

# BUS AND COACH SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

A0006261D Preserving Australia's bus and coach heritage ABN 86 829 759 481



## 2019 Annual Report



1956 line up of Jack Cartin's Capital Road Lines C&B Leyland Royal Tiger and Grummet and C&B Federals interstate express coaches

### President's Report: Paul Kennelly

#### Membership

Membership reached 200 this year, the first time this mark has been achieved.

#### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

The main event in the last year was the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Society in November. Two of the founders of the Society were in attendance – Geoff Mann and Keith Kings. We were able to display many enlarged prints of Keith's colour slides taken in the 1960s. These were the first time many of these had been seen and from the look of joy on Keith's face it was the first time he seen them since they were taken. As it turned out, this was the last major function that Keith attended as he passed away in April this year.

#### Visit to Volgren

Society members visited the premises of Volgren in January. Unfortunately, it turned out to be the hottest day of the year which meant some members could not attend. Despite that, the 40+ attendees were treated to an excellent reception from the staff at Volgren for which we were most grateful. Ventura and VTC provided pick up buses and the very first Volgren Volvo B58 was brought from Monbulk for the occasion. Many thanks to all involved.

#### Optare Tour

This last year has seen a reduction in opportunities for tours due to the magnitude of the rail replacement programs in the state. However, during a lull in such operations, in June, we took the opportunity to ride on some Optare buses and to visit Ventura's Monbulk depot. Thanks to all those at Ventura who made the day possible.

## **Meetings and other Events**

The HCVCA display at Yarra Glen attracted around 30 preserved buses, including the Driver Heritage Fleet, Moonee Valley Coaches, Dyson's, John Usher, Craig Coop and other private individuals. Once again, Gary Driver provided a riding opportunity for members on the set up day, for which we were grateful.

Our meetings continued to be held at the premises of Hawthorn Tramway Museum and we are grateful for this opportunity and for their continued support of the BCSV. The venue has excellent facilities and has proved popular with members. It proved the perfect venue for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.

The March 2019 meeting featured Paul Kennelly and Geoff Foster presenting the next part in Government bus operators 1920 to the present day - featuring Adelaide and Tasmania. The May 2019 meeting saw a late change due to the unavailability of guest speaker Cos Sita whose mother passed away. Instead, we viewed part of Greg Travers' latest DVD featuring "Buses in the Snowfields" and Paul Kennelly presented the early years in Adelaide which was deferred from the March meeting due to time constraints.

Our July 2019 meeting featured a special guest speaker – Dr Chris Lowe, Executive Director of BusVic. This was very well attended. After an informative presentation on BusVic's Bus Plan, Dr Lowe fielded numerous questions from members.

## **Archives and Heritage**

Work has continued on the Society website and Virtual Museum. Thanks to Webmaster Matt Fleay-Daly and Craig Halsall. This is one of the premier bus enthusiast sites in the world.

Research has been undertaken about past operators or people involved in the industry, including Bridges of Mentone, Blue and Silver and Sandringham Bus Company. These will feature in future stories in Panorama.

Work continues with the State Library of Victoria in relation to Keith Kings' photographic collection. Currently, we are involved in "deciphering" descriptions from Keith's meticulously kept, but somewhat illegible, notebooks on his negative collection.

An Archives Sub Committee was established with David Kemp in the lead role. The staged plan is to establish a list a materials that the Society should keep as part of its official archive, identify where these materials currently reside, investigate options for the storage of these materials, implement the storage arrangement and then finally arrange for the movement of identified archives to the storage facility. This was never going to be quick process as it involves the investigation of numerous options. However, significant progress has been made (through the elimination of some possibilities) and work will continue into 2020. This may be linked to the concurrent investigation of a Museum site (see Jason Blackman's report).

## **Finances**

Treasurer Rick Carlisle prepared the balance sheets which show that the Society continues to operate on a sound financial footing with a surplus for the year of around \$2,800. More details in the attached financial statements.

## **An attack on Society Officers**

On Christmas Day 2018, an email entitled, "Statement from Brad Woodford regarding BCSV" was sent to the President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, Committee member David Kemp and the Social Media Officer. It contained false, malicious and defamatory comments. Mr. Woodford had applied to re-join the Society (after an absence of ten years) three days before the last AGM. He had also submitted an application for the position of Vice President (which was ruled ineligible as it did not meet the time related requirements in the Rules). After the results of the elections at the 2018 AGM were made known to him, Mr. Woodford published abusive comments on the Society's Facebook page about two of the elected officers. These posts were removed. He then posted additional abusive comments. He was banned from the page. Mr. Woodford has been banned from various social media sites (ATDB and Facebook

pages) over the years for making abusive comments. Mr. Woodford's application to re-join the Society was rejected by majority decision at the October Committee meeting in accordance with the BCSV Rules.

On Boxing Day, Mr. Woodford posted his "Statement" on two Facebook pages that he had established. The other administrators/moderators of these pages were contacted and asked to remove the defamatory posts. None did. Facebook was also contacted and they removed one of the pages entirely. Mr. Woodford continued to send abusive messages to Society officers and make posts on his remaining Facebook page which contained additional false and defamatory material. After taking some counsel on the matter, I determined to take personally funded legal action for defamation against Mr. Woodford and the administrators of the Facebook pages. The end result was that the defamatory posts were taken down. As required through my legal representative in order to settle the matter, written apologies were received from the six people named in the action (Mr. Woodford and five page administrators) and monetary compensation was received from 4 individuals (Mr. Woodford and the three administrators of the still active Facebook page). Mr. Woodford's written apology was given to attendees at the AGM and is available to be sent to members upon request.

There is no doubt that this incident took a great toll on those officers subjected to Mr. Woodford's attack. They had put themselves forward at the 2018 AGM, and were duly elected, to work on behalf of BCSV members. These are voluntary positions and those who put themselves forward should not be subject to abusive or gratuitous attacks.

### **Finally**

Thank you to Geoff Foster and his team for another outstanding volume of Panorama. The quality and content just seems to get better and better. Geoff also made a very strong rebuttal on Facebook in relation to the incident reported above, and for that, I thank him.

Following the incident above, Michael Presta (Vice President) and Ben Knight (Tours) tendered their resignations from the Committee. Geoff Foster was appointed to the now vacant Vice President position. The Committee returned to harmonious operation. I thank them on behalf of the membership. In particular, I would like to thank David Kemp for his personal support during difficult times and for his thoughtful work on Society business. It was most unfortunate that Jason Blackman, Rick Carlisle and Craig Halsall had to endure the nasty incident which was really aimed at me. Despite that, Craig's work on social media for the Society has been outstanding and has established the Society as one of the best enthusiast group communicators on social media. Despite its potential downside, this is the secret of continued membership renewal for the future.

### **Secretary's Report: Jason Blackman**

#### **Shepparton Motor Museum**

Discussion has been held during the year with those involved with the Shepparton Motor Museum about the possibility of including a section for heritage buses on rolling display in their plans for an expanded museum.

A number of bus operators including Driver, Ventura and Dyson's are supportive of the idea and have agreed to contribute to the display once the expanded museum is built.

#### **Publications Report: Geoff Foster**

The usual seven issues of Australian Bus Panorama appeared with the six bi monthly issues and the Christmas Special. Major news stories covered in Volume 34 included Victoria's new bus contracts, Forest Coach Lines sale, Station Link in Sydney, Tasmania's bus review and Canberra's 2019 bus network.

Articles included 20 years of Bustech, the Commonwealth games and Gisbus. Histories covered Tullamarine Bus Lines, Wise of Inverloch, Noreng and Curren, Bishop of Nowra, the Ansair Scenicruiser, Apollo Bay, Symons & Fowler

and associated bus companies Fowler's and Arunga, Advertising in Truck and Bus Transportation, Morgan of Foster, Calderwood Coaches, 100 years of Sandlant's and Coleambally of NSW.

There was also coverage of various bus enthusiast tours and events including Australia Day 2019 in Sydney.

The Christmas Special celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BCSV with photo presentations from the collections of the four founding members, Keith Kings, John Masterton, Bruce Tilley and Geoff Mann.

The Editor's thanks go to all contributors with particular mention to Paul Kennelly, Stephen Haby, and Alan Ofak for article contributions, to Hayden Ramsdale for an article and the proof reading and to all those who contribute news and fleet notes sightings directly or via the range of forums from which information is now sourced.

## **Social Media Report: Craig Halsall**

Our Facebook page has continued to successfully deliver news about society activities to both our growing membership base and the wider community. We have now hit a milestone of 900 'likes' plus a further 30 followers, an increase of over 30% compared to this time last year when sat on 676 'likes'. We have taken advantage of a new feature that allows us to 'invite' those who like our posts that may have yet to have liked the page.

Online bookings were trailed via the locally-based TryBooking platform for our January members' visit to Volgren and around 80% of attendees were able to successfully book online with a handful of email bookings. Various changes to the itinerary were able to be updated to those who booked. The outgoing committee has decided that for now online bookings will only be used for tours where numbers are to be capped and walk-up fares will continue to be offered for most tours and events.

A successful online poll was conducted to determine our joyrides at the June Optare Tour and will continue for future depot visits.

Cover photos on the Facebook page continue to spark broad interest in the community, attracting likes from 40 to 50 each time. Many recent cover photos have been sourced from the recent CD-ROM release covering Victorian high floors.

The digitalisation of Graeme Cleak's 1925 - 1970 route histories was undertaken over the past year and David Kemp kindly proof-read the content, which should be published alongside historic photos from the Bruce Tilley Collection in the near future.

While I hope to remain involved in both the Facebook page and website over the coming year, opportunities exist for other members to assist me and to steer the direction of both the Facebook page and the website. The role should not rest solely on the shoulders of one person, especially given work commitments.

It was disheartening to see social media, including our Facebook page, used to openly bully and criticise the Committee over their decisions and direction for several months following the AGM by a small group of individuals. Shameless personal attacks towards me and others were also grossly inappropriate. Most members, however, will agree that the Committee, led by Paul Kennelly as President, has delivered a successful year for the Society in our 50th year and the many achievements simply speak for themselves.

