

The Electrification of Melbourne's Suburban Railway Network

...Presented by Ian Cook

The 2009 Engineering Heritage Victoria Guest Speakers Series



Thursday, 15 October 2009
5:30pm for 6:00pm to 7:00pm

John Connell Auditorium,
Engineering House, 21 Bedford Street North Melbourne

Engineering Heritage, Victoria would like to invite you to a special presentation.

In 1919 the first Suburban Electric Train Services started in Melbourne. At the time Melbourne was the largest city in Australia, and was the first to electrify its Train Services. By 1923 most of the Suburban Train Services were operated by Electric Trains. It was an immediate success, with patronage soaring as a result of the quicker travel times and increased services – all achieved at a reduced cost.

This was the culmination of a large investment by the Victorian Railways into the new Electric Traction Technology to replace the Steam Train Passenger Services of the time. The Electrification Scheme adopted was from the recommendations of a Report in 1912 by noted UK Electrical Engineer Charles Merz. The Scheme was to be the first application of 1500 V DC using overhead current collection in the World at the time, and boasted the largest Power Station in the Southern Hemisphere.

Scheduled completion in 1915 was delayed by the hostilities in Europe of the First World War. Since then there have been long periods with no changes, and other exciting periods with huge changes, but generally it has evolved and survived the many cut backs that the Suburban Trains have endured. Currently it is facing many new challenges as Governments are belatedly investing in public transport again, including many more new trains for Melbourne and new railway infrastructure.

This talk aims to give an overview of the history of the beginnings; the technology used; to track the changes in the 90 years since, and to outline the challenges for the future.

About the Guest Speaker:

Ian Cook is an Electrical Engineer who has worked in the Victorian Railways and its various successors for his working life. He has been involved with the Traction Network since 1975, and has been instrumental in many of the changes and extensions of the Network since then..

Registration is NOT required for attendance at this event.

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