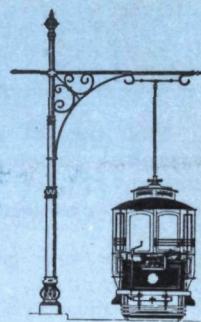


# TROLLEY WIRE

Magazine of the  
**SOUTH PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY**  
**AUSTRALIAN ELECTRIC TRANSPORT**  
**MUSEUM**  
**WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ELECTRIC**  
**TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION**

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**FEBRUARY 1971**



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The Annual General Meeting of the Australian Electric Transport Museum (S.A.) Inc. will be held on Friday, 26th March, 1971 at the Sir William Goodman Hall, Hackney Road Hackney, commencing at 8pm.

After the presentation of reports and the election of officebearers, an informal slide evening covering the S.E.C. Tramways will be held.

## Around the Depots---

### LOFTUS

The 1970 Open Day and Dinner was held on 12th December, this time with a difference. The Australian Railway Historical Society (N.S.W. Division) held their Annual Christmas function at the Museum and over 500 persons arrived at our railway platform by steam train hauled by 3214 assisted by vintage train engine 381. Trams operated during the afternoon included E class set 529 and 530. This was the first large scale use of this coupled set which was only recently returned to operating condition. Needless to say the opportunity was taken to photograph the trams with the train, and a parallel run was staged using F393 to conclude the afternoon's programme. Sixty-six members, their families and friends attended the dinner at night, and it was pleasing to new faces among those present. An excellent programme of 16mm films was screened non-stop, these being supplemented by vintage 9.5mm cartoons.

A small diesel alternator was purchased during December and was subsequently extricated from the basement of a city building and moved to Loftus. It will be fitted with silicon diodes for a DC output and whilst intended primarily for stand-by duties, it will be useful at times of peak loading when it can be paralleled with the existing M.G. sets.

On the Australia Day Holiday, Monday 1st February, 1971, the first major interruption to traffic operations at Loftus occurred when a tree fell across the SCC power lines, cutting off power for 1½ hours. This is the second tree to so fall but as the previous occasion was during the week no inconvenience was caused. The tree missed C290, standing at the highway terminus, by only a few inches.

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FRONT COVER: With its destination sign already changed for the return journey, R1 2076 heads across the Sydney Harbour Bridge towards the underground terminus at Wynyard on the last day of operation of trams on the North Sydney system, 28th June, 1958. The weather was in sympathy - it rained all day!

Photo: Norm Chinn.

# TROLLEY WIRE

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A  
 SPECIAL  
 ISSUE  
 TO  
 COMMEMORATE  
 THE  
 TENTH  
 ANNIVERSARY  
 OF  
 THE  
 CLOSING  
 OF  
 SYDNEY'S  
 TRAMWAYS



A close shave for 290! The tree is one of several which have died following bulldozing of the area by the Department of Main Roads.

Photo: Doug Keech.

## Mr. A.A. Shoebridge 1894 - 1970

It is with regret that we record the death of Mr. A.A. Shoebridge, the former Commissioner for Government Transport, after a short illness on Sunday, December 13th, 1970.

Although Mr. Shoebridge was responsible for the implementation of the Government's plans to replace Sydney's trams with buses, he will be best remembered by the S.P.E.R. for his faith and confidence in the tramway museum's plans when he was approached in June, 1950 with the request to allow an "L/P" tramcar to be preserved. Not only did he favorably meet the request, but he arranged the donation of the majority of the Sydney cars which now make up the museum fleet, at a time when it was doubtful to other than museum members that the museum's plans would ever reach fruition. Unknown to many members, Mr. A.A. Shoebridge was never hesitant to describe and praise our efforts to heads of other government departments when they directed enquiries his way about the museum's activities.

Arthur Shoebridge joined the clerical staff of the Public Works Dept. in 1910 and after serving at Kempsey in this role he joined the A.I.F. in the First World War and was mentioned in despatches. Returning to civilian life his next major task was Clerk of Works in charge of the Lithgow power house construction completed in January, 1928.



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Above: Mr. A.A. Shoebridge handing over O class 1187, his last public function. The handover was the highlight of a tour run by the S.P.E.R. to commemorate fifty years service and the withdrawal from traffic of the O class trams.

Photo: Norm Chinn

Troubles on the northern coalfields at the start of the depression resulted in the very unhappy occurrence of two miners being killed by police gunfire when the Mass Picketing Act was tested on 16th December, 1929 at Rothbury Colliery. After these troubles Mr. Shoebridge was on secondment to the clerical staff of Rothbury Colliery until the period of the upheaval passed.

He transferred to the new Transport Department in 1930 and in 1932 was appointed administrator of the Road Transport Branch and was largely responsible for its initial organisation.

During World War II he served on Automotive Advisory Committees and was Assistant Commissioner to Mr. C. Neale and later to Mr. R. Windsor from 1944 to 1950. Mr. Shoebridge was Commissioner for Government Transport from May, 1950 until January, 1959 and inherited a Department which was forced to carry a huge annual deficit. Although unable to arrest the decline in riding figures the undertaking did manage to level out the annual deficit which has remained large, but constant over the last decade.

One of the last tasks carried out by Arthur Shoebridge, three days before his retirement, was the official handing over of 0 car 1187 to the United States Consul-General Mr. F. Waring on 11th January, 1959 as a donation to the Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society of Glenwood, Oregon, U.S.A.

To mark the 100th anniversary of the opening of the 1861 Pitt Street horse tramway, Mr. Shoebridge officially opened the S.P.E.R. museum depot on 23rd December, 1961 for static display, and on this occasion the museum's Chairman, Mr. R.E. Murray, thanked the former Commissioner for his generosity in having most of the museum's fleet given to the Society free of charge.

Fifteen years of museum labours were rewarded when the S.P.E.R.'s operating museum tramway was officially opened by the then Deputy Premier, Mr. P. Hills driving L/P class tramcar 154 through a ribbon on 13th March, 1965. Arthur Shoebridge paid the museum its highest compliment over refreshments which followed the opening. He said "I knew you chaps would do it, but I did not think you would reach your goal so soon".



## THE DEMISE OF THE N.S.W. TRAMWAY DEPARTMENT

A decade has passed since February 25th 1961 when the N.S.W. Department of Government Transport replaced the last of the Sydney tramway routes, those from Hunter Street and Railway Square to Maroubra and La Perouse, with buses. The success or failure of the conversion needs no lengthy comment here; one only needs to compare the current Sydney scene with Melbourne's street transport undertaking to draw one's own conclusions. Very briefly the political and social events which caused the changes in N.S.W. are presented here.

### The First World War

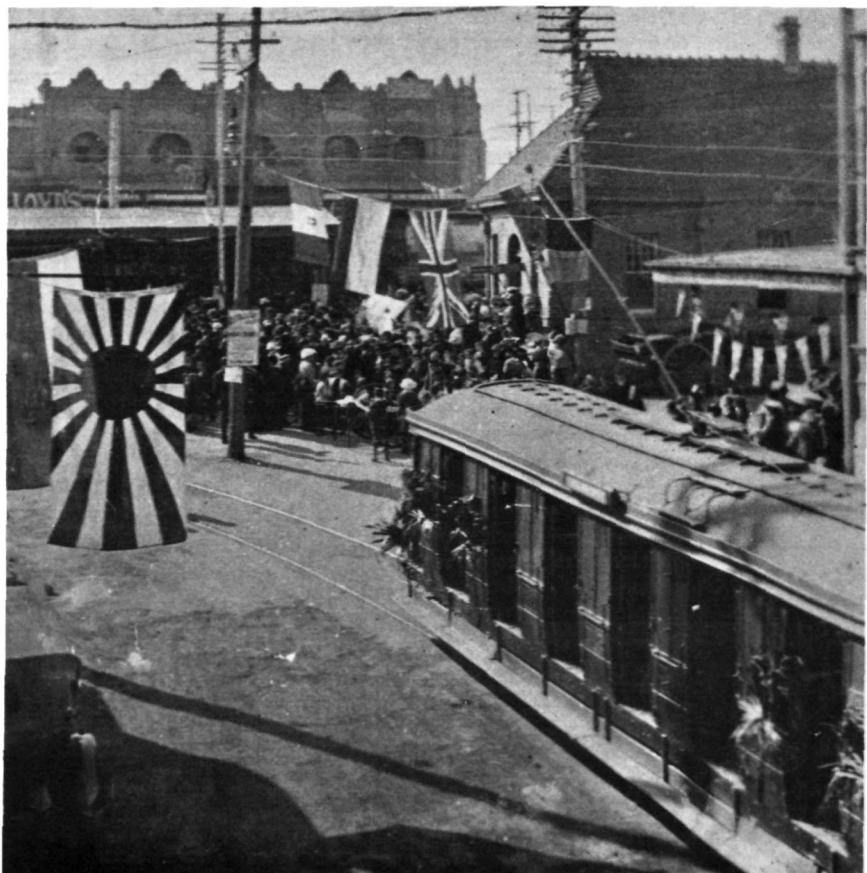
The construction of major tramway extensions in N.S.W. ceased with the premature death of Traffic Superintendent Kneeshaw in 1914 together with the retirement of Railway Commissioner T.R. Johnson. Four events stifled future major tramway expansions:

1. The elevation of conservative John Doran to Kneeshaw's former position and the appointment of a Chief Railway Commissioner with two assistants to replace Mr Johnson, who had been considered too strong a personality for this job.
2. The manpower and equipment shortages during the 1914-1918 war.
3. The development of the internal combustion engine to an efficient level whereby motor buses and private cars could challenge the trams' supremacy, coupled with the electrification of the Sydney suburban railway system after 1926.
4. The awkward geographical situation of the harbourside Sydney city area caused the tram routes to be compressed into five major city thoroughfares.

As the boom period of the 1920's gained momentum, track replacement programmes as well as the task of replacing elderly electric trams with new rolling stock were launched, but by the time construction of new major routes could be considered to such places as the expanding Dacey Village (Daceyville) and to such areas as Bankstown, Kingsgrove etc., the unrestricted private bus competition and the 1929 financial depression placed the N.S.W. Government Tramways in an unenviable financial situation.

### The Depression Years

During the turbulent depression years N.S.W. was governed by political parties with extremist views. The radical Lang



A florally bedecked N car stands under the flags of Allied nations at Summer Hill station on 30th July, 1915. Patriotism was running high as collections were made to aid the Australia Day Fund to provide comforts and nursing assistance to wounded servicemen. The Summer Hill line had only been open six months when this photo was taken.

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Labour Government held office from 17th June 1925 until 18th October 1927 and from 4th November 1930 until 13th May 1932 while the conservative Bavin (Nationalist-Country Party) coalition governed from 18th October 1927 to 3rd November 1930 and returned to power under the leadership of B. Stevens on 16th May 1932 after the shameful dismissal of the Lang Government by the Governor. Although politically these two groups were diametrically opposite, both wanted some form of public transport co-ordination in Sydney and Newcastle

to prevent costly service competition with private buses and to place the government railway and tramway services on a better financial footing.

The Bavin government introduced the Transport Act of 1930 which resulted in the transfer of the Newcastle and Sydney tramway systems from the direct control of the Railway Commissioner to the Newcastle and District and the Metropolitan Transport Trusts, bodies which endeavoured to win extra business by advertising services, introducing fare concessions, establishing overlapping sections etc. This change took place on 5th August 1930 (footnote 1).

The Lang Government considered that some stronger measures were required and under the Transport Co-ordination Act of 1931 they regulated private bus competition with the government services by special licensing and taxing regulations from 31st October 1931. These taxes proved too costly for many private bus operators so on December 25th 1932 the Government Transport Department launched their own bus services which have grown into the system we know today.

#### Footnote 1.

According to official letterhead correspondence the name changes took place as follows:

N.S.W.G.T. changed to M.T.T. .. .. ..	5.8.1930
M.T.T. changed to N.S.W.T.D. .. .. ..	1.4.1932
N.S.W.T.D. changed to D.G.T.&T. .. .. ..	14.2.1933



Passengers transfer from L/P 308 to double decker MO 1717 at Carrington Junction in August, 1938.

Photo: Ken Magor.



Shepherd's Motor Service in Newcastle ran a "pirate" bus service in competition to the Government tram service to Adamstown. The vehicle is a 29 passenger White with a Syd Wood body.

Photo: Ken Magor.

The Bavin Government had given the job of Commissioner for Railways to Mr W. Cleary as it felt that this gentleman's business acumen, gained as the manager of a major Sydney brewery, would aid him in delivering the state's railway and tramway systems from their difficult times. His formula amounted to the dismissal of thousands of employees so it is not surprising that the return of a Labor Government resulted in a further re-organisation of the railway and tramway administration.

On 22nd March 1932 the N.S.W. Transport Department, under the control of Transport Commissioner Hartigan of the N.S.W.G.R., was established under the terms of the Ministry of Transport Act 1932. This department controlled all transportation sections through lesser commissioners but the return of the Stevens Government on 16th May 1932 with M. Bruxner as Minister for Transport again altered the structure with the establishment of the separate N.S.W. Government Railway under Commissioner Hartigan and a separate Department of Road Transport and Tramways with S. Maddox as Commissioner.

During November 1932 with the release of the findings of a Royal Commission in Railway and Tramway services, some conversions of tramway to bus operation were proposed. With the opening of the Town Hall to Potts Point trolley bus service in Sydney on 23rd January 1934 and the later conversion of the Kogarah steam tramway to trolley bus



R 1918 stands at the southern end of the Suspension Bridge after the line was cut back on 29th May, 1936. The line was closed on 8th September, 1939.

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operation on 4th July 1937 the possibility of trolley buses replacing the main tram networks seemed likely.

## Initial Closures & New Trams

The initial tramway closures under the Stevens-Bruxner coalition were the Hurlstone Park to Summer Hill line on 8th July 1933, the Redfern to Henderson Road working on the following day, the Ryde to Ryde Station shuttle on 12th March 1934 and the line to Woolloomooloo Bay on 28th July 1935.

At this juncture the tramway department realised that full conversion to bus operation would take many years and would depend on the construction of the long-promised Eastern Suburbs Railway. To enable the older four-wheel trams to be retired an order for 250 modern corridor (saloon) cars of the "R" and "R1" design was placed with the Clyde Engineering Company and these vehicles, numbered 1738 to 1987, entered service between 1933 and 1935. In 1937 the government officially launched a programme whereby all N.S.W. tramways would be progressively closed (footnote 2) and the initial casualties were the Port Waratah and Carrington

electric lines in Newcastle on 20th November 1938 and the isolated Manly tramways on 30th September 1939.

Other than the closure of the Erskineville line in Sydney on 7th January 1940, World War II with its resulting liquid fuel and rubber shortages as well as the return of a Labor Government on 16th May 1941 caused the 1937 bus substitution plan to be postponed.

Due to the weakened nature of the suspension bridge over which the Northbridge trams reached their destination, this service was truncated to the southern end of the structure on 29th May 1936 and the entire electric line was converted to bus operation beyond Falcon Street North Sydney on 8th September 1939 when the rebuilt bridge became available for through bus traffic. War time conditions caused the partial re-opening of this tramway as far as Vale Street Cammeray on 30th June 1941.

## **Wartime Operations**

Between 1941 and 1947 various wartime restrictions were placed on the Sydney and Newcastle bus services to reduce duplication of government services; the most important measure was perhaps the termination of city bound buses at

Footnote 2.

At this stage only a single private street tramway continued to operate in N.S.W., the steam line between Parramatta Park Gates and Fedbank Wharf. This closed in March, 1943.



O class cars 1111 (now preserved by the S.P.E.R.) and 883 wait at Manly for passengers off the ferry from Sydney on the last day of service, 30th September, 1939.

suburban tramway terminals. The wartime restrictions imposed on the use of private motor vehicles by way of petrol rationing and spare parts shortages caused a return of heavy loading to the public transport services. The passengers carried by Sydney trams and buses during the 1938-39 financial year amounted to 375,200,000 but this climbed to 551,566,000 in the 1944-45 period.

The following table illustrates the profits and losses during the war period. (£1 = \$2 Aust.)

Year	Tram	Bus
1942-43	£94,007 profit	£60,055 loss
1943-44	£118,850 profit	£110,726 loss
1944-45	£45,679 profit	£140,701 loss
1945-46	£172,281 loss	£206,825 loss
Totals	£86,255 profit	£518,307 loss

Passenger decline commenced in 1946 and has continued ever since. By 1958 the figure had fallen to 310,087,000 and in the following year the 1945-46 figure was halved. The large profit earned by the trams in the above table was mainly due to neglected maintenance. In 1939 tramcar changeovers due to faults and breakdowns amounted to 50 per 100 tramcars per month, while in 1946 this had risen to 121 changeovers per 100 cars per month at a time when 1439 trams were available for traffic in Sydney and 96 in Newcastle.

## Postwar Plans

On 5th July 1946 the State Labor Government under premier W. McKell accepted the proposal of the State Transport Advisory Committee that N.S.W. trams should be replaced with 1000 buses over the following fifteen years at a total cost of £3,000,000.

The task carried out by the trams under unfavourable conditions during the war period convinced many politicians that perhaps the 1937 and the 1946 decisions to replace the trams with buses were erroneous; accordingly in his policy speech at Bankstown on 15th April 1947 the new Labor leader, Mr J. McGirr, reversed the McKell decision and promised 500 new trams for Sydney because "a city the size of Sydney needed all forms of transport". Advance tenders were called on 31st May 1947 for equipment for 250 of the proposed tramcars but when tenders closed on 10th July 1947 only one quotation had been received and this amounted to £8000 per car. The PCC design had been proposed for the second batch of 250 but as the tramway no longer employed a design staff the pre war "R1" style was selected for the post war order.

Disappointed with the high cost of this quotation compared with the current £5000 per vehicle for Melbourne's "SW6" tramcars, a visit of Commissioner C. Neale and Transport Minister M. O'Sullivan to the M.M.T.B. Preston Workshops resulted in an interim agreement that one of the Melbourne trams would be purchased as a trial sample car for the new Sydney fleet. Due to the unsuitability of this car's dimensions to the restricted Sydney loading gauge the transfer did not eventuate.

Commissioner C. Neale, who had replaced S. Maddox as Commissioner in 1937, revealed the post war plans for the Newcastle tramways when he addressed the Newcastle Rotary Club on 23rd April 1945. He announced that trams would be replaced by buses after the war as the money needed to supply corridor trams and to renew trackwork would be better spent on buses!

## The Swift Report

Deterioration of the undertaking's finances towards the end of the wartime period prompted a report from the N.S.W. Auditor General Mr. E. Swift. An interim release of part of the report on 12th November 1946 outlined the difficulties which could be expected with staff shortages, antiquated and run down rolling stock, elderly buses and fare evasion. On 10th June 1947, the full Swift report was released and the main features were:—

1. A rise in fares was needed as current fares were at the same level as those of 1920-27 while children's fares were cheaper.
2. Costs had risen 57.4% between 1939 and 1946. Expenses amounted to £3,702,103 in 1939 and £5,826,923 in 1946.
3. Running costs were high when compared with income. Sydney and Newcastle buses cost 24.86d per mile and earnt 20.25d while the trams cost 28.92d and earnt 26.69d. (Press accounts of the reports then stated that the buses lost 2.68d per mile and trams lost 1.20d per mile. How this emerged from the above figures is not too clear).
4. Very little tram track repairs had been carried out since 1937 so in order to restore the track £3,075,260 would be needed in Sydney over the next nine years and £410,190 in Newcastle over a period of four years.
5. New vehicles were needed. Of the 1535 trams in service the various classes had average ages from 45 years to 11 years while 229 of the 274 double deck buses were more than seven years old and 79 of the 142 single deck buses were more than seven years old. The undertaking was criticised for its delay in placing early orders for post war replacements.

6. The continuation of the 1937 tram scrapping plan would depend on bus deliveries and the construction of the Eastern Suburbs Railway.

Mr. Swift's fare rise recommendation of 1d for each adult fare, planned to yield an extra £1,225,440 per year, was implemented on 1st July 1947. Although an extra £1,601,000 was actually received in increased revenue, the introduction of the 40 hour working week in N.S.W. and an increase in the basic wage on the same date as the introduction of the fare increase lifted expenditure by £1,616,011 resulting in a bus and tram loss of £601,657 in the 1947-48 financial year.



The Rockdale - Brighton-le-Sands tramway was closed with only three days notice. On the last day, 3rd September, 1949, all cars carried wreaths and 154 was photographed by the Sydney Morning Herald with its crew and wellwishers, among them a number of well-known S.P.E.R. members. Little did they know that one day they would be responsible for the preservation of this very tram!



Services to Erskine Street Wharf along King Street ceased to operate on 10th December, 1950 when a terminal loop was opened at Queen's Square. The loop is nearing completion in this view taken a week before the service along King Street stopped.

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## The Richardson - Wilson Report

The situation seemed so desperate that the Engineer and Manager of the Metropolitan Tramways Trust in Adelaide, Sir William Goodman, was invited to submit a report, but declined. However the Commissioner for Transport in Tasmania, Mr. M. Wilson, and the former Manager of the Melbourne Tramways, Mr. S. Richardson accepted and their joint report appeared on 20th October 1947.

Highlights of the report were:—

1. Buses should be substituted immediately for trams on the isolated Ashfield tramway. This would cost £150,000



R1 1943 departed Queen's Square at 2.05am on 10th July, 1960 for the last run to Watson's Bay. Although light globes were removed, little damage was done to the car and it ran in darkness escorted by three police patrol wagons and followed by the customary motorcade.

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as against £200,000 needed to place the system in order for continued tram operation.

2. Buses should replace the remaining tramway routes in Newcastle.
3. 500 trams should be ordered to allow many footboard trams to be withdrawn from traffic.
4. The removal of footboard cars would allow £200,000 in uncollected fares to be obtained each year while an additional £919,000 in revenue could be obtained if the long Sydney fare sections were shortened to Melbourne lengths and the overlapping sections eliminated.

After lengthy protests and legal moves by the citizens and council of Burwood the Ashfield tramway closed on 21st August, 1948, Newcastle services followed on 10th June, 1950 and after routine fare increases the overlapping sections were finally abolished in October, 1950, the sections being shortened to approximately one mile each on 4th November, 1951.



Returning from Watson's Bay, R1 1943 was halted by a large fire which had been started in the cutting on the S bend near Park Loop. Some delay was caused while police and passengers extinguished the blaze and cleared the track of rubbish.

## New Tramcars

Firm quotations for 250 new R1 type tramcars were called for January 28th, 1948 but the prices received were considered still too high so revised quotations were called for March 22nd. This unusual move failed to reduce costs below £8,000 per car, thus Commonwealth Engineering Company received the contract during May 1948. The first new tram, no. 1988, did not arrive on the Sydney system until 5th September, 1950 and the second car of the batch, no. 1989, was delayed until 14th September, 1951. Only 100 trams in the original order for 250 were built although a large quantity of parts for the full complement had been ordered and stockpiled. The last vehicle, tram 2087, arrived at North Sydney on 17th September, 1953 to complete the order.

Another scheme to reduce the number of footboard cars in service had been planned during the late 1930's but did not reach fruition until 13th May, 1949 when former P class car no. 1582 appeared on the Alexandria line as the first of the new PR1 type. The conversion required a thorough body rebuild from the footboard to the saloon design in which only the roof, end driving cabins, the chassis and electrical equipment were

retained. Although this conversion cost only £3725 per tram and provided a comfortable addition to the fleet with more sophisticated electrical equipment than the new R1 vehicles and were also able to run coupled, only three other trams were so treated. Footboard cars 1562 and 1582 were rebuilt in the railway carriage workshops at Eveleigh while 1517 and 1573 were converted at the Randwick Tramway workshops. The next report, however, called for a halt to this programme.

## The 'Experts' Report

This report, released on 10th May, 1949, was prepared by a panel of three London experts, Messrs Sinclair, Andrews and Ellen. Hailed as a major effort in the press (except for the Daily Mirror which was in favour of retaining and modernising the tramways) this report presented little which was new. One original proposal was the establishment of a Directorship of Transport Co-ordination under which the separate transport Commissioners would operate their departments. Mr. R. Windsor, the Commissioner for Transport from the retirement of Mr. C. Neale on 12th September, 1949 until May, 1950 received the post of Director, but the dubious worth of the



Last "Railway" tram. Shortly after midnight on 29th September, 1957 R1 1818 departed on the last run from the Sydney Station collonade to Circular Quay.

scheme is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that it only lasted a little over two years.

Briefly this 1949 report recommended:-

1. Newcastle trams to be replaced by buses by 1950 and Sydney trams to follow in stages until 1960.

2. 1060 buses would be needed to replace the trams at a cost of £4,750,000.

3. No further PR1 conversions should be made and the order for 250 R1 trams should be curtailed as low as contract penalties would allow.

4. The order for 1400 new tram motors should be lowered to a minimum.

5. Overlapping fare sections should be withdrawn but current section structure should be retained at present.

6. The number of standing passengers on buses should be reduced to 8 and to 24 on trams.

These experts found that trams operated at 35.91d per car mile compared with the bus figure of 26.5d but no figure appeared in the press as to the passenger mile income of each form of transport. The trams were losing £307,000 per annum and the buses £93,000.

Tramway closures followed hard upon the release of this report. The Vale Street line to Suspension Bridge, Cammeray, had reverted to bus operation from 10th January 1948, while extremities of the main Sydney network to Ryde and Watson's Bay succumbed in late 1949 and the King Street access into Sydney was curtailed at Queens Square on 10th December, 1950. The isolated lines at Newcastle and the Rockdale to Brighton-le-Sands route were also replaced by buses due to this report.

## Mr. Windsor as Commissioner

In his three senior positions as Commissioner for Transport between September, 1949 and May, 1950, Director for Transport Co-ordination from May, 1950 until August, 1952 and finally as Commissioner for Railways until July, 1956, Mr. Windsor developed the knack for placing his name before the public and becoming involved in other vicissitudes. He is perhaps best known for two events while head of the tramways.

The first event was the Commissioner's Message which appeared on the front of the departmental "Weekly Notice" for 2nd November, 1949 under the title "Are Trams Doomed?" The message pointed out that trams would continue to operate in Sydney in conjunction with buses. This was released at a time when the tramway system was being pruned as quickly as the arrival of new buses would allow.

The other event was the re-opening of two tram routes. Some five weeks after the closure of the Dover Road to Watson's Bay tramway on 4th December, 1949 Mr. Windsor attended a very large and forceful meeting at Woollahra Council Chambers which resulted in the reversal of the decision to close the Double Bay to Dover Road section of the line. Further protests were so successful that part of the Watson's Bay track was relaid and on Sunday 28th May, 1950 trams returned to Watson's Bay as well as to Gladesville Bridge on the recently closed Drummoyne to Gladesville route.

## Tramway Retention Plans

The re-opening of these tram routes caused a pause in the conversion programme. Except for the truncation of the City end of the Watson's Bay line at Queen's Square and the cutting back of the Botany to Bunnerong Gates tramway to a newly constructed terminal at Chelmsford Avenue in June, 1952 no further withdrawals were undertaken until mid-1953.

The premature death of Railway Commissioner Fraser cleared the way for Mr. Windsor's transfer to that post in August, 1952. During May, 1950 Assistant Transport Commissioner A. Shoebridge received promotion to Transport Commissioner, a role he held until his 65th birthday on 14th January, 1959. Traffic Manager W. Carter followed as Commissioner but due to ill health was forced to retire six months later when Mr. S. Berry became the last Commissioner while trams operated in Sydney.

With the reorganisation of May, 1950 the railways returned to direct political control, a fetter which had been partially broken by Sir Henry Parkes and his Railway (Reorganisation) Act of 1888. The bus and tram undertaking, together with private vehicle administration remained together as the Dept. of Road Transport and Tramways until the close of 1951 when the public transport section entitled Dept. of Government Tram and Omnibus Services was formed. This name was shortened to the Dept. of Government Transport during November, 1952.

The Transport Ministers under the Labour Governments were; M.O'Sullivan to June, 1950; W.Sheehan to February, 1953; C.Martin to September, 1953; E.Wetherell to March, 1956; A.Enticknap to August, 1960 and J.McMahon to April, 1965.

Just as the early death of John Kneeshaw in 1914 prevented further major tramway expansion, the premature death of Railway Commissioner Fraser in 1952 caused the planned construction of an electric rapid transit tramway from Belmont to Newcastle, with the city access along the



Pitt Street services came to an end at 1.00am on 29th September, 1957 with the departure of black creped 1028 from Circular Quay.

Burwood Street Colliery line, to be shelved. The sudden death of Transport Minister Martin on 5th September, 1953 resulted in the proposal to have a new Brisbane tramcar brought to Sydney for trials and as a possible model for a future fleet to be forgotten.

A set of bogies fitted with "rubber insert" wheels from Brisbane underwent trials on the Quay to Railway service under Sydney R1 1958 for a few weeks from 14th April, 1950, but Mr. Martin's proposals of June, 1953 envisaged a complete tram being borrowed.

During the lull in tramway closures between 1950 and 1953 Labour Caucus, possibly influenced by Trades Hall feelings, and the Transport Department decided that a compact tramway system serving the eastern suburbs as well as the inner older suburbs in other areas could perhaps be retained in Sydney. A plan was compiled by the undertaking during September, 1951 which envisaged a fleet of 1050 trams being retained. These were: R1=305, R=195, PR1=4, E=4, K=2, P=253, PR=1, OP=8, O=278. Maximum requirements would need 840 trams leaving an additional 20% for repairs and emergency traffic.

## Final Closure Policy

This proposal was reversed on 9th November, 1953 when the new Minister for Transport, Mr. E. Wetherell announced in state parliament that no further trams would be constructed and the entire Sydney network would be gradually replaced by buses. He decided that Commissioner Shoebridge had prepared cases for and against tramway retention and the latter appeared the stronger case. The Department was particularly keen to adopt any method that would overcome the huge deficit (that for 1952-3 being £3,270,277) and thought that this change would produce the desired results. At this stage trams cost 99.56d. per mile to operate and earned 75.3d. while the comparative bus figures were 45.68d. and 31.56d. The trams therefore lost 24.26d. per mile and the buses 14.12d.

The following day Mr. Wetherell added that he would not allow unions and other outside interference on this transport policy and he felt that the Commissioner alone should be responsible for the changeover and its results. Here then was the crux of the matter.... The reduction of the tramcar order from 250 to 100 had been carried out without undue penalties, this cleared the way for any method, no matter how extreme, to be launched in order to achieve some immediate financial savings and the public and employees would not be allowed to influence the plan.



To mark the closure of Sydney's last tramlines, tramway and railway enthusiast organisations mounted a display of photographs, models, relics and memorabilia in a window of David Jones' Elizabeth Street store during the last week of operation.

Although this marked the end of the Sydney tramways one last major report on the matter was tabled. A team of four engineering and management consultants of Ebasco Services Inc. of New York was engaged in September, 1956 and the 600 page document placed before parliament in November, 1957. This report emphasised the following:

1. No further double deck buses should be built and there should be no increase in the trolley bus system.
2. If trams were to continue operation they would have to be of the corridor type with centre entrance and end exit with fare collection at the door.
3. With 100% one man operation a saving of £2,280,000 could be made on the 1956-7 operating costs while the staff could be reduced from 10,600 to 6,600.
4. The decline in passengers was expected to continue.
5. If tramway operation should continue due to extending the life of the tracks and overhead wire the footboard trams would have to be retired and the corridor cars converted to one man operation, but the cost of this change would be prohibitive.

Costs at this stage amounted to 112.58d. per mile for trams or 4.11d. per passenger mile while buses cost 62.04d. or 3.67d. per passenger mile.

The rest of this story is recent history. The last of the southern suburban tramways using Pitt and Castlereagh Streets closed on 28th September, 1957, the North Sydney system and the underground followed on 28th June, 1958 and the remaining western lines along George Street ceased after regular traffic on 22nd November, 1958. The eastern suburban lines, which were to have continued until the completion of the Eastern Suburbs Railway followed the rest of the system into oblivion. The Watson's Bay line closed for the second time on 9th July, 1960 and the last two routes along Elizabeth Street to La Perouse and Maroubra were replaced by buses during the afternoon of Saturday, 25th February, 1961. One point must be emphasised.... Even though at two periods during the post war era the plan to scrap trams entirely was reversed and the system seemed to gain a reprieve, the final demise occurred within two months of the period in the 1949 "experts" report and exactly at the time recommended by the 1946 McKell proposal. Footnote: Passengers carried on the all bus system for the 1969-70 financial year - 235,980,000 and the loss - \$5,938,492.

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Back Page: Steam Motor 87A and O class 1042 pose for an official photograph at Cabarita during a trial run over the newly electrified Enfield lines on 1st February 1912. The electric service replaced the steam trams without any fanfare on 3rd February, 1912.

