

MELBOURNE 249 The Federal Capital Commission Tram



If Canberra had had trams in its early days, as envisaged by Walter Burley Griffin, they would probably have been similar to Melbourne 249.

Griffin made a number of references to tramways in submissions and papers on the planning of the city. The wide medians in Canberra's main thoroughfares were designed to accommodate tram lines. The Federal Capital Commission (FCC), established in 1925, was given the authority to construct, maintain and operate tramways.

No. 249 was one of more than 400 trams of the W2 classification, the most numerous type of Melbourne tram. It was the first tram of this type to be built by James Moore and Co of South Melbourne, and first ran in September 1924.

These trams were among the most modern in Australia at that time. Their fully enclosed construction made them well suited to cool climates. This design of tram could well have been adopted for Canberra, and so No. 249 has been painted as if it had been operated by the FCC around 1925. Its maroon and stone colours are those used on Canberra's first buses, run by the FCC at that time.

During more than sixty years of service, No. 249 ran on most routes around Melbourne. It was retired in 1986, and sold complete to Mr Garnet Pearce of Clarendon, near Ballarat, who had a sentimental interest in the tram from his

schooldays. Later acquired by the Sydney Tramway Museum, it has been fully restored and repainted by the Bendigo Tramways Heritage Rail



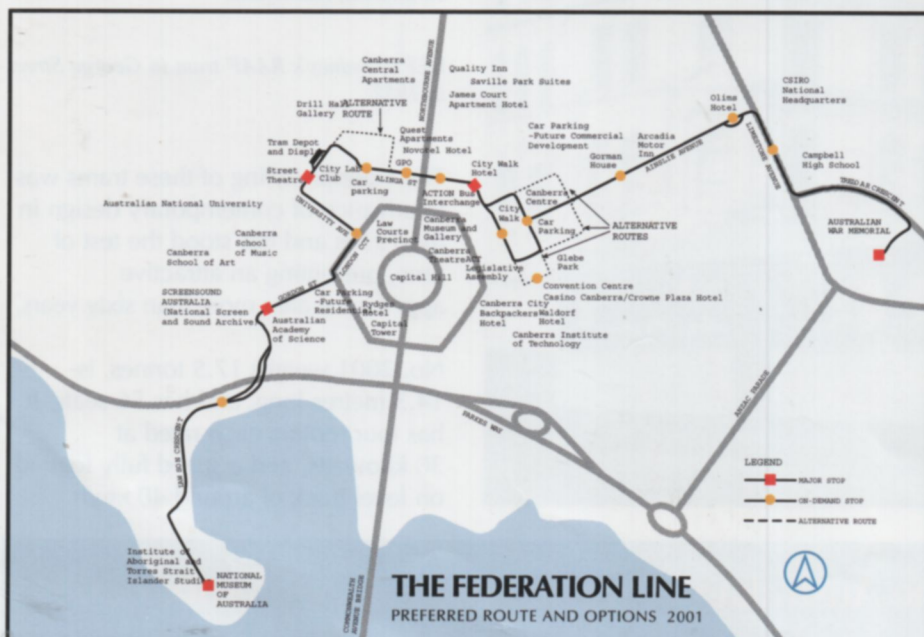
No. 249 painted silver and blue for the silver jubilee of Melbourne's Luna Park in 1938.

Workshop. With its varnished interior woodwork, No. 249 displays the craftsmanship of the vehicle builders of a bygone era.

No. 249 has capacity for 52 seated passengers. It is 14.6 metres in length and weighs 17 tonnes. It has four motors, each rated at 30 kilowatts, and a speed with a full load on the level of around 45 km/h.

The map at left shows the route of the Federation Line, Canberra's Heritage Tourist Tramway. Nos 249 and 2001 have been refurbished and restored to run on this line. Planned to link the National Museum of Australia and the Australian War Memorial via Canberra's city centre, the Federation Line will use trams which formerly ran in cities around Australia.

For a brochure giving more information, write to The Federation Line, PO Box E340, Kingston ACT 2604; or visit our website: www.fedline.canberra.net.au



SYDNEY 2001 The Royal Australian Air Force Tram



No. 2001 is a representative of the last type of tram built for Sydney, prior to the return of trams to Sydney in 1997. Designated the R1 class, 55 trams of this design were built in 1935-36 and a further 100 between 1950 and 1953.

Although trams were among the largest and most impressive vehicles on city streets, little use of them was made for advertising until the mid 1950s. The Royal Australian Air Force was a pioneer in using trams for this purpose.

In 1952 two trams, one each in Sydney and Melbourne, were painted in RAAF colours to promote recruiting (a ferry in Sydney was similarly used to promote recruiting for all three of the armed services, using a red, white and blue colour scheme). No. 2001

has been painted in the colours used on these RAAF trams in the 1950s.

No. 2001 was built by the Commonwealth Engineering Co. at Granville, and was delivered in December 1951. It ran on lines in the inner south-western and western suburbs, and later to places such as Bondi, Bronte, Coogee and La Perouse. After a useful life of less than 10 years, it was withdrawn from service when Sydney's former tramway system closed in February 1961.

Like many other Sydney trams, it was stripped of wheels, motors, control equipment and seats, and its body was sold for use as an outbuilding on a property at Balmoral village, near Mittagong.

Late in 2000 the tram was acquired from the Michael family by the Sydney Tramway Museum. It has been restored to operating condition by the Bendigo Tramways Rail Heritage Workshop, using equipment sourced from both Sydney and Melbourne. Its renovation has been supported by the NSW Heritage Federation 2001 program.



ABOVE: No 2001 at Circular Quay, Sydney, on a run to Haberfield.

LEFT: Sydney's RAAF tram in George Street in 1952.



The exterior styling of these trams was in advance of contemporary design in the 1930s and has stood the test of time, presenting an attractive appearance after more than sixty years.

No. 2001 weighs 17.5 tonnes, is 14.3 metres long, and has 56 seats. It has four motors each rated at 30 kilowatts, and a speed fully loaded on level track of around 40 km/h.