



TABLE TALK

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Melbourne's remarkable new bus route – page 10

About *Table Talk*

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TOP TABLE TALK

Melbourne's newspapers discuss the problem of capacity of the City underground rail loop:

More trains could run through City Loop from the Age 9 March 2009

Melbourne's existing suburban rail network could run more than double the present number of trains if it was operated as designed, Connex's own documents show. During the morning rush hour, between 8am and 9am, 100 trains arrive at Flinders Street Station — the same as in 1975 before hundreds of millions of dollars were spent building the City Loop in a bid to run more trains.

Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky said last week that few extra trains could be run into central Melbourne during rush hour. This was because the train system — and the Loop in particular — could not handle more trains safely, Ms Kosky told ABC Radio's Jon Faine. "We don't have the capacity for the expansion of a lot of extra services (because) you can only provide as many trains coming into the CBD as the City Loop allows," she said. Ms Kosky's comments echo those of the Department of Transport, which describes the Loop as "approaching capacity", with trains running through it at about three- to four-minute intervals.

But internal Connex rail maps, produced in 2006, show that far more trains were designed to be run on the city's railway lines, including through the Loop. The rail diagrams show that each of the eight suburban tracks that run into Flinders Street Station — four via the Loop and four "direct" — can handle a train every two minutes. If run efficiently and as the engineers who built the Loop intended, 240 trains could run during rush hour, alleviating the overcrowding now being experienced during peak times. A Government film released in the mid-1970s while the Loop was under construction, and now featured on the Department of Transport's website, describes its designers' plans. "At the moment Flinders Street Station handles about 100 trains an hour during peak periods," it says. "When the Loop comes into operation (the central city's rail stations) will be able to cope efficiently with twice as many trains and twice as many people."

Connex spokesman John Rees confirmed that "precisely 100 trains" currently arrive at Flinders Street Station between 8am and 9am during a weekday rush hour. He also agreed that the Loop, which opened in stages from 1981 to 1985, had been designed to run far more trains. But trains were now so overcrowded they had to stop for longer at stations to let passengers off and on, he said. The Loop was designed to have 20-second stopping times. "(Stopping) times now frequently exceed one minute at peak times at certain stations in the Loop," Mr Rees said. "This has the effect of ... decreasing capacity." Connex is trying to shorten the time trains stop at stations by remodelling carriages to make getting on and off easier. RMIT transport academic Paul Mees said Ms Kosky's claim that few more trains could be run was an insult to previous

generations of rail engineers. "Either we have become a lot dumber in the last 35 years, or the minister is so lazy she can't be bothered questioning her own department when they tell her we can't run more trains," he said.

Plan to bypass the City Loop by Ashley Gardiner, *Herald-Sun* 11 March 2009

Connex has drawn up a secret proposal to remove one of Melbourne's busiest train lines from the City Loop. Confidential documents reveal the rail operator is considering running Frankston line trains directly through the city and on to Werribee. This would mean thousands of Frankston line passengers who want City Loop stations would have to change trains at Richmond. The Connex business plan reveals concern about crowding at stations as passengers change platforms.

The *Herald Sun* believes the State Government has concerns about the impact of the proposal on services. They want Connex to be able to properly run its new timetable, introduced last November, before making more changes. Department of Transport officials are now investigating whether the no-loop proposal should apply only to additional services or all Frankston trains.

Connex spokeswoman Lanie Harris said the plan offered extra capacity. "This additional capacity will enable the operation of the additional trains ordered by the State Government on the Cranbourne, Pakenham and Frankston corridors," Ms Harris said. "It is not a short-term plan, and certainly wouldn't be delivered under the current franchise (which ends this year)." Ultimately, this is all with a view to making train lines less dependent on each other and less susceptible to the knock-on effects of delays."

Opposition transport spokesman Terry Mulder said passengers on the Epping, Hurstbridge and Werribee lines were sometimes missing out on the Loop. "Now the Government is going to force 15,000 commuters from Bentleigh, Mordialloc and Frankston to squeeze on to already crowded trains at Richmond," Mr Mulder said.

A spokesman for Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky explained that Connex had presented a number of proposals it believed could improve the network.

NEWS

RAIL & TRAM

GSR timetables

GSR's website www.gsr.com.au has been updated to show very slightly altered timetables from 1 April 2009 until 31 March 2010. The main change is a new section indicating which of the Indian Pacific and Ghan services are cancelled up to January 2010. Look under "Travel Advice", then "Withdrawn Services". The section showing detailed timetables has not been updated and shows 2007 schedules.

ARTC's empire expands

On 22 March V Line formally transferred the NE line north of Seymour, and the Maroona-Portland line to the ARTC. ARTC has not yet issued timetables for the Maroona-Portland line, but did issue Route Access Standards on 10 March and these appear on the ARTC website.

ARTC WTTs 15 March 2009

New Working Timetables for ARTC's Interstate mainlines are operative from 15 March 2009. They can be found at www.artc.com.au/Content.aspx?p=180 A compilation is available from the AATTC Distribution Service's April list.

NSW Rail Corp WTTs 15 & 22 March 09

New Working Timetables for freight trains within NSW Rail Corp's area operative from 15 March 2009 and designated version 2.8 were published. Only two days later, a new version, 2.8.1, was published, operative from 22 March 2009.

CityRail: booklet timetables November 09

It appears that CityRail may have re-issued all its suburban and intercity train timetable books dated 28 May 2006 with an updated version dated November 2008. Some locations are still issuing older versions of the timetables. Nine of the November 2008 versions of the timetable books have been included in AATTC Distribution Lists, and the rest will be included when stocks become available.

CityRail: 16 March 09: Hornsby new platform



The new down platform at Hornsby was brought into use from Monday 16 March 2009. All down InterCity trains use the new Platform 5. Countrylink services continue to use Platform 4. STN (Special Train Notice) 0339-2009 refers.

CityRail: Newcastle Show 28-29 March 09

The Newcastle Show was held on Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 March 2009. CityRail modified its normal Maitland Line timetable on each day to enable people to travel directly to and from the Showground at Broadmeadow. For people going to the Show, the 0750 Dungog-Newcastle, and 0914 and 1730 Telarah-Newcastle services were diverted to travel via Broadmeadow before continuing to Newcastle. For people going home after the Show, the 1635 Newcastle-Telarah and 1741 Newcastle-Dungog services were diverted via Broadmeadow. This is a good example of CityRail's response to special events in the Hunter Region.

CityRail: South Coast trackwork timetable April 09

CityRail has issued a 72 page timetable for trackwork replacement services which will take place on the Illawarra and South Coast lines from Friday 3 April to Friday 24 April 2009. This will mainly affect the Sutherland-Cronulla line throughout this period, with work to advance duplication. Over the Easter weekend and 18/19 April there will also be bus diversion on the main Illawarra line as part of resignalling of the Oatley-Sutherland-Loftus area.

Countrylink: South booklet timetable 1 April 09

Commencing 1 April 2009 Countrylink buses will stop at the Griffith Visitor Information Centre in addition to Griffith Railway Station, and the 940 Griffith-Wagga Wagga bus will depart 15 minutes earlier at 0925 and arrive Wagga 10 minutes earlier at 1225.

Consequently, the Countrylink Southern Timetable booklet has been re-issued with the designation "Effective 4 September 2005 – Updated 1 April 2009". Copies are available from the AATTC Distribution Service.

Connex Melbourne struggles from *Herald-Sun* 5 March 2009

Connex admits thousands of commuters will be left stranded on platforms as it struggles to meet growing demand. The rail operator expects more than 5000 passengers to be squeezed out every morning peak by 2011. The astonishing projections were made in confidential Connex

documents submitted to the Victorian Government. Opposition transport spokesman Terry Mulder has warned the crumbling train system could damage Melbourne's reputation as an international city.

Worst affected will be the Sandringham line, where 1700 passengers are predicted to miss out each morning. Connex estimates a total of 1100 passengers will fail to be accommodated on the Cranbourne-Pakenham and Hurstbridge lines. On the Sydenham line, 900 passengers will miss out, while another 300 will be left stranded on the Upfield line.

Connex, though, may not be around in 2011, with the State Government soon to announce who will be operating metropolitan trains from the end of this year. Hong Kong's MTR is competing against Connex and another French company, Keolis.

Mr Mulder said the documents showed rail passengers had more train pain ahead. "This will start to have a profound negative impact on Melbourne's economy, as well as damaging our international reputation," Mr Mulder said. Connex spokeswoman Lanie Harris said the business plan was submitted before the release of the Victorian Transport Plan. A spokesman for Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky said at least 14 new trains would be running by 2011. These would be able to carry an extra 14,000 people an hour during peak periods. "Patronage on Melbourne's trains is growing at unprecedented rates," the spokesman said.

And while on the subject of Melbourne's timetables, in the Weekend Australian newspaper of 21 March, Greg Sheridan wrote about philosophy – especially the French philosopher Teilhard. Here is an extract:

But it was not that scepticism which led me to conclude Teilhard was as useful as a Melbourne Connex train timetable.

Victorian bushfire disaster

Following the February bushfires, services have resumed on the **Yarra Valley Tourist Railway** operating from Healesville, and on the **Daylesford Spa Country Railway** but only on the undamaged section of track near Daylesford.

V Line Easter & Anzac Day services

Thursday 9 April

Normal Thursday timetable plus buses which usually operate on Fridays:

0700 Wangaratta-Bendigo

1800 Bendigo (Latrobe Uni)-Wangaratta

1805 Ballarat (Mount Helen)-Castlemaine

2000 Castlemaine-Ballarat

1500 Casterton-Warrnambool

2030 Warrnambool-Casterton

2110 Geelong-Lorne

2210 Warrnambool-Heywood bus extended to Mt Gambier

2045 Ararat-Ouyen

1755 Ballarat-Donald

2035 Bendigo-Sea Lake (via Birchip)

0530 Corowa-Wangaratta

1123 Bright-Wangaratta bus connects with 1030 taxi from Mt Beauty

1345 Wangaratta-Bright bus connects with 1700 taxi to Mt Beauty

1430 Bright-Wangaratta

1605 Corowa-Wangaratta

2135 Wangaratta-Corowa

Good Friday 10 April

Special holiday timetable similar to a Sunday timetable with additional and altered services.

Saturday 11 April

Normal Saturday timetable.

Easter Day Sunday 12 April

Normal Sunday timetable.

Easter Monday 13 April

Special holiday timetable similar to a Saturday timetable with additional and altered services.

Anzac Day Saturday 25 April

Normal Saturday timetable.

Adelaide

The **Belair line** will be closed for major track works – as foreshadowed in the last State Budget – from 29 April. Substitute bus services are being provided - details are in Bus News on page 9.

The Adelaide City Council has rejected plans for the **Port Road tramline extension** that “eats into the parklands” and demands the demolition of up 25 trees and has asked that the line run along the roadway and not take a short cut through the parklands.

During the **January/February heatwave** regular bulletins were posted to the Adelaide metro website giving details on rail and tram services. Updated information was on the Adelaidemetro Info line. On hot days, free bottled water was made available to peak hour passengers at Adelaide station.

Cheltenham Racecourse closed with the last meeting on Saturday 21 February. The land is planned to be turned into a housing estate. No plans have been announced as to the future of Cheltenham Racecourse station on the Port line. This station is the former Cheltenham station which was replaced by a new station at Stroud Street nearer the next station Alberton.

The **Adelaide Cup** was held at Morphettville on Monday 9 March. The day is a public holiday so the tram service started late. The first tram was scheduled to leave Glenelg at 0750 and City West at 0837, with a ten minute service during the day. The last tram for the City departed Glenelg at 2320 and City West at 0005. The full timetable was available on the adelaidemetro website in the 24 hour clock style and with a timing point shown at stop 12 Morphett Road instead of Brighton Road.

From 1 July **Seniors** will receive free travel on TransAdelaide on weekdays between 0930 and 1500 and all day weekends and holidays.

Yorke Peninsula Rail suspends operations

The Lions Club of Yorke Peninsula Rail, which had been operating between Wallaroo and Bute, SA since 1994, suspended operations in March. Recent services have used ex SAR Redhen Railcars. The track was badly buckled during the recent heat wave and morale sapped by a recent vandal and graffiti attack.

Cambodia

Due to track renovation of the entire network of the Royal Railway of Cambodia, all passenger services have been suspended since 1 January 2009.

Botswana

The Botswanan Government has instructed Botswana Railways (BR) to withdraw all of its passenger services from 1 April in an effort to reduce the railway's Pula 600 million (\$US 75 million) debt. BR made a Pula 78 million loss last year, compared to a deficit of Pula 10 million in 2007. The Transport Minister says BR's passenger services cost Pula 38.8 million to run in 2005-06, but provided revenues of just Pula 9.1 million. He added that investment of Pula 586.5 million is required to tackle BR's shortage of locomotives and wagons to meet the demand for freight services, and said that the passenger coaches would be sold to help finance this. BR has a fleet of 46 air conditioned coaches supplied between 1991 and 1993, and although these were due to be overhauled after five years they have yet to receive works attention.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Ian Cooper, Scott Ferris, Len Regan, Roger Wheaton, Victor Isaacs and *Thomas Cook Overseas Timetable* for Rail news.

BUS NEWS

ACT

Service cancellation: Transborder Express has advised that due to lack of patronage over the recent months the Surfborder service that runs from Canberra to Ulladulla has been cancelled. The last day of service was Tuesday 31 March 2009.

This leaves Murray's Coaches as the sole operator between Canberra and the NSW South Coast

New South Wales – Sydney

Major expansion of Metrobus across Sydney

Premier Nathan Rees has announced a major expansion of Metrobus routes across Sydney.

Mr Rees said that this was a direct result of the positive response from the community to the existing Route 10 Metrobus trial from Leichhardt to Kingsford. "There will be a total of five Metrobus routes, with the next one to start running between Rosebery and Lane Cove via the CBD from October. "When the Route 10 Metrobus trial began in October last year we said there was no reason why this model of transport could not be replicated across other busy corridors, should the trial be successful," Mr Rees said. "With more than 600,000 people having travelled on the Route 10 Metrobus, and patronage up by 81% since it started, we know that the Metrobus model is a positive one for commuters. "The Metrobus network will provide a simple way of getting around Sydney and attract more people to public transport, with high frequency routes that are easy for everybody to understand and use. "Four extra Metrobus routes will be added, establishing a Metrobus network throughout Sydney that will be progressively rolled out by the end of next year. "The Metrobus network will service the most densely populated areas of Sydney- suburbs within a 10 kilometre radius of the CBD - providing almost a quarter of a million extra passenger spaces every week.

"A north-south Route 20, running between Rosebery and Lane Cove, will run along the Pacific Highway in the north to the rapidly developing Green Square area of south Sydney." Three more Metrobus routes would then be introduced throughout 2010:

- **Route 30** running between Mosman and Enmore
- **Route 40** running between Chatswood and Bondi Junction
- **Route 50** running between Drummoyne and Randwick.

Minister for Transport David Campbell said all five Metrobus routes will connect at the Metro Hub in Park Street. "We will continue the Metrobus Trial to examine which bus and seating configurations best meet the needs of commuters, before the new routes commence. The Metrobus model is based on:

- Providing capacity along busy corridors between two locations approximately 20-30 minutes from the city
- Connecting places of work, shopping districts, entertainment and dining venues and hospitals
- Delivering high frequency services not requiring a timetable
- Offering a cashless, PrePay-only service for faster boardings
- Utilising a mixture of high capacity and standard buses.

Routes 461, 480 & 483: From Wednesday 11 March, services on Routes 461, 480 and 483 returned to The Domain between 0700 and 1800 daily. Services operate via George Street, Park Street and William Street in both directions during these times.

To help improve on time reliability, Sydney Buses is implementing new timetables for Routes 474, 476 & 477 (Miranda & Dolls Point to Rockdale) and Route 415 (Burwood to Campsie)

Pre Pay bus stops: From Monday 6 April, the bus stops in George Street, Railway Square, Druitt Street, Clarence Street, and in York Street at the Queen Victoria Building will be converted to prepaid ticket-only stops to speed up passenger boarding times and help improve the on-time reliability of bus services.

Sydney Region 12 Review implemented

TRANSDEVTSL - Shorelink Buses introduced the following timetables effective 23 March 2009.

- 556 Lindfield-East Killara
- 558 Chatswood-Lindfield via East Lindfield
- 560 Gordon-West Pymble
- 565 Chatswood-Macquarie University via West Lindfield
- 571 Turramurra-South Turramurra
- 573 Turramurra-Fox Valley
- 575 Hornsby-Macquarie University
- 576 Wahroonga-North Wahroonga
- 577 Turramurra-North Turramurra
- 579 Pymble-East Turramurra
- 582 Gordon-St Ives
- 586 Pennant Hills-Westleigh
- 587 Hornsby-Westleigh
- 588 Hornsby-Normanhurst West
- 589 Hornsby-Sydney Adventist Hosp
- 592 Brooklyn-Mooney Mooney
- 594 City-North Turramurra (includes Forest Coach Lines 194)
- 595 Hornsby-Mt Colah
- 596 Hornsby-Hornsby Heights
- 597 Hornsby-Berowra
- 598 Hornsby-Asquith-Hornsby North-Hornsby loop
- 599 Berowra-Berowra Heights

Notes:

- 556 no longer serves Killara Station.
- 558 gets a Saturday service over the whole route again, despite STA 207 still providing a full time service to East Lindfield (a hint as to some future alteration?).
- 560 is now Gordon-West Pymble only. Gordon-Macquarie Uni trips are now part of Forest Coach Lines 197 Mona Vale-Macquarie Uni introduced on 24/11/08.
- New 575 operates from Hornsby to Macquarie Uni via Hornsby Hospital, Wahroonga East, Turramurra and South Turramurra, replacing 571 (other than at peak hours), 574 and 575 (other than North Wahroonga). Although 571 was to be discontinued in the proposed Region 12 Network Plan, it still survives as a peak hour service serving the Canoon Rd and Carina Rd areas not covered by the new 575. North Wahroonga now only receives the 576 peak hour service.
- 582 school day only peak hour trips from Gordon to East Gordon (Mt Ida St) and Woodlands Av have been discontinued.
- 587 Pennant Hills-Westleigh trips have been renumbered 586.
- The limited service on 590 Chatswood-Turramurra via Pacific Hwy has been discontinued (last vestige of old Route 55, the "Highway" bus, Chatswood to Mt Kuring-gai).
- 595 now operates along Pacific Hwy instead of Hornsby North.
- New 598 replaces 593 (except Parklands Rd, now a diversion of 597) and the Hornsby North area of 595. It runs anti-clockwise in the morning, clockwise in the afternoon.
- 597 has been split into 597 Hornsby-Berowra (running at reduced frequencies) and 599 Berowra-Berowra Heights (increased frequencies).

There is also an Upper North Shore Bus Network Guide issued in conjunction with the new timetables, dated 23 March 2009.

Free Staff Express Bus trial from Redfern Station to UNSW

Following recent feedback from staff and students, the University has been considering some options to alleviate the current demand for the Monday - Thursday 891 bus service from Eddy Avenue (Central Station) to UNSW.

From Monday 23 March the Vice-Chancellor has arranged for Telford's Tours (a private bus company), to transport staff from the single bus stop on Gibbons Street at Redfern Station direct to the UNSW campus. Buses run from Redfern Station Monday through Thursday at 15 minute intervals at the following times: 0715 (first bus), 0730, 0745, 0800, 0815, 0830 (last bus). The bus service is free and the drop off at UNSW is at the main gate on Anzac Parade and then near gate 11 on Botany Street at the top of campus. The service is a pilot scheme for a six-week period

commencing Monday 23 March 09 with a view to making future adjustments to fit with train timetables and staff and student requirements, and ultimately extending a Redfern service to the wider UNSW community.

Liverpool Bus Guide: A new Guide to Bus Services at Liverpool Transport Interchange has been issued dated February 2009. It also contains the timetable for new Shopper Hopper Service S9 which commenced during February, between Glenfield and Glenquarie Shopping Centre and not to Liverpool. This new service is also referred to on the Busabout website.

New South Wales – Regional

Newcastle: On 16 March 2009, Newcastle Buses started operating additional services on Routes 100 and 226 to support a Park-n-Ride initiative at Broadmeadow in an effort to alleviate parking congestions at the Calvary Mater Hospital at Waratah and at the University of Newcastle at Callaghan.

There are five extra trips at a 90 minute frequency from Hamilton to Jesmond in the morning on route 226, returning to City West on route 100. They fit awkwardly between every third half-hourly memory timetable trip on these routes. In the afternoon, there are three extra outward trips on route 100 from City West, returning on Route 226 to Hamilton, with the last trips on each route acting as head-offs for existing trips in the normal timetable.

There has been virtually no publicity for the extra trips. No public timetables have been issued, and timetable inquiry staff have been unable to provide any information about them.

The Park-n-Ride location offered is the CityRail car park at Broadmeadow Station, which is already full each day with rail commuters, and the residential streets in the vicinity.

Wollongong Shuttle commences: The free service commenced at 1500 on March 18. The service operates between 0700 and 2200 Monday to Friday, running every 10 minutes during the peak (0700-0900 and 1500-1800) and every 20 minutes off-peak. The weekend service will operate every 20 minutes between 0800 and 1800. Nine buses will travel in both directions on a 15km loop between the university, TAFE, Innovation Campus, North Wollongong and City beaches, entertainment precinct, CBD and Wollongong Railway Station (stops on Princes Hwy).

The service will cost \$3.4 million a year to run.

There will be staff at bus stops, on buses and around town for the first few days of the service, providing information and handing out timetables. The university student shuttle bus will still run on weekdays, while the Government's new free shuttle bus will service North Wollongong Railway Station on weekends.

Countrylink changes: Commencing 1 April 2009 Countrylink buses will stop at the Griffith Visitor Information Centre in addition to Griffith Railway station, and the 0940 Griffith-Wagga Wagga bus will depart 15 minutes earlier at 0925 and arrive Wagga 10 minutes earlier at 1225. Refer also to Rail News.

Blue Mountains: Blue Mountains Bus Co has advised some minor enhancements and service additions from 23 February 2009 to the following routes: 685 Springwood to Hazelbrook, 690 Springwood to Lawson & Katoomba and 685 Hazelbrook to North Hazelbrook

South Australia - Adelaide

Special B1 Belair Line Bus Substitute

A bus substitute service will operate along the Belair Line from Sunday 26 April for the duration of the rail upgrade closure, operating approximately every 15 minutes in peak times and approximately every 30 minutes in the interpeak. Bus substitute services will display route number B1. Subject to demand, a minibus shuttle will be provided from Lynton Station to Belair Road connecting with the B1 service.

After Midnight services:

The current after midnight services at standard fares were commenced in March 2008 on Saturday night/Sunday mornings replacing the earlier Wandering Star services at special fare. There has been a 40% increase in patronage during the period or approximately 800 per week. .

Victoria – Melbourne

Red Orbital Bus Route 903 – Mordialloc to Altona

This much vaunted Smartbus route commences on Monday 20 April and is free for the first two weeks of operation. The service replaces Routes 700 (Mordialloc – Box Hill) and 291 (Box Hill – Heidelberg). The route also traverses portions of a number of existing routes (513, 527, 465, 408, 219, 232, 411, 412 and 415). Some sections receive a bus service for the first time. Dedicated bus lanes, priority at traffic signal intersections and improved access bus stops are provided. The service also provides 'real-time' information at selected bus stops, along with high-visibility signage, stop-specific timetable information and a map of the local area.

The route is touted as a high frequency service running seven days a week. "A bus will arrive around every 15 minutes between 0630 and 2100 on weekdays and every 30 minutes at other times" according to the Department of Transport. The reality is somewhat different. A timetable sighted has 15 minute departures from each end (hourly after 2130 from Mordialloc). However, due to running times being adjusted across the day due to traffic conditions, frequencies vary. For example, departures from Sunshine to Altona between 0700 and 0900 are at 0717, 0742, 0803 and 0841. In the evening, between 1900 and 2100, there are 10 departures. This is inevitable on a route of the length of 903 unless "cut in" trips are provided. On Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays, frequencies of 34 to 38 minutes prevail over significant portions of the route. There are additional short workings over the Mentone to Heidelberg portion in peak periods, lifting frequencies to levels similar to those on the presently existing 700 and 291 routes. Running times are up to 4 hours and 21 minutes in each direction. Unlike circular routes in other cities (which were often mentioned in support of the 903 introduction), buses do not of course terminate at their point of commencement.

The summary timetable (which presumably will become the printed version for distribution) lists 16 timing points. There are approximately 224 stops and an all stops timetable is 3 A4 pages for each direction. Burwood is not mentioned – the timing point at the Burwood shops is shown as Toorak Road (Glen Iris) which is nowhere near Glen Iris shops or station.

Time will tell how successful the 903 will be both operationally and in patronage.

Melbourne Tourist Shuttle: A new edition of the Melbourne City Tourist Shuttle brochure dated November 2008 reflects the extension of the route to Docklands.

Queensland – Regional

Surfside Buslines has revised timetables as from 30 March 2009 on the following routes:

601 Kingscliff – West Tweed
602 Tweed Heads – Banora Point
603 Tweed Heads – Pottsville
607 Tweed Heads – Banora Point – Flame Tree Park
608 Tweed City – Coolangatta – Bilambil Heights

Western Australia – Perth

Transperth timetable alterations for the following routes have been recently implemented:

Fremantle Cat from 8 March 2009.

Routes 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 97, 100, 101, 103, 218, 240, 288, 291, 294, 295, 297, 314, 315, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 335, 336, 337, 338, 506, 507, 707, & 788 from 15 February 2009.

Routes 81, 84, 85, 91, 92 & 95 from 22 February 2009 to improve on-time running.

Route 37 also had a minor change from 23 March 2009.

Routes 558, 561, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, & 594 from 5 April 2009

Thanks to Adelaide Metro, Australian Transport Discussion Board, Tony Bailey, Barry Blair, Neville Fenn, Hilaire Fraser, Robert Henderson, Geoff Lambert, Metlink, Michael Marshall, Len Regan, Lourie Smit, Roger Wheaton.

AIR NEWS

International

Air New Zealand suspended its Hamilton-Sydney and Hamilton-Gold Coast routes from 29 March and the Hamilton-Brisbane service from 25 April. It states that these services are unlikely to be re-introduced in the foreseeable future. It will axe its Dunedin-Sydney service for six months from 16 April until 24 October and reduce frequencies between Dunedin and Brisbane during May and June.

Air New Zealand will introduce an extra direct weekly flight between Brisbane and Queenstown during the peak ski season in July following increased demand taking the direct flights into Queenstown to 10 per week.

New airline **V Australia** launched its Sydney Los Angeles route on 27 February, Brisbane –LA on 8 April, Melbourne-LA early September and Sydney-Johannesburg on a date to be announced.

Pacific Blue will launch non-stop twice-weekly services between Adelaide and Fiji and Melbourne and Fiji from 4 June. The Adelaide flights are the first direct services to Fiji from SA. Pacific Blue will launch flights from Sydney and Melbourne to Bali from 1 June - two weekly from Sydney and three per week from Melbourne. Adelaide-Bali flights will increase from two to three per week.

Jetstar is to launch domestic NZ flights from 10 June, with flights Auckland-Christchurch, Auckland-Wellington, Auckland-Queenstown and Christchurch-Queenstown. From 24 June Christchurch-Queenstown will be added. It will reinstate direct flights between Cairns and Osaka in December. Jetstar will extend its existing daily Perth-Bali-Jakarta flights to Singapore from 14 July 14 connecting to Qantas flights to Frankfurt and London, in addition to Jetstar's existing direct daily Perth-Singapore service.

Jetstar plans to fly from Perth to Singapore, via Indonesia. In a submission to the International Air Services Commission, the airline said it wants to extend its current four times weekly Perth-Denpasar and thrice weekly Perth-Jakarta flights to Singapore by mid-year. (Qantas Airways withdrew from the Perth-Denpasar-Singapore route at the start of the Northern Winter 2008.)

Qantas axed its Melbourne-Shanghai and Sydney-Beijing services from 31 March, but increased its Sydney-Shanghai flights to seven per week. Formerly non-stop flights to Mumbai will from 2 June stop at Singapore. It will increase A380 services between Australia, the UK and US from 7 June after the delivery of its fourth A380. The QF31 Sydney-London service will increase from three to five weekly A380 services. From 9 June, the Australia-Los Angeles services will increase from five to six per week whilst Sydney will also have an additional fourth service.

Singapore Airlines will reduce its services to Australia from April, including the axing of seven weekly flights from Sydney. Flights to Brisbane, currently 19 per week, will reduce to 17 between 29 March and 26 April before falling to 14 per week until 23 June. Perth flights will be cut from 19 per week to 14 until 24 June, before moving back to 19 until 2 August. It will maintain its three-times daily service to London, but it will replace 747-400s with smaller 777-300s. Elsewhere capacity will be cut by up to 11%. Services to Amritsar and Vancouver will be terminated and flights to India, the US, Manchester, Bangkok, Tokyo, Guangzhou, Colombo and Male reduced. The carrier stated that a drop in travel demand due to the global economic slowdown was the reason for the changes to routes and frequencies. It added that it would continue to monitor demand and make further changes if necessary.

Malaysian low cost carrier **AirAsia X** launched flights between Kuala Lumpur and London Stansted on 11 March, connecting with its flights from Melbourne, Perth and the Gold Coast. Sydney and Adelaide may be added to its network.

Delta Air Lines will go ahead with its planned flights from LA to Sydney from 1 July despite announcing plans to cut international capacity by 10% from September. Delta will cut Trans-Atlantic capacity by 11-13% while trans-Pacific capacity will be cut by up to 14%.

Yet another airline from the Gulf is to commence services to Australia. **Qatar Airways** will fly to both Sydney and Melbourne from late this year.

Domestic

Jetstar introduced a daily Adelaide-Perth service and a thrice weekly direct Perth-Cairns service from 6 February. Jetstar will close its Hobart base from 1 May 2009 and the base's single overnighting aircraft will be relocated to Melbourne. It will open new bases in Darwin and Perth and extend its Cairns and SE Queensland (Gold Coast and Brisbane) bases.

QantasLink commenced flights between Townsville and Mt Isa from 2 March.

Virgin Blue will launch five new routes on 6 April: Canberra-Hobart, Canberra-Townsville, Townsville-Gold Coast, Townsville-Rockhampton and Townsville-Cairns. All will operate daily.

Virgin Blue will remove of 28 of their 330 daily flights from 7 May and will remove five of its B737s from service. It says it will not withdraw from any market, but consolidate high-frequency routes, in particular middle of the day Sydney-Melbourne flights.

Services to regional Queensland ports to replace those provided by the failed **MacAir** (see February *Table Talk*, p. 14) are:

- **SkyTrans**: Thargomindah-Cunnamulla-St George-Toowoomba-Brisbane & Mt Isa Bedourie-Birdsville-Windorah-Quilpie-Charleville & Mt Isa-Doomadgee-Burketown-Mornington Island-Normanton-Cairns
- **West Wing**: Longreach-Winton-Townsville & Mt Isa-Julia Creek-Richmond-Hughenden-Townsville
- **Qantas Link**: Mt Isa-Cloncurry-Townsville.

Brisbane-based **SkyAirWorld** (which flew to Cocos Island and Christmas Island) was placed in liquidation on 16 March with millions of dollars of debt. The airline's five Embraer aircraft have been repossessed by GE Capital.

Banksia Adventures will commence an Adelaide-Streaky Bay service from 17 April operating both ways on Fridays and Sundays plus a monthly midweek flight. It is hoped that tourism will underpin the service. The service will operate initially for a 12 month trial period.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Roger Wheaton and Victor Isaacs for Air news.



Illustration from www.showbus.com a comprehensive British timetable directory.