

'Historic' Melbourne trams to call Launceston home

[Jessica Willard](#) April 9 2019 - 6:45PM

The trams were among the first to leave Melbourne's Newport Railway Workshop on Tuesday, following an expression of interest process by the Victorian Government to find new homes for about 130 disused rail vehicles.

The City of Launceston council was one of the first successful applicants, with potential plans including transforming the trams into indoor seating areas within a mobile food vendor area in Riverbend Park, formerly known as the North Bank precinct.

Mayor Albert van Zetten said the council was thrilled with its successful \$1000 bid.

"The trams are in an original condition, and we can imagine a whole host of different uses for them, whether that's as play elements in parks, dining areas, community restoration and education projects and more," he said.

"Our plans at this stage are for the trams are to be put into storage at our depot until we can consult with the council and community groups on potential future restoration or fit-out projects.

"Ultimately, they could be re-purposed as a picnic or play elements in a park like Riverbend Park, and we're excited to begin discussions with local community and education groups about the next steps.

"It's something a bit different, celebrates our tram heritage and our historic relationship with Melbourne, and we're excited to have been successful in our bid."

Considered a piece of Melbourne's history, about 750 W-class trams

were built between 1923 and 1956.

More than 1500 applications were received through the expression of interest process, which was mostly for W-Class trams retired from Victoria's railway and tram network over the past 30 years.

After being lifted onto trucks from Newport's East Block, the trams are expected to arrive on Thursday following an overnight journey on the Spirit of Tasmania.

Acting Victorian Public Transport Minister Jacinta Allan said the move offered the trams a second life after many years in storage.

"It's exciting to see two retired Victorian trams make the trip across the Bass Strait, where they will help promote our state to Launceston locals and visitors alike," she said.

"We look forward to blowing the dust off our retired tram fleet and re-homing more trams over the coming years."

VicTrack is in the process of allocating the remaining trams to successful applicants. The relocation of all retired trams from Newport is expected to take two years.