



# Fact sheet: 3

## History of the traffic environment of South Australia – roads, trains and trams<sup>1</sup>

**White settlement in South Australia dates from 1836. Narrow, winding dirt tracks were the forerunners of the road network of today.**

- 1841** Toll gate installed at Mt Barker Road to collect revenue for the road.
- 1856** South Australian Government opened the first railway line between City of Adelaide and Port Adelaide. Steam trains were in operation for the next 70 years. First Adelaide Railway Station was built on the current site in North Terrace.
- 1873** First tram – a horse tram ran between Adelaide and Glenelg, as a private railway. Adelaide developed Australia's first permanent (and largest) horse tram system. It grew to 82 route kilometres. By 1883 there were eleven companies operating horse trams.
- 1894** First petrol fuelled car driven in Australia.
- 1898** Mademoiselle Serpollet brought a motorised tricycle in from France.
- 1899** First imported motorcycle seen in Eudunda, South Australia. Glenelg Tramline came under control of South Australian Railways.
- 1900** First car on South Australian roads developed by David Shearer. It was a steam car and is on display at the National Motor Museum, Birdwood.
- 1901** Tom O'Grady, Vivian Lewis and Murray Auger developed a chain driven car – the Lewis. Fred Modistach of Tanunda built the Quad motor vehicle.
- 1902** The first automobile driven in Mt Gambier was a Quadricycle.
- 1903** The Automobile Club of South Australia (later the Royal Automobile Association - RAA) began as a social club.
- 1907** The Municipal Tramways Trust was formed. Electric trams were introduced in Adelaide. The lines were taken over by the Municipal Tramways Trust (MTT) and electrified from 1908.
- 1911** Police introduced a speedometer on motorcycles to trap speeding cars. RAA introduced legal advice as part of its services.
- 1913** The first Model-T Ford sold for £215 – two hundred and fifteen pounds (\$430). Speeding fines were set at £2/15/ – two pounds fifteen shillings (\$5.50) for speeding and 10/ – ten shillings (\$1) for drink driving.
- 1918** The first Adelaide woman to drive Adelaide to Sydney solo was Mrs G. Mackie. The trip took three weeks through muddy terrain. The first motor school – Saunders & Mole – was established to train motor mechanics.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from SafeTrack Rail Education Program Teacher Resource TransAdelaide 1998

### For further information

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- 1920** Cars were able to travel from 6-9km/h in Rundle and Hindley Streets and 12 km/h in other streets in Adelaide. The speed limit for the suburbs was 12km/h or 20 km/h and the country limit was 48 km/h. South Australian vehicle ownership ratio was 1:11 vehicles per head of population. Adelaide's first motor show was held.
- 1923** White centre line markings on dangerous bends were introduced by the Highways Department.
- 1926** The Highways Department put in the first bitumen surface on Mt Barker, Pt Wakefield, Main North, Main South, Magill, Glen Osmond, Port, Unley, Belair, North East and Gorge Roads, and Nottage and Park Terraces.
- 1928** The first stop-go traffic signals in operation in Adelaide had red and green lamps. General Motors Holden commenced building cars at the Woodville plant. The Automobile Club of South Australia changed its name to the Royal Automobile Association (RAA). The current Adelaide Railway Station was completed. White settlement in South Australia dates from 1836. Narrow, winding dirt tracks were the forerunners of the road network of today.
- 1929** The Municipal Tramways Trust ran its first tram to Glenelg, having taken over the heavy rail line, converted it to 1435mm gauge, and electrified it. H type trams, (affectionately known as 'rattlers') painted tuscan red and cream, were purchased for this service and are still in use, 80 years later.
- 1937** Three lantern (red-amber-green) traffic signals were introduced in Adelaide.
- 1938** The Anzac Highway was opened.
- 1955** The 'Red Hen' trains replaced Brill railcars on Adelaide's railway system. During the 1950s and 1960s, trams were painted silver to match the colour of the other public transport vehicles run by the Municipal Tramways Trust.  
All of Adelaide's tramlines, apart from the City-Glenelg route, were closed by the end of 1958.
- 1959** Practical driving tests were introduced by the RAA's Driver Training School.  
Adelaide's first traffic lanes were installed in King William St, City.
- 1969** Australian Design Rules – all new cars fitted with seatbelts.
- 1972** Seatbelts compulsory in all cars in all Australian states.
- 1977** Seatbelts required in heavy vehicles.  
In the late 1970s, it was planned to extend the Glenelg tram line through to the north-eastern suburbs along the Torrens River valley. The plan would have required tunnels under King William St in the central city extending from the terminus to the river parklands. The plans got as far as commencement of trial borings in 1979. However, there was a change of government and the project was replaced with the O-bahn guided busway.  
Trams reverted to their original tuscan red and cream colours.
- 1986** TransAdelaide's new depot opened at Glengowrie. Trams were fitted with pantographs (jointed framework conveying current to electric vehicle from overhead wires). These are now the oldest passenger trams in service in Australia. The first stage of the O-bahn (from 'autobahn' (German) meaning 'omnibus way') track to Paradise Interchange was opened.
- 1988** Adelaide took delivery of ten natural gas powered buses.  
Wearing of restraints in cars for children under 12 months old made compulsory.
- 1990-92** Compulsory wearing of helmets by bicycle riders introduced by all States and Territories in Australia.
- 2003** Premier Mike Rann and Transport Minister Michael Wright announced a \$56 million upgrade for the Glenelg tram service. The upgrade included nine articulated air-conditioned light rail vehicles, which seat up to 80 people. They are fully accessible under the *Disability Discrimination Act* standards with low floor entry and provision for wheelchairs, as well as being environmentally friendly with low noise, negligible local pollutants and aesthetically pleasing designs. An upgrade of the track and passenger stops was also included.

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- 2004** Adelaide Metro fleet included 214 (as of Sept 2004) natural gas buses, thus reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 50per cent, carbon monoxide emissions by up to 80per cent, nitrogen oxide emissions by almost 90per cent (particularly sulphur and lead emissions) as well as effecting a reduction in traffic noise.
- 2006** New fleet of Bombardier Flexity Classic 11 trams phased in for the City – Glenelg route.
- 2007** Continuation of tram tracks from Victoria Square, up King William Street and west along North Terrace. Adelaide City Council introduced the world's first solar-powered electric bus, as part of the Connector Bus service.

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