



The replica of the last W-class tram is put in place at the corner of Spencer and Flinders Streets. Photo: Angela Wylie



A W-class gets to stand tall

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A journey on one of Melbourne's few remaining W-class trams might seem long and tedious at times, but at least they're on the move. This version of an iconic rattler spearing out of the ground at the corner of Flinders and Spencer streets is decidedly stuck on the way to, and from, nowhere.

Lifted into place on Monday by artist David Bell and a team of engineers, the *Raising the Rattler Pole* (*The Last of the Connies*), is an eight-metre tall replica of the last W-class tram built in 1956, but upended and trapped in time. A public art commission for the City of Melbourne, Bell and his team spent more than 12 months on the sculpture, building the to-scale frame in steel and cladding it in plywood, which was later painted bluestone grey. At night, LED lights will lend it a soft interior glow, "a suggestion that there's perhaps things going on inside," Bell said.

Its position at the busy intersection of Flinders and Spencer was part of the project's appeal, Bell said, the monument to a bygone Melbourne made even more incongruous by the 10-degree angle at which it juts.

"It's a very, very tricky location to get in here and it's one of the reasons why we thought it was a spectacular location," he said. "It seemed almost impossible when we first saw it."



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See a video of the sculpture's installation.