AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MELBOURNE BRANCH

ARHS Melbourne Luncheon Outing Group, Preston Depot 1ˢᵗ August 2023

	Meet at Southern Cross Waiting Room.
	Walk to Route 11 Tram Stop in Spencer Street, catch 9:37 or 9:44 Tram to Preston Workshops.
10:51	Walk to Preston Depot Visitors Entrance in Miller Street.
10:30	Commence visit to Preston Tram Depot.
	Time determined by Yarra Trams, Depart Preston Tram Depot for East Preston Tram Depot.
	Return to Preston Tram Depot, walk to Junction Hotel for lunch.
14:00	Depart Junction Hotel, walk to Tram Stop for 86 Tram to City or Thornbury Station for train to City.
approx	Tour ends here.

If you are leaving the Tour earlier than arrival back at Flinders St Station, please let Geoff or Hugh know you are leaving the Tour Group.

If you wish to contact Geoff or Hugh on the day of travel only, Geoff's mobile is 0412 056 033 and Hugh's mobile is 0499 176 770. These numbers are for use on the day of travel only.

Preston Workshops

Preston Workshops is the heavy maintenance facility for the Melbourne tram network. The workshop is located on a block surrounded by Miller Street, St George's Road, Oakover Road and the Mernda railway line in Preston, a suburb of Melbourne, Australia. Following a major redevelopment in April 2016, it also became an operational depot under the name New Preston Depot, taking over from East Preston.

History

The Preston Workshops were erected by the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board (MMTB) in 1924-26, to provide manufacturing and maintenance facilities for Melbourne's trams in conjunction with the introduction and production of the W class trams.

The earlier tram maintenance workshops were located on the corner of Holden Street and St Georges Road, Fitzroy, where today only a tramways substation remains, following demolition and sale in 1937.

In the mid-1920s, the MMTB sought a suitable place to build its own tramcars, having previously manufactured the steel chassis and truck frames at the Cable Repair Workshops at Nicholson Street, Fitzroy North, built the wooden bodywork in temporary sheds behind the Fitzroy cable car shed, done painting and varnishing at Preston and Glenhuntly depots, and let tenders to private companies for completed bodies. The running maintenance and overhaul was conducted at workshops attached to the Malvern, Hawthorn, Coburg and Essendon depots.

A single comprehensive workshop was desperately needed, and a site was ultimately chosen opposite Thornbury depot on St Georges Road adjacent to the Miller Street line, covering 17 acres. Tenders were let progressively for each building - the paint and car erecting shops and first traverser completed early in 1925; the main store and sub-station in 1925/26; the large truck, wheel, machine, fitting and electrical shops and second traverser to the car shop in late 1926; the timber storage racks, office block, blacksmiths and plate shops, foundry and pattern shop in the next few months; and finally the mess hall and amenities.

Preston became the most modern tramway workshop in Australia and took over the maintenance, overhaul and new construction tasks for the whole system. W-class cars were built to replace cable trams for the cable conversions, and subsequently W1 and W2 types were built at the workshops.

A distinctive workplace culture grew up around the workshops, evident in the oral traditions and characters of the workshops, such as Norm Cross, who may have been the inspiration for Malcolm in the film of the same name by Nadia Tass.

The Tudor style "Melbourne Room" which provided a ball-room, theatre, concert and lecture hall for tram events, still features the gaily decorated stage that hosted 3DB's Lunchtime Funtime with Bill Collins.

In the 1990s, part of the works was leased to A. Goninan & Co to refurbish Z1 and Z2 class trams, as well as fit out light rail vehicles for the Hong Kong Light Rail system.

In 2014, a project commenced to revitalise the workshop. The heavy maintenance facility was reconfigured, a new servicing facility for the E-class trams built and seven kilometres of track re-laid. It was officially reopened in 17 April 2016 as New Preston Depot, replacing East Preston.

Rolling stock

As at December 2019, the depot had an allocation of 72 trams: 48 E Class, 24 E2 Class making a total of 72 Trams.

Routes

The following routes are operated from Preston depot:

11: West Preston to Victoria Harbour Docklands

86: Bundoora RMIT to Waterfront City Docklands

East Preston Tram Depot

East Preston tram depot was a depot on the Yarra Trams network in Melbourne. Located on Plenty Road, East Preston, it opened in 1955 to coincide with the reintroduction of trams to Bourke Street. It closed in April 2016.

History

The Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board made plans in 1938 for a depot in Preston, on the site later occupied by the now closed Preston & Northcote Community Hospital, but these were dropped due to congestion concerns. The current site was identified in the early 1950s, and opened on 26 June 1955, replacing the old Preston depot (also referred to as Thornbury depot). Its opening coincided with the reintroduction of tram services to Bourke Street; the former Bourke Street cable lines, Melbourne's last, had been converted to bus operations on 26 October 1940.

When the Public Transport Corporation was privatised in August 1999, East Preston depot passed to Yarra Trams. In 2000 a paint shop and refurbishment bay was established. Between 2000 and 2004 these facilities were used to apply all over advertising liveries.

In 2006 East Preston depot became Yarra Trams' first 'Green Depot'. A variety of initiatives were implemented aimed at lowering the environmental footprint of the depot, including, three rainwater tanks with a combined capacity of 18,000 litres, water efficient appliances within the depot, 60 solar panels, and more efficient lighting and cooling technology. Energy consumption dropped 40% while 424,800 litres of water was saved in the 2005–06-year.

During August 2012 track renewal took place, affecting roads one to ten.

In April 2016, East Preston tram depot closed with operations transferred to Preston Workshops. It is now used for storing trams.

The refurbishments are being undertaken for life extension at the East Preston Depot.

Layout

The depot consists of 13 roads, 10 of which are covered.

Routes

When it closed in April 2016, the following routes operated from East Preston depot:

11: West Preston to Victoria Harbour Docklands

86: Bundoora RMIT to Waterfront City Docklands

Melbourne's tram fleet consists of 539 operational trams:

SW5	3	SW6	15	W6	4
W7	4	Z3	101	A1	27
A2	42	B2	130	C1	36
D1	38	D2	21	C2	5
E1	50	W8	13	E2	50
Operating out of 8 depots:		Brunswick		Camberwell	
Essendon		Glenhuntly		Kew	
Malvern		Preston		Southbank	

Entrance to Preston Depot looking from the corner of St Georges Road & Miller Street 20180309 by Phillip Mallis

The new Improved Preston Depot showing E Class Tram Noses peeking out.

E1-6048 at Preston Depot

E2-6066, E2-6079, E-6009, E-6035 & E-6025 Stabled at New Preston Depot.

W5-763 Preston Depot with Trolley Pole.

W5-826 Preston Depot with Trolley Pole.

Z3-168 at Preston Depot 20071108 Alex1991.
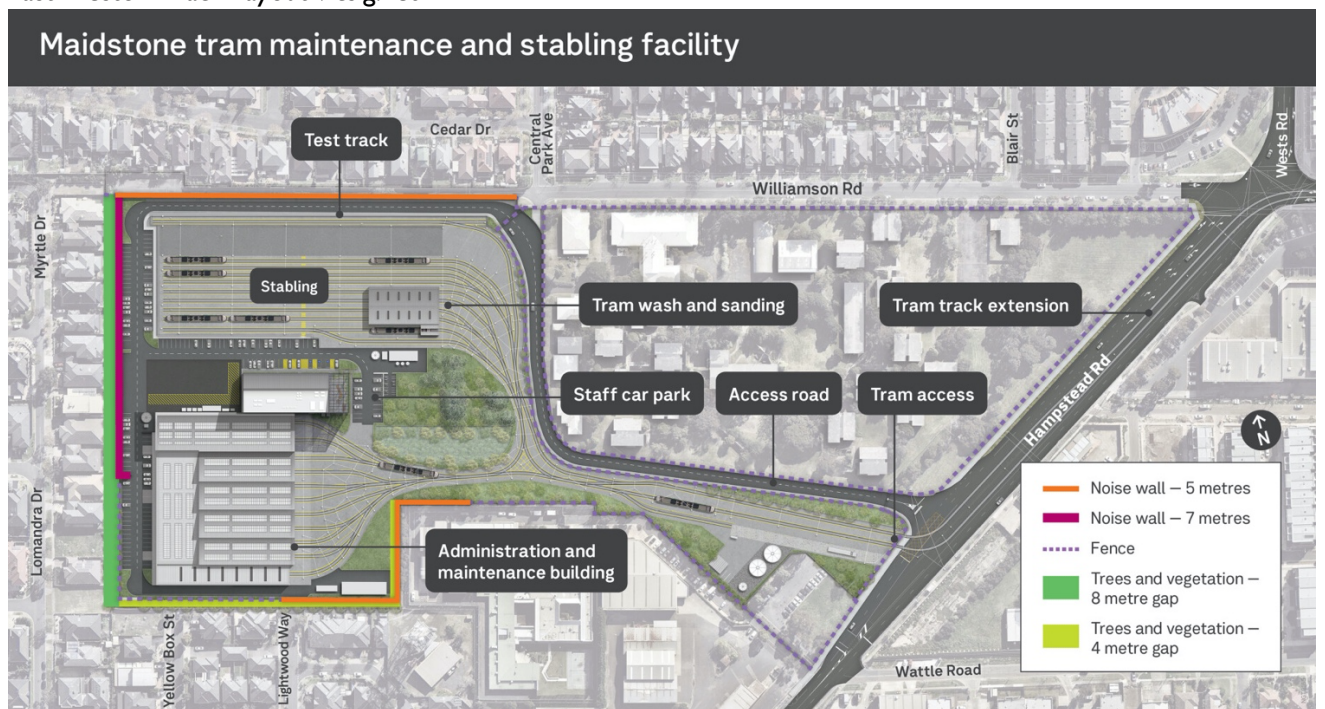

A2-264 at Preston Depot.
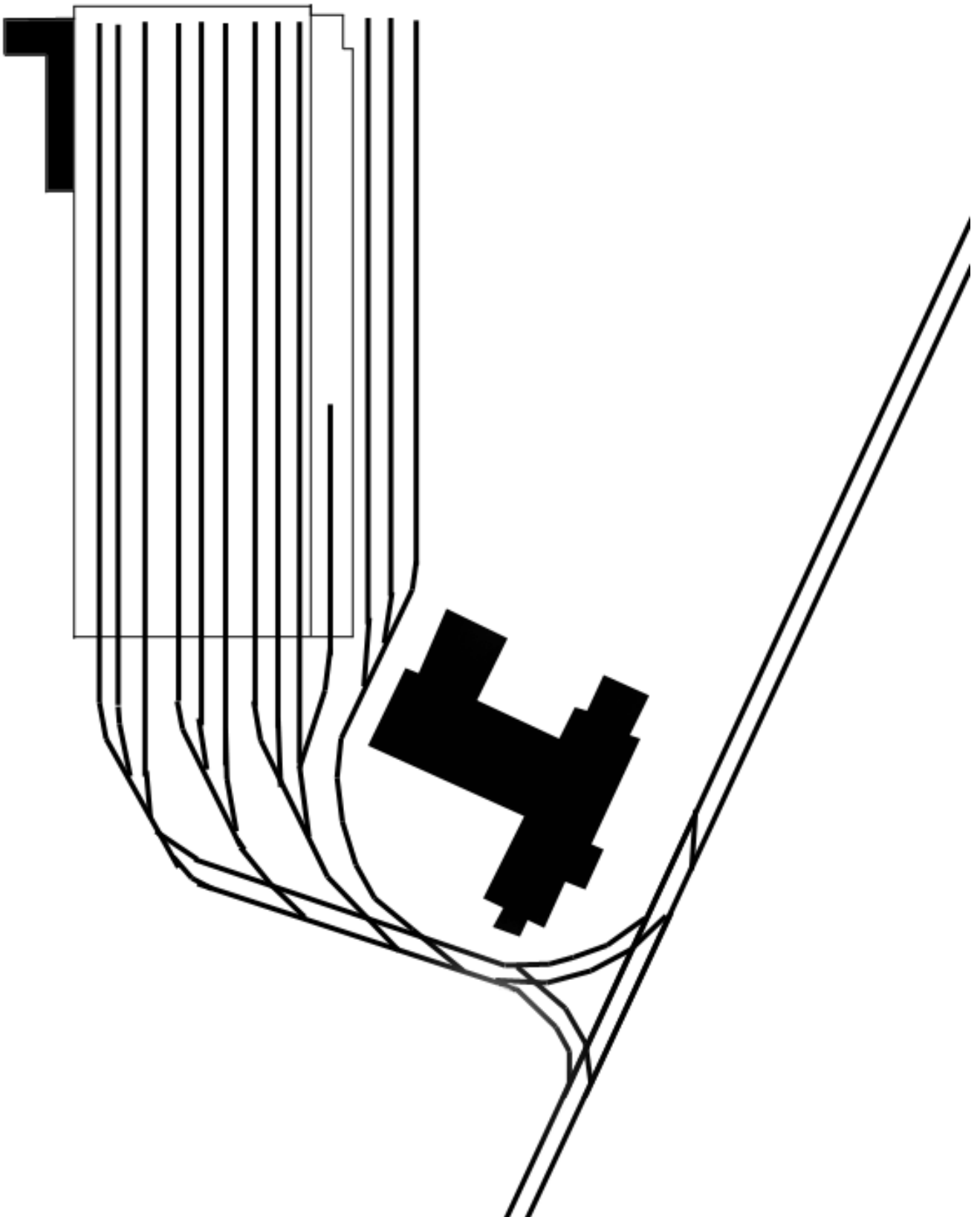

Track Plan Preston Depot. Vicsig.net

Melbourne Tram Routes Vicsig.net

East Preston Track Layout vicsig.net

Maidstone Maintenance & Stabling Facility Map, Department of Transport & Planning 20230715 see Key Dates on Page 7.

East Preston Track Layout vicsig.net

MAIDSTONE MAINTENANCE & STABLING FACILITY KEY DATES

2021

- Community engagement.
- Site investigations.
- Technical assessments.

2022

- Community engagement.
- Further engineering investigations.

2023

- Community engagement.
- Project designs released.
- Early works.
- Construction begins.

2024-2025

- Construction.

2026

- Tram maintenance and stabling facility operational.

Department of Transport & Planning

Photos by Wikipedia, East Preston Track Layout vicsig.net, Phillip Mallis, Alex1991, Department of Transport & Planning.

Notes compiled by Geoff Wallace.

E&OE