

THE WERE

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yarra trams

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RIGHT: Farewell to a true gentleman of Melbourne's tramways.

Farewell Len Bates

More than 200 family, friends and colleagues have attended the funeral of Melbourne's longest serving tram driver, Len Bates.

Known as Lenny to his trammie colleagues and Lennie to his family, Lenard Reginald Bates died on 27 December 2011, aged 81.

Some of Len's passengers were among those who gathered to celebrate the life of a man who had served as a tram driver for 56 years.

He had driven trams until he was diagnosed with cancer early in December last year. In fact the illness caused Len to take the first sick leave of his career.

In a eulogy delivered by Len's niece Tracey, she told of his dedication to his family and to his beloved trams.


Such was Len's devotion to his work that he even reported for duty after being hit by a car one day on his way to work at Kew Depot.

His favourite tram was the W-Class. It was the only class of tram in service when he joined the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board on 13 June 1955. His tram driver cap number was 3050.

Lenny was recently presented with a new cap and it was placed on his coffin during his funeral service.

The CEO of Yarra Trams Michel Masson paid tribute to Len Bates saying he was an "icon of the icon that is Melbourne's tram network." He said in the worldwide operations of the Yarra Trams French parent company Keolis, Len was unique as the only person to be driving trams at the age of 81.

Michel said the company would consider a suitable way to ensure that Len Bates is remembered by future generations.

 SNAPSHOT	
Punctuality	85.24% (this time last January 84.85%)
Service Delivery	99.44% (this time last January 99.52%)
Tram-vehicle collisions	18 this month
Tram-tram collisions	2 this month
Passenger falls	2 this month
Pedestrian knockdowns	0 this month
Derailments	2 this month

All figures current on 12 January 2012



Remembering Lenny

After Lenny's sad passing his workmates were moved to put some of their memories in writing.

Kew Driver Michael Griffith penned a poem entitled *The Endless Road* (right) which he read at the service.

Depot Starter John Edwards shared his memories of 30 years working with Lenny.

"With the passing of Len we are left with a large gap in our depot" John said, "for someone to have driven trams for 56 years is incredible. I remember remarking to Len after he hit 65 that perhaps he would relax more and just do five days. He simply smiled and kept on."

John spoke of Lenny's love for the job and his willingness to have a chat with anybody in the depot, especially new drivers.

He remembered that Lenny trained many drivers at Kew and despite joining in an era where all trams were W's and working until the modern tram era he was still always available to give advice or solve problems with trams.

In the past Lenny fed stray cats in the depot and John recalled a practical joke when another staff member placed a 'fox tail' strategically hanging from a rubbish bin. Lenny's favourite stray was a ginger tom cat. Upon seeing the red tail hanging out he stopped his tram in the yard and ran over to the bin and gave a wave of relief when he realised it wasn't 'his' cat.

"He did a job he loved, he worked with the public and colleagues who he enjoyed. The saddest thing for me," John said "will be not seeing Len Bates carefully printing on the sign-in anymore".

ABOVE: A 56 rose tribute from Kew Depot. One for each year of Lenny's service.

RIGHT: Friends and colleagues formed a guard of honour for Lenny outside the funeral chapel.

The Endless Road by Michael Griffith

*After Laurie called with the news you'd passed
I moved outside and as the evening fell
I began wondering who you'd be stopping for now.*

*Was your tram filling with those drivers who
populate those pictures strung along our walls,
Ghosts to us who were smiling because
they knew you would be running late.*

*I saw you glance in your mirror at us,
and satisfied that all was well,
you moved away as gently as
you always conducted yourself.*

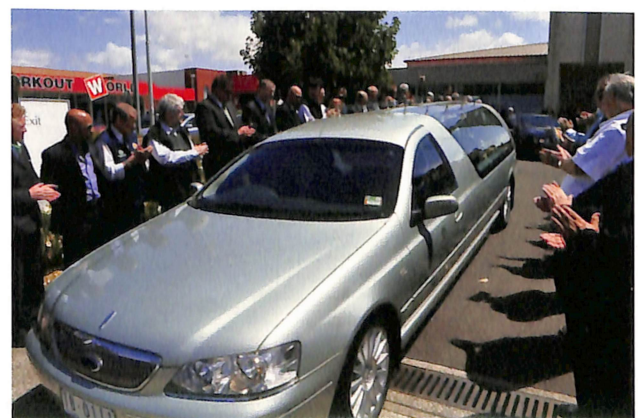
*It was a pleasure to know you Lenny,
And may your new road be an endless road.
May your new road be endless.*



ABOVE: The Kew maintenance team with Lenny at the depot last month.

Len Bates memorial

Yarra Trams wants to ensure Lenny is remembered by future generations of trammies. If you have an idea for a lasting tribute to his memory please send an email to thewire@yarratrams.com.au





It's easy seeing green

A tram priority trial on Nicholson Street has shown that enhanced signalling for trams is a winner.

Melbourne's trams spend more time stopped at traffic signals than most other modern tram networks around the world. It's estimated that every tram spends 11 hours a week stopped at lights.

Yarra Trams believes that one of the most effective ways to improve tram service reliability and capacity is with better traffic signal priority for trams. In November we joined with VicRoads and the Department of Transport to conduct a priority trial on Route 96 between East Melbourne and Fitzroy.

Tram drivers were 'given the green' through all nine intersections on Nicholson Street and as a result travel time through that section of Route 96 reduced by 17%. The variability of journey times decreased in both the AM and PM peak by more than 50%.

Premium Line Project Manager Veronica Micic thanked all staff who helped make the trial a success.

"Not only was the trial an important step forward, it has proven that our tram network can be more reliable if provided with better levels of tram priority" she said.

Data collected during the trial will help advance tram priority on the wider public transport and road network.

Did you know?

In a typical year, the Operational Standards training team will deliver:

- Around 80 newly trained drivers
- 2500 driver follow-up monitoring sessions throughout all depots
- 40 special follow-up monitoring sessions
- 40 tram driver conversions (not including rolling stock conversions)
- 20 – 25 drivers retrained after leave
- 770 – 780 drivers participating in refresher training

The team, part of Network Development and Performance, plays a critical role in developing the capability of our employees to deliver a safe, reliable service for our passengers.



myki update

The first stage of the withdrawal of Metcard has started and changes have been made to pricing of myki cards.

From January 1 this year the Yearly Metcard is no longer available. Any yearly tickets purchased before 31 December 2011 will still be valid for the rest of the year. Additionally the Metlink website will no longer sell any Metcard tickets.

A full fare myki smartcard now costs \$6 (down from \$10) and a concession myki will be \$3 (previously \$7).

The \$9.80 administration fee for passengers who require a refund of unused credit or a replacement for a lost/stolen/damaged card has been abolished.

Passengers will not be able to use Metcard from the end of 2012 so they are advised to use up any old Metcards then make the switch to myki.

Any myki faults on the network should be sent to FOC who will report the problem.



Tennis time

Between now and the end of January, the Australian Open tennis championship will focus world attention on Melbourne.

With many visitors in town, it's another chance to demonstrate how we all "think like a passenger" and provide service with a smile.

For the 13th year, Yarra Trams has again teamed up with Tennis Australia to provide a free shuttle tram service to and from Melbourne Park for ticket holders.

Of the 651,000 tennis fans who attended last year's event, a record 406,000 of them travelled by tram. The tram usage over the 2011 Australian Open was up 8% on the previous year.

Our special services will operate between the city and Melbourne Park until one hour after the conclusion of play each day. For passengers with special needs, two low floor trams will be in operation throughout the tournament.



Points in lockdown

Drivers crossing the Gardiner Railway Square on Route 6 no longer have to contend with tricky catch points.

Since they were first installed in the 1920's at the four points

where tram and train lines directly intersect, catch points have proven a frustration for trammies.

The points, which are set to derail trams under emergency conditions to avoid a tram/train collision, were a necessary distraction until the 1970's when advances in tram technology made them redundant.

At the Gardiner Railway crossing alone four trams were derailed during 2011 as a result of the points. Following on from a successful trial at Kooyong Station where the catch points were first side-locked and then removed it was decided to implement the same measures two stations further along on the Glen Waverley line.

Closed circuit television was installed at Gardiner to help ensure future driver and signal person compliance. Metro Trains and VicRoads then changed the circuitry of the traffic lights so train and road T-Lights were harmonised to make life easier for drivers. The track maintenance staff then welded the points.

Safety and Environment Director Dean Matthews has thanked Program Manager Damien Kook for his important work leading the project and liaising with Metro Trains and VicRoads.

Dean and Damien also thanked Jim Nadda and Jeff Dunkley from Malvern, Gary Smith and the track maintenance team, Darren Young and Shane Platts for the CCTV works and everyone at Metro Trains and VicRoads who assisted in making the changes.

The remaining rail squares are under review. Future updates will appear in *The Wire*.



Follow the leader

Yarra Trams is now on Twitter.

During 2011 we monitored the popular social media service for fault reports or matters that required urgent attention but with a new year comes a new form of communication to passengers.

Our Twitter account, which can be followed [@yarratrams](https://twitter.com/yarratrams) or viewed on the web at twitter.com/yarratrams, posts information about planned disruptions and major unplanned incidents which affect services.

Over 2000 users are already following [@yarratrams](https://twitter.com/yarratrams).

If you have a Twitter or Facebook account please be sure to read the Yarra Trams social media policy which is available at your location and on the intranet.



Business Excellence update

Annual self evaluation workshops assess how we are performing as an organisation.

Late last year organisational assessments were conducted through focus groups, online and in individual interviews with staff from all departments.

The process helps us understand where we're doing well and where we need to refocus our efforts in order to further Yarra Trams as a world class organisation.

The results of the assessment show a 13% improvement over last year's score. Our strengths were identified as:

- Yarra Trams being regarded by staff as a great place to work. There is a sense of pride in Yarra Trams as an organisation.
- Commitment to training and skills development of people at all levels. Yarra Trams training academy is seen as a tangible demonstration of this commitment.
- An organisation wide commitment to satisfying the needs of passengers and other stakeholders and a strong commitment to improving customer service at all levels.
- *Zero Harm* has a high profile and is reflected in a concern by all for the safety of the employees and other stakeholders.

Members of the ELT will hold a workshop to take feedback and opportunities for improvement into consideration, and prioritise their efforts.

Look out for more results from the Business Excellence workshops in the next edition of *The Wire*.

If you have any further questions or comments please contact our Business Excellence Manager, Sara Parmar on 9619 3237 or sara.parmar@yarratrams.com.au

Your Say

To provide your feedback or submit a story to *The Wire* email thewire@yarratrams.com.au