

DESTINATION UNKNOWN



STEVE LIGHTFOOT

GET A LIFE. WOTTA BILL.

IF NORTH BALWYN does not exist, why does Yarra Trams insist the 48 tram terminates there? For eight years Balwyn North resident Ern Wass has urged the company to change the tram's destination sign to match the name of his suburb. His mission has so far been fruitless, but now Boroondara council is adding muscle to his efforts. ■ **REPORT P3**

LOCAL NEWS

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Tram title to stay

THE 48 tram will continue to trundle to North Balwyn rather than Balwyn North, with Yarra Trams standing by its decades-old name preference.

Yarra Trams spokesman Adam Woolcock told *RL* that although Balwyn North was the suburb's official name, the tram's North Balwyn sign was too well known to passengers and staff to warrant a change.

The tram has been the subject of an eight-year campaign by Balwyn North resident Ern Wass to have its destination and tramstop signs amended to concur with the state government's gazetting of the suburb in 1928.

"Other entities in the area use North Balwyn as an identifying title - for example the North Balwyn Plaza and North Balwyn Baptist Church - indicating that the terms can be interchanged and easily understood," Mr Woolcock said.

He said Yarra Trams had not received any other recent requests for a name change, and preferred to use resources on improving customer information on all its routes.

Asked if there were plans to extend the 48 line beyond its Balwyn Road terminus, he said the company was not in a position to propose route extensions because the state government owned tram infrastructure.

The 72 tram, which terminates in Kew, would continue to be known as the Camberwell tram, he said.

Trams destined for name change

P.3 BOROONDARA REVIEW LOCAL 16-1-2013

BY ALISON BARCLAY

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IF THERE'S no such suburb as North Balwyn, why does Yarra Trams insist the No. 48 tram terminates there?

For eight years, Balwyn North resident Ern Wass has been on a scholarly mission to have the wayward tram sign changed to read Balwyn North.

He says it is one of 11 tram lines for which the destinations do not match their signs, another notable one being the No. 72 to Camberwell that ends in Kew.

In 2010, Yarra Trams told him the matter was closed. But Mr Wass has the support of Melway, the Geographic Place Names Board and now Boroondara council, which told him last month it would write to Yarra Trams to ask for the destination to be corrected.

Mr Wass' investigation began in the final days of the trams' rolling destination signs.

"Yarra Trams said it was too costly to take all the rolls out of the existing trams and repaint them, and that I should wait until the electronic boards came in, which they did around 2004-05," Mr Wass said.

"The tram now runs to the Docklands, and they were able to amend that destination sign. Why can't they change the North Balwyn sign?"

Mr Wass provided historical evidence, including a statement from the Geographic Place Names Board, that the suburb was named Balwyn North on February 1, 1928, when Melbourne was divided into postal areas.

"Yarra Trams wanted a whole lot of information for their technology department, then they never replied," he said.

In 2010, Yarra Trams chief executive Michel Masson sent Mr Wass a letter saying the company had received no information that the name should be changed, and "we regard this matter as closed".



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ON A MISSION: Ern Wass with a tram that's going to a non-existent suburb

But Mr Wass persisted, seeking the support of Boroondara council.

In a reply on December 18, the council's manager of corporate services, Bruce Dobson, said: "I have asked council officers to write to

Yarra Trams as you have suggested, and we hope Yarra Trams will respond appropriately."

Yarra Trams was unable to answer *RL*'s questions last week, citing staff shortages.