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Open House Melbourne

FOHTD will be participating in the Open House Melbourne program for the first time this year, on the weekend of 27 and 28 July 2013.

Open House Melbourne is a non-profit association that runs annual events providing a free and rare opportunity to discover a hidden wealth of architectural, engineering and historic buildings nestled around the city of Melbourne.

The Open House program started in 2008, opening eight buildings to the public with over 30,000 visitors on that weekend. Last year one hundred buildings participated over the Open House weekend, with 134,900 visits being recorded.

This year it is expected that one hundred and eleven buildings will be opened – one of which will be the Melbourne Tram Museum @ Hawthorn Depot. Special opening hours will apply on both days: between 10 am and 4 pm.

Participation in Open House will mean that the normal gold coin donation for museum entry will be waived on that weekend. It is expected that due to the considerable public profile of the program that visitor numbers will be substantially higher than normal open days. We expect that increased shop sales will offset any reduction in donations.

It is also hoped that participation will translate into an increase in visitors on our normal open days.

However, to make our participation a success, we will need more than our usual number of volunteers to act as guides and help with visitor control. Lunch will be provided to our Open House volunteers.

If members are able to help on either or both days, please contact Carolyn on (03) 9877 4130, or send an e-mail to info@hawthorntramdepot.org.au. More information on Open House Melbourne can be found at http://www.openhousemelbourne.org/.

Proudly supported by **yarra trams**

The new sign advertising the Melbourne Tram Museum @ Hawthorn Depot at stop 29 on routes 70 and 75. Photograph by Kevin Taig.

Riversdale Junction Sign

A new sign has been erected at Riversdale Junction, advertising the museum. The sign was designed and installed by Yarra Trams, and contains information on the history of Hawthorn Depot, as well as our opening times and website address.

Riversdale Junction is the new name for tram stop 29 on routes 70 and 75. It is located at the intersection of Wallen Road, Power Street and Riversdale Road – the closest tram stop to our museum.

A photo of the sign appears above this article. Keen-eyed members should be able to identify the locations of each of the photos.

The committee wishes to express our appreciation to the Marketing Manager of Yarra Trams, Matthew McDonell, for facilitating the design and installation of the Riversdale Junction sign.

Tram Information Signs

Much of the activity we are undertaking at the moment is in preparation for the Open House weekend.

The first of these initiatives is the completion of the eight tram information signs. Each of the signs consists of two A4 sheets covering the history of the relevant tram, together with some technical details and a photograph. They were installed on the 8 June open day.

We hope to have acquired and deployed new signs for all the cars by the Open House weekend.

Pit Covers

Another action in preparation for the Open House weekend concerns the ten-year old pit covers, which were originally installed to prevent museum visitors from tumbling into the old maintenance pits. Since

our museum opened, some of the covers have settled by a couple of centimetres.

In order to present a safer and more attractive environment for our visitors, Kevin Taig has been repairing the covers back to their original height. He expects to have this work completed before the target date.

Metcard Machine

All Melbourne residents will be aware of the replacement of the Metcard public transport ticketing system with myki in December 2012. One result of the introduion of myki has been the progressive removal of Metcard ticketing machines and validators from railway stations, trams and superstops.

To mark the passing of Metcard, Public Transport Victoria is donating an in-tram Metcard ticketing machine and validator to our museum, enabling us to commemorate a significant period in Melbourne's recent public transport history. PTV has also donated a box containing a strip of one thousand Metcards, all unused.

Moving the ticketing machine into its display position may prove a little challenging, as we are told that it weighs in excess of 250 kilograms.

We expect to take delivery of the machine before the end of June 2013. Thanks to Jason McDiarmid from PTV for facilitating this donation.

More On Metcard

In 1992 the State Government issued a tender for a new ticketing system to cover metropolitan trams, trains and buses, selecting the Onelink consortium in September 1993. The partners in the consortium were ERG Australia, Fujitsu Australia, Mayne Nickless (Armaguard) and the National Australia Bank.

A key objective of the new Metcard system was to eliminate the requirement for tram conductors, producing the saving that had been anticipated through the previous State Government's scratch ticket initiative. Additionally, there was a desire to eliminate ticket-selling staff at the majority of railway stations.

Metcard coin-operated ticket machine, on board Z3 class tram, September 2012. Photograph by Noelle Jones.

The Metcard system was based on magnetic strip card tickets issued primarily by ticket machines, although they were also available from staffed railway stations and retail outlets such as newsagents. Trams and buses were fitted with on-vehicle ticket validators which printed on the validated ticket a line stating the first use of the ticket, allowing for manual ticket inspection without expensive hand held readers. The ticketing continued Melbourne's unique multi-zonal multi-ride fare structure, usable across all vehicle types – tram, train and bus.

Additionally, trams were fitted with coin-operated ticket machines, allowing for on-board purchase of two-hour tickets. The Kennett Government had decided that passengers would mostly use pre-paid tickets, attracting considerable criticism for not providing for the on-board purchase of the popular daily tickets. This decision was later reversed, modifications to tram ticketing machines being made in 2001. The Metcard system design also required passengers to validate their tickets at the beginning of every journey on each transport mode, initially for statistical purposes.

Regrettably, the original target for introduction of the Metcard system was not achieved. In 1995 the State Government threatened penalty action against the Onelink consortium regarding late delivery, before the parties reached agreement for a revised schedule. Of the many causes for this delay, two stand out.

Trams are hostile places for microprocessor controlled equipment, both with regard to the electrical environment and physical vibration. Z1 class car number 10 was dedicated to operating as a Metcard test vehicle out of Camberwell depot for many months before satisfactory test results were finally achieved. Surges and spikes in the electrical supply were common problems, through acceleration and regenerative braking of other trams in the same electrical section, together with drops in supply as a result of tram overhead wire design – especially section isolators and other special fittings, not to mention the occasional dewirement.

The decision by the Kennett Government to split the public transport system into two tram operators and two train operators as a precursor to full privatisation created a major project slippage. The reason for this delay was the requirement to re-engineer the backend Metcard systems to correctly allocate revenue to each of the operators based on usage, which was never an initial design objective of the project. The requirement for passengers to validate tickets on entry to each mode of transport then became much more important, as it became critical for revenue allocation purposes to count accurately the number of passenger journeys.

Metcard was initially rolled out on Camberwell Depot services from September 1996. There were teething difficulties experienced with implementation of the system, although these were eventually resolved. The remaining depots followed between February and May 1998, the last Melbourne tram conductor finishing on the evening of 23-24 May 1998. The complete Metcard implementation was finalised in March 2003.

However, the failure of the previous scratch ticket implementation had made the Melbourne public cynical towards new ticketing systems. Reception of the new Metcard was not positive, and fare evasion rates increased substantially.

The Metcard contract was originally planned to end in March 2007.

The successful implementation of a number of stored value card systems by international public transport operators showed the State Government what could be achieved. The Transport Ticketing Authority (TTA) was established in April 2003 with the objective of replacing the Metcard system with a smart card system, which was later named myki. The original budget was $741.9 million, with the objective of replacing Metcard by the original end of contract in March 2007.

In July 2005 the successful tenderer Kamco began work on developing the myki system, with an adjusted budget of $999 million. However, like many complex IT projects, myki development ran over time and over budget, increasing to $1.35 billion in April 2008 and four years behind the original schedule. This required the extension of the Metcard contract. The two systems were run in parallel on the train system from the end of 2009, with myki deployment on trams and buses commencing on 25 July 2010.

Metcard was eventually phased out on 29 December 2012.

Electric Railway Journal

Members will remember from our last issue that correspondent Peter Metzke noted the availability of the *Electric Railway Journal* on the Web. This was a trade journal published in the United States, covering industry developments from the early days of electric traction.

An article in the very [first issue](#) of this publication from 1891 will be of interest to our readers, as it is titled '*The Largest Cable Road In The World*'. The author gives an interesting contemporary view of Melbourne's cable trams from an American perspective.

Membership Renewals + AGM

Just a reminder that FOHTD membership renewal notices will be going out in July. The membership fee will remain unchanged at $25.00.

The FOHTD Annual General Meeting will be held on the first October Open Day, 12 October 2013, commencing at 5:00pm. The formal meeting notice and agenda for members will be enclosed with the next issue of *The Bellcord*.