

BALLARAT TRAMWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Progress report from the Publicity Officer: (19th August 1971).

Since the formation of the Society on 30th May 1971, your Council has been working towards our aim of retaining the tram line around Lake Wendouree in Ballarat as a tourist and historical attraction. The section of track we want to retain is that in Wendouree Parade.

The Combined Council has met twice and the Melbourne Members of the Council have met nine times. At the first Combined meeting, the following office bearers were appointed:

President: Hal Cain, (Ballarat). (Provisional).
Vice-President: Bill Jessup, (Melbourne).
Secretary: Neville Gower, (Ballarat).
Treasurer: Campbell Duncan, (Melbourne).
Publicity Officer: Paul Nicholson, (Melbourne).

The Society's official address is 5/12 Errard Street South, Ballarat, Victoria, 3350. All correspondence should be sent to this address.

Members in Melbourne gathered for a meeting at the VRI on 21st June. Attendance was poor in comparison to the earlier meeting, but this was due to the inclement weather on the night concerned.

We still haven't had any final word from the Ballarat City Council which is still considering our submissions. They are due to meet again on 30th August and we are hoping that they will hand down a firm decision then. Our Council Members have made several approaches to the Finance and Tourism Committees of the BCC. There have also been representations to a number of other bodies.

Our main problem is finance, or lack thereof! At the moment, we have 130 financial members. Most Melbourne members have been asked to give some indication as to how much money they could donate to the Society in the first few weeks after operations commence. A telephone appeal was conducted, and over \$800 was raised in four days. Your Council is very mindful of the need to conserve cash, and our expenditure over the past few weeks has been kept to the lowest possible level.

The need to raise more money is urgent. If each member could sign up one of his friends, our funds would be doubled. Others might like to promise cash donations. Campbell Duncan, our Treasurer, is only too happy to discuss financial matters with members, who can phone him on (03) 870 1595.

Members are probably aware of the closure dates. The first closure, Victoria Street and Gardens via Drummond Street North, takes place next Sunday, 23rd August. Mount Pleasant and Gardens via Sturt Street West go on 5th September, with the final closure (Sebastopol and Lydiard Street North) on 19th September. On each day, the normal service is provided to the last car. No special trams will run.

Tramway closures in the past have been rather rowdy affairs, and Ballarat will probably be no exception. We are appealing to all our members to consider that ALL cars will be going to some museum or another. Our cars should be safely locked in the depot on each of the last days, but nevertheless, the cars in use will be destined for another museum or body. Therefore, we are asking you to keep your eyes open for any acts or potential acts of vandalism and report them to either the police or the SEC officials who will be on the cars, or nearby. In this regard, we are speaking on behalf of all preservation groups around the country.

Members will be pleased to know that the Minister for Public Works, Murray Byrne and other Parliamentarians have acted on our behalf to have the Ballarat tram depot retained for our use until 31st December 1971. This will give us plenty of time to gather our equipment, and have everything ready for one move to our permanent depot site. After the end of the year, the depot site will be sold for residential development, and the building demolished.

Both before and after the closures, the tram depot is out of bounds to unauthorised visitors. Until 19th September, enthusiasts can apply to the SEC for official permission, but there is no guarantee that it will be given. After the final closure, people will be able to inspect our exhibits by prior arrangement only. Further details will be given in our next information sheet.

The SEC has agreed to provide us with a number of cars. We have applied for Nos 14, 26, 27, 38 and 40. Also, we have applied for No 28 as a source of spare parts. This car has been out of service for some time following an accident. Both the BTPS and the Tramway Museum Society of Victoria have applied for the scrubber car. We expect to receive official word from the SEC about our fleet shortly. Because of the unique historical value of the Ballarat cars, the demand from museums right around the world is greater than the supply available.

We apologise for the delay in issuing this circular. We aim to let our members know what is going as frequently as possible, but this is not always practicable because most of us are working flat out on the project. Because we want to conserve our funds, we will not be producing anything more sophisticated than a duplicated information sheet for the time being.

The next sheet should be sent out following the next Ballarat City Council meeting, in time for the final closure.

In conclusion, we wish to make it clear that only Members of the Society Council are permitted to use the name of the BTPS in an official capacity. Members are strongly encouraged to give the Society all the publicity they can, but there are limits. One younger member recently embarrassed the Society when he told tram crews in Ballarat that he wanted to know "how it was done" because he would be running the BTPS vehicles within a few months. Please...All we ask is a little discretion!

Another concerning factor, is the number of rumours circulating on the "enthusiast grapevine". Several of these concerning the Society have been far from the truth, and this circular should clear up any doubts. If any members have queries, please don't hesitate to write to the Secretary, but please include a stamped addressed envelope because we are conserving our finances.

REMEMBER - we need a lot of money within the next few weeks. If we are to succeed, we need YOUR help.

Paul Nicholson,
Publicity Office,
33 Broughton Road,
Surrey Hills,
Victoria, 3127,
(Phone: (03) 89 6228).