Ballarat Tramway Museum Inc.

(Association No: A0031809K)



Collection Policy

Version 3.0 - September 2024

BALLARAT TRAMWAY MUSEUM INC .

Collection Policy

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Collection Policy (*Links correct at 11-9-2024)*

1.0 Aim

To define the general purpose of the museum operated by the Ballarat Tramway Museum (BTM), identify the general significance of the existing collection and provide a collection policy for the care of our current collection and scope for future acquisitions.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to assist the Board in fulfilling the aims of the Museum in what it collects, maintains and disposes of in the future. It is not to detail the standard of upkeep, or presentation etc. These are covered in other policy documents, eg the Fleet Conservation, Interpretation policies and the Procedures Manual for Management and Care of the Collection. It is to be read in conjunction with the Museum's adopted Code of Ethics – the International Council of museums – (ICOM) – see https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf

3.0 Policy Basis

The policy has been prepared on the following basis, given the history of the Museum, its present aims and what is seen as its future direction. As an Accredited Museum adopting accepted professional standards for the ownership of cultural property and improving these standards on an on-going basis will enhance this direction. For the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMAGA) National Standards see https://www.amagavic.org.au/resources/national-standards

1. The Museums Mission Statement: Continue the development of a working museum to preserve the style of Ballarat's former street tramways and trams for the public benefit in a safe environment.
2. The objects expressed in the Incorporation documents, Statement of Purpose
3. The current collection of the Museum.
4. During 2021/22 the Museum constructed a new museum exhibition display area and space to house the collection, offices and meeting facilities. This has significantly increased the space to store and manage the collection. A significant offsite storage building has been constructed at Bungaree to house tramcars for both the Museum, Melbourne Tram Museum and VicTrack
5. What is likely to come available in the future and is consistent with the theme of the collection.
6. What would be desirable to have in our Collection.
7. The history of the various Ballarat tramway operators.
8. A Significance Assessment of the Collection by Stella Barber of "*SMB Wordsmith*".
9. That the "Vintage Tramway Museum" and "Tram Tracks" are included within the Victorian Heritage Register as items B7 and F12 respectively.[1]

[1] Victorian Heritage Register H2252 - http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/#detail_places;1761

4.0 The Existing Collection

4.1 Collection Theme

The collection theme for the museum functions of the BTM is "*the history of Ballarat's passenger tramways, its people, equipment, development and operation in relation to the history of Ballarat, Victorian Provincial Tramways and their relationships with other Australian Tramways."*

4.2 Collection Significance Assessment

A Significance Assessment of the BTM Collection was undertaken during 2007 by historian Stella Barber of *SMB Wordsmith*. The author has a Masters qualification in history and archives, has worked as a corporate historian and prepared the significance assessment on the large photographic collection of the Ballarat Gold Museum. As the study was looking at the whole of the collection and not just the tramcars, only four of our tramcars were reported on, considered by the BTM to be the most significant.

The author of the significance study concluded:

"Although the Ballarat service was relatively small compared with other world systems, it was in fact significant because of its inclusive social nature. This is something that the BTM has tried to preserve."

"At the time of closure of the tramway in Ballarat, that service and that of Bendigo was a gem in the tramway world. All its trams were of WW1 vintage and ran on what was considered a quaint tramway. It is a proud survivor given that other cities the world over have shut and demolished their street trams."

4.3 A Ballarat Treasure

The Museum's Collection was also recognised by the City of Ballarat's Treasures Register, formally launched in August 2007.

During the 2019 and 2022, the City of Ballarat in partnership with the Museum reconstructed the track in Wendouree Parade and the new Museum depot tracks. This work was funded by the State of Victoria, Federal Government and the City of Ballarat.

The New Museum building was funded by private donations. The State Government Regional Development Fund and the Vera Moore Trust have funded the new exhibitions and accessibility facilities.

4.4 Collection Significance

4.4.1 Our Tramcars

The existing collection of Ballarat's tramcars is significant in that it represents an enlarged sample, generally in operable condition, of the trams that operated in Ballarat from the 1930's with representative samples from the time the trams commenced to operate in Ballarat in 1887. The collection can be interpreted to visitors by both displays and operation on a section of original track or tram line.

The new facility has allowed us to expand the collection on display (as of Sept. 2024) with trams from Geelong, Melbourne, Launceston, and one operated by the Victorian

Railways on the St Kilda to Brighton Electric Street Railway. The latter three are on loan to the Museum.

Two culturally significant trams have been acquired during the last seven years; former Restaurant tram No. 939 (operating as Cuthberts939) and Clifton Pugh Transporting Art Tram No. 504. More recently a tram that will allow wheelchair access No. 1029 was acquired and refurbished. All these are former Melbourne trams which did not operate in Ballarat during the era of operations by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV).

4.4.2 Our Artefacts etc

The large collection of artefacts, photographs, models, posters, drawings, oral histories, small items and parts, form a comprehensive sample of the materials and people needed to operate and maintain a public transport tramway system. While concentrated around Ballarat's trams, it includes the other two Victorian Provincial Tramways, Bendigo & Geelong with a sample of other tramways such as Melbourne for comparative purposes. The Collection can be used as a research and interpretation facility for those interested in the social development of Ballarat, ~~and~~ public transport development in conjunction with the generation of electricity and the role of tramways in public transport.

The generation of electricity was an integral part of the development and operation of the Provincial Tramways. This history and artefacts of the four electric tram operators and one-horse tram operator are important to understand Provincial tramway history. This includes its interpretation and its impact on the social life of Victorians in general. The various operators were:

- Ballaarat Tramway Co (horse trams): (1887 to 1903)
- The Electric Supply Co of Victoria (ESCo) who operated both Ballarat and Bendigo systems (1903 to 1934)
- The Melbourne Electric Supply Co (MESCo) the Geelong operator (1912 to 1930)
- The State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV) (1934 to 1971)

4.4.3 Our Contemporary Items

Through the collection of contemporary materials, the Museum can continue to tell the story of the tramcars, the people and the organisation which preserved and now operates them. The Museum also tells the story of today's tramway and the ongoing relationship with the community.

4.4.4 Non-Ballarat Items

While the Museum's collection of Non-Ballarat items has a lesser significance to the history of Ballarat's tramways, it is important in the overall study and interpretation of the other Victorian Provincial tramways and electric street tramways in general. The existing collection consists almost entirely of photographs, documents, and some very small items of other Victorian Provincial (Geelong and Bendigo), Australian and International systems, in particular where they have been collected by tramway enthusiasts or workers who lived in Ballarat or had a close affiliation with Australasian tramways or the Museum.

4.5 Significance Assessment & Categories

The following collection classifications or categories are made to assist decision making and answer future questions in the future regarding how we view and prioritize our collection. The definitions can be used for both the tramcars and general collection of artefacts and paper collection, where fragile originals and duplicates are held. They follow the accepted criteria, such as that outlined in Significance 2.0, a guide to assessing the significance of collections, published by the Collections Council of Australia, 2009, see pages 49 to 50[2]. The following table is drawn from a number of sources.

Criteria	Assessment Basis
Historic	An object may be historically significant for its association with people, events, places and themes. In doing so, the object: • Demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of Ballarat's tramway history or other SECV systems. • May yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Ballarat's trams or other SECV systems. • Has a strong association with the life or work of an individual or organisation or an event of historical importance that affected Ballarat, its tramways or other tramway systems and Museums.
Aesthetic/ Technical	An object may be significant for its craftsmanship, style, technical excellence, beauty, skill and quality of design and execution. It may be unique or mass produced. It may demonstrate a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment, or be an excellent representation of unique construction techniques or design characteristics.
Scientific	This criterion tends to apply chiefly to biological, geological and archaeological material, but may also encompass documentary collections. An item may have research significance if it has major potential for further scientific examination or study.
Social	This may be demonstrated in social, spiritual or cultural expressions that provide evidence that a community has a strong affiliation with that object or collection, and that it contributes to its identity and cohesion. The item may also have strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or group within it.
Comparative or Supportive Criteria	
Provenance	Means the chain of ownership and context of use of an object, a documented history its existence, ownership and use – gives context.
Representativeness	The way it represents a particular category of object, activity, way of life or historical theme.
Rarity	Is it rare, unusual or particularly fine example of its type. It is possible for an object's significance to be rated as both rare and representative.
Condition, intactness and Integrity	Is the object unusually complete, or in sound, original condition? Objects with these characteristics have integrity. Changes and adaptations made in the working life of an object do not necessarily diminish significance but recognised as an integral part of the object and its history.
Interpretive potential	The capacity to interpret and demonstrate aspects of experience, historical themes, people and activities, ability to tell their story, ideas or illustrate particular themes.

[2] This document is undergoing revision 2024/25 and this table will need to be updated following its completion.

5.0 Collection Policy

The collection policy is described for each of the four main areas of collection significance.

1. Tramcars
2. Artefacts
3. Contemporary Collecting
4. Non-Ballarat Tramway Items

5.1 Tramcars

The tramcars are the primary collection items of the Museum and generally form the operating section of the museum. While these form the largest single collection item in terms of physical size, they are the smallest numerically. The histories of the individual trams are reasonably well documented. In the case of tramcars, it is the body number that is considered unique to that car, i.e. its essence, not it's trucks or mechanical equipment, which was often swapped between trams.

The collection has several duplications. This is necessary from an operational viewpoint, where restoration or maintenance of a tram to operating condition can take a volunteer organisation such as ours, several years. It also allows the Museum to represent the various colour schemes that were used on the various trams. This adds to the visual impact of the collection and enables better interpretation of the story of Ballarat's trams.

For the significance of the existing tramcar fleet, reference is made to the Conservation Policy.

5.1.1 Ballarat Tramcar Collection Gaps

Missing from the BTM collection are the following items:

i) ESCo - 1905 Toastrack Car - built new for the Electric Supply Company of Victoria (ESCo) in 1905. None of these bodies is known to exist or are likely to exist given the nature of their construction.

ii) State Electricity Commission (SECV) works car - used to maintain the tramway track and drainage system. The Tramway Museum Society of Victoria hold this car

iii) Single deck horse tram – no bodies known to exist, or likely to exist.

iv) A single truck straight sill closed combination car – Ballarat No. 29 – was scrapped in 1950.

v) A former Sydney electric car that was built for Sydney and then rebuilt for ESCo in Ballarat; either the Experimental type or C class type - no bodies known to exist. These were ESCo cars 2, 7 & 9 built by Stephenson for Sydney in 1890 and ESCo 3, 5 & 8 by Hudson Bros in 1898. All were modified by Duncan and Fraser for use in Ballarat.

The Museum in 1994 acquired the body of ESCo No. 21 and in May 2009, the body of ESCo. No. 22 and has effectively completed the collection if each type of tramcar that operated prior to 1971 in Ballarat, other than those trams noted above.

5.1.2 Future Acquisitions

It is possible that other trams of the ESCo, MESCo and SECV Provincial tramway eras could become available to the Museum in the future. If this occurs, then they should be considered as worthy of acquisition depending upon their completeness and the space to store them. They could be considered as part of a strategic ‘reserve' in

case the present tramcars are destroyed for some reason or to fill the known collection gaps. Any decision will need to be made upon the following criteria:

- condition of body and how complete it is
- cost of acquisition
- historical relevance
- cultural significance to the community
- storage space available
- number of duplicates already held
- ability to make operational at a reasonable cost
- the Museum is the only Victorian tramway operator capable of demonstrating the item.

The Board must approve all additions of Tramcars and vehicles to the formal catalogued collection.

5.1.3 Policy Relevant to Trams from Other Systems

Trams from other non-Provincial systems are seen to have a low priority, particularly with respect to Ballarat History. They only should be acquired on merit such as cultural significance, or to meet a specific need, eg disability access or for specific purposes, eg hiring for functions. Each case needs to have regard to storage space, historical relevance, cultural significance, condition, need, or is worthy of institutional collecting.[3]

5.1.4 Other forms of Ballarat transport

Other forms of transport used in Ballarat, eg horse drawn cabs, omnibuses, motor buses etc. are not directly relevant to the history of Ballarat Tramways. While these are relevant to the history of transport in Ballarat, it is considered that acquisition of these items is not part of the Museum's aims, although the Museum's Statement of Purpose does allow it. It is recommended that they not be funded for acquisition. If they are given or left to the Museum, they should be accepted only if another suitable institution cannot be found and on the understanding that they may be disposed of at a later date.

5.1.5 Offsite Storage

The Museum has constructed extensive storage facilities at its offsite storage facility at Bungaree to hold trams on behalf of the Museum, Melbourne Tram Museum and VicTrack.

5.2 Artefacts, Archives, Oral Histories, Pictorial Records and Tramcar Parts

5.2.1 Artefacts

Includes such items as; drawings, tickets, fare tokens, drawings, posters, ephemera, timetables, rulebooks, personal records, operational paperwork, uniforms, conductors' bags, safeworking equipment, tramway street furniture (eg stop signs), record books, references used in the operation and maintaining the system, and ancillary equipment such as a tower trucks.

Such material should be collected on the following basis:

- Historically significant in understanding the operation of the Ballarat tramways over its life.
- Size of the object/s, the ability to properly store it, and its condition.
- The number of similar items in our collection already.

This area includes overhead and track materials. For these operational material items, the following considerations will be applied.

- Overhead materials where necessary for essential spare parts or for historical displays (includes all traction power supply equipment, from the switchboard to the actual trolley wire).
- Track materials will not be acquired unless for direct use in the track or as essential parts for the maintenance of existing material.
- Samples of track materials, or equipment may be acquired where historically relevant and suitable for display, including track reconstruction of 2019 and 2022.

5.2.2 Archives

Archives consisting of personal papers, tramway information, notes, diaries, private letters, business records and associated paper documents concerning Victorian Provincial Tramway systems should be actively considered for acquisition. Archival material from other tramway systems unless in small quantities and directly associated with the donation of archival material, shall be treated in accordance with clause 5.4 – Non-Ballarat Tramway Items.

Donors of archives which are of a public record nature shall be referred to the Public Records Office of Victoria for deposit. Donated archives which contain sensitive or confidential records shall be discussed with the Donor as to the nature of access to these items, and agreement reached prior to acceptance. Such items can be catalogued on Victorian Collections, but held private to the Museum, so that they are not visible to the public.

In the determination of whether to accept the donation, consideration is to be given to the condition of the archives, the volume of material, the space needed to store, restrictions placed on their access, copyright issues and whether they contain private or sensitive information.

5.2.3 Oral Histories

Where oral histories are collected or recorded by the Museum, these must be collected in accordance with guidelines such as those of the Oral History Association of Australia, which address the needs for the ethical, confidentiality and sensitivity issues relating to oral history. An Oral History Release Form must be completed.

5.2.4 Pictorial Records

The policy is to acquire pictorial records, which is inclusive of photographs, postcards, video and films and other electronic images that record trams operating in Ballarat. The equipment used to maintain, operate and construct the system, the personnel who worked on the system, or other photographs relevant to the history of Ballarat and its tramway system should also be included. The photographs should not be only of the trams themselves, but of life and streetscape aspects of Ballarat's tramway history and other SECV Provincial systems.

Priorities with respect to pictorial records (including digital images) are:

(1) Photographs of 1880 - 1920s, of all types, including those requiring restoration.
(2) Photographs of 1930s - 1940s - poor or lower grade photographs acceptable.
(3) Photographs of the 1950s - 60s should be collected where of good quality.
(4) Photographs of the last years of operation - Ballarat streetscapes, life and activity with the trams. Photographs of trams standing for example would not form a prime priority for acquisition, especially where a cost was involved.
(5) The Museum is receiving digital images provided by Members or interested people. These should be received on the basis that the images can be used freely in Museum publications or displays without obtaining further permission from the original owner.

5.2.5 Tramcar Parts

Parts or materials removed from tramcars, such as defective structural members may be considered for acquisition where they form part of the tram's overall life history.

Priorities with respect to tramcar spare parts and equipment are.
(1) Spare parts directly relevant to our single truck or maximum traction bogie trams and in short supply to be acquired.
(2) Spare parts related to Melbourne trams to be acquired only where relevant to our Ballarat trams or our ex-Melbourne trams where stocks are not at present held or are critical to the future operation of the trams themselves.
(3) Small hand tools relevant to the SECV operations are to be considered for acquisition where historically relevant, are suitable for display, or could be useful in the conservation of our present fleet.
(4) Machines and machine tools to be acquired where considered to be useful, not requiring large space or specialist qualifications for their use. Consideration is to be given to other holdings or abilities of other groups at the same time.
(5) Spare parts related to non-Ballarat trams or Melbourne trams, which are not suited to our trams, should not be acquired.

5.3 Contemporary Collecting

The BTM/BTPS itself has operated or cared for Ballarat trams longer, than each of the previous operators, Ballarat Tramway Company, Electric Supply Company of Victoria and the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. As such our pictorial and physical records, materials, equipment and operational paperwork should be sampled and collected on a rational basis to form a collection of Museum activities and its history for future reference. This includes maintaining files of digital images of the Museum's activities.

At least one of the following criteria should be satisfied:
- Relevance of the item to the Museum's history or collection
- Does the material best represent the event or a change in the way the community looks at the tramway and its local or community heritage.
- Connection to an existing item or object within the collection.

5.4 Non-Tramway Items, models and other tramway ephemera

Material not associated with the Ballarat or SECV Provincial operated tramways or the operation of a tramway system should not be acquired. It should be directed to another, preferably to an Accredited Museum[4] where it would be more appropriate

[4] Under the Museums Australia's Museum Accreditation Program or equivalent scheme.

or to another body who has the facilities to house and care for these items and make them accessible. However, a small quantity of material from a collection where they have been collected by tramway enthusiasts or workers who lived in Ballarat (eg the Wal Jack Collection) which can be used for comparison purposes by researchers should be considered for formal acquisition. However, if space becomes a premium then these items should be considered for de-acquisition.[5]

Tramway Models and other associated tramway ephemera may be considered for collection provided it can be used in interpretative displays or on the Museum's model layout.

Material not associated with the Ballarat Tramways may be considered for acquisition provided it fulfils the following criteria:

- It relates to other SECV operated tramways, or to other electric tramways
- It is free of any charge.
- It can be stored SECV securely or displayed without impacting upon the Museum's resources.

6.0 Acquisition Management

Decisions on whether to acquire an item are made by the Museum in accordance with the *Procedures Manual for Management and Care of the Collection.* For decisions regarding tramcars see clause 5.1.2

6.1 - Duplicate materials

Offer to receive but advise the donor that if the materials are duplicate to our collections, we will dispose of them by sale through the Museum's shop unless they wish to have them returned or passed on to another body.

- Books – first checked that they are not in the Museum's Library or collection
- Journals – as for books, checking condition of existing holdings.
- Other items such as badges, bags, maps, drawings, tickets as above.

7.0 Deaccessioning of Collected Items

7.1 General

De-accessioning is the process of de-registering an object from the collection for clearly stated reasons and disposing of it in accordance with approved policies. Caution and transparency are essential in the process.

7.2 Criteria for Deaccessioning

The following should be considered when de-accessioning an item:

[5] A very substantial collection Wal Jack's albums of Australasian and overseas tramways photographs and tickets were donated to the Museum during 2011. See "Board Report June 2011 – re Wal Jack Materials."

a. Its relevance or significance to the history of Ballarat tramways.
b. The condition of the object.
c. Any determination made at the time of acquisition.
d. The method of acquisition - whether donated and how donated.
e. The significance given to the object in the Fleet & Infrastructure Conservation Policy (Table 1).
f. The need to dispose - i.e. pressure on space.
g. Any alternative use that could be made of the object by the Museum.
h. Statutory requirements.

If an item has been acquired under the Commonwealth Government's Cultural Gifts Program (formally known as the Taxation Incentive for the Arts Scheme) or any similar scheme, then it shall be considered as part of the Museum's permanent collection. *(April 2024 change)*

7.3 The Decision process

When an item has been identified for de-accession, the item should be offered to other museums, either for sale, long term loan or as a donation, depending on the acquisition history of the object and its value on the open market. The person who donated the item to the Museum should be consulted if possible. If an item has been stolen from the Museum, and there is no hope of its return, it should be formally de-accessioned from the Collection Management system. Items cannot be transferred without undergoing a public or open and transparent process to the ownership of any member of the Museum unless it is an institution.

For tramway items, these should be offered firstly through Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia, other museums and followed by private bodies. In the case of items which are not directly related to tramways, eg equipment or tools which could have been used by any organisation, these should be offered firstly to museums affiliated with the Central Highland Historical Association and then other museums, before being offered on the open market. An exception to this would be if the item were determined to be of national or state significance when priority should be given to the Museum of Victoria.

7.4 Deaccession Procedure

a. Any identified item to be deaccessioned must considered by the Board and its decision recorded in the minutes.
b. The item must be held for an agreed period (at least three months or until the following Board meeting) to give a "cooling off" period before it is disposed of.
c. Staff, volunteers, Board members and their families are prohibited from purchasing or otherwise obtaining a deaccessioned item.
d. Any funds acquired from the sales of the deaccessioned item should be used for acquisitions or care of the collection.

7.5 Recording in the Collection Management System

The steps in the recording process after the decision is made and approved by the Board would be to:

- Record the item has been de-accessioned in the Victorian Collections Management System – a record of the data would be maintained.
- Mark the work sheet as de-accessioned and store with the worksheet, any correspondence, paperwork and a copy of the Committee approval.
- The Registration Number is not to be reused.

Document History

This policy document is a revision of the original 1992 Policy that was adopted by the Board in May 1992, which itself underwent three minor revisions. Version 2 was a significant revision of the original document and followed a BTM Member Forum in October 2004. Version 2.1 is an update for the Collection Significance Assessment study, recognition of the collection as a Ballarat Treasure and the addition of ESCo 22 to the collection. It also changed the categories for significance assessment to bring it into line with the Museum Standards and Collection Council of Australia documents and the addition of a cover and index to the document. It was authorised by the Board at its meeting of 19 July 2009.

Version 2.2 is a minor update to the policy to pick up small changes to the Museum's infrastructure and collection and was authorised at the Board meeting of 15-1-2012. Version 2.3 a minor update regarding identified issues concerning oral histories, copyright on pictorial records and the de-accessioning items Cultural Gifts program previously known as the Taxation Incentive for the Arts Scheme. Version 2.4 – minor changes and updates.
Version 2.5 – see updated doc of April 2024 Board meeting for changes to the Cultural Gift Programme

Version 3 follows the move into the New Museum, a more spacious Collection storage area and the acquisition of two former Geelong trams and other tramcars.

Policy Review

This policy should be reviewed, if not already done so, during 2027/2028 and will need to have table in section 2.4 updated for the revision of Significance 2.0 .

BTM Collection Policy Version 2.4 and 3.0 - document issue

Date	Details	To
Version 2		
Version 2.4		
13-1-2017	Draft Pending consideration by Board.	All Board Members via the Secretary.
24-1-2017	Approved by Board 21-1-2017	BTM Secretary for Management system and web site.
Version 3		
	Tramcar section 5 considered by the Board at its May 2023 meeting.	
27-6-2023	Draft 1 of version 3.0	Pam Waugh, Sue Edmondson, Peter Waugh
4-7-2024	Draft of version 3.0a	All Board members
11-9-2024	Revised following comment from the Collection Management team.	
16-9-2024	Draft of version 3	All Board members
21-9-2024	Approved by Board at meeting of 21/9/24	