



TABLE TALK

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About *Table Talk*

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RAIL & TRAM NEWS

Australian Budget 2009-10: Metropolitan Rail a winner

Metropolitan rail projects were big winners from the Federal Government's decision to overcome the Global Financial Crisis with an infrastructure building program. In particular, **Melbourne** was the major beneficiary, with a large allocation for the Regional Rail Express project to provide a dedicated rail line from outer western Melbourne to Southern Cross station for V Line trains from the Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo lines. This will also free up existing lines for additional suburban trains. Federal funding was also provided to commence planning on Melbourne's proposed east-west suburban rail tunnel. Of \$4.6 million for metropolitan rail projects, Melbourne will receive \$3.2 million. In **Adelaide** the Gawler line will be substantially upgraded and the Noarlunga line extended to Seaford.. Funding is provided for planning for the **Sydney** west metro proposal, for a Light Rail system for the **Gold Coast**, planning for additional inner city lines for **Brisbane**, and for lowering the rail line in **Perth** CBD.

- **Regional Rail Express** (West Werribee to Sunshine, Victoria): \$3,225.0 million over six years (including \$150.0 million in 2008—09 and \$1,034.0 million in 2013—14) towards the separation of V Line (regional) and metro rail services between West Werribee and Southern Cross Station via Sunshine. This will improve the capacity of lines operating on four corridors. The project involves an extension of platforms and other capital works to enable eight car trains to operate on the Geelong and Bacchus Marsh lines; and a new station at Tarneit. Construction will also include duplication of existing tracks between Sunshine and Kensington and the utilisation of disused tracks from South Kensington to Southern Cross Station. The Victorian Government says that work will start before the end of this year to commission platforms 15 and 16 at Southern Cross Station and major construction of the new track will start in 2010.
- **East West Rail Tunnel** preconstruction work (Melbourne): \$40.0 million over two years from 2011—12 for preliminary works for a rail tunnel from Dynon to St Kilda Road.
- **West Metro** preconstruction work (Sydney): \$91.0 million in 2008—09 towards engineering and design work to further develop the West Metro project. When completed, the project will provide a 25-kilometre metro system from Central Station to Westmead Hospital and will link up with the proposed CBD Metro from Central Station to Rozelle.
- **Gawler Rail Line** Modernisation (Adelaide): \$293.5 million over five years (including \$14.0 million in 2008—09) towards the acceleration of renewal projects (re—sleepering, electrification and station enhancement) on the Gawler line. The line is 43 kilometres in length and has 24 stations.
- **Noarlunga to Seaford Rail Extension** (Adelaide): \$291.2 million over five years (including \$8.0 million in 2008—09) towards a 5.5-kilometre dual-track, electrified

extension of the existing rail line from Noarlunga to Seaford Meadows and Seaford in the south of Adelaide, including a 1.2-kilometre viaduct and bridge over the Onkaparinga River, electrification, and train stabling. The Tonsley branch line will be electrified and improved as well. Both Adelaide rail projects are planned to start in 2010 and be completed in 2013.

- **Brisbane Inner City Rail Feasibility Study** (Brisbane): \$20.0 million in 2008—09 towards a detailed feasibility study of additional river crossing capacity and cross city capacity for the provision of a rail loop that services the major stops north and south of the Brisbane River, to cater for future growth.
- **Gold Coast Light Rail.** Construction is expected to commence in 2011 and is scheduled for completion in 2013. Total Federal investment will be \$365.0 million. The project is for initially a line 13-17 km starting from Helensvale just inland in the north down to Southport, Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach, these being the centres of greatest population. The total projected expenditure is \$894 million. In addition to the Commonwealth contribution, the Gold Coast City Council will provide \$150 million and the balance of \$379 million from the Queensland State Government and a Public Private Partnership that is yet to be announced. The Queensland government is on record as earmarking \$1.67 billion for the project but that appears to be for the whole project including a second section from Broadbeach to Coolangatta, approximately 30 km further. It is anticipated that construction will start in 2011 with the opening of the first section in 2013 and the remainder in 2015. No firm commitment has yet been made in respect of the southern section.

For more information about the Gold Coast Light Rail see

www.translink.com.au/translin.nsf/indexgc_rapidtransit *Our thanks to this site for our front cover map.*

- **Northbridge Rail Link** — the Hub (Perth): \$236.0 million over six years (including \$7.0 million in 2008-09 and \$37.0 million in 2013-14) towards the sinking of the central city section of the Perth-Fremantle railway line and construction of a new rail platform. This is not a new rail line, but will make available new land to develop above the rail line and is the first stage required for the Hub urban redevelopment project.

For Adelaide O-Bahn extension funded in the Federal budget, see Bus news.

ARTC: Inland Rail Alignment Study

The ARTC has released the preliminary reports of its investigation of the proposed Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Rail route. At this stage, the consultants found that the timesaving of trains on the route would be small compared to an upgraded coastal railway – 25 ³/₄ hours compared with 26 ¹/₂ to 28 hours. They also found that most additional traffic attracted to the railway would be low quality coal from near Toowoomba attracted by an upgraded railway route to Brisbane port.

The principal finding was that the proposal “does not appear financially viable as a standalone commercial entity” and “for the inland railway to reach financial viability it is likely to require a combination of additional tonnages, reductions to the capital cost and/or a range of funding contributions from different sources.”

After examining more than 50 options, the first stage finding of the study of the proposal is that it should mainly follow existing rail lines Melbourne-Albury-Cootamundra-Parkes-Narromine-Dubbo-Werris Creek-Moree-North Star near Goondiwindi; with new construction North Star-Toowoomba-Brisbane. North of Parkes the railway would require the upgrading of parts of the existing route, including minor deviations to improve its alignment. Some sections of the route will be finalised in later stages of the study, including between Junee and Stockinbingal; a possible route from Premer to Emerald Hill avoiding Werris Creek; North Star to Yelarbon near Inglewood; and in the vicinity of Toowoomba. The inland railway would be approximately 1890 km in length, compared with approximately 1920 km via Sydney and it would have similar transit times to the route via Sydney.

ARTC states that assessment of the proposed railway's financial and economic performance is at an early stage. Work in Stage 1 of the Study was aimed at providing sufficient information for selection of the route. The route chosen for further analysis has the lowest overall capital cost. All options considered in a preliminary forward assessment do not appear to be financially, or economically, viable. The cost of the project is driven largely by the difficult terrain from Toowoomba towards Brisbane. The capital cost of the route to be further analysed at its lowest preliminary estimate ranges from \$2.8 billion to \$3.6 billion.

The preliminary reports can be found at www.artc.com.au/Content.aspx?p=192

ARTC: Interstate mainlines in Victoria being upgraded

Work on laying 658,000 new concrete sleepers along two critical sections of the interstate freight rail network started in mid-May with funding provided under the Federal Government's Economic Stimulus Package. The projects are:

- A \$100 million upgrade of the line between **Maroona and the South Australian border**: a project that will replace the existing wooden sleepers with 433,000 new concrete sleepers; and
- A \$45 million upgrade of the line between **Albury and Seymour in Victoria**: a project that will replace the existing wooden sleepers on the existing standard gauge track with 225,000 new concrete sleepers.

In NSW/ACT, 45,000 concrete sleepers are being laid between **Joppa Junction and Canberra**.

ARTC: Working Timetables 3 May 09

New ARTC Working Timetables for both the interstate network and for NSW have been issued effective 3 May 2009. The Portland line is not included.

New ARTC NSW Graphical Timetables were also published on their website. The quality is better than before, but the NSW North West is still not included (perhaps because it's not part of the Defined Interstate Network). There is no indication in the documents that the new Passing Lanes exist, and there are still very long delays indicated for some trains, often without a cross. There are trains in the tabular timetables or elsewhere that don't make it into the graphical timetables.

An omnibus volume of these documents is available via the AATTC June Distribution List.

ARTC: Northern Sydney Freight line funding

On 26 April the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Anthony Albanese MP, announced funding of \$840 million for the Northern Sydney Freight line.

ARTC: Bylong and Johns River Loops

A new 2 km crossing loop at Bylong between Gulgong and Denman on the Muswellbrook-Ulan line was completed in late April by the Australian Rail Track Corporation, at a cost of \$11 million. The ARTC says the loop will increase capacity in one of the most important coal lines on the east coast as part of the 2007-2012 Hunter Valley Coal Network Capacity Improvement Strategy.

The Johns River Loop between Taree and Kempsey on the NSW North Coast has been upgraded at a cost of \$1.1 million, by a new turnout configuration, new signalling and significant track alterations.

Construction at both loops was brought forward thanks to joint funding between ARTC and the Federal Govt as part of its \$1.2 billion Nation Building package announced in December 2008.

ARTC: Victorian NE line

The conversion of the Victorian northeast line to a double-track standard gauge is expected to be advanced sufficiently for freight use by August and for passenger trains by December 2009 (just in time for the Victorian bus industry to provide vehicles for the next big Victorian shutdown, the Springvale Road level crossing project – see below).

Work on converting the Benalla-Oaklands (Vic)–Oaklands (NSW) line from broad gauge to standard gauge commenced in March.

QR: Diesel Tilt Train

The Diesel Tilt Train from Brisbane to Cairns and v.v. resumed operation from 4 May (earlier report May *Table Talk*, p. 4).

QR: Beerburum and Coppabella duplications

On 14 April the Caboolture-Beerburum duplication, 13.7 km, was brought into use. From Caboolture to Elimbah, 7.9 km, the original line has been retained to provide a third track, primarily as a freight train refuge.

Work commenced on 4 March on duplication of the coal railway from Coppabella to Ingsdon, 10.5 km.

QR: Varsity Lakes line

Tracklaying on the new line from Robina to Varsity Lakes, 4.1 km, commenced on 31 March.

No train for northern rivers

Unsurprisingly, the NSW / Queensland Cross Border Transport Taskforce, reporting in April, found that "the re-commencement of operation of passenger rail services from Casino to Murwillumbah is not warranted", and that no further work be advanced to on potential rail links between northern NSW and SE Queensland.

No train for Newcastle?

The threat to the railway into Newcastle has raised its ugly head again. A report issued on 26 May by the Hunter Development Corporation, a NSW Government body, has extolled the so-called "benefits" of cutting the Newcastle line at Wickham. But the report pointed out that the rail corridor should remain in public ownership and be made available for public uses such as shared pathways and public domain spaces.

RailCorp: new Working Timetable 10 May 09

A "brand new" (i.e. Version 1) Working Timetable was issued in April, to commence 10 May 2009. For the first time since NSW State Rail days, the SWTT has been reorganised, with "Books" 4, 5, 6 & 7 being replaced with "Sections" 1, 2, 3 & 4. The PDF files are still issued as separate Up and Down sections.

RailCorp: Newcastle line

From 11 May the weekday 1715 Sydney-Newcastle stops at Tuggerah and then runs two minutes later than formerly.

Sydney CBD Metro will run almost empty

by Linton Besser , *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 May 2009

The CBD Metro will run as much as 87 per cent empty during the height of the morning rush hour when it opens in 2015, the Transport Minister, David Campbell, has conceded. Although the \$5.3 billion metro between Central Station and Rozelle will have a capacity of 30,000 passengers an hour, as few as 4000 to 5500 passengers will use it, the Government estimates. That means the equivalent of 26 of the 30 trains running each hour in the peak will be empty. Off-peak passenger loads are likely to be half again. By contrast, 27,650 passengers travel along CityRail's western corridor to the city in the one-hour morning peak, which includes services from the west, inner-west and northern lines. The figures, supplied by Mr Campbell's office, show most CBD Metro trains will be empty for decades. By 2031, just 7250 people an hour will travel on the CBD Metro in each direction according to the Government's forecast, which means it would be operating 76 per cent empty at the busiest time of day.

The Government has maintained the short metro line is to become the "spine" of a future network of metros that will carry far more people. "Whilst the CBD Metro will have an important role creating new transport connections through the CBD, the long-term vision is for the Metro to be the spine of a greater metro network spanning first to the west and then out into other areas of Sydney," Mr Campbell said. "This would substantially increase the usage of the CBD Metro." But the dismal patronage forecast raises serious questions about why the Government is forging ahead with the project, undertaking geo-technical investigations and preparing construction and operation contracts that will carry prohibitive breach-of-contract provisions.

The alternative rail plan, pledged by the former premier Bob Carr in 2005, included a second CityRail line through the city between Redfern and Chatswood at a similar cost, but which would have carried 16,000 passengers an hour - four times as many as the proposed metro. The

projected patronage is so low that Sydney Metro Authority officials are considering extending the CBD Metro from Central to Broadway and Camperdown, where Parramatta Road buses could be forced to terminate, to boost passenger numbers. Mr Campbell said that there is "the ability to extend the CBD Metro to the west and also north-west, should funding be available in the future".

The metro, which was announced by the Premier, Nathan Rees, before any feasibility studies, was predicated on a plan to terminate up to 26 western suburbs trains an hour at Central Station's country platforms. Last month the *Herald* revealed that the Metro Authority had withdrawn this plan during discussions with Infrastructure Australia because the Commonwealth body pointed out that terminating so many trains so quickly at Central was virtually impossible. But a similar warning has also been issued, the *Herald* has learned, by the State Government's own bureaucrats. Advice composed in the past few months from RailCorp has warned the head of RailCorp, Rob Mason, that there are serious flaws in the plan. Not only are the Central Station changes impossible without enormously expensive capital works, but such a plan would also require millions of dollars to be spent on overhauls of CityRail junctions at Strathfield and Blacktown, the advice warned.

Paul Rea, a RailCorp spokesman, said: "RailCorp is developing options for cabinet consideration on the rail infrastructure plan for the next 30 years. We will not comment on any material that is yet to be considered by cabinet."

Connex Melbourne: Additional trains from 20 July

A new timetable from Monday 20 July will provide a major improvement in weekday off-peak frequency on the Werribee line. Weekday interpeak trains between 0900 and 1600 on the Werribee line will double in frequency from twenty to ten minutes. The new services, which will alternate with the existing services, will bypass the Altona loop line (Seaholme, Altona and Westona stations) and will also run direct to and from Flinders Street. The existing off-peak services will continue to run via the Altona loop and the City Loop. Two additional trains will be introduced following the evening peak (including connecting Newport-Williamstown shuttles). Additional morning peak services will be introduced on the Frankston, Pakenham and Craigieburn lines. A total of 53 additional and five extended services will operate each weekday.

Werribee, Williamstown and Sydenham Lines

- Additional services will operate between the peaks on the Werribee line running direct between Laverton and Newport and running direct to and from Flinders St.
- Additional trains from Werribee to the city every twenty minutes from 0858 until 1538, stopping all stations with a journey time of 39 minutes. Thus, on average, there will be a train from Werribee to the city every 10 minutes.
- Additional services from Flinders St to Werribee will depart every 20 minutes from 0840 until 1500 stopping all stations with a journey time of 41 minutes. Thus, on average, there will be a train every 10 minutes from Flinders St to Werribee.
- An additional express from Flinders St to Werribee will depart at 0825 stopping at North Melbourne, Footscray, Newport and Laverton then all stations to Werribee, arriving at 0903.
- An additional train from Flinders St to Werribee at 1917 will run via the City Loop then stop at Footscray, Yarraville, Newport and Laverton then all stations to Werribee, arriving at 1958.
- An additional service from Flinders St to Werribee at 1945 will run via the City Loop and then express from Newport to Laverton to arrive at Werribee at 2028.
- An additional service from Werribee to Flinders St at 2013 express from Laverton to Newport and arriving at Flinders Street at 2052.
- The 0814 Flinders St to Williamstown will run one minute later at 0815.
- An additional shuttle service from Newport to Williamstown departing Newport at 1941, connecting from the new 1917 from Flinders St.
- An additional shuttle service from Newport to Williamstown departing Newport at 2011, connecting from the new 1945 ex Flinders St.
- The 1457 Flinders St to Sydenham will run two minutes earlier, departing at 1455.

Pakenham and Cranbourne lines

- An additional train will depart Dandenong at 0611 running express from Malvern to South Yarra, arriving at Flinders St at 0700.
- The 0541 Pakenham to Flinders St will now depart at 0540, arriving at Flinders St at 0657.
- The 0822 Oakleigh to Flinders St will be altered to stop all stations arriving at Flinders St at 0851.
- The 0637 Flinders St to Cranbourne will now depart at 0634 and stop all stations.
- The 0732 Cranbourne to Flinders St will arrive one minute later at-0838.

Frankston line

- An additional train will depart Frankston at 0532, running express from Malvern to South Yarra, arriving at Flinders St at 0638.
- An additional train will depart from Carrum at 0737, running express from Malvern to South Yarra, arriving at Flinders St at 0828.
- The 0623 from Carrum to Frankston has been extended to start from Mordialloc at 0612.
- An additional train will leave Mordialloc at 0657 arriving at Frankston at 0718, stopping all stations.
- The 0629 from Flinders St to Frankston will run express South Yarra to Malvern and arrive at Frankston three minutes earlier at 0727.
- The 0717 Mordialloc to Frankston has been extended to start from Flinders St at 0636, arriving at Frankston at 0737. This train will stop at all stations.
- The 0734 Mordialloc to Frankston has been extended to start from Flinders St at 0702, running express from South Yarra-Malvern and Caulfield-Moorabbin arriving at Frankston at 0756.

Northern lines

- The 0713 from Broadmeadows will originate at Craigieburn at 0706 and arrive at Flinders St at 0750.
- An additional service will operate from Broadmeadows to Flinders St leaving at 0533 stopping all stations.
- A new service will operate from Flinders St to Broadmeadows at 1458 stopping all stations.
- The 1838 from Flinders St to Broadmeadows will be extended to Craigieburn arriving at 1923.
- The 1806 Upfield to Flinders St will arrive one minute later at 1840

South Morang extension

The Victorian Premier, John Brumby MLA, announced on 30 April that the long-anticipated extension of the Epping line to South Morang will be funded in the 2009-10 Budget with \$562.3 million committed. This will fund double tracking from Keon Park to Epping and a double track extension for 3.5 km from Epping to South Morang. Construction will commence in 2010 with completion in 2013.

Connex Melbourne: Working Timetables

Connex Melbourne has reverted to the practice of making Working Timetables available on their website. The passenger WTT of 9 November 2008, freight WTT of 1 June 2008 (not their own trains, of course, but other operators running on their tracks) and WTT Addenda of June 2008 are available. Go to www.connexmelbourne.com.au then click on "About Us" followed by "Access Arrangements". The passenger WTT is very large (446 pages), and the freight WTT is in glorious colour.

Nunawading level crossing reconstruction

The busy Springvale Road level crossing at Nunawading station is to be replaced by a bridge. This major project will cost \$140 million. It will necessitate a close down of the busy Lilydale/Belgrave line during January 2010, similar to the closedown for the Middleborough Road level crossing reconstruction in 2007. Trains will be replaced by buses. A new Nunawading station will be built on the west side of Springvale Road replacing the present station on the east side.

Connex train delays from the *Herald-Sun* Melbourne 23 May 2009

A secret State Government document has revealed the reasons Melbourne's train system has all but ground to a halt. Faulty brakes, broken doors, signal problems and level crossing incidents have caused delays as have vandals, drug-affected and drunken passengers and trespassers wandering near train lines. The information comes from a Public Transport Safety Victoria document obtained by opposition transport spokesman Terry Mulder. The 851-page dossier shows brake problems with Siemens trains caused thousands of delays between July and December last year. Each incident causing a train to stop can affect up to 23 services. Of the 2746 reported incidents, 917 were caused by faulty brakes and faulty passenger doors. Mr Mulder said the State Government had failed to put enough money into the public transport network. "It's a combination of not enough trains and too much pressure on the operator," he said. Mr Mulder said Connex did not have enough trains to replace the ones that needed repairs.

Connex spokeswoman Lanie Harris said the operator had improved its proactive maintenance program. "We're working the rail network harder than ever. In 2008 we added 433 new services to the timetable without any new trains. It is only through operational improvements we've made that we can achieve this," she said. Ms Harris said almost half of the delays were caused by vandalism, unruly behaviour and trespassers, which were difficult to avoid. Stephen Moynihan, a spokesman for transport minister Lynne Kosky, said because the city loop took trains from 10 different lines any breakdown had a domino effect. "The Brumby Government has a \$38 billion plan to improve transport in Victoria," he said.

Reasons for delays: Train faults	917
Vandalism	638
Unruly passengers	441
Trespassers	219
Ill passengers	157
Track faults	114
Level crossing incidents	111
Signal problems	111
Overhead faults	10
Driver error	7
Fire	7
Lost children	4
Driver illness	3
Missing person search	1
Hit dog	1
Syringe in train	1
Derailment	4
TOTAL	2746

V Line: Wendouree station opens 14 June

Wendouree station, to the west of Ballarat, opened from Sunday 14 June. On weekdays three trains originate at Wendouree at 0608, 0654 and 0738 (express Ballarat – North Melbourne), followed by the three trains ex Ararat stopping there at 0822, 1257 and 1737. Down trains, (in addition to the three Ararat trains departing Southern Cross at 0810, 1208 and 1825) are extensions of Ballarat trains departing SX at 1703 and 1749. On weekends the two trains to and from Ararat stop at Wendouree. Running times of trains to and from Ararat are extended by two minutes for the additional stop. The 2025 Mon-Fri from SX is speeded up by eight minutes to now arrive Ballarat at 2146. The 0533 ex Ballarat now departs seven minutes later at 0540 and arrives SX at the same time as formerly. Similarly the 0608 Sat departs Ballarat eight minutes later at 0615 but arrives at the same time. New working and public timetables for Ballarat and Ararat were introduced from 14 June.

V Line: new timetable 19 July

New V Line system-wide timetables will be introduced from Sunday 19 July to coincide with the new Connex Melbourne timetable (*see above*), except for the Ballarat / Ararat line which will have a new timetable from 14 June (*see preceding item*). There will only be minor changes. The new timetables will be online from 3 July.

Train travel on V Line reached a 60-year record in March 2009, beating the previous best result by 12,000 passenger trips. The Geelong, Bendigo, Traralgon and Echuca lines all achieved their

highest ever passenger numbers in March. Travel to the International Airshow at Avalon contributed about 20,000 to the record, but on the other hand trains were not running to Albury / Wodonga because of upgrade works. Overall travel increased by more than 160,000 or 15.3%.

	March 2008	March 2009	Difference	Comment
Geelong	234,319	283,746	+21%	New record.
Warrnambool*	39,575	40,799	+3.1%	Stable. Not a record.
Ballarat & B/Marsh	173,437	208,806	+20.4%	Second busiest month on record.
Ararat*	26,944	29,527	+9.6%	Stable. Not a record.
Bendigo	186,272	220,688	+18.5%	New record.
Swan Hill*	30,110	31,017	+3%	Stable. Not a record.
Echuca*	26,327	27,253	+3.5%	New record.
Seymour	48,310	73,187	-	2008 & 2009 are not comparable as Albury trains are included in March 2009 due to track works.
Albury / Wodonga*	30,093	-	-	Trains in 2009 replaced with buses during line upgrade works. Albury figures are counted in Seymour stats as trains terminate at Seymour.
Shepparton*	22,468	22,332	-0.6%	Stable. Little change.
Traralgon	94,763	120,506	+27.2%	New record.
Bairnsdale & Sale*	38,690	39,193	+1.3%	Stable. Little change.
ALL V/LINE TRAINS	951,308	1,097,054	+15.3%	New state-wide record.

* Figures for long distance trains to Warrnambool, Ararat, Swan Hill, Echuca, Albury / Wodonga, Shepparton and Bairnsdale / Sale may include passengers who disembark at earlier stops along the line.

In the five years since passenger train service was restored to East Gippsland on 2 May 2004, patronage at Bairnsdale and Stratford has increased 90% compared to the former bus service. In 2004-05 there were 39,268 boardings at these locations compared to the 12 months to March 2009 of 74,556 boardings.

Victorian Budget 09

The Victorian Budget presented on 5 May included:

- \$650.6 million for 20 new X-Trapolis trains to cater for increasing demand;
- \$562.3 million to duplicate the single track between Keon Park and Epping and extend the Epping line 3.5 km to South Morang, (see above);
- \$204.7 million to electrify the Sydenham line from Watergardens through Diggers Rest to Sunbury, 14.6 km, to begin in 2010 with completion by 2012;
- \$152.6 million to build new stations at Williams Landing, Lynbrook and Caroline Springs;
- \$11.4 million for metropolitan train station upgrades including better customer amenities, walkways, drop-off areas, taxi zones and improved bus to train connections;
- \$8.8 million for regional train station upgrades including better customer amenities, walkways, drop-off areas, taxi zones and improved bus to train connections
- \$132.1 million for a range of measures to improve reliability and capacity of rail services across Melbourne, including 24 staff to assist with passenger movements and improved driver changeover practices;
- \$5 million to commence the procurement of up to 50 new trams;
- \$27.6 million over three years for re-instatement of passenger trains between Maryborough and Ballarat (one service daily each way) in 2010.

Bus initiatives are covered in bus news below.

Supporting papers for the Budget show that in 2008-09 in metropolitan Melbourne, trains carried 220.1 million passengers, trams 174.0 million and buses 101.2 million. In rural Victoria V Line trains and buses carried 13.1 million and other buses also 13.1 million. V Line services covered 22.9 million km and other country buses 18 million km.

V Line: goods lines derailed

The former grain line from Mittyack to Kulwin closed from mid (17?) April 2009.

The Swan Hill – Piangil line was booked out of service from 22 January due to track condition.

The Toolamba – Echuca line was booked out of service from 29 January due to track condition.

V Line: do it at Dooen

A freight terminal is under construction at Dooen, east of Horsham, to replace the existing Horsham terminal.

V Line: Mildura line

Rehabilitation of the Mildura line recommenced in late March after a suspension during summer. The line is now about 80% re-sleepered. When the project is complete, freight trains will travel at 80 kph instead of 50 kph. Third rails have been added at level crossings to facilitate any future standardisation.

Melbourne City Circle trams

The free City Circle Tram tourist route was extended to the north-west precincts of Melbourne Docklands on Saturday 30 May. It now extends to Docklands Drive.

Bendigo commuter trams

The AATTC Distribution Service for April provided a timetable of a trial service for commuters provided by the Bendigo Trust preserved trams. Trams operated from 16 March to 9 April, between 0800-0900 and 1630-1800.

PN: Tasrail no-rail

Following a derailment at Rhyndaston on Friday 15 May, PN closed the Tasmanian main north-south line for "at least four weeks" due to defective track.

Adelaide

The free travel for **Seniors Card holders**, introduced from 1 July, is to be extended by 30mins. The weekday times will be 0900 to 1500 instead of starting at 0930 which was designed to avoid morning peak complications. However, bus operators considered they could better operate the changeover from 0900. The free travel applies to all Adelaide metro services. The extended time is not expected to add to the cost of operating the scheme, estimated at \$10million pa.

A recent trip along the **Belair line** revealed that the entire line has been removed from the 6km post towards Belair with the exception of (a) between Coromandel and the Blackwood Main Road level crossing which had previously been replaced, (b) all level crossings and many pedestrian crossings and (c) track access into the Belair storage sidings. The signals, however, are continuing to display their red aspects. In addition to the regular replacement bus service operating between the City and Eden Hills via Belair and Blackwood, a conveyance with a trailer for bicycles is also operated from Mitcham to Blackwood for up hill traffic only, on a trial basis. No leaflets have been sighted but details taken from a timetable at the stop at the Blackwood Interchange/station are: Stops are at Windy Point (Sat, Sun and PH only) and Glenalta, in addition to the terminals. On Monday to Friday buses depart Mitcham at 1530, 1615, 1700, 1745 and 1830. On Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays buses depart Mitcham at 1000 and every 40 minutes to 1600. The journey time is 25 minutes on all journeys. Passengers with their bikes must be at the stop 5 minutes before the departure time.

WA Budget: Clarkson – Brighton line

Construction of the Joondalup train line extension from Clarkson to Brighton will start in 2010. \$147.4 million was allocated in the WA 2009-10 Budget over the next four years towards the estimated \$282.9 million project which will extend the very successful northern suburbs line by about 11 km.

The WA Budget also provided:

- for free travel entitlements for seniors, aged pensioners and disability pensioners on the Transperth bus and train system and regional bus services between 9am and 3.30pm on weekdays and all weekend.
- \$4.5 million to support the Fremantle Port rail service, to reach the Government's target of 30 per cent of containers travelling by rail from Forrestfield-Kewdale to the port.
- \$3 million in 2009-10 for the ongoing development of a 20-year public transport plan (total cost of the plan is \$6 million).
- \$18.15million in 2009-10 for upgrades to Greenbushes rail.
- \$5 million for further planning to site the Northbridge Link rail underground.
- \$10million in 2012-13 to establish a public transport master plan for Ellenbrook.
- \$95 million for additional bus and train acquisitions.

WA: Grain on Rail

WestNet Rail, owner of WA rail infrastructure, in association with the Australian Railroad Group (ARG), the WA freight operator (owned by Queensland Rail), WA Farmers and the WA Local Government Association, are supporting Grain on Rail to encourage use of the WA rural wheatbelt network. They claim that urgent upgrading of the rail network is required to keep heavy grain trucks off the roads. For more information see www.grainonrail.com.au

Transwa: Prospector

Due to track works in the metropolitan area, the evening up Prospector will terminate at Midland on many dates from May to September 2009.

Auckland resignalling

The Auckland rail network is to be resignalled over two years from early 2010 as part of KiwiRail's ongoing upgrade of Auckland's rail network, at a cost of \$NZ90 million. This will support electrification of the network and the increasing number of commuter services. It will include a back-up computer control system that will run in tandem with the primary system, so if one failed the other would keep the signals working. Key routes between Otahuhu and Britomart, Newmarket and Morningside will be the first to be commissioned by the end of 2010. It will incorporate an automatic train protection system which will automatically intervene if a train is going to pass a stop signal, not hitherto used in NZ. The current Auckland signalling system is not compatible with electrification system and much of the equipment needs to be replaced or modified to immunise it from the high voltage overhead traction system. All points and signals will be replaced and a sophisticated computerised train control system introduced. Track circuits will be replaced with a more reliable and cost effective system using axle counters.

DB: European timetable ceases

Deutsches Bahn (German Railways) have ceased to provide their European Timetable. Before 2000 this was a very comprehensive production, rivalling the Thomas Cook Timetable. Since 2000, it has been the Thomas Cook Timetable within a few extra pages in German and a DB themed cover.

Italy

Since the Milano-Bologna High Speed Railway opened on 14 December 2008 rail passenger numbers from Milano to Roma have increased by 33% (64% in first class). Market share has changed from 54% plane/32% train to 48% train/39% plane.

€ 17.8 billion has been allocated for new High Speed railways in Italy, for Milano-Venezia, Milano-Genova, Bologna-Firenze and La Spezia-Parma. € 1.3 billion has been allocated for starting work on a rail/road bridge between the mainland and Sicily. The total cost is expected to be € 3.9 billion.

Thanks to Ian Cooper, Geoff Lambert, Dennis McLean, Victor Isaacs, Roger Wheaton, *Newsrail*, *Railway Digest* and *Today's Railways Europe* for Rail news.

LETTER

Simon Aalbers writes in response to Albert Isaacs' article "At last – A system-wide timetable for QR Traveltrain" in February Table Talk, p. 2 and March Table Talk, p. 3:

Albert states that QR has not issued a system-wide country tt for many years. This is not correct as I have the following tts in my collection:

- Effective March 1, 1990 – quick reference Traveltrain Timetable
- Effective July 12, 1992 – quick reference Traveltrain Timetable
- Effective 1 April 2004 – timetable for discovering Queensland by Traveltrain
- Effective April 2005 – timetable for discovering Queensland by Traveltrain
- Effective from April 2006 – timetable for discovering Queensland by Traveltrain
- Effective from 16 June 2007 – timetable & fares
- Effective from 1 April 2008 – timetable & fares

It is possible that the quick reference timetables could represent the "scrappy and very brief summary TTs", however they constitute a system wide tt and cover all major stops, only excluding such places as Home Hill, Sarina or Gordonvale. The later tts are much more reminiscent of the recently reviewed tts.

Since moving to Queensland in 2006 I have found it difficult to obtain current rail tts and while enquiring of a local travel agent in Bowen for a rail tt I was informed that even the travel agents have trouble sourcing them. Indeed I have not been able to find the June 2008, October 2008 or January 2009 tts locally. This may go some way to explain why Albert was unaware of the tts from 2004-2008.

Further, Albert makes reference (March 2009) to the current tt being dated "Valid until 31 March 2009". It appears to be a long held tradition in the Queensland tourism industry to change tours and/or prices from 1 April each year. A look at many of the tour brochures in places such as Cairns and Whitsunday show that prices are regularly quoted being valid from 1 April to 31 March. This has been a regular practice since at least my first visit to Cairns in 2000.

BUS NEWS

ACT - Canberra

Belconnen Town Centre changes

New timetables for all Belconnen services were introduced on 25 May, the day after the Belconnen Interchange closed. The new timetables were available from 11 May. All Belconnen services with the exception of Xpresso routes 701-4, now operate past the new permanent bus station in Cohen Street and the two temporary "super stops" in Lathlain Street and Cameron Avenue in the Town Centre.

In order to operate all routes past the three stops, route and timetable changes were made to the following routes: 3, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 30, 31, 43, 44, 45, 51, 52, 56, 58, 59, 71, 73, 74, 300, 312, 313, 314, 315, 318, 319, 701, 704, 705, 710, 720, 729, 732, 737, 749, 757, 900, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 932, 934, 942, 951, 952, 956, 958 and 980. Most or all ACTION timetables have been reprinted. This includes a new edition of the Weekend Bus Book. Routes in this now appear in correct numerical order, and it includes diagrams of the new Belconnen bus "stations".

Copies of the new timetables will be available from the AATTC June Distribution List.

In order to improve the public transport coverage of the town centre which is nearly two kilometres wide, some of the revised routes have become quite circuitous. Therefore, as a result of the decision to operate all buses past all three major stops, interchanging between any two buses can, theoretically, take place at any of the three stops, which have all been labelled "bus stations". The Cohen Street Bus Station, outside the Belconnen bus depot, has two off-street platforms plus four on-street bus stops. All school services transferred from the Interchange now depart from Cohen Street.

The six temporary stops on Lathlain Street and five temporary stops on Cameron Avenue are basic on-street bus stops. Over the next 18 months the Lathlain Street stops will be incorporated into the new Westfield shopping centre bus station, while the temporary Cameron Avenue bus

stops will be incorporated into a new bus station to be built on the extended Cohen Street, which will run through the site of the old Interchange, parallel to Cameron Avenue. When these works are completed, there will be another timetable revision – probably in October 2010.

REDEX – Rapid Express Direct

Chief Minister and Minister for Transport, Jon Stanhope, announced on 28 April that ACTION would be starting a 12 months trial on 12 October of two new bus services – REDEX 1 and REDEX 2 (Rapid Express Direct). Both services would operate every 15 minutes from 0630 to 0930 and 1530 to 1830 or 1900.

REDEX 1 will run from Gungahlin to Tuggeranong via Dickson, City, Russell, Barton, Woden and Erindale and return and REDEX 2 between Kippax and Tuggeranong via Belconnen, City, Russell, Barton, Woden and Erindale and return. No specific information on the precise routes and whether buses will service all stops along each route were provided. As part of the trial, improved bus stops, described as transfer stations, will be established at eight major employment hubs.

REDEX services will operate on weekdays only during school terms. There is no reference to replacement services during school holidays.

Some of the buses for the new services will be supplied as part of an order for 100 new vehicles to be supplied over the next three years. Contracts are to be signed shortly for the supply of 74 rigid diesels and 26 “steer tag” 14.5m rigid diesels. The latter buses will eventually replace the 26 Mark I Renault/Mack PR180.2s. All the new diesels will be based at Belconnen Depot following a decision to retain this depot as a diesel only base. Tuggeranong will remain as the only depot equipped with compressed natural gas re-fuelling facilities.

New Route 88 to the Gaol

The new Canberra Gaol (Alexander Maconochie Centre), the ACT’s first prison, began operations in late March and early April and ACTION officially commenced running Route 88 from Woden Interchange on 6 April. The printed timetable, dated 2 June 2008, was retrieved from the ACTION storeroom for distribution. The service did operate for a few days after 2 June last year, before it was realised that construction of the gaol was incomplete. All trips were suspended from about 9 June 2008.

Other than previously announced programs there was very little in the way of new “big ticket” public transport initiatives in the ACT Budget handed down on 5 May. Much was made by the ACT Treasurer and Chief Minister of the Government’s continued investment in Integrated Transport although, not surprisingly, most of the funding was for new roads.

ACT Budget

Fortunately, from a public transport perspective, the ACT Budget provided for a continuation of a number of projects commenced in the last financial year:

- Purchase of 100 new buses
- Replacement of the Belconnen Interchange (an extra \$7m is to be allocated over the next two years)
- Acquisition of a new smartcard ticketing system
- Continuation of retrofitting bike racks on buses
- Continued upgrading of Network 08, with an expected increase in the frequency of services on a number of routes starting early in the new financial year
- Creation of additional bus lanes and priority measures.

Early this year there was a concern that some, if not all, of the above programs could have been deferred or substantially reduced, as a result of the difficult global financial situation.

Other new programs contained in the budget are:

- Feasibility studies into two additional Park ‘n Ride sites at Erindale and Mitchell, expected to cost \$120,000.
- Carbon Systems Australia has been engaged to measure the carbon footprint within ACTION in an attempt to identify current outputs and reduce emissions
- Several programs being continued with additional funding in the current year:
 - Installation of shelters, seats and signage to cost \$240,000;
 - Bus stop disability improvements – upgrading of selected stops to meet DDA standards to cost \$370,000.

It is gratifying to note that ACTION is being funded an additional \$2.9m for seven projects which can all be described as vital ancillary infrastructure programs:

- . Continuation of the upgrade of CCTV at Bus Interchanges
- . Upgrade the existing CCTV on 54 Scania's with ACT Government Standard CCTV
- . Upgrade of fueling facilities at both Belconnen and Tuggeranong depots to meet EPA Standards and to incorporate fuel monitoring software.
- . Upgrade of the radio system and a relocation of the Communications Centre
- . Upgrade of the Belconnen Workshop spray booth to meet EPA and OH&S Standards

Among the many disturbing statistics in the Budget papers are two from ACTION. It expects its patronage to grow this year at a much slower rate than last financial year: 529,000 compared with an estimated 949,000 in 2008-9. The original growth target for 2008-9 was 847,000. Modal share growth is also expected to fall – from 3% in 2008-9 to 2.9% in 2009-10. No total passenger boardings or modal share data were published.

On the other hand, two impressive projected growth figures, resulting directly from the expected intake of new buses, are:

- Percentage of fleet fully compliant with DDA standards – expected to grow from 29.3% to 36%, and
- Percentage of fleet Euro 3 Emission Standard compliant – 17.8% to 24.8%

Fares are to increase on 1 July by an average of 11%, the first increase since July 2006. Cyclists travelling with a bike on the front rack will now have to pay standard fares with the bike carried free. It is expected that the farebox recovery as a percentage of total cost will increase from 18.8% to 21.0%.

Brisbane: BCC alterations

On 27 April, Brisbane City Council opened a new bus depot at Willawong. This is the first new depot in 15 years other than the "temporary" Larapinta depot a couple of years ago. The following alterations to service were introduced to coincide:

Route	What changed
66 Woolloongabba to QUT Kelvin Grove	Student special - extra peak-hour buses during uni semesters
129 Parkinson to City rocket	Timetable has been updated to more accurately show current running times. Extra trip at 0712
130 Parkinson to City BUZ	Early morning buses every 10 minutes from 0500 to 0620
131 Parkinson to City rocket	Timetable updated to more accurately show current running times
132 Algester to Garden City local	Timetable updated to more accurately show current running times
133 Sunnybank shuttle	Timetable updated to more accurately show current running times
137 Sunnybank Hills to City pre-paid fare rocket	Timetable updated to more accurately show current running times
139 Sunnybank Hills to UQ	Timetable updated to more accurately show current running times. Extra buses to UQ during uni semesters.
141 Browns Plains to City rocket	Extra bus at 0615
169 Eight Mile Plains to UQ	Extra buses running to UQ every 5 minutes during morning peak
185 Garden City via Cavendish Rd to	Extra morning-peak capacity from Mt Gravatt East to the

City	City
209 Carindale to UQ	Extra buses to UQ during uni semesters
227 Wynnum to City	Extra morning and evening peak-hour buses. A new weekend service introduced
384 The Gap to City	Extra morning and evening peak hour buses with trips leaving every 15 minutes

Queensland – Regional

Greyhound Australia have added a daily service Longreach (07.00) - Emerald (12.00-12.45) - Longreach (18.20), following on from the success of their recent Rockhampton-Emerald and Mackay-Emerald services. Services commenced Monday 30 March 2009.

These services are in direct competition with Paradise Coaches, which have the qConnect contract for services Rockhampton-Emerald-Longreach and Emerald-Mackay.

Paradise Coaches had attempted to introduce a service from Rockhampton to Moranbah in September 2008, however the service had ceased by the end of November, presumably due to the competition from the new Greyhound Australia services.

Sydney Private: Hillsbus

Hillsbus Region 4 in Sydney North West had their region review implemented on 11 May 2009 after a number of deferments, with 29 new timetables replacing all their timetables:

Route	Title	Version No	Size
600, 603	Glenhaven and Castle Hill to Parramatta	1	Passport
601	Parramatta to Rouse Hill Town Centre	1	Passport
604	Parramatta to Castle Hill	1	Passport
606	Parramatta to Winston Hills	1	Passport
608	Windsor to Rouse Hill Town Centre	1	Passport
609	North Parramatta to Parramatta	1	Passport
610, 610X, 619	Rouse Hill Town Centre to City	4	DL
611, 630	Blacktown to Macquarie	1	Passport
612	Kellyville to North Sydney/Milsons Point	1	Passport
613, 614, 615, 616, 617X, 618	Hills District to City	1	Passport
620, 620X, 621, 642, 642X	Castle Hill and Cherrybrook to City	1	Passport
625	Parramatta to Pennant Hills	1	Passport
626	Pennant Hills to Dural	1	Passport
632, 633	Castle Hill to Pennant Hills/Hornsby	1	Passport
635, 650, 651, 652X	Castle Hill and West Pennant Hills to City	1	Passport
637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 644	Dural District	1	DL
T60	Parramatta to Castle Hill (T-way)	1	Passport
T61	Parramatta to Blacktown (T-way)	1	Passport
T62	Parramatta to Castle Hill (T-way)	1	Passport
T63	Parramatta to Rouse Hill Town Centre (T-way)	1	Passport
T64	Parramatta to Rouse Hill Town Centre (T-way)	1	Passport

T65	Parramatta to Rouse Hill Town Centre (T-way)	1	Passport
T66	Parramatta to Rouse Hill Town Centre and Rouse Hill (T-way)	1	Passport
700	Parramatta to Blacktown	1	Passport
702	Seven Hills to Blacktown	1	Passport
705	Blacktown to Parramatta	1	Passport
708, S8	Constitution Hill to Parramatta	1	Passport
711	Blacktown to Parramatta	1	Passport
714, 715	Seven Hills to Norwest and Bella Vista	1	Passport
Network Guide	Hills District Bus Guide	1	DL

New timetables for the Optus charters which were operated by various operators, have been issued dated 23 February 2009 by Hillsbus who acquired the contract from that date. It now only consists of two routes instead of about 5 or 6 before that date:-

- Route 993 .City to Optus Centre.
- Route 995 Strathfield to Optus Centre.

A separate timetable has been issued by Murrays who operate route 996 on weekday nights after 2145 consisting of three trips to Epping, two to Chatswood and a final trip at 0010 to Wynyard via Epping. Although starting on the same date, this timetable is undated.

Following numerous complaints, additional services have been added to routes in the Hills timetable and a new version 2 dated 18 May 2009 is now available on the Hillsbus website. The following is an extract from their website:

“Hillsbus has responded to community concerns about the new bus network in the Hills district. Minor service changes will commence from Monday 18 May on Routes 620 and 642. These changes include: Route 620/620X, extension of peak hour trips in Dural between James Henty Drive and Dural Bus Depot; Route 642, additional off peak trips between Dural and the City.’

There are new Hillsbus website timetables for routes 626 and T64 dated 18 May 2009. A number of further changes to Hillsbus services occurred from 25 May according to their website:

- Route 601 new website timetable dated 25 May 2009.
- Route 612 new website timetable dated 18 May 2009 but shown as being effective from 25 May.
- Route 625 partial undated timetable on web shown as being effective from 25 May.
- Route 632 advice of changes from 25 May on website.
- Route 635 (part of multi route timetable) partial undated timetable on website shown as being effective from 25 May.
- Route 638 advice of changes from 25 May on website with full new timetable for routes 637-644 on website dated 25 May.
- Route 650 (part of same multi route timetable as route 635) partial undated timetable on website shown as being effective from 25 May.
- Route 651 (part of same multi route timetable as route 635) Partial undated timetable on website shown as being effective from 25 May.
- Route 652 (which is actually route 652X) (part of same multi route timetable as route 635) partial undated timetable on website shown as being effective from 25 May.

Sydney: Sydney Transit

New Sydenham – Bondi Junction route 357 timetable dated 26 April 2009 shows two afternoon peak trip extended from Kingsford (Nine Ways) to Sydenham.

New Eastern suburbs timetables dated 26 April 2009 (all v1.0):

- 200 Chatswood to Bondi Junction
- 313, 314, 316, 317 Eastgardens & Coogee to Bondi Junction.
- 326, 327 Bondi Junction to City via Bellevue Hill
- 333, 380, 381, 382, X84 Watsons Bay & North Bondi to City
- 389, X89 North Bondi to City via Paddington
- 301, 302, 303, X03 Sans Souci/Eastgardens to City
- 305 Railway Square to Stamford Hotel.

Two new Prepay Brochures:

- Circular Quay, Pitt Street and Castlereagh Street go Prepay dated 11 May 2009.
- George Street and Druiitt Street go Prepay dated 6 April 2009

Sydney Transit north of the Harbour

A new bus network for the Northern Beaches and Lower North Shore will be introduced from Sunday 2 August 2009, providing:

- A full time 7 days direct Cromer-City service.
- A daytime 7 days direct Wheeler Heights-City service.
- New route 153 providing three daytime off-peak shopping trips on weekdays between Warringah Mall and major retirement villages in the Wheeler Heights, Cromer and Narraweena areas.
- Additional weekend city services on Route 244 to Chowder Bay via Mosman
- Extension of city service route 246 from Spit Junction to Balmoral via Mosman.
- Better access to Manly during daytime off-peak and weekends between Warringah Mall with an increase in frequency from 15 minutes to approximately 10 minutes
- Changes to route 136 service provide Forestville with additional links to Chatswood, Dee Why and Manly.

Sydney Locality Access Guides

The Sydney Bus Network Consultation website advises that as part of the Region 4 review implementation, new summary Locality Access Guides have been issued dated May 2009 for Blacktown, Castle Hill, Hornsby, Macquarie, Parramatta, Rouse Hill, Seven Hills and Westmead networks. In the case of Hornsby and Parramatta they are updates of previously issued guides. They are all available on 131 500, but it is not known if they are available yet in paper form. In the case of the Macquarie one, there is a previous comment: "Available in pdf only until the reviews of regions 4, 7 and 12 are completed" As region 7 has not been done as yet, it is assumed that this comment will still apply.

New South Wales Country

Albury-Howlong-Corowa service formerly operated by Rutherglen Bus & Coach, from 1 Jan 2009 is operated by Cann's Bus Lines of Corowa who have issued an undated timetable which is somewhat different.

A new Busways Port Macquarie region timetable for routes 322, 323, 324, 325, 328, 332, 334, 335, and 340 has been issued dated 4 February 2009.

Cavanagh of Kempsey introduced new timetables for their Kempsey routes 341, 342, 343, 346 and 349 on 4 August 2008. All references to Saturday services have been deleted.

Hannafords, Tamworth has issued a timetable for route 437 dated 26 Nov 2008. There appears to be a considerable reduction in the number of trips operated from their previous May 2008 timetable.

Tasmania – Hobart

Metro fully integrated all Channel District and Kingston/Blackmans Bay area school services acquired from private operators earlier this year, notably from Lovell's Coaches, with its own services on 20 April. Metro's website advised that all services will be undertaken by Metro buses, implying that buses owned by Lovell's Coaches and hired by Metro since the beginning of Term 1, are no longer being used.

Commencing 20 April there were changes to 12 school services operating from the Channel District and Kingston/Blackmans Bay to Hobart schools. There were also timetable changes to route services in these areas plus Summerleas. Four extra trips to were introduced to cater for the ever increasing commuter traffic to Hobart on routes 67 and 84 (Kingston/Blackmans Bay) and routes 93 and 94 (Snug and Woodbridge), plus a re-scheduling of some services. A new Channel District timetable was introduced on the same day.

Victoria – V Line additional Horsham service

A new bus service between Horsham and Ararat began on Monday, 27 April. It departs Horsham at 1040 and arrives in Ararat at 1157 to connect with the 1212 train to Melbourne. The return service connects with the 1208 train from Melbourne which arrives at Ararat at 1434. The new bus departs Ararat at 1445 to arrive at Horsham at 1558.

Victorian Budget 09

The Victorian Budget presented on 5 May included:

- \$112.1 million to build new buses and commence services similar to SmartBus services to and from Doncaster every 10 minutes in peak periods in 2011 as part of the Doncaster Area Rapid Transit (DART) project;
- \$85.9 million to extend the Yellow SmartBus Route 901 service (Ringwood to Frankston) 70 km from Ringwood to Melbourne Airport through Blackburn, Greensborough, South Morang, Epping and Roxburgh Park; and
- \$22.9 million to improve bus services in Geelong, including a new bus interchange in central Geelong, improved cross-town connections and better links to Deakin University and V Line train services.

There was no mention of funding for the foreshadowed improvements to V Line bus services in South Gippsland.

Rail and Tram initiatives are in Rail news above.

Melbourne: Moonee Valley Coaches

Not previously reported is a reprint of Moonee Valley Coaches pocket format timetable for routes 503 & 506 effective September 2008 (v 1 - 8.2008). The route maps have been updated to the current Metlink format, but there are no changes to the timetables from the previous undated issue produced in 2006.

Melbourne northern suburbs bus review

Victorian Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky has initiated a review of northern suburbs buses to assess their effectiveness, and invited public submissions. The Banyule/Darebin/Moreland Bus Service Review will capture services in Bundoora, Brunswick, Coburg, Eaglemont, Fairfield, Heidelberg, Heidelberg Heights, Heidelberg West, Ivanhoe, Ivanhoe East, Kingsbury, Macleod, Macleod West, Northcote, Pascoe Vale South, Preston, Reservoir, Rosanna, and Thornbury. Services in northern Banyule were reviewed in the Banyule/Nilumbik review held in 2007 and services in northern Moreland were reviewed as part of the Hume/Moreland review also held in 2007. Both of these reports are available to the public.

Routes included in the current review are:

- 246 Latrobe University - Elsternwick
- 250 Latrobe University - City - Garden City/Port Melbourne
- 251 Northland - City - Garden City
- 340 City - Latrobe University
- 350 City - Latrobe University via Freeway
- 503 East Brunswick – Essendon
- 504 Clifton Hill - Moonee Ponds
- 506 Westgarth - Moonee Ponds
- 508 Alphington - Moonee Ponds
- 509 Sydney Road - West Brunswick
- 510 Essendon - Ivanhoe
- 512 Strathmore - East Coburg
- 513 Glenroy - Eltham via Lower Plenty & Greensborough
- 517 St Helena - Northland
- 525 Coburg - West Reservoir
- 526 Coburg - West Preston via Elizabeth Street
- 527 Gowrie - Northland
- 546 Heidelberg - Melbourne University
- 548 Latrobe University - Cotham Road, Kew
- 549 Ivanhoe - Northland
- 550 Northland - La Trobe University
- 551 Heidelberg - La Trobe University
- 552 Northcote Plaza - North East Reservoir
- 553 Preston - West Preston
- 555 Epping - Northland via High Street
- 556 Epping - Northland via Dalton Road
- 558 Reservoir - Reservoir
- 560 Broadmeadows - Greensborough

561 Macleod - Reservoir
563 Greensborough - Northland
566 Lalor - Greensborough - Northland
567 Northcote - Regent
609 Royal Talbot – Fairfield
903 Red Orbital SmartBus

Adelaide

The Federal budget funded extension of the O-Bahn Track Extension at a cost of \$61.0 million over four years (including \$5.0 million in 2008-09) towards dedicated tracks in the city centre and associated improvements for the final 4.5 kilometres of the O-Bahn. The proposed works include provision of on-road priority along Hackney Road and Dequetteville Terrace by providing a single reversible lane in the median, including traffic signal improvements; a two-way dedicated corridor along Rundle Road, and two-way dedicated lanes in Grenfell and Currie Streets. This will comprise a single dedicated lane along Hackney Road and Dequetteville Terrace. Twin lanes will then be provided from Rundle Road, East Terrace., Grenfell and Currie Streets to West Terrace. It will help the current delays to the services using the O-Bahn whereby a large part of the journey time can be taken up from the City to the track commencement at Gilberton. Construction is expected to start this year with completion in 2011.

Thanks to Simon Aalbers, Tony Bailey, Barry Blair, *Advertiser, Canberra Times*, Ian Cooper, Hilaire Fraser, Lourie Smit (also last month, but omitted), Roger Wheaton and Viclink for Bus news.

AIR NEWS

International

Viva Macau discontinued its Friday Sydney-Macau service from 21 May, retaining three weekly services.

AirAsia Indonesia – an offshoot of AirAsia - will operate daily from Perth to Bali from 17 July. Flights will arrive in Perth at 0410 and depart at 0450.

From February **Emirates** has been operating daily A380 flights on its Dubai-Sydney-Auckland route after initially offering a three times weekly service.

Jetstar commenced daily services Sydney-Auckland and Gold Coast-Auckland from 28 April.

Qantas announced that beginning in July, First Class will be removed from the four Sydney–Buenos Aires services, three Sydney–San Francisco, seven Melbourne–Hong Kong services and seven Hong Kong–London services. The effected B747 services now only offer Business, Premium Economy and Economy, affecting 42 weekly services, or 7% of Qantas' international services.

Qantas has applied to the International Air Services Commission to have Japan Airlines codeshare on its flights between Australia and Singapore. If granted, the arrangement will begin on 1 June.

On 20 May **Ozjet** suspended flights from Perth to Bali without prior notice.

On 29 May **Delta** received approval to operate its previously announced daily service between Sydney and Los Angeles.

Domestic

Torres Strait operator **Aero-Tropics** has been grounded. Aero-Tropics contracted to **Transair** on the Bamaga - Cairns leg when Transair crashed at Lockhart River in May 2005. On 5 October 2008 CASA grounded Aero-Tropics for the second time and cancelled their operating licence over concerns about their safety standards (some of which apparently relate to the 2005 crash). Services are now operated by **West Wing Aviation** who appear to have commenced flights from 14 April 2009.

Toowoomba has been added to **Skytrans'** route from from Brisbane to Charleville, Quilpie, Windorah, Birdsville, Bedourie, Boulia and Mount Isa from 27 April. Flights to Mount Isa are on

Mondays and Thursdays and return on Tuesdays and Fridays. The timetable is at www.skytrans.com.au

Tiger Airways commenced a daily service between Sydney and Adelaide from 31 July.

Thanks to Simon Aalbers, Tony Bailey and Victor Isaacs for Air news.

FERRY NEWS

Around 18 March 2009 South Molle Resort was closed for renovations (not before time according to some locals). As a result substantial changes occurred to Cruise Whitsunday services with services to South Molle Island reduced to two per day. The resort reopened on 5 April 2009 as Koala Adventure Island and Cruise Whitsunday services returned to six per day.

Cruise Whitsunday appears to have recently won the tender to provide ferry transfers to Brampton Island. Bluefin was seen just after Easter in Voyages livery.

Fantasea have issued a new timetable to coincide with the end of daylight saving in southern states and the subsequent changes to airline flight times to Great Barrier Reef Airport. Ferry service changes are very minor.

Cruise Whitsunday have issued a number of timetables recently:

- 18 March 2009 (temporary timetable for closure of South Molle Resort)
- 29 March 2009 to 4 April 2009 (Koala Adventure Island was due to open but didn't)
- 5 April 2009 to 3 October 2009 (flight times change and Koala Adventure opened)
- 18 April 2009 to 31 May 2009 (very minor change for altered JetStar BNE arrival time)

Thanks to Simon Aalbers for Ferry news.

COLLECTORS' CORNER

The Committee would like to re-instate the practice of a Collectors' Corner or Traders' Column. If you have an item you want to dispose of, or swap, or obtain, or if you are seeking information, send your request in. Depending on availability of space, Collectors' Corner will appear either in *Table Talk* or in the *Members' Newsletter*. These are both edited by Victor Isaacs. He may be contacted on abvi@webone.com.au or 43 Lowanna St, Braddon ACT 2612, or 02-6257 1742.

Our first entries:

Len Regan has a large collection of road maps and street directories. He is interested in swapping duplicate copies for missing copies in his collection. The Collection includes State and Regional maps produced by various motoring organizations, UBD and Melway Street Directories for major cities, and State-based Country Towns Directories. If you are also interested in map collection, contact Len at tp@hunterlink.net.au

A new timetable trading site in Germany has come to our attention. Have a look at www.eisenbahn-sammlershop.de/index.php/cPath/26?osCsid=65ab228aab58119e1490d2accfec85de

In Switzerland there are two timetable sites we know of. One is: www.fahrplancenter.ch

And, best of all, is the site of our enthusiastic and generous Swiss member, Samuel Rachdi: www.fahrplancenter.com

And don't overlook the website of our US contemporary, the National Association of Timetable Collectors. While not a sales site, it has a cornucopia of information about timetables and timetable collecting:

www.naotc.org