



WAVERLEY COUNCIL

# THE TRAM TO BRONTE BEACH

A Waverley Library  
Local History Fact Sheet



After a 10 year battle, a tram line extension running all the way to Bronte Beach opened on 20 May, 1911. The tram terminus had previously been at the corner of Macpherson Street and St Thomas Street, catering for people visiting Waverley Cemetery.

Bronte Baths, allowing the tram to come down at an easier gradient.

After rattling along Macpherson Street they entered this cutting, emerging on the cliff top above the beach. The trams then descended to Bronte Park, arriving opposite the newly built shops. This route provided travellers with magnificent views as the tram emerged from the cutting on its way to the beach. This part of the tram route became known as the 'Bronte Cutting'.

A passenger on the inaugural tram trip recalled:

*'...being a passenger on the first tram to come down the steep incline, I, with many others, had some qualms, and wondered if we would reach the bottom safely.'*

Part of the argument for a tram to the beach was that:

*'The beach would be available and easily accessible to the public by the electric trams...the tramway system was the most democratic of all concerns, anyone being entitled to the same privileges, providing they paid the penny fare.'*

Due to the steep slope of the road to the beach, an alternative tram route was cut into the sandstone rock above





WAVERLEY COUNCIL

# THE TRAM TO BRONTE BEACH

At the opening of the new Bronte Beach run the trams were festively decorated with Union Jack flags. A ribbon was stretched across the track and ceremoniously cut by the Lady Mayoress, despite her husband, Mayor John Campbell, opposing the construction of the route only ten months earlier.

For decades the trams continued to deliver swimmers, surfers and picnickers to the beach and the park until the last tram ran on 28 February 1960.

Although the trams have been gone for many years, there are permanent reminders of this route to the beach. Bronte Cutting remains operational, buses now operate on the former tram route, and waiting passengers can still find cover in the original Federation-era tram shelter.



Images from top:

Official opening of Bronte Tramline, 1911.

Tram in Bronte Cutting, c. 1950s.

Watercolour of Bronte Tram, 1950s.

Bronte Tram on McPherson St, 1960.

Bronte Beach terminus, 1950s.

Published by Waverley Library from sources in the Local History Collection, 2020