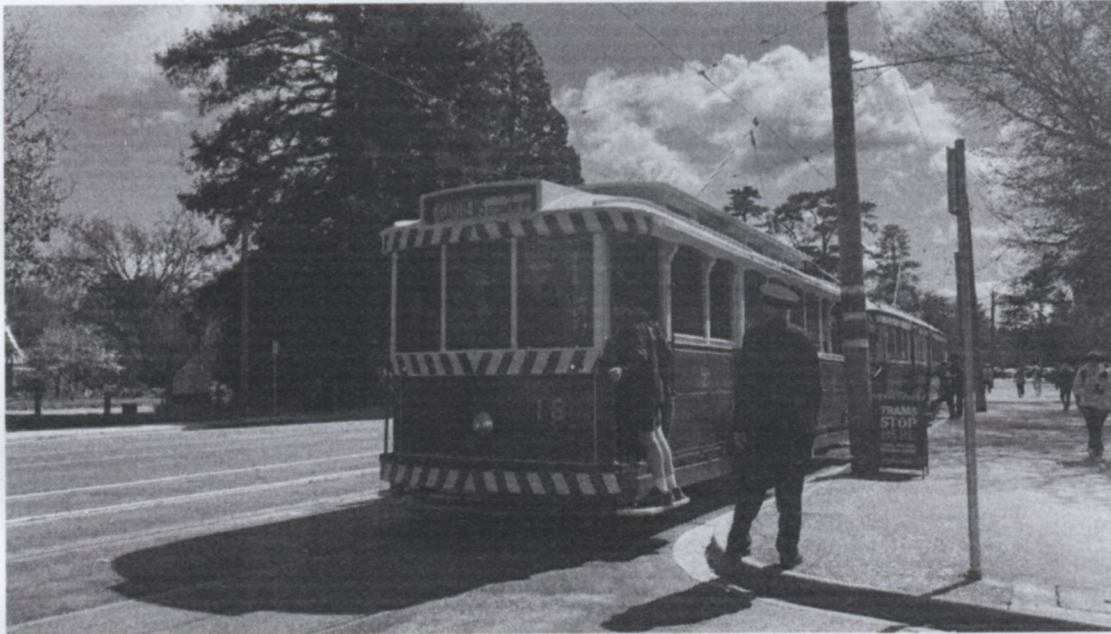


Ballarat Tramway Museum celebrates 50 years as hopeful enthusiasts look to the future

ABC Ballarat / By Laura Mayers

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One of the historic trams stops to let passengers on at Lake Wendouree in Ballarat. (ABC Ballarat: Laura Mayers)

Hundreds of history lovers and transport enthusiasts have rolled in to celebrate one of Ballarat's most popular tourist attractions.

The Ballarat Tramway Museum has commemorated its 50th anniversary, after being founded in 1971 when trams were removed from the city.

Due to the pandemic last year, a celebration was unable to go ahead.

The day of fun comes weeks after the volunteers behind the Tramway Museum unveiled the second stage of new tram tracks around Lake Wendouree.

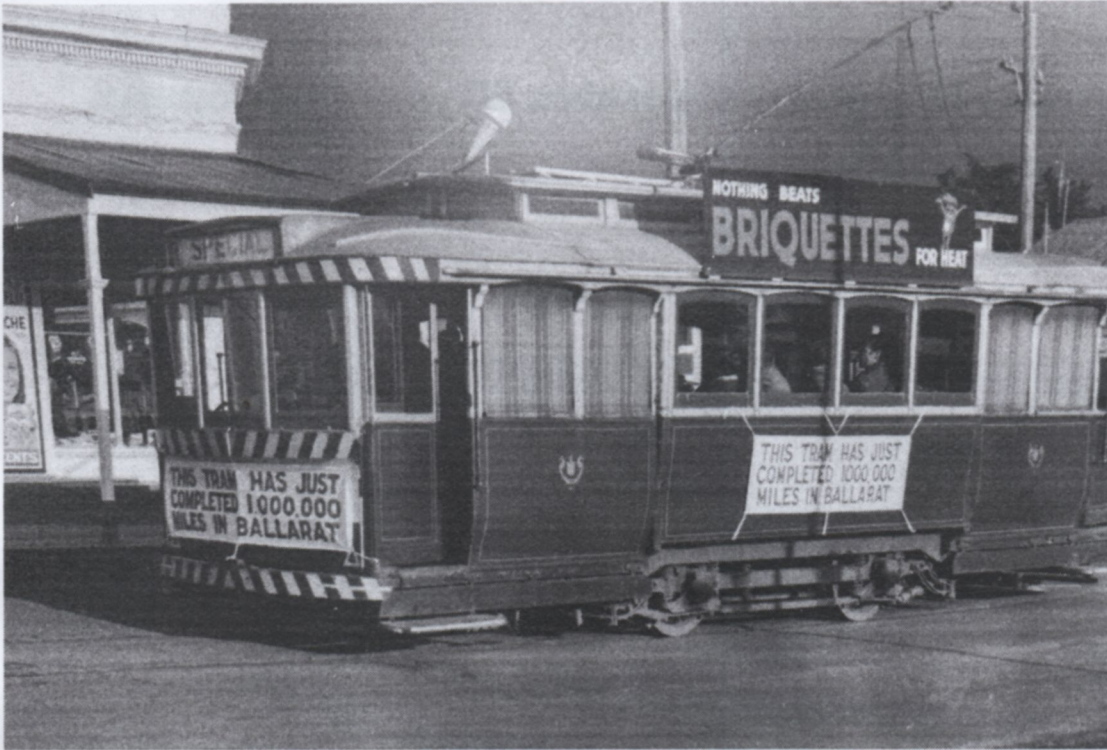
Visitors from across Australia came to enjoy tram rides around the lake, performers and grand

Key points:

- The 50-year anniversary celebration was delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions last year
- It came just weeks after a new train track was unveiled at Lake Wendouree
- A founding member says there is a renewed appreciation for

displays at the museum.

history among the population



One of the original trams that used to service the streets of Ballarat. (Supplied: Ballarat Tramway Museum)

Founding member of the Ballarat Tramway Museum Richard Gilbert said it was wonderful to celebrate the milestone.

"In those days, there weren't even any ride-on mowers. This bottom end of the gardens was a bit of out-of-control forest with trees, and long grass," he said.

"And now it's a different world with it being developed the way it has.

"We are very proud to be able to say we have the original shed that we built."

Looking to the future

The museum finally reopened to the public earlier this year after an extension was finished.



People arrive to join the Ballarat Tramway Museum for its 50th anniversary celebration. (ABC Ballarat: Laura Mayers)

"We've had a few people just from Brisbane come down just for [the celebration]," he said.

"They were past members and supporters of the organisation ... it's been a fantastic day."

Mr Mong said it had been tough period for museum volunteers after the pandemic forced the closure of its doors and left volunteers unable to socialise.

But he was pleased to see younger and older generations alike come out and celebrate.

"It's fantastic to be able to operate our trams on the tracks and show off our new tram museum. It's a double-whammy," Mr Mong said.

"It's a massive milestone for the organisation.

"Considering we've been able to soldier on for 50 years, it's tremendous."

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Richard Gilbert is a founding member of the museum, which was launched in 1971. (ABC Ballarat: Laura Mayers)

Mr Gilbert said he was excited to think about what the next 50 years at the museum would offer.

"We have people around who appreciate history. That's taken a new turn of phase," he said.

"I'd like to see ... the museum developed to tell more of the story of the trams of Ballarat.

"And maybe a little bit of tram track extension wouldn't go astray, either."

From far and wide

Ballarat Tramway Museum president Paul Mong said the museum had received visitors from across Australia.