
1. EARLY TRAMWAY DAYS:

CABLE AND HORSE TRAMWAYS AND THE FIRST ELECTRIC LINE. 1885 - 1904.

1885

JAN 10 Fairfield horse tramway opened, operated by a land development company.

NOV 11 The Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company opened the first cable line from Spencer Street to Richmond.

1886

OCT 2 Fitzroy cable line opened.

NOV 22 Victoria Street (North Richmond) cable line opened.

1887

AUG 10 Clifton Hill cable line opened.

AUG 28 Nicholson Street cable line opened.

OCT 1 Brunswick cable line opened.

OCT Coburg horse tramway opened, operated by the Northern Tramway Company, and later by Coburg City Council.

DEC 21 Collingwood (Johnston Street) cable line opened.

DEC 28 Kew horse tramway opened, operated by the MT&OCo.

OCT 11 Brighton Road cable line opened.

OCT 26 Prahran cable line opened.

1888

FEB 9 North Carlton (Rathdowne Street) cable line opened.

FEB 15 Toorak cable line opened.

1889

APRIL Elsternwick to Glenhuntly and Caulfield horse tramways opened, operated by the Caulfield Tramway Company.

Sandringham to Cheltenham horse tramway opened, operated by the Beaumaris Tramway Company.

OCT 14 The first electric tramway in the southern hemisphere opened from Box Hill to Doncaster. It was operated by the Box Hill & Doncaster Tramway Company until 1892, and then by the Doncaster & Box Hill Electric Road Company.

1890

JAN 27 Hawthorn horse tramway opened, operated by the MT&OCo.

FEB 18 Northcote cable line opened. This line was operated by the Clifton Hill, Northcote and Preston Tramway Company, and was the only cable line not run by the MT&OCo.

MAR 3 North Melbourne cable line opened.

MAR 10 Zoo horse tram opened, operated by the MT&OCo.

APR 18 West Melbourne cable line opened.

1894

Fairfield horse tramway closed. (Possibly could have closed in 1891 - no precise date has been found).

1892

OCT 27 Windsor to St. Kilda Beach cable line opened.

1891

JUN 20 Port Melbourne cable line opened.
JUN 17 South Melbourne cable line opened.

1903

NOV 27 Northcote cable line closed.

1897

JAN 6 Box Hill to Doncaster electric tramway closed.

1896

2. ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS: THE TRUSTS, COMPANY LINES AND RAILWAY TRAMS. 1905 - 1919.

1905

Construction of the Essendon electric tramways (North Melbourne Electric Tramway & Lighting Co.), and the St Kilda - Brighton electric street railway (Victorian Railways) commenced.

1906

MAY 5 The Victorian Railways 'electric street railway' opened from St Kilda Railway Station via Grey Street, Barkly Street, Mitford Street, Broadway, Ormond Road, St Kilda Street and Esplanade to Park Street, Middle Brighton. Originally conceived as a standard gauge line running from the cable tram terminus at the 'Village Belle' (Acland Street), it was actually built as a broad gauge line (5'3") to allow for the possibility of running to Melbourne via the St Kilda railway. (All other electric tramways in Melbourne have been built to standard gauge [4'8½"]). The authorising act was guided through Parliament by the Premier, Thomas Bent, who happened to have real estate and electoral interests in the area - he was Member for Brighton. A three road depot and Power House were built in Eiwood at the corner of St Kilda and Park (now Head) Streets. The line was single track with four passing loops and a terminating loop.

ROLLING STOCK: Trams were painted chocolate, red and cream. Five cars were available at the opening:

1 - 5 Single truck California combination cars built 1906 by J. G. Brill & Co. U.S.A., and assembled at the VR Newport Workshops.

JUNE VR Acland Street loop (St Kilda - Brighton line) relocated to Carlisle Street to improve timekeeping.

OCT 11 A private concern, The North Melbourne Electric Tramway and Lighting Company, opened lines from Flemington Bridge via Mount Alexander Road, Pascoe Vale Road, Fletcher Street and Mount Alexander Road North to Keilor Road and via Mount Alexander Road, Victoria Street, Racecourse Road, Epsom Road, Union Road and Maribymong Road to Saltwater River (shortly afterwards renamed Maribymong River). A branch line was also built along Puckle Street to Moonee Ponds Railway Station. The construction of these lines followed much opposition from the Victorian Railways and the Metropolitan Gas Company, Cabinet approval being obtained after a referendum of ratepayers showed overwhelming support for the trams. The Saltwater River line was double track to Union Road, Ascot Vale, with crossovers provided at the Showgrounds, then single track to the terminus, with one passing loop, crossing the railway at the Showgrounds on the level; the Keilor Road line was double track to Moonee Ponds Junction, then single track to the terminus, with five passing loops, the section in Mount Alexander Road North being laid along the western carriageway; the Puckle Street branch was single track. A six road depot was built in Mount Alexander Road; these are the present-day roads 13 to 18 of Essendon Depot.

ROLLING STOCK: 25 trams were built:

1 - 10 Single truck saloon cars built 1906 by J. G. Brill & Co. U.S.A., and assembled by Duncan and Fraser, Adelaide [later MMTB U class 202 - 211].

11 - 15 Single truck open crossbench ("toastrack") cars built 1906 by J. G. Brill & Co. U.S.A., and assembled by Duncan and Fraser, Adelaide [later MMTB V class 212 - 216].

16 - 25 Single truck open crossbench ("toastrack") trailer cars built 1906 by Duncan and Fraser, Adelaide.

DEC 22 VR Extension to Brighton Beach opened, single track. The Park Street loop was relocated to Wellington Street, and a loop installed at the terminus. 'Brighton' was retained as the destination sign.

1907

FEB 9 VR

ROLLING STOCK: By this time twelve additional trams were in service, making a total of 17. Three trailers were still under construction at Newport Workshops, which would bring the fleet strength up to 20:

- 6, 7 As Nos. 1 - 5.
- 8, 10 Single truck saloon cars built 1906 by J. G. Brill & Co. U.S.A., and assembled at the VR Newport Workshops.
- 9 Single truck saloon trailer car built 1906 by J. G. Brill & Co. U.S.A., and assembled at the VR Newport Workshops.
- 11 - 17 Single truck open crossbench ("toastrack") trailer cars built 1906 by J. G. Brill & Co. U.S.A., and assembled at the VR Newport Workshops.

MAR 7 VR Elwood Depot and all rolling stock completely destroyed by fire, the cause of which was never discovered. An emergency bus service was implemented.

MAR 17 VR St Kilda - Brighton service recommenced after acquiring seven trams from Sydney:

ROLLING STOCK:

- 15 - 17 Single truck California combination straight-sill cars built 1899 by Ritchie Bros. and Clyde Engineering for New South Wales Government Tramways. Ex-Sydney D class Nos. 98, 101, 110 (not respectively). Mounted on broad gauge trucks salvaged from fire.
- 18 - 21 Single truck saloon cars built 1899 by Hudson Bros. for New South Wales Government Tramways. Ex-Sydney C class Nos. 23, 25, 38, 39. Mounted on broad gauge trucks salvaged from fire.

The three trailers under construction at the time of the fire entered service at the end of March, being numbered 8 - 10. Eleven new trams were ordered, entering service in June and July:

- 1 - 7 Single truck California combination cars built 1907 by VR Newport Workshops.
- 8 - 14 Single truck open crossbench ("toastrack") trailer cars built 1907 by VR Newport Workshops.

As these cars entered service, the ex-Sydney C class trams (Nos. 18 - 21) were converted to trailers.

JUN 20 VR Rebuilt Elwood Depot completed with two roads, which were extended out the rear. An additional shed with three roads, also extending out the rear, was opened on August 1.

1908

JLY 6 The Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust was constituted by local councils, after attempts to obtain cable tram extensions failed; it was later re-constituted to include neighbouring councils as lines expanded.

1910

MAY 5 The Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust lines opened from Charles Street via High Street to Tooronga Road, and from High Street via Glenferrie and Wattletree Roads to Burke Road. Services from Charles Street operated to both branches. The lines were double track with centre poles from Charles Street to Glenferrie and Wattletree Roads, and single track with a passing loop on each line from Glenferrie Road to the terminus, with a level crossing over the railway at Armadale. Crossovers were provided at Chapel Street, Orrong Road and west of Glenferrie Road. A six road depot and workshop was constructed off Glenferrie Road.

ROLLING STOCK: Thirteen trams were available for the opening, with a further seven entering service by late 1910 / early 1911:

- 1 - 20 Single truck California combination cars built 1910 - 11 by Duncan & Fraser, Adelaide [later MMTB A class 1 - 20].

1911

MAR 12 PMTT Wattletree Road duplicated from Glenferrie Road to Burke Road, with a crossover installed at Glenferrie Road.

MAR 14 PMTT High Street line extended from Charles Street to Punt Road, the points at Charles Street being removed.

DEC 16 PMTT Line opened from Wattletree Road via Glenferrie and Dandenong Roads to the railway bridge at Windsor. Built as double track, with crossovers at Orrong Road and at the level crossing over the railway in Glenferrie Road. The Dandenong Road track was constructed in a central reservation. Services were provided from Wattletree Road.