

# Trams on new tracks

BY ROCHELLE KIRKHAM

REPLACING Ballarat's historic tram tracks will provide a smoother ride for passengers and heritage trams.

The Ballarat Tramway Museum was awarded a \$200,000 Pick My Project grant on Tuesday to complete the first stage of the track replacement project.

It is the museum's biggest funding injection for a single project since its establishment in the 1970s.

Ballarat Tramway Museum president Paul Mong said replacing the tram tracks would help preserve Ballarat's history.

"Replacing the track will increase operations and future proof our museum," he said.

"This is preserving Ballarat's heritage and we all know heritage brings people to this city."

Track replacement will begin on the South Gardens Reserve end of Wendouree Parade where track condition is poorest.

Parts of the track date back to 1905 and were used by horse drawn trams.



**TRAM ENTHUSIASTS:** Ballarat Tramway Museum members Alice, 7, Ruby, 2 and their father Paul Mong, president, are helping to preserve Ballarat's history for future generations. **Picture:** Rochelle Kirkham

Mr Mong said new tracks would ensure a smoother ride, which will improve the running of the restaurant tram.

"At the moment the track is so rough we can't actually take our restaurant tram up there," he said.

"We will be able to do a full trip in the restaurant tram, but it will also protect our

100-year-old fleet as well. At the moment they are starting to deteriorate from wear and tear on the rough tracks."

City of Ballarat had promised the Ballarat Tramway Museum it would match any funding it campaigned for to complete an extended section of the track.

Replacement work is expected to take around four

weeks to complete.

Tramway Museum members said they had 'big plans' for the future of the museum, with plans to build a new display museum at the tram depot and long term visions to extend the tram route.

More than 30,000 people ride Ballarat's trams or visit the Tramway Museum each year. The trams operate

weekends, public holidays and school holidays. It is run by more than 50 active volunteers and 250 members. Members range from two and a half to people in their late 70s.

Mr Mong said he would like to thank the state government for the grant and community members for voting for the project.

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