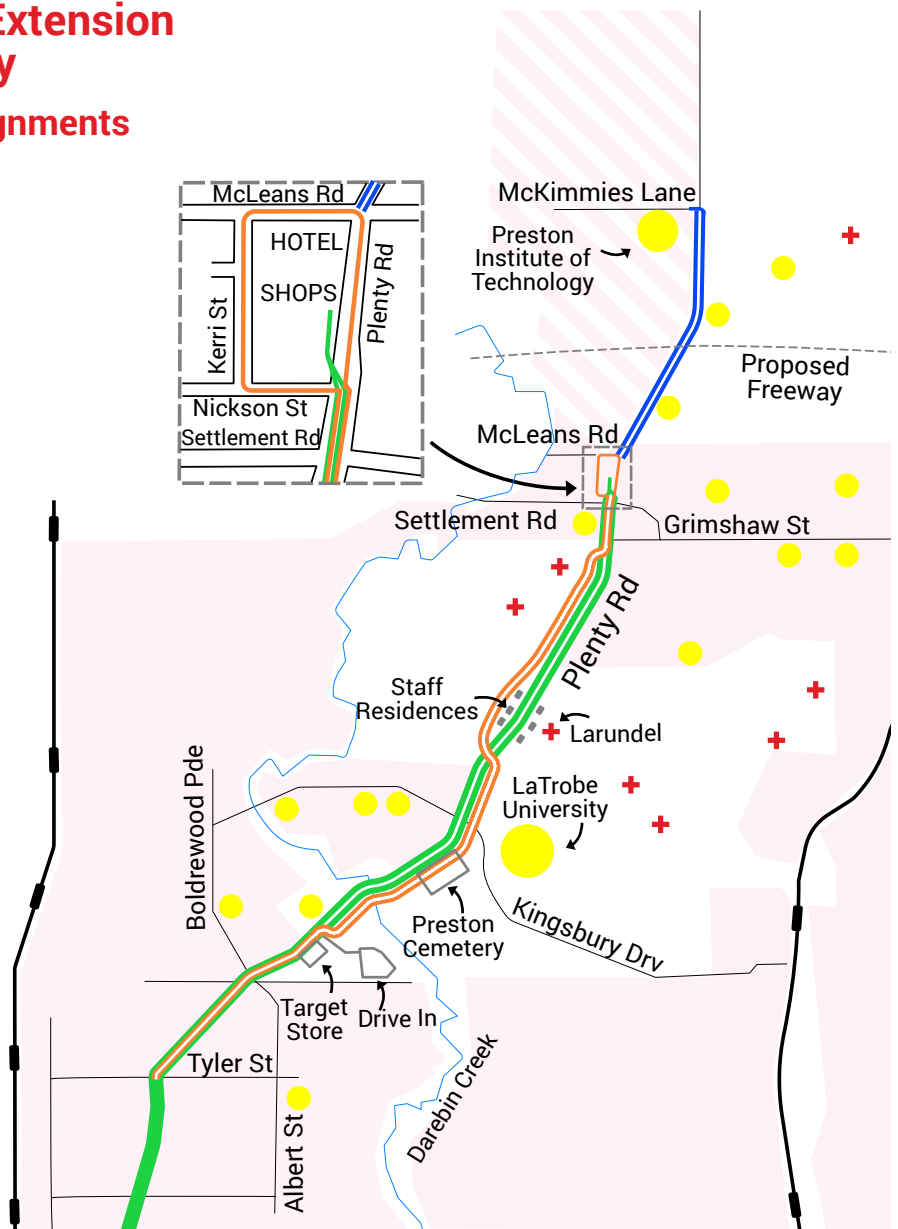
# East Preston Tramway Extension Feasibility Study

## Land Use & Proposed Alignments

1976



- Existing residential development
- Future residential development
- Public purpose land/Open space
  
- Hospitals (psychiatric, geriatric, disability) +
- Schools, tertiary education ●
  
- Existing East Preston tramway ▬▬▬
- Proposed centre-of-road extension with off-road terminus ▬▬▬▬▬
- Proposed partial side-of-road extension with terminus loop ▬▬▬▬▬
  
- Option not proposed ▬▬▬▬▬
- Railway and station ▬▬▬▬▬



Reproduced from maps and descriptions included in the feasibility study and the transcript of the Public Works Committee Inquiry. Map by Geoff Brown.

### An exhaustive inquiry

As required, the all-party Parliamentary Public Works Committee was convened in October 1976 to receive submissions from 27 government authorities, local businesses and resident groups. This required seven days of hearings over the next nine months – more than twice the length of the East Burwood extension inquiry in early 1975. Some representatives appeared twice, others several times.

The 230-page transcript of these hearings sets out detailed arguments, points of dispute and proposed solutions. Nearly all submissions supported the extension although many advocated for minor adjustments. Only three opposed the extension. These were made by:

**Sir Rupert Hamer (1916-2004)**

*Sir Rupert 'Dick' Hamer was a lawyer and army officer who was elected to the Victorian State Parliament in 1958 as a Liberal Party candidate, initially in the Legislative Council as member for East Yarra, and then in 1971 in the Legislative Assembly as member for Kew. As Premier (1972-81) he introduced numerous reforms including the first equal opportunity act, heritage controls and increased support for the arts.*

*Frederick Dudley Snell (1924-88), the fifth and last Chairman of the M&MTB (1976-83), was an electrical engineer with the State Electricity Commission and the M&MTB, then Deputy Chairman under Francis Kirby. As Chairman, his efforts were hampered by increasing government control and economic challenges. Official M&MTB photograph.*



- Dyson Bus Services, which operated the bus network in the area and feared significant loss to its business.
- Northcote Civic Association, which promoted improved bus services through East Thornbury and on to Bundoora via Albert Street and Plenty Road. It argued that express buses to the city by this route would be faster than tram services.
- A tenacious local resident representing shop owners and residents between Tyler Street and Boldrewood Parade. He had initially appeared at the 1967 Inquiry and appeared on four of the seven days of this inquiry.

It is noteworthy that the Country Roads Board (CRB), the state government authority responsible for main roads, raised only one objection in a single page submission. This was in contrast to its extensive list of objections at the East Burwood extension inquiry in 1975.

Immediately following the CRB presentation, the assistant director of the Ministry of Transport spoke to the committee. His lengthy submission was an explanation of inter-departmental cooperation and government policy. It could be interpreted as a very senior public servant using his position to convey a clear message to a committee of elected parliamentarians. This message was that the Ministry wanted the M&MTB's proposal to be approved and all the transport authorities were in support of this.

It seemed that this time the Ministry of Transport wanted to prevent another public disagreement between its tramway and roadway authorities as had occurred two years earlier. From the challenging questions asked by committee members, some did not share the assistant director's reassurance about inter-departmental cooperation.

**Details examined**

The long travel time by tram between Bundoora and the city was seen by some as a constraint on patronage and revenue. The Board acknowledged this fact but pointed to its projections that the tramway would be popular for suburban travel by students, shoppers, hospital visitors and others. This projection of increased suburban travel was also submitted at the East Burwood extension inquiry, which partly explains the many details of schools, shops and hospitals included in both feasibility studies.

Between **Tyler Street and Boldrewood Parade**, Plenty Road was already a well-established 20 metre wide roadway with private residences on both sides. Many of these residents objected to the proposed tramway on the grounds of reduced property values, increased noise, increased congestion and access difficulties. The sole objection by the CRB was to the proposed legal requirement to keep motor vehicles off tram tracks in the direction of peak period travel. In the CRB's view this would add to congestion.



*East Preston tram terminus in March 1983 looking northwards toward Tyler Street. The original terminus had been replaced with dual track that extended a few hundred metres beyond Tyler Street. East Preston trams continued to terminate at Tyler Street for several months using the newly installed crossover. Photograph by Gary Davey.*



In 1983 as this first stage of the extension was being constructed, a 'Fairway System' was introduced in some parts of the tram network, legally requiring motor vehicles to keep off tram tracks in the direction of peak period travel. Whether it was applied in this section of Plenty Road in 1983 has not been established. However, currently most of this section has signage directing motor vehicles to keep off tram tracks in peak periods.

Between **Boldrewood Parade and Grimshaw Street** there was considerable open space on one or other side of Plenty Road. This allowed for land acquisition with minimal cost and disruption. The Feasibility Study proposed a track alignment along the centre of Plenty Road which would require a widening of the existing centre reservation and the relocation of some traffic lanes.

A decade earlier the CRB had taken advantage of this open space by progressively widening Plenty Road north of Boldrewood Parade with the inclusion of a narrow centre reservation. It was completed to Curtain Street by 1967, to Grimshaw Street by 1969 and to McLeans Road by 1972.

On the second day of the Inquiry, Chairman Dudley Snell provided an alternative track alignment. Although not mentioned in the Feasibility Study, the Board had investigated the option of constructing part of the tramway extension along the side of Plenty Road. This presented two advantages – cheaper construction costs by avoiding alterations to some of the existing roadway and improved passenger interchange with buses.

This new option took many by surprise, drew the support of two municipal authorities and was debated extensively. One notable disadvantage was that the tramway would be further from residential areas with most intending passengers required to cross the full width of Plenty Road. In the committee's view the advantages were outweighed by the disadvantages.

Difficulties with road and pedestrian access to Larundel Psychiatric Hospital, its staff residences and the tramway were also discussed

extensively. A pedestrian underpass was proposed as a solution – but this was neither included in the recommendations nor built.

### Congestion point

The east-west arterial roads of **Grimshaw Street and Settlement Road** formed a major intersection with Plenty Road. Over previous decades residential and business development had clustered around this intersection constraining road widening along a 250 metre length of Plenty Road. The Diamond Valley and Whittlesea shires had recently cooperated with the CRB to maximise traffic flows and were protective of their work.

Both track alignments included a tram right-of-way bordered by barrier kerbs, which would potentially reduce the width of the roadway. The municipal authorities strongly objected, claiming this would increase road accidents and congestion and require further modifications to the intersection and traffic signals. A strong argument was made to acquire property to the west of the intersection for the tramway but this was not undertaken. When built in 1987, a tramway right-of-way was constructed.

Between **Settlement Road and McLeans Road**, a shopping centre and hotel were located on the western side of Plenty Road. The M&MTB noted that this was a more favourable location for a terminus than in the centre reservation or at a point south of Grimshaw Street as recommended in the 1967 Inquiry. It argued that the shopping centre would offer better interchange for shoppers and buses. The Feasibility Study included drawings of a proposed single track terminus located in the shopping centre car park.

This proposal generated complaints about the loss of parking spaces and a perceived danger for pedestrians. Chairman Snell then proposed a single loop track around the perimeter of the shopping centre that would not require trams to use the car park. Such terminus loops had been used in Sydney and other cities. But this proposal also drew strong criticism from local government and shop owners.

*Plenty Road, East Preston looking southwards toward the Tyler Street terminus at the top of the rise, March 1983. Note the overhead wires already in place and the M&MTB crew working in white overalls. A Dyson Bus Service Bedford is southbound on a school run. Photograph by Gary Davey.*



*Plenty Road, East Preston looking southwards toward the Tyler Street terminus at the top of the rise, March 1983. Track crew are laying new track that will join with track being built from Tyler Street. Note the overhead trolley wires already in place. Photograph by Gary Davey.*



During his explanation, Snell mentioned a future option of introducing single-ended trams with a driver cab at only one end. However, neither terminus proposals were included in the committee recommendations nor have single ended trams been introduced. When constructed in 1987, a single track terminus was located in the middle of Plenty Road with adjoining bus bays.

### Enthusiastic endorsement

Limited time was spent on the option of an extension between **McLeans Road and McKimmies Lane**. While several submissions argued in favour, the committee agreed with the M&MTB that the lack of development along this section did not make it viable. The committee noted that if worthwhile patronage became evident in the future, “the Ministry of Transport should examine ways and means of accommodating it by provision of tram extension, bus system or reopening the railway beyond Epping.”

The committee enthusiastically endorsed the building of a 5.8km tramway extension from Tyler Street to McLeans Road along the centre reservation and presented its report to the Governor-in-Council in September 1977. In early 1978 a three-year scheme to fund the extension was announced and \$280,000 was allocated for preliminary works in the September 1978 budget. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways (Bundoora Tramway) Act 1978 was then passed by parliament in December.

### Economic woes

At this time Australia was continuing to experience economic problems which had first emerged in the early 1970s. Inflation, declining manufacturing output, rising unemployment and industrial unrest had reduced state and federal government income. The federal government’s funding for states was restricted. Then a second world oil crisis in 1979 and



*John Cain (1931-2019), was a lawyer and the son of the previous Victorian Labor Premier, John Cain Senior (1882-1957, Premier 1952-55). He entered the Victorian Parliament as a Labor candidate in 1976 winning the newly formed lower house seat of Bundoora. Cain became party leader in 1981 and was Premier between 1982 and 1990. His government introduced numerous reforms to the State of Victoria. Detail from a 1985 official Metropolitan Transit Authority photograph.*

a disastrous May 1979 state election left the long-standing Liberal government hanging onto power with a one seat majority.

To address its unsustainable subsidies to passenger and freight transport, the Liberal government commissioned the Victorian Transport Study (Lonie Report) headed by retired General Motors and BHP executive Murray Lonie. The study's September 1980 report recommended the deregulation of transport markets along with the closure of seven tram lines, seven suburban rail lines and most country rail services.

Even though the Hamer Government promptly rejected a number of the report's recommendations, an extension to the East Preston tram line was now out of the question.

### **Change of government**

In the April 1982 election, the Liberal government was soundly defeated with Labor winning 49 of 81 lower house seats. As Australia sank into recession, the new Premier, John Cain, brought an ambitious plan to stimulate Victoria's growth by pump priming the economy. This would include infrastructure spending on transport, health, manufacturing and even sport – investment in the tramway system would be part of this stimulus. But where would the money come from?

In the September 1982 budget speech, Labor treasurer Rob Jolly announced that the sinking funds of major state authorities would be abolished. These funds would be transferred to a new Victorian Development Fund to finance capital works and employment initiatives. The state would approach the federal government to match its growth initiatives dollar for dollar and Victoria would also introduce a resource-based tax on gas and coal, a financial institutions duty and other taxes. The Treasurer added:

It is proposed to significantly increase the [capital] work efforts of the public transport authorities through the leasing of new equipment and the sale and lease back of existing rolling stock. The combined works programs of the railway and tramway systems in 1982-83 will be \$227.5m – about double the figure for last year. Nearly \$190m of the program will be financed from leasing sources. [Victorian Hansard, 22 September 1982, p 552]

These leasing arrangements and debt would come back to bite the government when Victoria was again hit by recession at the end of the decade. But in the short term Victoria's unemployment declined, the state moved out of recession and Melbourne's tramways resumed a period of expansion begun in the 1970s. The extension to Bundoora and the ordering of the A class and articulated B class tramcars were two of several tramway capital works to be funded.

Construction of the new terminus northeast of the Boldrewood Parade intersection, March 1983. Note the narrow grassed centre reservation installed in the mid-1960s and the overhead trolley wires that converge for the single track terminus. Photograph by Gary Davey.



### Acknowledgments

My thanks to Dale Budd, Gary Davey, Warren Doubleday, Mal Rowe, Brian Weedon and Randall Wilson for their assistance with research and photographs for this article.

Thanks also to the Australian Electric Traction Association (AETA) for its large donation of government transport documents to the museum's collection, some of which are listed at right.

### Construction

The construction of the Bundoora extension in three stages to McLeans Road began in late 1982 and was completed by April 1987. Details of these works and the subsequent extension to Bundoora RMIT at McKimmies Road by 1995 will feature in a future article.

Geoff Brown

#### Sources

- East Preston Tramway Extension Feasibility Study (1976), M&MTB
- Jones, R. (2004), *Fares Please: An economic history of Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board*
- Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways (Bundoora Tramway) Act 1978, AustLII
- Report from the Parliamentary Public Works Committee on the Plenty Road, Preston, Tramway Extension Inquiry (1967)
- Report from the Parliamentary Public Works Committee on the East Preston Tramway Inquiry (1977)
- Transcript of Evidence given before the Public Works Committee regarding the East Preston Tramway Inquiry, (27 October 1976 to 6 July 1977)
- Victorian Hansard (1977-1980, 1982), Parliament of Victoria



## The Heatherton Sanitorium tramway

*The terminus at the Sanitorium. Photograph courtesy of the Canberra & District Historical Society.*

Electric trams are typically associated with busy streets and passengers boarding, riding and alighting the cars. In Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs, there was one electric tramway with none of these characteristics. This tramway opened in 1912 and ran for about fourteen years. It carried no passengers and did not run along streets. But it did serve a vital purpose.

Read on for the story of this tramline.

### **The Cheltenham Benevolent Asylum and Hospital**

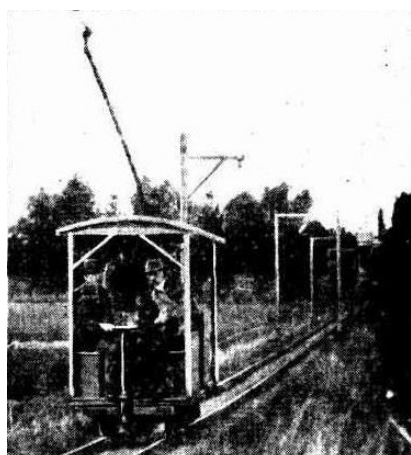
In 1851, fifteen years after the founding of Melbourne, the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum was built on bushland, on a substantial site between Abbotsford and Curzon Streets. It divided Victoria Street into two separate sections and straddled the suburbs of West Melbourne and North Melbourne. The Asylum was established to be a place of refuge for the



*George William Watson (1850-1915) was born and educated in England. He entered the Public Works Department soon after his arrival in Victoria in October 1872. In 1910 he was promoted to Chief Architect of the Public Works Department. Watson took an active part in the Service Corps of the Victorian militia, eventually being promoted to the rank of colonel, and was honorary aide-de-camp for several State Governors.*

*Photograph from The Cyclopaedia of Victoria (Johnstone, O'Shannessy & Co).*

*The electric tram travelling towards the Sanatorium. Image from The Argus, 11 August 1923.*



“aged, infirm, disabled or destitute of all creeds and nations”. It was operated by the Victoria Benevolent Society which was privately funded.

The Asylum’s role over time increasingly focused on the care of the aged. This led to conversations about the suitability of the buildings for this role. The three-storey structures proved to be inappropriate for many elderly and infirm residents in the Asylum.

By the 1870s, there were calls for its removal to a larger and more appropriate site. In 1890, a Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions commented on the risk of fire at the Asylum: “Should a fire occur in the present building... it would spread with great rapidity, and the chances of all the inmates being rescued would be remote.”

Finally in 1904, a special meeting of the Society voted to move the Asylum. The Society chose a site at Cheltenham which had been reserved by the Government many years earlier. The 152 acre site was on a ridge commanding views of Port Phillip Bay and the Dandenong Ranges. Charles D'Ebro was engaged as the architect for the project, and the contractor was Wadey and Co.

The first sod was turned in May 1908, and construction was completed by the end of 1910. The transport of materials during the construction was facilitated by the use of a temporary narrow-gauge railway built between Cheltenham Station and the Asylum.

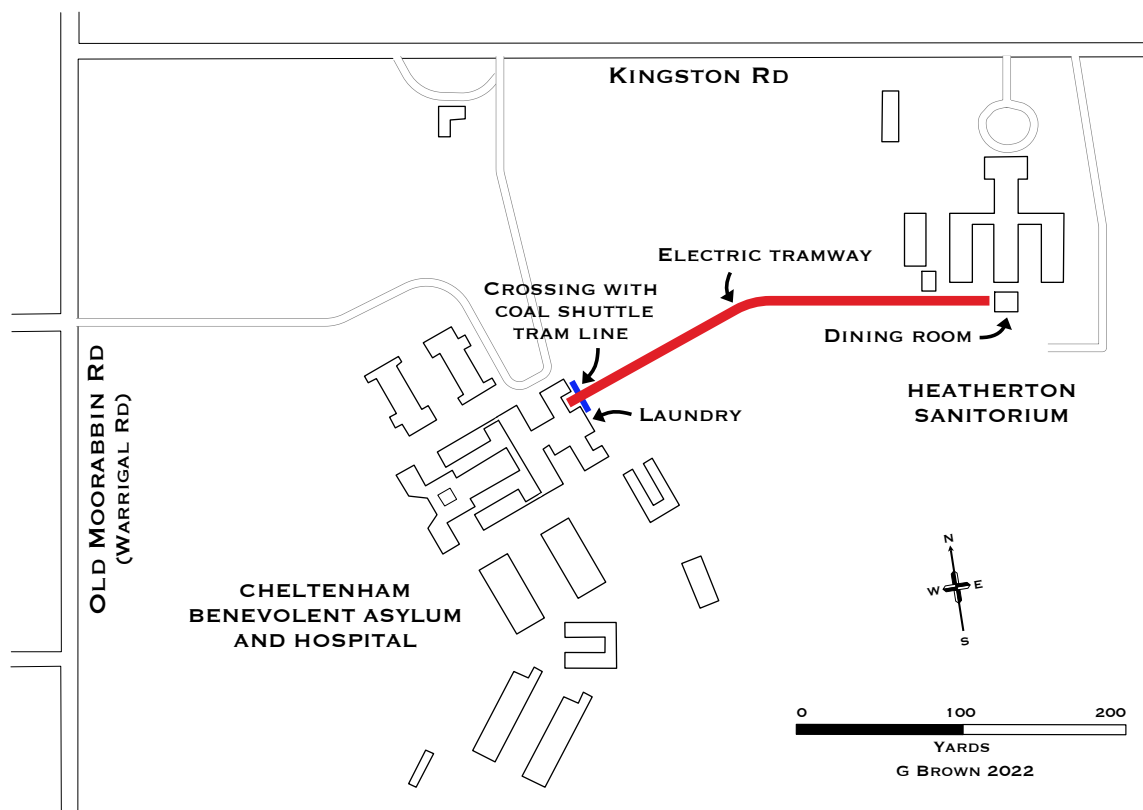
During the last week of March 1911, the 510 residents (317 men and 193 women) were transferred to Cheltenham. The former facility was demolished by Whelan the Wrecker later that year.

### **The Heatherton Sanatorium**

In the final decades of the 19th century, tuberculosis had emerged as a prominent cause of death. Being an infectious disease, it was closely monitored by the State Government through its Department of Public Health. Responsibility for providing treatment for the disease was however shared by the State Government and Municipal authorities. In March 1910, an agreement was reached between the Department of Public Health and metropolitan municipalities to construct a sanatorium on the same site as the Cheltenham Benevolent Asylum but about a quarter of a mile (400 metres) distant from the Asylum.

As the sanatorium was a State Government facility, the responsibility for the design and supervision of the construction rested with the Public Works Department (PWD). The Chief Architect of the Department, G.W. Watson, undertook the design of the facility in late 1910. It comprised three wings, each of which had three wards. The sanatorium had accommodation for 101 inpatients. Tenders were called in early 1911 and T. Quayle was awarded the contract. Practical completion was achieved in December 1912.

## HEATHERTON SANITORIUM TRAMWAY



*Plan of the Cheltenham Asylum and Heatherton Sanitorium showing the tramway route.*

### The electric tramway

The main reason for locating the two facilities in close proximity was the opportunity for the Benevolent Asylum to prepare meals and provide laundry facilities for both locations. The method selected by Watson to transport meals and laundry was an electric tramway.

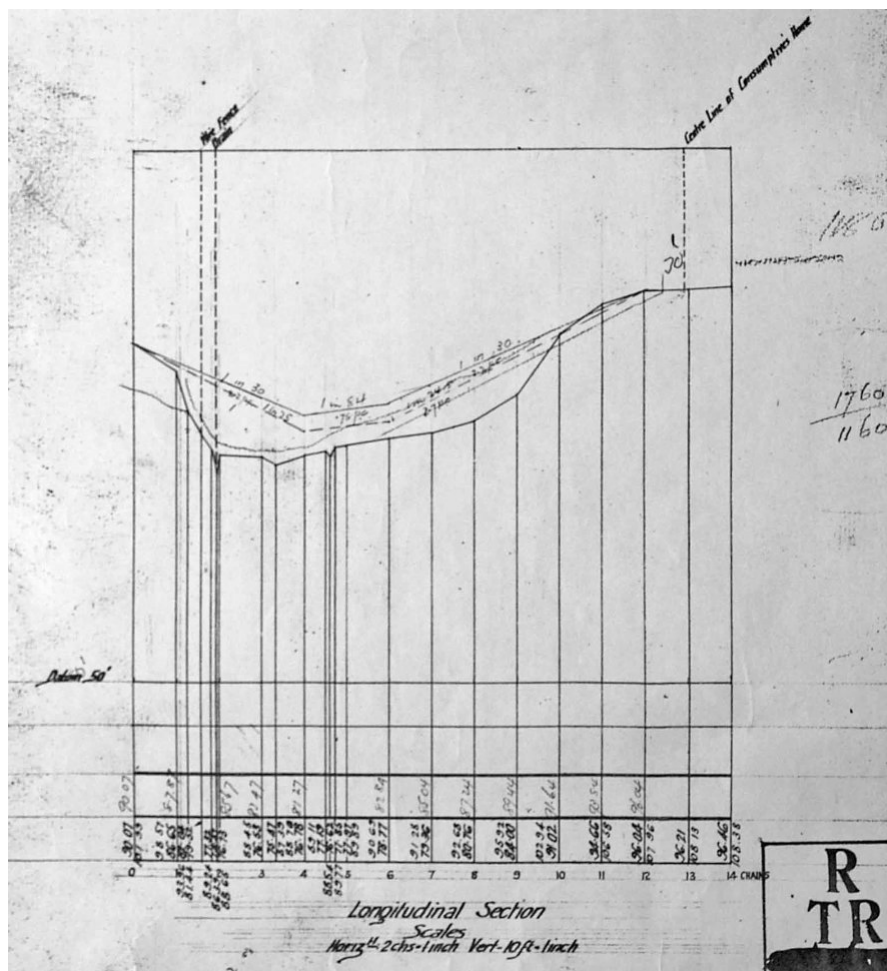
The Department of Public Health signed off the scheme in August 1912, and the Public Works Department then called tenders. The tramcar and overhead components were supplied by G. Weymouth Pty Ltd at a cost of £197 17s 2d. An additional boiler and dynamo had to be ordered for the Benevolent Asylum at a cost of about £1,800 as the existing plant had insufficient capacity to power the tramcar. No information has been found regarding the construction of the track.

The line was 14 chains (308 yards, or 282 metres) long. It commenced at the Asylum laundry in an alcove. Immediately outside of the laundry, the tramline crossed another light rail line at right angles. That line was used for coal skips. The tramline then crossed the shallow valley between the two institutions and terminated at the Sanitorium just west of the dining room. A longitudinal section of the line prepared by the PWD indicated grades of around 1 in 30 on both sides of the valley. The gauge was not documented but from photographs it appears to be two feet (0.6 metre).

The tramcar was a flat trolley with a bench seat for the operator and a set of controls at the western end. There was a low bulkhead at the other end of



Public Works Department longitudinal section of the line. PWD contemplated excavations to ease the grades. It is uncertain whether or not the regrading occurred. Image courtesy of Public Record Office Victoria.



the tramcar. Low sides with a central opening were provided on each side of the car. The arched roof and trolley pole were supported by four corner posts.

A trial trip with a load was made in mid-December 1912. The trip to the Sanatorium took 1 minute 40 seconds. The return trip was quicker at 1 minute 20 seconds as the climb up to the Asylum was shorter than the climb to the Sanatorium. The first patients were admitted in March 1913, and regular operation of the tramway would have started at this time.

### Subsequent developments

In early 1925, work commenced on a new kitchen at the Sanatorium. The work was completed around July and meal preparation had commenced by December 1925. The arrangement with the Benevolent Asylum for the provision for meals was then no longer necessary. The tramway lost the main reason for its existence, and it is believed that it ceased running around this time.

There is no sign of the tramline in an aerial photograph of the facilities taken in 1945. Instead, an internal roadway linked the Sanatorium and the Asylum. This road would have enabled stores and laundry to be transferred by truck. Part of the road was on the same alignment as the former tramline.

*Aerial photograph of the Heatherton Sanatorium and Cheltenham Asylum, 1945. Photograph courtesy of the University of Melbourne.*



The number of cases of tuberculosis started to decline from the late 1950s. By 1974, the low caseload enabled the Sanatorium to be used for other health services. The facility gradually deteriorated and it was closed in January 1998. The site was subdivided and sold for housing in the early 2000s.

The Benevolent Asylum was renamed the Kingston Centre on 21 October 1970. The Centre still offers services for the aged but no longer provides long term residential services.

*Brian Weedon*

## Acknowledgements

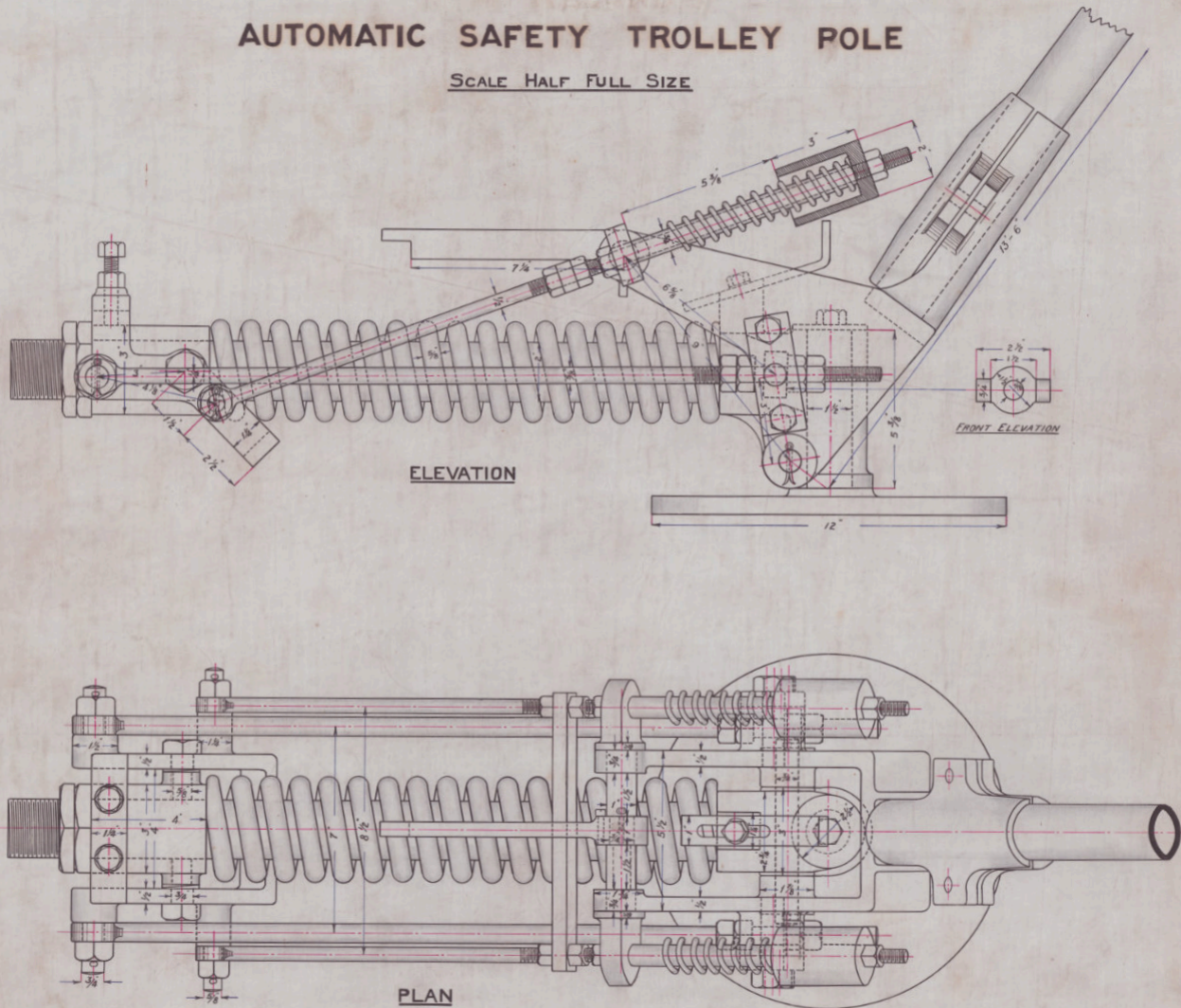
Colin Harvey located PWD plans of the tramline and the Sanatorium, and Ross Willson found the Government Gazette notices concerning the supply of the tramcar and overhead equipment. Geoff Brown prepared the tramline plan. Contemporary newspaper reports were sourced through Trove at the National Library of Australia.

## Sources

- Bennett, Alan (2018), *Heatherton Tuberculosis Sanatorium*, Kingston Local History.
- Churchward, M. (2010) *Geo. Weymouth Pty Ltd, Electrical Engineers, Richmond, Victoria* in Museums Victoria Collections
- Dennis, John (2014), "Off The Beaten Track", *Narrow Gauge Downunder*, Issue 53, April 2014, pp 38-39.
- Fairlam, W.P. (1968), "The Cheltenham and Heatherton Tramway", *ARHS Bulletin* No 366, April 1968, pp 86-90.
- First Progress Report of the Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions*, 11 November 1890.
- Kehoe, Mary, *The Benevolent Asylum*, Hotham History Project.
- Tout-Smith, D. (2020), *Tuberculosis (TB) Outbreaks in Victoria*, Museums Victoria.
- Victorian Government Gazette*, 18 September 1912, p 3865.
- Victorian Government Gazette*, 11 June 1913, p 2507.
- Welsh, Lachlan (2022), *Benevolent Asylum*.
- Whitehead, Graham (2018), *The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum Comes to Cheltenham*, Kingston Local History.

# AUTOMATIC SAFETY TROLLEY POLE

SCALE HALF FULL SIZE



## Scanning our collection of plans & drawings

Preparation work is almost complete, and we are about to commence scanning our huge collection of tram and bus plans and drawings.

The museum is privileged to be the custodian of such an important archive of tram and bus material. These plans and drawings are extremely fragile – handling the items results in irreversible damage which accumulates over time. The aim of our digitisation project is to ensure that the information in these documents is saved for future generations, while protecting the originals against damage from unnecessary handling.

There are between four and five thousand documents in the collection. It includes plans of Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board tramcars, as well as drawings from the Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust, the Fitzroy, Northcote and Preston Tramways Trust and the Hawthorn Tramways Trust: tramcars, wiring diagrams, motors, controllers and power supplies. Many have been rendered obsolete by the passage of time, but still provide

*Above is a technical drawing of a trolley base dated 12 April 1921, and one of the drawings from the Melbourne Tram Museum's collection that has been digitised for this project.*

important information on the development and history of our city's tramways.

These drawings are not only important parts of tramway history, but they are also beautiful artworks illustrating technical draughting skills from the early twentieth century to its close.

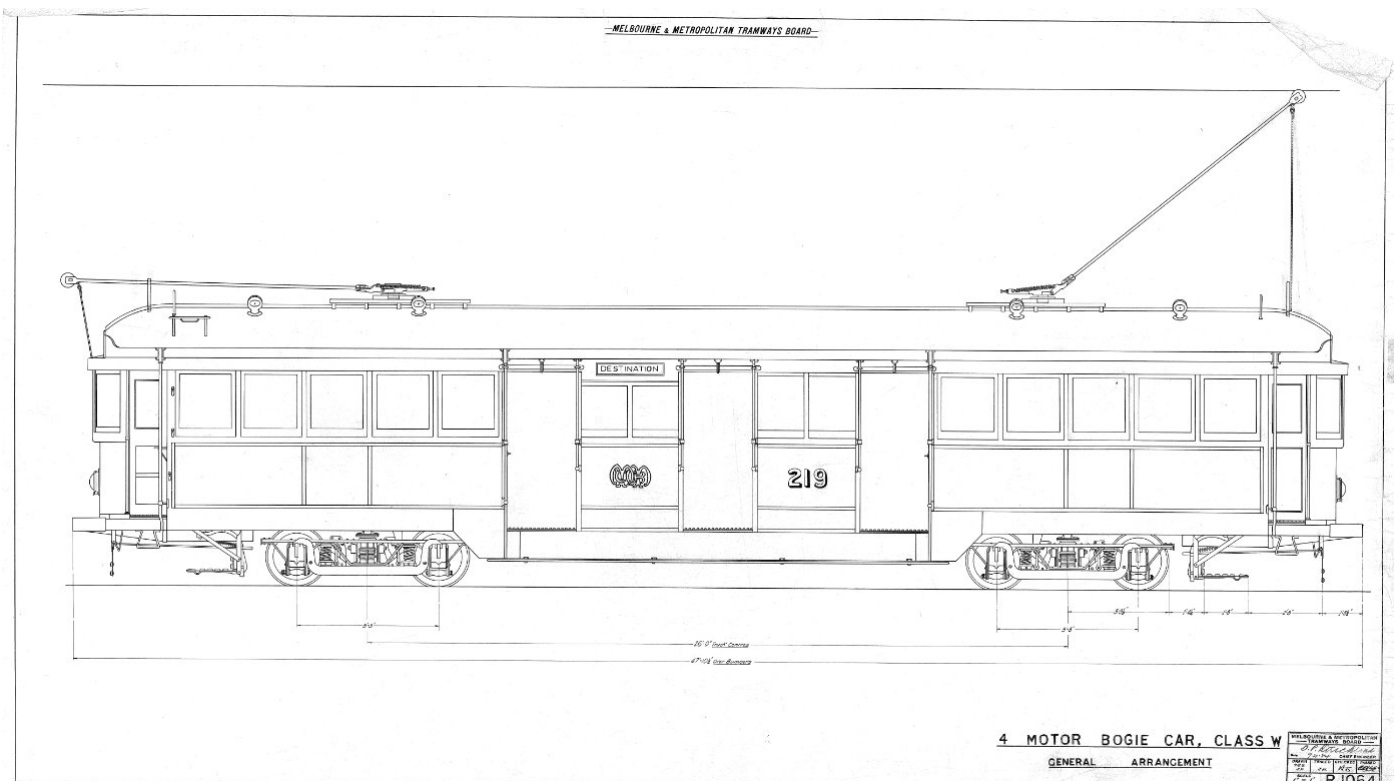
Scanning will commence in December, on museum open days as well as other days by arrangement. We need volunteers to help with this important task – emails with scanning schedules will be distributed to museum members shortly. Volunteers participating in the project will be trained in handling and scanning the documents.

If you want to be part of this important project, contact Kevin Taig at [kevin.taig@trammuseum.org.au](mailto:kevin.taig@trammuseum.org.au) or call 0418 314 456.

Not a member and want to participate? Don't let that stop you in contacting Kevin.

Kevin Taig

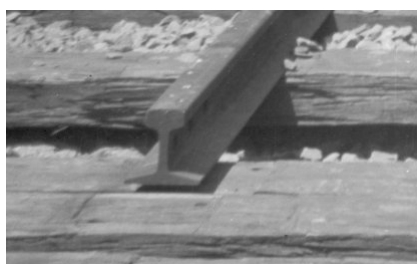
*Below is a general arrangement drawing, dated 7 April 1924, of the prototype Melbourne W class tram No 219, the first to be built. The equal widths of the doorways in the drop centre were characteristic of the first 200 W class trams. Note the first version of the M&MTB logo, which changed to its classic design shortly after this drawing was issued. Image from the collection of the Melbourne Tram Museum.*





## Building the La Trobe Street track

*The above photograph looks eastwards along Victoria Street towards Nicolson Street, showing trackwork under construction in late 1948. Below is a detail of the tram track in the main photograph. From the Peter Duckett collection, Melbourne Tram Museum.*



In recent months the Museum's elves have been busy sorting through a large box of prints and negatives taken by Peter Duckett. So far over 500 images have been scanned. Many of these images show details of new tram line construction in Melbourne during the 1940s and 1950s. Some clever detective work has been needed to identify locations, the backgrounds having been transformed significantly over the last 70 years.

The photograph above shows the construction of a section of track located between Nicholson Street and the first crossover opposite the College of Surgeons. St Vincent's Hospital appears in the background, while the buildings to the right are part of the Salvation Army Training College. A double deck bus travelling northwards along Nicolson Street is possibly on its way to Northcote. Track still needs to be laid over the Nicholson Street intersection, with work being carried out on either side of the roadway.

In 1946 the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board (M&MTB) announced its intention to build a line from Victoria Parade Junction (now St Vincent's Plaza) along Victoria Parade and La Trobe Street to Spencer Street. The purpose of this line was to provide peak period relief to Collins Street traffic. Work commenced in September 1948 and the M&MTB hoped



*Trackwork in Victoria Street, late 1948. Photograph from the Peter Duckett collection, Melbourne Tram Museum.*

that it would be completed by June 1949. However completion was delayed by the material and manpower shortages experienced during the years immediately after World War II. The line was eventually completed in late December 1950, with a formal opening on 15 January 1951.

The date of the photograph would be around November or December 1948; reports in the January 1949 issue of *Tram Tracks – the Electric Traction Monthly* include a photograph from *The Argus* of the completed cross over.

The rail head (see insert) looks worn. Based on the tapered web of the rail, it appears to be 94lb/yard or 47kg/m rail. At first appearance the sleepers look secondhand, but a closer examination suggests they have been adzed or shaped to provide a level surface for the point castings to be laid adjacent to the end of the rail.

A second photograph shows four workmen completing the cross over. The seated man is holding the sleeper up against the foot of the rail with a bar so the man with the spiking hammer can drive a dog spike into position. The man on the right is tightening fishplate bolts. Scattered on the ground is a track gauge, a sleeper auger for hand drilling the holes, track jacks and other equipment – trackwork at that time was still very much manual labour.

The La Trobe Street line opened with no fanfare, speeches or ceremonies. Initially the line ran as an extension of the Hawthorn to Spencer Street trams along La Trobe Street and terminating at Brunswick Street, operating only on

Peter Duckett was the proprietor of the Model Dockyard bookshop in Swanston Street, a foundation member of the Australian Electric Traction Association, and a collector of tramway memorabilia and photographs. Peter died in 2011. He left his vast collection of tramway books and magazines to the Victorian State Department of Transport. The collection is currently housed at the Melbourne Tram Museum.



Map of tram routes in central Melbourne, 1945. Note the lack of east-west routes – at that time, Bourke Street was served by buses. From the collection of the Melbourne Tram Museum.

weekdays from around 6am to 6pm and on Saturday mornings. However from late February 1951 a shuttle service – operated by Preston (Thornbury) depot – began running between Spencer Street and Brunswick Street.

It was not until 21 July 1952 that some of the Collins Street peak period services – West Preston, East Preston and Mont Albert – were diverted to run via La Trobe Street. This was expected to reduce the heavy overcrowding along Collins Street. The shuttle service continued, but again only during working hours on weekdays plus Saturday mornings. The Saturday shuttle service was discontinued in June 1955.

Today only Route 30 and the City Circle trams are scheduled to run along La Trobe Street. However, the track is frequently used for rolling stock transfers and as an alternative route for Bourke Street and Collins Street trams blocked by traffic disruptions.

Warren Doubleday



M&MTB W2 no 333 in La Trobe Street, 22 December 1967. Photograph by Mal Rowe.

# Vale: Ian Brady



*Ian Brady at Malvern Depot, 11 July 2008. Photograph by Mal Rowe.*

Ian Brady was known to many of us and had a long history of involvement with the Australian Electric Traction Association and the Australian Railway Historical Society in Sydney.

For many years Ian was on the NSW Railway Heritage Committee. He was described by another member of that committee as “very professional and with a ton of knowledge, as well as being a very amiable and pleasant person to chat with”. He was the author of several books on trains and trams, mostly in NSW.

Ian was a regular visitor to Melbourne – especially if a good opera was being performed.

I came to know Ian well around 2009 when he took on the mammoth task of writing the history of the Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust for Transit Australia Press.

I'm sad to report that Ian passed away on 9 November 2022 at the age of 87, following a stroke a week earlier. Ian is survived by his wife Barbara.

I'll remember Ian as a friend and a thorough gentleman.

*Mal Rowe*

*One of Ian's Melbourne pictures shows two trams at Malvern Depot in 1955 at the start of a special tour to celebrate the return of electric trams to Bourke Street.*

