

For "Australia Calls"
July, 1950

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN
TRAMWAYS BOARD.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFITABLE EMPLOYMENT.

As the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board operates more than 1,100 vehicles (nearly 800 of these being electric trams, the remainder being ~~minors~~ buses mostly of the Diesel type), has extensive workshops at Preston for the construction, overhaul and maintenance of the trams and the building of bus bodies, and a large, well-equipped garage at North Fitzroy for the repair, maintenance and overhaul of the buses and a Tailoring Department at Hawthorn for the making of all uniforms and clothing issued to the staff, it will be obvious that the organisation offers considerable scope for profitable employment either to those who desire to enter the Traffic Department or to those who follow any of the skilled trades whose services are utilised in the construction, repair and maintenance of the rolling stock.

Many advantages and benefits are enjoyed by the employees of the Board. All sections work on the basis of a 5-day 40-hour week, which means, except for those engaged in or associated with the Traffic Department, that the week finishes on the Friday evening. The Traffic Department operates a round-the-clock service ; but/^{so}that a.m. and p.m. shifts may be shared equally the rosters provide for alternate weeks of a.m. and p.m. shifts. As the 5-day week provides two days off each week, the rosters are arranged to give a percentage of 3-day and 4-day breaks off, such as Friday and Saturday at the end of one week and Sunday and Monday at the commencement of the following week. On the average, a driver, conductor or conductress can count on having every other Sunday and every sixth Saturday free.

To avoid misunderstanding, it must be explained that if traffic requirements are such that the Depot Master is compelled to cancel a day off, either another day is provided in the same week or the work done on the day off is paid for at a minimum of time and three-quarters. All duty on Saturdays and Public Holidays is paid for at penalty rates, while double time is the rate for Sundays. In addition, there are penalty rates for spread of hours and for overtime. All uniform and other clothing issued is supplied free.

Subject to satisfactory conduct, Traffic employees receive 20 consecutive days' leave every 11 months so as to ensure that all will rotate round the calendar. Other employees receive a minimum of two weeks leave per annum. Payment for all leave is made prior to the employee going on holiday. One week's sick leave on full pay is granted each year. Any such leave not taken is carried forward to the following year and is cumulative to a maximum of 60 days. Such accumulation may be allowed as paid recreation leave at the end of each 10-yearly period.

All employees come under the Board's Retiring and Death Gratuity Scheme, which is financed solely by the Board. Under this plan, which operates after 10 years' continuous service, an employee on retiring at the age of 65 receives a gift of 78 weeks' salary or wages for the first 20 years, plus one week's salary or wages for each additional year over 20 up to a maximum of 104 weeks. Should death occur, the widow, or dependant, receives two weeks salary or wages for each year of service. Two weeks for each year of services is given also to the man who wishes to retire at 60 or whose health incapacitates him from further work. Former members of the Services (Australian, British or other Dominion Forces) are recognised socially. If their health at 60 does not permit them to continue, then they receive the full gratuity of four weeks salary or wages to the maximum indicated above.

Naturally, when a man is thinking about trying his fortune in another land his primary concern is the wage he will receive. In this connection he must remember that in Australia the wage structure is founded on the Basic Wage, which is supposed to be the minimum amount on which a man can support himself, his wife and three children, plus the "margin for skill" figuring in all Awards made by the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration. In practice, no one gets the bare Basic Wage, for even a labourer has his "margin" added. For those meaning to look for work in ~~Australia~~ Victoria, the ^{minimum} rates for typical grades in the employ of the Board at the end of July, 1950, are set out below. These rates are subject to the addition of 3/ per week after 10 years service, with an additional 1/6 per week for each additional five years, and are exclusive of all penalty rates.

GRADE

Bodymakers	£ 9	14	0
Coach Painters	9	9	6
Wood Machinists, 1st Class	9	9	6
Metal Machinists, 3rd Class	8	11	6
Carpenters	9	18	0
Plumbers	10	14	11
Patternmakers	10	8	0
Fitters and Turners	9	14	0
Motor Mechanics	9	14	0
Angle-iron Smiths	9	18	6
Blacksmiths	9	15	6
Welders, 1st Class	9	18	6
Electrical Fitters or Mechanics	9	14	0
Linesmen	9	3	6

While the guaranteed minimum rate that can be earned by a tram driver, ~~and~~ tram or bus conductor or conductress/was in July, 1950, £8/6/ per week, the guaranteed minimum for a bus driver being £9/1/6 per week, these amounts were, generally speaking, always exceeded mainly through the Award giving time and a half for Saturdays and double time for Sundays and secondarily by overtime and spread of hours penalty rates. That it is possible for Traffic employees to earn quite astonishing sums will be evident when actual individual earnings for the week which ended on the 8th July are quoted :

While the minimum rate, guaranteed, that can be earned by a tram driver, tram or bus conductor or conductress from their second year of service was £8/6/ per week in July, 1950, the guaranteed minimum for a bus driver for less than 10 years' service being £9/1/6 per week, it is, in practice, extremely rare for these sums not to be exceeded, due mainly to the fact that all Saturday work is paid for at time and a half and Sunday work at double time. There are also penalty rates for overtime, spread of hours, working on a cancelled day off and public holidays. That it is easy for Traffic employees to earn quite astonishing sums will be evident when the rates for the various classes of duty are quoted :

Tram driver, tram and bus conductor or conductress worked 6 days, which included a Saturday	£11	16	7
" " " a " " worked 6 days which included Saturday and Sunday	12	17	4
" " " " " 6 " " included both Saturday and Sunday	13	14	11
Omnibus driver worked 6 days, including a Saturday	13	7	9
" " " 6 " " Sunday	13	12	3
" " " 6 " " both Saturday and Sunday	14	16	1
One-Man Omnibus driver, 6 days, including a Saturday	13	10	3
" " " 6 " " a Sunday	14	7	10
" " " 6 " " both Saturday and Sunday	15	11	4
" " " all-night, 5 nights	14	14	11
" " " " 6 "	17	18	5
Tram driver, all-night, 5 nights	12	14	11
" " " 6 "	15	14	10

These rates are increased by 3/ per week after 10 years, with an additional 1/6 per week for each five years, and are exclusive of all penalty rates for overtime or spread of hours. In addition, all employees of the Board enjoy free travel at all times, and their Benefit Society is subsidised on a £ for £ basis. The Society runs a Private Hospital, again with substantial financial assistance from the Board, and conducts separately a Mortality Fund which for a contribution of 1/ results in the deceased's beneficiary receiving approximately £175. For members of the Society, Hospital treatment is free both for them and their families.