



TABLE TALK

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RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Brisbane Airport

Buses could provide public transport direct to Brisbane Airport after 2014 in competition with Airtrain, according to Brisbane City Council. However, the Queensland Minister for Transport Minister, Scott Emerson, says Airtrain has exclusive rights to service the airport until 2036. The contract between the state Transport Department and the rail provider is confidential.

Brisbane Airport Corporation figures show the share of people using Airtrain increased from around 6% in 2008 to around 8% in 2011. BAC statistics for 2011 show that for the domestic terminal: the Airtrain carried 8% of passengers, private vehicles 50%, taxis 26%, mini-buses 13% and private limousines 3%. The number of people using private vehicles was declining.

Airtrain built the rail link without government assistance at a cost of \$200 million and opened the service in 2001. Airtrain's chief operating officer Neil Dickin said the company made a \$15.7 million profit in 2011-12, a 25% increase on the 2010-11 profit of \$12.5 million.

Mr Dickin said Airtrain's contract was for 35 years, but when asked about bus services, he said he "could not go into the details of the contract. We have around 1.5 million passengers a year, which equates to around 7% of the patronage at Brisbane Airport. It has been steady over the past three years."

QR National: Wiggins Island project

QR National has awarded a \$37.5m signalling contract for part of the initial phase of the Wiggins Island rail project, which will significantly increase coal capacity on the central Queensland heavy-haul network. Work began in July on the \$200m Rocklands – Stanwell duplication project, which involves 18km of track-doubling and construction of three new bridges between Rocklands and Stanwell on the Blackwater line. The project is due to be completed in June 2014 and will support the introduction of 1700m-long coal trains, which will serve the new Wiggins Island Coal Export Terminal at the Port of Gladstone.

Mary Valley Heritage Railway in trouble

The Queensland government has ruled out funding to save the Mary Valley Rattler Heritage Railway at Gympie in the state's south-east, which is struggling

to remain economically viable. The heritage railway has been shut down for the second time this year after two derailments. The "Rattler" is being run on a month-by-month basis due to financial problems.

Infrastructure New South Wales recommendations

Infrastructure New South Wales presented its report and recommendations to the State government on 3 October. Most recommendations related to road construction, either in Sydney and in rural NSW. The NSW government indicated that it accepted the major recommendation for a motorway under Parramatta Road from Strathfield to Camperdown, then to Sydney Airport at a cost of \$1.8 billion. Amongst the road proposals, there were some recommendations concerning public transport:

- Signalling improvements and operational efficiencies to run more trains through the Sydney CBD underground loop. It states that this would allow trains from the proposed NW railway to run through to the CBD. The Report specifically recommends against building a second railway Harbour crossing in the near or medium future.
- Single deck trains between Chatswood and Strathfield on the assumption that they will have quicker station stops.
- Modernisation of Wynyard and Town Hall stations over five to ten years to improve passenger flows and connectivity with buses.
- Acceleration of Intercity services from their present average of 55-60 km/h to 80 km/h. This would reduce travel time from Sydney to Wollongong and the Central Coast to one hour and to Newcastle to two hours. There should be \$100 million of improvements over the next five years on the Wollongong line; a second phase costing \$1 billion to improve the Wollongong and Central Coast lines; and then a third phase after ten years costing \$500 million to improve the line to Newcastle.
- In ten years, after improvements to CBD railways, a study of extending the Eastern Suburbs railway to Randwick and Maroubra.
- A "turn up and go" train service between Parramatta and the City delivered over five years.

- That a corridor be preserved for a Western Sydney freight line and an inter-modal terminal at Eastern Creek.
- A Bus tunnel to bypass congested CBD streets. It would use the disused former tramway tunnels from the Harbour Bridge to Wynyard, then via an unspecified route past Town Hall station. The cost would be around \$2 billion. The report states that this is a better choice than the suggested tramway along George St.
- Light Rail from the City via the Moore Park sporting area and Anzac Parade to the University of NSW in Kingsford.
- A Northern beaches bus corridor improvement plan.
- Operational bus reforms in the CBD to reduce congestion and improve running times.
- Additional buses to Sydney Airport.
- After ten years, a transitway from Parramatta to Macquarie Park.

The rail recommendations would cost \$7.5 billion to implement. The report argues that increased efficiencies would enable the existing network to run an extra 30 trains an hour into the CBD. It states that high speed rail travel will never be possible on lines north and south of Sydney because of the topography, but "services can be vastly improved over what is offered today".

In regard to rural passenger services, the Report is most unsympathetic towards renewal of the **Countrylink** fleet. It says (page 136): "Over the next 10 years, the XPT fleet used on long distance rail services will approach the end of its economic life. A decision will need to be taken on whether the substantial investment required for new rolling stock is justified given very low regional rail patronage, or whether alternative approaches should be a priority. Alternatives could include greater use of coach services or service sharing on some routes with Great Southern Railway, a private sector operator of interstate passenger trains. These options may be more economically viable and could provide faster journey times".

For full details, see www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/media/

Hunter Valley coal trains

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has approved a plan for longer, more efficient trains on the Hunter's coal chain network. The Australian Rail Track Corporation has amended pricing for coal producers to encourage them to utilise the longer trains. In its submission Xstrata backed the variation saying the rail network is under severe strain with insufficient track capacity being a major constraint. ACCC Commissioner Joe Dimasi says pricing has been set for trains with almost 100 wagons. "The 96 wagon is the efficient reference service," he said. "Of course it's up to the users to use shorter or even longer trains if they think that that's worthwhile but the pricing will be based on that configuration of trains as the efficient train."

Countrylink's future

On 15 October in evidence before a State Parliamentary Committee, Transport for NSW

Director-General, Les Wielinga, said that replacing the Countrylink fleet would cost \$450 million. This would provide for refurbishment of existing passenger cars and replacing the locomotives. Buying higher-speed tilt trains would add "probably a couple of hundred (million) more" to the bill. The estimate was met with prolonged silence from the committee of MPs. "It's a fairly significant investment and it's a critical decision," Mr Wielinga told them. He said a decision on whether the investment was justified was a decision for government. "Some of these [existing] trains are many, many hours above their original design life but maintenance is keeping them going," Mr Wielinga said. The XPT fleet was designed to travel 6.25 million kilometres but by the end of last year had notched up nearly 10 million. The passenger cars are so outdated they don't even have power points for phone chargers or laptops. The ageing fleet, inconvenient timetables and consistent inability to meet the 78% on time target are seen as barriers to boosting passenger numbers. 1.9 million people travelled on CountryLink trains last year, down from 2.2 million a decade earlier.

CountryLink acting general manager Matthew Coates told the hearing that until recently, just 10% of trains travelling between Sydney and Melbourne had been arriving on time. Some had been regularly arriving up to an hour-and-a-half late.

Commuters face years of pain under shutdown plan

By Jacob Saulwick, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 October

Train services into central Sydney would be shut for months and restricted for years under plans by Infrastructure NSW to avoid building a second rail crossing over Sydney Harbour. That is according to analysis by Transport for NSW which, for half a decade, has been trying to avoid the cost of the crossing estimated at \$10 billion. The shutdown, which would affect the daily commute of tens of thousands of workers, would be needed under plans to upgrade stations in the central business district and track infrastructure. The objective would be to run up to 30 single-deck trains an hour instead of the 20 double-deckers it can run now. The department and the Transport Minister, Gladys Berejiklian, rejected this idea only in May after deciding the disruption would not be worth the benefit. Train commuters to the CBD would need to be dropped off on either side of the city - at Redfern, Chatswood or North Sydney - and taken by bus to the city. A limited service would remain for years.

The idea was revived last week as part of Infrastructure NSW's 20-year strategy. Infrastructure NSW, set up as an independent adviser to the government, disputes the analysis. It says its job is to challenge a bias in Transport for NSW towards new infrastructure such as another harbour crossing. "The general focus of the NSW transport bureaucracy over a very long time has been about building stuff," the chairman of Infrastructure NSW, Nick Greiner, said last week. He wants to eke more out of the existing network. "No matter where you come out you cannot believe that the existing thing is run anywhere near capacity," he said. Mr Greiner's plan rejected the idea of adding to the city's train system in the next two decades, beyond the north-west and south-west rail

links. Instead of a second harbour crossing, which Transport for NSW now says is necessary, the strategy recommends spending \$5 billion in the next 20 years upgrading track, stations and signalling between the city and the lower north shore to allow more single-deck trains to cross the Harbour Bridge. It says the work could be carried out largely while trains were still running.

But the proposal echoes those being developed within Transport for NSW since at least 2008, which it has ruled out because of the disruption they would cause. Analysis the *Herald* has obtained shows Transport for NSW concluded that for about "four years there will be significant changes to the network operation in the CBD, with major disruption to operations, including no City Circle services from Central to Wynyard for three to four years (option dependent)". In fact, the disruption could be more intensive under the proposal by Infrastructure NSW. The Transport for NSW proposal assumed the construction of a "city relief line" or extra tracks between Redfern and Wynyard. These would help mitigate the impact on services while the existing tracks were overhauled and rerouted. But Infrastructure NSW proposes no spending on new CBD tracks for the next 20 years.

Switching to single-deck trains may sound simple but getting any extra capacity out of smaller trains with more doors would require rebuilding Wynyard and Town Hall station platforms. It would also require closing lines so the complicated criss-cross of tracks between Redfern and Central could be rebuilt. Infrastructure NSW acknowledges that "junction remodelling" would be needed to link the inner west and north shore lines south of Central. Internal Transport for NSW documents say the work would cause a big disruption on all lines for three to four years.

CityRail: Major Sydney closedowns

On the weekend of 6 and 7 October no trains ran on the Eastern Suburbs and Illawarra lines, nor on the South Coast line from Sydney as far as Dapto. The usual huge fleet of buses from a variety of operators replaced trains.

A closedown of the Sydney City Circle took place on the weekend of 13 and 14 October with buses replacing trains. Approximately \$4 million was expended on:

- renewing overhead wiring at St James, to allow for more air-conditioned trains
- replacing signals at Central with more reliable LED-based units
- refurbishing turnouts at Redfern, reducing the risk of equipment failures that cause peak delays.
- progress works on the Newtown Station Easy Access Upgrade (which will be completed in late October)
- 'deep cleans' of Museum, St James and Circular Quay stations
- undertaking routine ballast cleaning, infrastructure maintenance and corridor presentation works.

The next CBD closedown is planned for the weekend of 2-3 February 2013.

A closedown from Nowra and Oak Flats will take place from 22 October to 2 November to relay four km of track between Kiama and Dumore, including replacing timber with concrete sleepers, as well as signalling work and track maintenance.

CityRail: Snow unexpected

Heavy snow on 12 October closed the Blue Mountains line for most of the day between Katoomba and Lithgow. Connecting Countrylink buses were also delayed.

Sydney-Canberra High Speed Rail

On 9 October Canberra Airport released a report into Sydney-Canberra High Speed Rail. It claims that nearly 12 million passengers would use it. "Anyone who alleges that there is no case for HSR is simply not looking at the evidence," Canberra Airport Managing Director, Stephen Byron said. "The case is really very simple. Sydney needs a second airport because Kingsford-Smith Airport (KSA) will be at capacity by 2027. But demand will continue to grow – and where do those passengers go? "Passenger demand for HSR between Canberra and Sydney will be boosted significantly from KSA overflow and support the viability of the HSR as a solution to Sydney's aviation capacity needs, provided the HSR delivers passengers directly to Canberra Airport."

Mr Byron said the best outcome was for a second Sydney airport to be built at Badgery's Creek but that would never happen. "Forty years of history tells us that. Both the Federal and NSW governments have repeatedly ruled out building an airport at Badgery's Creek and the Federal government has not moved to shore up its preferred site at Wilton. The land there is not yet owned by the Commonwealth and local opposition to Wilton is mounting in a grassroots movement reminiscent of Badgery's Creek. People don't want to live next to airports. In the meantime, it is only 15 years until KSA is at capacity according to the *Study on Aviation Capacity for the Sydney Region* and if nothing is done the revenue foregone for NSW and Australia will be billions of dollars".

The Canberra Airport study concludes that in 2030, the number of passengers overflowing from a capacity constrained KSA and using Canberra Airport and the HSR will be 2.5 million, and this will boost the total number of HSR passengers by 37% to 9.3 million. In 2035, the number of passengers overflowing from KSA and using Canberra Airport and the HSR will be 4.5 million, boosting the total number of HSR passengers by 62% to 11.8 million. By 2040, the number of passengers overflowing from KSA and using Canberra Airport and the HSR will be 10.5 million – a boost of 133% to 18.4 million. "With HSR from Canberra Airport, passengers will reach the Sydney CBD in 57 minutes – faster than from Wilton, Badgery's Creek, or even KSA given the ground transport forecasts. And although they show Canberra Airport's relative advantage, the raw travel times fail to capture the biggest transformation of the HSR option: the certainty of travel time. The HSR will be on time, every time, as it is elsewhere in the world with average delays measured in seconds not minutes. This sort of clockwork operational performance represents a stark contrast to both the airline delays forecast into KSA post-2027 and the near permanent traffic jam likely to occur between KSA and the Sydney CBD. Airlines will choose

Canberra as their port because with HSR they can deliver their passengers into the Sydney CBD in under an hour and with superior certainty," Mr Byron said.

Canberra Airport has been a strong supporter of Sydney-Canberra High Speed Rail. The new Canberra Airport terminal building includes space for a High Speed Rail station.

However, the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, says a very fast rail link for Canberra is "some time away" from even being viable. On 9 October she said it would cost a "lot of money" and that the population density did not exist at present to support the project. Qantas chief executive Alan Joyce also cast doubt on its feasibility. He says that another airport for Sydney was the only solution to its air traffic problem.

ACT Chief Minister, Katy Gallagher, was more supportive, but indicated that she, too, saw the project as happening in the long term. "It's no secret that we support the fast train to Canberra, but like the Prime Minister has outlined, it's not sitting on our budget books," she said. "We'll continue to support the work that's being done and to work with the Commonwealth to complete the studies."

NSW Country Regional Network: Train Orders

Train Order working replaced Train Staff working from Temora to Lake Cargelligo and from Ungarie to Naradhan from 25 October.

Train Order working replaced Train Staff working from The Rock to Boree Creek from 1 November.

NSW Country Regional Network: Working Timetable 21 October

John Holland Rail has posted new Working Timetables for the NSW Country Regional Network dated 21 October on the CRN website. On the Canberra line, the only change seems to be insertion of a new location called Fyshwick between Canberra and Queanbeyan, but it is not clear why.

[Article ends]

V/Line Annual Report: Traffic increases

V/Line's 2011-12 Annual Report was released on 9 October. V/Line recorded a record year for passenger numbers. 15.55 million people travelled on V/Line's rail and coach services - a 6.2% increase from the previous financial year, and more than double the passenger numbers of 2004-05! But despite the strong growth in patronage, V/Line reported a much smaller surplus than the previous year of \$1.8 million, down from \$12.7 million in 2010-11. The government subsidy for each V/Line trip also dropped fractionally, from \$18.36 to \$18.27 per passenger. Chief Executive Rob Barnett, who announced he was stepping down, said he believed he was leaving V/Line in "terrific shape". "V/Line has been the fastest-growing railway in Australia," he said. Mr Barnett said train traffic on V/Line's freight lines had increased almost 50% in 2011-12, due to bumper grain harvests.

V/Line: Albury trains regress to the dreaded buses

Due to ARTC track works between Melbourne and Seymour, buses replaced V/Line's 1200 Melbourne Southern Cross-Albury and 1245 Albury-Melbourne trains from Sunday 14 October. V/Line said that this was to be "until further notice." However, there is an inconclusive indication that the midday trains will be restored from 18 November when other V/Line timetables change. A report in the *Border Mail*, however, is that the midday trains will be restored on 8 December.

The sad story of problems on the Victorian NE line was set out in the September *Table Talk*, page 6, October *Table Talk*, page 5 and October *Times*, page 14. The 1200 Melbourne SX-Albury has been the most affected by the problems and has had a very poor time-keeping record. The midday trains provide the connection to V/Line's buses to/from Canberra. (Indeed, this change caused the Rail Editor to change his travel plans to the AATTC AGM.) The following data, compiled by Geoff Lambert, summarises the "minutes late arrival" averages for each service in September:

0710 SX-Alb	0830 XPT Syd4	SX-1200 SX-Alb	1801 SX-Alb	1955 XPT SX-Syd	0415 XPT Alb-SX	0635 Alb-SX	1245 Alb-SX0	1522 XPT Alb-SX	1720 Alb-SX
39	17	57	31	21	15	34	31	15	35

The noon Down is definitely the worst performer, but the 1245 Up is actually the best of the V/Line services. It is notable that the Countrylink trains have less than half the delay. This suggests that trackwork is only part of the problem. V/Line's delays are higher than Countrylink mostly because of rolling stock problems, such as a broken window on 5 October, necessitating the entire carriage set being withdrawn for repair. Another factor is locomotive and rolling stock balancing. V/Line has no leeway for error. The locomotive from the morning Up train goes out of service for a day. If anything breaks down, they have to re-roster it onto the noon Down and this requires it go to Dynon and refuel.

Public Transport Victoria CEO Ian Dobbs said on 15 October that there may be a sub-standard rail line for up to three years. He said there was no "magic wand" solution to the litany of delays and cancellations. "The

only thing we can do to make the trains faster is to fix the track. There's a lot of work, there's a couple of years' work to actually get that track fixed. So as much as I'd like to wave a magic wand and make it happen yesterday, the reality is that work physically has to be done." Mr Dobbs met ARTC CEO John Fullerton recently to "express our, not just disappointment, but wanting to know what he was going to do about it. I have to say that meeting was constructive. He will ensure that work is prioritised and the quality of the work done in the future will be sustainable. We've agreed that we're going to find a revised timetable in the short term because there's a lot of work to be done to get the line back to the way it needs to be over the next two to three years."

Asked if the government was satisfied with the NE rail line, Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder was resolute: "No, not at all ... (The government is)

absolutely devastated to look at that project and the amount of money that was invested there. When you invest that amount of money into a rail project, particularly one that affects our V/Line passengers ... and get that outcome, it's disappointing. It points to the fact that if you're going to do that sort of work and spend that amount of money, do the planning and get it right."

While the timeline suggested by Mr Dobbs is dismaying, Dr Lambert's analysis suggests that there is little to reassure travellers that fixing the track is all that is needed to get V/Line trains back on time. There is every appearance that track is not the issue because, in October (up to 25 October), 93% of V/Line trains had been delayed in transit by an average of 26 minutes whereas only 22% of Countrylink trains have been delayed and on average Countrylink trains transited the line about two minutes **faster** than the timetabled time. These differences cannot be due to trackwork in the middle of the day because (first) they were not altered by the cessation of the middle of the day V/Line services and (second) the differences held true for the morning and evening services throughout the month. The figures are strongly suggestive of faults with either V/Line's management of its own trains, or possibly an ARTC management policy which gives precedence to Countrylink trains. During October, eight V/Line trains were cancelled or terminated short, whereas no Countrylink trains were cancelled and only one terminated. Most of the V/Line cancellations were related to rolling stock problems or locomotive breakdowns.

From 16 to 18 November **Countrylink** trains between Albury and Melbourne will be replaced by buses.

V/Line: Gippsland trains return

V/Line trains resumed operation beyond Moe from 15 October. Service had been suspended since 19 August when heavy rain caused a washaway, requiring very extensive repairs. Five days after the restoration, however, all Gippsland trains were replaced by buses for weekend scheduled works.

Metro Trains Melbourne: New Timetables 18 November

Metro Trains Melbourne will operate ninety additional services a week from 18 November, mostly on the Sunbury line. Suburban electric trains will be extended from Watergardens (Sydenham) to Sunbury. There will thereby be a 64% increase in the number of trains to Sunbury. There will be changes to all metropolitan train timetables, except for the South Morang, Hurstbridge, Sandringham and Stony Point lines. A handful of extra peak-hour Metro services will also be added on the Craigieburn and Upfield lines. Metro chief executive Andrew Lezala said the timetable change, the third for Melbourne in 18 months, marked "another step towards providing a genuine metro-style service for Melbourne. With this change we're a step closer to a turn-up-and-go service, where customers won't need to know the timetable because they'll know it's only a few minutes' wait for the next train," he said. Details are:

- Trains will run from Sunbury at 12-minute intervals in the peak, and at 6 minute intervals from Watergardens. Off-peak, trains will run to Sunbury every 40 minutes. In general, every

second train will terminate/start at Watergardens.

- Most peak hour trains from/to Sunbury run express from Sunshine to Footscray or v.v. However, they are timetabled to take the same time (usually ten minutes) as the stopping trains over this section.
- Craigieburn trains will run at 6 to 8 minute intervals in the peak.
- Upfield trains will operate at 18-minute intervals.
- Journey times along the Craigieburn and Upfield lines will be extended by one to two minutes. Mr Lezala said this was due to passenger growth.
- Four additional AM peak services, five PM peak services, and other services across the day will operate to/from Watergardens (Sydenham) - every second service on the Sunbury line will start/terminate at Watergardens.
- One new AM peak service and four new PM peak trains on the Craigieburn line.
- One new AM peak service and one new PM peak train on the Upfield line.
- An additional train from Westall.
- A PM peak service on the Dandenong line will now stop at Hawksburn, Toorak and Armadale.
- An AM peak service on the Ringwood line will now stop at Laburnum.
- Travel times will be reduced by one to two minutes on the Frankston line, after they were extended by three minutes in a previous timetable change in May 2011. Mr Lezala said that change had led to too many trains running ahead of schedule.
- The connecting time at Newport from Altona loop trains will be reduced to four minutes instead of seven during the inter-peak,

Forty-six bus routes in Melbourne's north-west will have changed timetables to better connect with the Sunbury line.

V/Line: New Timetables 18 November

For **V/Line** there will be timetable changes on the Bendigo, Ballarat, Albury, Shepparton and Gippsland lines. Connecting V/Line bus services will also be altered. The additional trains and the additional carriages are possible because of the release of V/Line trains which formerly operated to/from Sunbury. Details are:

- An additional morning peak train from Bacchus Marsh to Melbourne and a new evening peak service to Melton.
- Additional carriages will be added to some Bacchus Marsh and Seymour trains.
- Trains beyond Sunbury to Bendigo, Echuca and Swan Hill will have an extra five to 10 minutes' travel time because of the extra Metro trains on the line. Eleven Bendigo trains will take more than five minutes longer to complete their journey. The quickest trip, which takes in four stops, will take an hour and 42 minutes instead of 1:31.

- Three morning peak services from Geelong to Melbourne will run a total of four minutes faster, while a number of off-peak services will take longer, according to the timetable. Five services will arrive up to three minutes earlier, while seven services will take up to six minutes longer.
- The 1647 from Southern Cross to Geelong will now travel through to Marshall instead of terminating at Geelong.
- Almost all Warrnambool trains now stop at Werribee to set down (up trains) or pick up (down trains).
- The evening weekend Melbourne-Swan Hill train runs an hour later (was 1735, now 1836).

Ian Dobbs, CEO of Public Transport Victoria, said that running Metro trains to Sunbury following the \$270 million electrification of the line would make for a slightly slower journey for V/Line passengers travelling further along the line. "There's a slight slow-down...because we're putting more Metro services in the mix, so that's led to a short-term increase in journey time of between five and 10 minutes roughly. The reason for that is we've got a lot more trains on that line. The regional rail link, when that comes in in a couple of years, is going to allow us to go back and significantly improve those times." The \$5.3 billion regional rail link is due to be completed in early 2016, and will separate Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong line trains from Metro lines, removing train bottlenecks in the western suburbs.

Yarra Trams: New Timetables 18 November

Trams on routes 30, 86, 95 and 96 will operate to new timetables from Sunday 18 November. Major changes are:

- Four new PM peak services on Route 96 every weekday
- The Route 95 lunch shuttle service along Bourke Street will be extended from Spencer Street to Docklands
- More Route 86 trams will run towards Docklands as they come out of the depot in the morning, benefiting passengers in High St & Smith St during the AM peak.
- Journey time on Route 30 has been reduced, which will speed up travel along La Trobe St.

Melbourne: City Loop confusion

The Public Transport Users' Association has prepared a series of maps to try to explain to users the confusing different routes of trains around the Melbourne City underground loop. There are maps for AM peak, AM off-peak, PM off-peak, PM peak and Weekends. To see these look at <http://www.ptua.org.au/tips/loop/> or at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ptua/tags/cityloop/how/>

Melbourne: Public Transport frequency survey

The Public Transport Users' Association claims that Melbourne is lagging on providing frequent, easy-to-use services that will encourage people out of cars.

This follows from a study they undertook of public transport timetables. It shows that trams run frequently, trains are a mixed bag, and that most buses do not offer frequent service. The full survey is at <http://www.ptua.org.au/2012/10/03/frequent-services-still-lag/#more-3185>

Summary of results: Number of services every 15 minutes or better 2012 & 2006:

2012	Peak	Off-peak	Weekend	Evening
Train	79.2%	45.8%	29.2%	4.2%
Tram	96.7%	90.0%	90.0%	10.0%
Bus	20.9%	13.1%	2.0%	0.3%
Overall	29.9%	20.6%	9.5%	1.2%
2006	Peak	Off-peak	Weekend	Evening
Train	66.7%	41.7%	12.5%	12.5%
Tram	96.6%	93.1%	93.1%	10.3%
Bus	12.0%	6.3%	1.3%	0.3%
Overall	22.7%	15.9%	9.6%	2.0%

Metro Trains Melbourne: A trip from Altona to Alamein

Travellers on the Altona line gave it the lowest rating in a survey of traveller satisfaction in the June quarter with a rating of 62.9 out of a 100. Travellers on the Alamein branch had the highest satisfaction rating of 71.9, despite having to change at Camberwell in the off-peak. Alamein trains are rarely crowded. Altona Loop Group spokeswoman Diana Rice said reliability had suffered badly since Metro overhauled its timetable in May 2011, and travel had become more arduous and time-consuming due to the need to change trains up to three times on trips in and out of the city. It has a train every 22 minutes in peak times. Metro sometimes bypasses the loop to make up time, adding up to 40 minutes to the journey if there is a need to backtrack from Laverton.

Adelaide Metro: Adelaide Station closure, Noarlunga and Belair lines closure.

Details are now available of the closure of Adelaide Railway Station for a month in January 2013 to facilitate electrification works (as mentioned in September *Table Talk*, page 8). It will be closed from 2 January until 3 February 2013. During this time

- Gawler line trains will terminate at a refurbished North Adelaide station and connect to substitute buses.
- Noarlunga, Tonsley and Belair lines will be closed and substitute bus services will operate throughout.
- Outer Harbor and Grange line trains will terminate at Woodville and will connect to substitute buses.

New temporary timetables will be distributed from mid-November. During the closure travelling will be free on train lines and on substitute buses.

Works will not only be carried out on electrification, the rail yard and public facilities at Adelaide station,

but also on other Rail projects. Adelaide Convention Centre expansion work will also be accelerated.

At this time, work will take place on the \$443 million Goodwood grade separation project, mainly funded by the Federal government. This will separate freight and passenger services. Works will include:

- major earthworks
- improving pedestrian access between the Adelaide Showgrounds and the Parklands
- refurbishing Keswick station

At a later date, grade separation will take place near Bowden between the ARTC line and the line to Port Adelaide, Bowden station will be refurbished, and level crossings at Leader St and a further three near Bowden will be removed.

The Belair line will be closed and substituted from 2 January until June.

The longest closure, however, will affect the important Noarlunga line and the Tonsley line. These will be closed for electrification works and Goodwood junction reconstruction for eight months from 2 January until September. Works will involve:

- upgrading 24 km of track (12 km of double track) by installing gauge convertible concrete sleepers, new ballast and new and refurbished rail
- upgrading seven level crossings
- improving drainage.

It is notable that this announcement confirms that the Tonsley line will be electrified.

Substitute bus services will match, as closely as possible, the train timetables. Services are being designed to ensure all stations along the rail line are serviced with a mixture of express/limited stop and stopping services.

WA tier 3 grain lines reprieved

The WA government has reprieved the tier 3 rail grain lines. The lines were due to close at the end of October but the Transport Minister Troy Buswell now says they will remain open until at least October 2013. He said that a decision was made after meeting the grain handler CBH and Brookfield Rail. "This extra 12 months gives those two parties the time I hope to work towards a solution. A solution which will see Brookfield able to maintain the railway lines in an operational state and it will enable CBH to run their trains on those lines," he said.

TransWA Feeder Services

The Public Transport Authority of WA called tenders closing on 31 October for the provision of passenger feeder services between Albany and Ravensthorpe, Bunbury to Boyup Brook, and Northam to Mukinbudin on behalf of TransWA and the PTA. These are on regular scheduled services connecting with TransWA buses. There is no mention in the tender documents of the link service to Bremer Bay from the Albany - Ravensthorpe route, the Ravensthorpe - Hopetoun service, or the Narembeen service, all of which are also run by contracted companies.

TasRail: Bridges

TasRail has awarded a contract to replace the Forth River Rail Bridge. This is the latest in a series of contracts worth \$20m won by VEC Engineering to

build new bridges over the Blythe, Leven and Forth rivers and rehabilitate the River Don bridge at Devonport. The first contract covered the Blythe River Bridge, scheduled for completion this month.

Auckland: Veolia Transport timetable 15 October

Auckland Transport and its operator, Veolia Transport, introduced new train timetables from Monday 15 October. The times of most Monday to Friday services were changed. The timetables were said to be amended in response to customer feedback and include:

- spreading the timing of services better at peak times to help reduce overcrowding of some trains
- making better allowance for freight trains sharing the tracks with commuter trains to improve the punctuality of passenger services
- allowing for increased boarding time required at busy stations to improve the punctuality of services
- four more return trips to Pukekohe each day, the first service leaving half an hour earlier
- there will be no changes made to weekend timetables given on-going requirements for weekend closures for engineering works as part of the electrification of the network.

There were no major changes to frequency on any line. New train berthing arrangements were put in place at Britomart. The new timetables are available at www.AT.co.nz/timetables

On the western line there are six fewer services on weekdays. Previously these ran from Britomart to Henderson only at the end of the morning peak and back from Henderson again at the start of the evening peak. They were positioning runs to send the trains to the stabling yard at Henderson that were put into service along the way. The Southern and Eastern lines have a few more changes. Many times have been tweaked, but not by much. Trips from Papakura to Britomart via Newmarket are scheduled to take exactly the same amount of time, however the times between some of the stations have changed.

The Auckland Regional Transport Plan was released at the start of October. It anticipates frequencies on Auckland suburban railways when electrified of every ten minutes all through the day and fifteen minutes in the evenings. Beyond Papakura to Pukekohe would be fifteen minutes in peaks, 30 minutes off-peaks and 60 minutes evenings and weekends. There is no mention of Swanson to Waitakere. The estimates seem optimistic.

KiwiRail: Napier-Gisborne line closed

KiwiRail has closed the Napier to Gisborne line due to the costs of repairing storm damage from earlier this year and of maintaining the rail line over coming years. It considers that the line is unlikely to generate sufficient revenue to cover costs. Freight services to Gisborne have been suspended since March after serious storm damage caused several large washouts north of Wairoa. Reinstatement of the line would cost around \$NZ4 million and take several months to complete. Ongoing costs to maintain the track and structures were likely to rise from the current level of about \$NZ2 million a year, to \$NZ6

million pa. Using 2011/12 operations as a guide this would equate to a subsidy of \$37,000 per trip. In the 2012 financial year to March, the line carried 44,345 tonnes and generated revenue of \$NZ1.04 million. However there was a cash deficit of \$NZ2.4 million after operating costs and annual line maintenance costs.

KiwiRail assessed the option of retaining rail services between Wairoa and Napier, but this was discounted as the majority of freight movements were to, or from, Gisborne. The traffic expected from Wairoa was not enough on its own to sustain services.

KiwiRail says it is working with the Gisborne City Vintage Railway to explore possible options for continued heritage operations in the region.

UK West Coast franchise

Britain's newly appointed Transport Secretary, Patrick McLoughlin, has cancelled the franchise for the West Coast Main Line, linking London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow, due to "significant technical flaws" during the franchising process. The 13-year and four-month franchise was awarded to First Group on 15 August, and was due to take over from Virgin Trains on 9 December, but was subsequently challenged by unsuccessful bidder Virgin Group. The Department for Transport (DfT) confirmed that it will no longer contest the judicial review of the franchise brought by Virgin Group in the High Court.

The DfT says the flaws were uncovered during preparation for the High Court hearing and relate to the way the procurement of the franchise was conducted by its officials. Specifically there were flaws in the evaluation of the level of risk in each bid, and mistakes in the assessment of inflation and passenger forecasts, and how much money bidders were asked to guarantee. DfT will negotiate a deal with the incumbent Virgin Rail Group to operate train services on the route for between nine and 13 months after the current franchise expires on 9 December, instead of appointing its own in-house operator to run the service. This will allow time for the DfT to launch a tender for a two-year interim franchise. This is necessary as the DfT does not know whether the Brown inquiry into the franchising process will recommend major changes which could take a considerable time to implement. It is still the DfT's intention to eventually invite tenders for a long-term franchise for the West Coast. In the meantime, the entire franchising tendering system is on hold.

Mr McLoughlin said, "The cancellation of the InterCity West Coast franchise is deeply regrettable and I apologise to the bidders involved and the taxpayer who have a right to expect better. My priority now is to fix the problem and the first step is to take urgent action to ensure that on December 9 services continue to run to the same standard and passengers are not affected. I believe Virgin remaining as operator for a short period of time is the best way to do this and my officials and I will be working flat out to make this happen."

McLoughlin has paused the competitions for the franchises currently underway for Great Western, Essex Thameside and Thameslink, and ordered two independent reviews. The first will examine what went wrong. The second review will be on whether changes are needed to the way risk is assessed in franchise bids, the bidding and evaluation process, and how to resume passenger rail franchising. Virgin Group founder Sir Richard Branson appears to have been more than vindicated in his criticism of the way in which the West Coast franchise was assessed and awarded, which he had described as flawed.

Engineering work from the passenger perspective

The results of recent research by British research group Passenger Focus are that 55% of respondents claimed that they would not make a journey by rail if part of it was by replacement bus. However, if the train were to be diverted around engineering work, 75% of respondents would tolerate an additional journey time of 30 min to 1 hour. For a 15 min extension the acceptance rate was 94%. When bus replacement and train diversion were compared, most passengers would prefer to stay on the train unless the bus was at least 40 min faster. Respondents complained about lack of information regarding bus replacements or diversions when buying tickets. Within the sample, 42% of passengers buying tickets online for a journey affected by engineering works said that they did not see a warning that the journey would involve a bus or a diverted train with a significantly extended journey time. Poor customer service when transferring between train and replacement bus was another complaint. Lack of information included poor signage to the buses and lack of clarity about destinations. Inadequate assistance with luggage was another complaint, even more important in the case of passengers with disabilities. Passenger Focus reports that 85% of respondents felt that use of a replacement bus warranted a discount on the normal fare. Others suggested complimentary tea or coffee as a goodwill gesture. Respondents were also asked about the timing of planned engineering work. The consensus was that such activity should take place overnight. If this were not possible, extending works over successive weekends and bank holidays was preferable to a 'big bang' closure for a short period. According to Passenger Focus, this is because all types of passengers prioritise commuters' interests over those of weekend travellers. On the time of year when work should take place, the preference appears to be for school summer holidays and half terms. The respondents suggested that Easter and Christmas, two traditional periods for major infrastructure schemes, should be avoided.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Scott Ferris, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Geoff Mann, Roger Wheaton, David Whiteford, *Age*, (Melbourne), *Advertiser* (Adelaide), *Border Mail* (Albury-Wodonga), *Geelong Advertiser*, *International Railway Journal*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, www.vicsig.net.au and www.railpage.com.au for Railway news.

CHANGES TO TABLE TALK

NEW BUS EDITOR

After five years as Bus Editor, Geoff Mann has decided to retire from the position. We are very fortunate that Craig Halsall has agreed to undertake this important role. A changeover will take place gradually over the next few months.

ONE OR TWO COLUMNS?

Whether *Table Talk* should have one or two columns has been discussed at the last two AGMs. Arguments for a two columns are:

- Expert opinion is that a two column layout is more readable
- Some members have strongly expressed a preference for two columns.
- A two column layout will save space, which is a consideration in the current exercise to save expenditure by the AATTC (see the current *Members' Newsletter*) – but it would only save a very small space.

For a one column layout:

- The Rail Editor/Coordinating Editor strongly thinks this is more attractive.
- It is more difficult to edit a two column format, and, in particular, insertion of tables can sometimes be messy.
- At the 2012 AGM there was a straw poll of attendees, as to preference for one or two column layout. A majority favoured a one column layout.

So this issue is unresolved. To progress resolution, this issue has been prepared in a two column layout, so you judge what it looks like. We solicit your views. Please send these to abvi@inet.net.au.

FONT

We are also considering a possible change to the Font used, perhaps to Times New Roman - however, one change at a time. If however you wish to comment on this, please email.

ALTERED STAPLING

The AATTC is currently considering moves to restrain expenditure (see the current *Members' Newsletter*). One change may bring almost all the savings we are seeking. Moreover, it is a simple change to implement. At present our two magazines, the Times and *Table Talk*, are printed on A3 paper, centre stapled. We have discovered that a change to A4 paper, side stapled, will be much cheaper, mainly because A4 paper is less expensive. Moreover this change, will remove from the Editors the tyranny of having to produce issues of both magazines in multiples of four pages.

FEWER ILLUSTRATIONS

As part of our program of expenditure restraint, there will be fewer illustrations in *Table Talk*. Illustrations do not cost anything, but the space they occupy does.

BUS NEWS

New South Wales - Sydney

Sydney Buses:

Changes to Route X39/339 and NEW Route X40

Further to the report in Bus News last month, from Sunday 28 October, a 12-month trial began on a new, quicker bus route from Clovelly to the City. Currently, Clovelly residents catching route X39 or 339 services enter the CBD from the south and travel north along Elizabeth and Phillip Streets. From 28 October, six morning Route X39 express services are redirected via the Eastern Distributor and travel under the new route number X40. They enter the City via Bent St and then travel south along Phillip and Elizabeth Streets, finishing at Liverpool St.

From 28 October, there were also changes to Route 339 to help improve its reliability. Route 339 services heading into the City now finish at Loftus St, near Circular Quay, instead of running through The Rocks to Millers Point. The Route 339 timetable is also altered slightly to ensure services match the times that passengers wish to travel. All Route 339 services commence at the bus stop in Pitt St near Spring St. In addition, all Route X39 services operating to Clovelly commence at the bus stop in Castlereagh St, near Martin Place.

Route 311 extends to Circular Quay and Millers Point

From Sunday 28 October, a 12-month trial began on Route 311 with bus services extending to Circular Quay, and some services then running through to The Rocks and Millers Point. Every second weekday

Route 311 morning-peak service and every daytime service (everyday) will operate to Millers Point via Circular Quay. After 8pm, all 311 services will operate just to Circular Quay. To avoid any confusion for customers, the destination signage on the front of Route 311 buses will clearly state whether their final destination is Millers Point or Circular Quay. This change to the Route 311 is a trial and its continuance will be based on the uptake by the community over the next 12 months. The Route 311 currently operates between Railway Square (Central Station) and the City (Gresham St) via Darlinghurst, Kings Cross, Elizabeth Bay, Woolloomooloo and Hyde Park.

Sydney private bus timetable news:

Northern CBD bus improvements

Transport for NSW is considering a proposal starting in early 2013 to redirect certain bus services from the north-west along alternative streets in the northern CBD to reduce congestion in York St and around Wynyard in the morning peak. The proposed diversion would apply to morning peak services on Hillsbus's 620/620X Dural Bus Depot and Cherrybrook to City, 642/642X Round Corner Dural to City, 650/650X and 652X West Pennant Hills to City. The proposal is to divert buses from the Harbour Bridge via the Cahill Expressway, then Bridge, Pitt, Hunter and Castlereagh Streets to terminate in Market St. This group of buses provides for enough morning peak services to start tackling congestion in the city's north without placing undue pressure on the affected streets. Transport for NSW believes that most customers will not be adversely affected.

Customers alighting on Bridge St will be able to walk to Circular Quay Station (approximately 300 metres) for connecting CityRail services on the City Circle to all CBD stations. Customers alighting at Pitt St can walk to Wynyard Station (approximately 400 metres) for CityRail services on the North Shore, Western and Northern Lines, or transfer (with the appropriate valid ticket, eg MyMulti) to Sydney Buses routes 422, 423, 426 and 428 for travel to Railway Square available from the same stop. There will be no alteration to outbound services on these routes. These services will continue to depart from Bathurst St and Clarence St from existing stops. Transport for NSW will provide information about the changes closer to the introduction of the new services, via a number of outlets including 131500 and new printed timetables for customers.

Busabout and Interline

There are new timetables issued effective 10 October 2010 with print date 3 September 2012 for routes in the Liverpool – Campbelltown area:

Busabout/Interline 870/871/872 v7

Interline 873 v6

Interline 874 v5

Interline 875 v5

Interline 876 v5

New South Wales - Rural & Regional private bus timetable news

Nowra Coaches

Nowra Coaches have issued new timetables for Routes 724 (Nowra-West Nowra/East Nowra) and 732/733 (Nowra-Bay and Basin) dated August 2012. There are two separate timetables.

Deanes Bus Lines Sapphire Coast Bus Guide

New timetables have been issued for these routes:

705 - Tura Beach, Merimbula and Pambula surrounds

790 - Eden – Bega via Wolumla

791 - Eden – Bega via Tura Beach and Kalaru

792 - Merimbula – Pambula Beach loop

Compared with the operator's 2007 timetables, previous 785 (Merimbula – Tura Beach – Merimbula – Short Point) and 793 (Merimbula town service) have been deleted. Curiously the number 785 had previously duplicated Tathra Bus Service's Bega-Tathra service. While that duplication has now been eliminated, the use of route number 705 now duplicates Shoal Bus's Nowra to Gerringong/Gerroa/Berry service.

South Australia - Adelaide

Additional Adelaide Metro Trial Services For Extended Rundle Mall Trading Hours: From Sunday 7 October Adelaide Metro has been trialing the following additional services for six months to support the Rundle Mall extended trading hours (closing at 7pm Monday to Thursday):

- Route H32 to Henley Beach at 7.15pm
- Route 224 to Elizabeth Interchange at 7.16pm

- Route 721 to Noarlunga Centre Interchange at 7.16pm

Victoria - Melbourne

AATTC Website: The list of current bus route timetables have been re-organised so that they are now listed by route number irrespective of operator. Shared operator timetables are now only listed once instead of for each operator. The special sections for National Bus Co (Ventura) and Melbourne Bus Link (Dysons/Reservoir) have been eliminated and those timetables listed in the main route list instead.

New timetables from Sunday, 18 November

2012: From Sunday, 18 November 2011, more than 40 metropolitan bus routes will have new timetables, to improve connections with the new train timetable. Most of the bus timetables changes will be in the north-western suburbs, as the most significant train timetable changes are on the Sunbury (Sydenham line until 18 November), Craigieburn and Upfield lines.

Sunbury area: Bus routes in Sunbury that will have a new timetable are:

- 481 (Sunbury – Mt Lion)
- 485 (Sunbury – Wilsons Lane)
- 486 (Sunbury – Rolling Meadows)
- 487 (Sunbury – Killara Heights)
- 488 (Sunbury – Jacksons Hill)
- 489 (Sunbury – Canterbury Hills)
- 483 (Sunbury – Moonee Ponds)

Craigieburn, Broadmeadows and Pascoe Vale areas: Six bus routes in the Craigieburn, Broadmeadows and Pascoe Vale areas will have revised timetables to improve connections with Craigieburn line train services.

- Route 534 (Glenroy – Coburg)
- Route 536 (Glenroy – Gowrie)
- Route 538 (Somerset Estate – Broadmeadows)
- Route 540 (Broadmeadows – Upfield)
- Route 541 (Broadmeadows – Roxburgh Park)
- Route 542 (Oak Park – Roxburgh Park)

Route 541 (Roxburgh Park – Broadmeadows, via Meadow Heights): Route 541 will have a new timetable designed to provide connections to trains at Broadmeadows and Roxburgh Park stations, and will also be boosted with more frequent services throughout the day. In Meadow Heights, Route 541 will travel along Malmsbury Road and Barry Drive, instead of Dunkeld Road, Redesdale St and Taggerty Crescent.

Route 542 (Roxburgh Park – Pascoe Vale, via Meadow Heights, Broadmeadows, Glenroy): Route 542 will have a new timetable designed to provide connections to trains at Broadmeadows Station. Route 542 will be extended from Oak Park to Pascoe Vale, providing public transport for the first time to the area near Devon Road and Westbreen Creek. The new section of Route 542 will travel along Devon, Northumberland and Fawkner Roads and

Heath St. It will also have a revised route in the Meadow Heights, Jacana and Glenroy areas:

- In Meadow Heights, Route 542 will travel along Dunkeld Road, Redesdale St and Taggerty Crescent instead of Malmsbury Road and Barry Drive.
- In Jacana, Route 542 will travel along Bliburg Stt instead of Gavin St.
- In Glenroy, Route 542 will travel along William St instead of Tarana Avenue.

Melton area: Bus routes in the Melton area that will have a new timetable are:

- Route 453 (Melton – Melton Stn)
- Route 455 (Micasa Rise – Melton Stn)
- Route 457 (Melton – Melton Stn)
- Route 458 (Kurunjung – Melton Stn)
- Route 459 (Arnolds Creek – Melton Stn)

Watergardens, Caroline Springs, St Albans and Maribyrnong areas:

Bus routes in the Watergardens, Caroline Springs, St Albans and Maribyrnong areas that will have a new timetable are:

- Route 408 (St Albans – Highpoint)
- Route 418 (St Albans – Caroline Springs)
- Route 419 (St Albans – Watergardens)
- Route 421 (St Albans – Watergardens)
- Route 422 (St Albans – Delahey)
- Route 423 (St Albans – Brimbank)
- Route 424 (St Albans – Brimbank)
- Route 425 (St Albans – Watergardens)
- Route 460 (Watergardens – Caroline Springs)
- Route 461 (Watergardens – Taylors Hill)
- Route 462 (Watergardens – Caroline Springs)
- Route 468 (Highpoint – Essendon)

The following bus routes will also have timetable changes to improve connections with trains:

- Route 465 (Essendon – Keilor Park)
- Route 467 (Aberfeldie – Moonee Ponds)
- Route 510 (Essendon – Ivanhoe)
- Route 512 (East Coburg – Strathmore)
- Route 518 (Greensborough – St Helena West)
- Route 520 (Doreen – Greensborough)
- Route 526 (West Preston – Coburg)
- Route 527 (Northland – Gowrie)
- Route 556 (Northland – Epping Plaza)
- Route 572 (University Hill – Doreen)
- Route 575 (Thomastown – Epping North)
- Route 606 (Elsternwick – Fishermans Bend)
- Route 788 (Frankston – Portsea)

- Route 822 (Sandringham – Chadstone)
- Route 831 (Berwick Stn – Kingsmere Estate)

Victoria - Regional

New regional train, coach and bus timetables from Sunday, 18 November 2012

The Bendigo, Ballarat, Albury, Shepparton and Gippsland lines will all have timetable changes. V/Line coach and town bus network timetables along the Bendigo, Ballarat, Albury and Seymour train lines will also change, to maintain connections with V/Line trains. Town bus network timetables in Ballarat, Geelong, Seymour, Kilmore, Wallan and Benalla will change to improve connections with trains.

Other regional bus improvements include:

- Two Benalla town buses routes will change to provide bus services to more areas of Benalla.
- Local buses that service Bendigo Station will also have new timetables.
- Small route extension of the Kilmore town service to the Kingsgate Village.

Western Australia – Perth

New Mandurah bus services: Transperth introduced new bus services linking Pinjarra and North & South Yunderup with Mandurah "effective Sunday 30 September 2012". However as there are no Sunday or public holiday services, the first buses operated on Tuesday 2 October (there is also no Saturday service). Route 600 runs from Pinjarra to Mandurah and is a surprisingly intensive service with 15 return services daily Monday to Friday. From the Pinjarra terminus near the Pinjarra Murray District Hospital route 600 largely uses the main road to Mandurah then runs to the Mandurah railway station. There are school day deviations to the Austin Cove Baptist College, South Yunderup. Route 604 starts from a terminus in South Yunderup, makes a small detour into the new Austin Cove subdivision, joins the main Pinjarra - Mandurah Road, deviates to North Yunderup then returns to the main road and on to Mandurah station. There are only 4 return services daily, Monday - Friday. These routes provide the first regular urban public transport services in Pinjarra, Yunderup and much of Ravenswood, Pinjarra being served by TransWA rail and bus services between Bunbury and Perth.

Transperth changes: Revised on-line timetables are due to be introduced for:

Perthcat 203 on 28.10.12

Circleroute 200 on 25.11.12

Thanks to Craig Halsall, Robert Henderson, Michael Marshall, PTV website, Lourie Smit, Sydney Buses, David Whiteford for Bus news.

AIR NEWS

Domestic

The Victorian government has initiated a process to investigate sites for a **third airport for Melbourne**. Sites to the east and SE of the city will be examined.

Tiger is making its daily services from Cairns to Melbourne year-round after better than expected demand. Existing flights would end on 18 November but resume on 15 December. Tiger will launch a new Melbourne–Mackay service four times a week from 18 December, subject to regulatory approval.

International

With the demise of non-stop flights by **Singapore Airlines** from Newark to Singapore, the longest non-stop flight in the world is by **Qantas** from Dallas to Sydney.

On 12 October the Federal government announced that it will change lease conditions to make **Avalon Airport** Melbourne's second international airport. At present Jetstar is the only scheduled airline using Avalon. Malaysian budget airline AirAsia X currently has unused rights to fly into Avalon. Two international air freight companies are reported to be interested in flying into Avalon. The Victorian government recently announced a feasibility study for a new rail link between the airport and Melbourne and now the Premier says he would like Federal government help to fund it. This move comes as Sydney continues its never-ending saga to resolve its second airport status.

Qantas and **Emirates** are no longer seeking interim authorisation from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission for their proposed alliance. Qantas believes it can do a lot of the preparatory

work for the tie-up without interim approval. The ACCC will continue to assess the deal, and expects to hand down its final decision by the end of March 2013. A draft determination is expected to be published by December. From 4 October Qantas started selling daily services from Melbourne and Sydney to London that include a stopover in Dubai, rather than Singapore. The first flights on the revised routes would begin on 31 March 2013. Meanwhile, Qantas said its flights to Frankfurt would end in October 2013, not March 2013 as originally planned.

Air New Zealand's Auckland-San Francisco route will go to daily from April, Auckland-Los Angeles to twice daily, and Auckland-Vancouver to thrice weekly in off peak and five times a week during peak periods.

Virgin Australia has sought to claim Qantas' rights to fly from Australia to Italy. In a submission to the International Air Services Commission, it argued that if granted the route it would enhance competition.

Malaysia Airways will introduce a weekly direct service from Perth to Kota Kinabulu from 10 December.

Singapore Airlines will increase services to Adelaide to 12 a week from July, and hope to move later to twice daily.

Hawaiian Airlines will operate an additional 18 flights from Honolulu to Brisbane from March to May 2013, as well as scheduled services from 28 November.

Thanks to Tony Bailey and the *Australian* for Air news.

FERRY NEWS

Sydney Ferries

Sydney Ferries September 2012 timetable reprints:

- Parramatta River 24 October 2011 – Reprinted September 2012
- Woolwich Balmain 17 December 2011 Reprinted September 2012 with note on front that Balmain Wharf upgrade means ferries will operate to Yeend St Wharf from 24 September for approx. 5 months. However the inside of the timetable shows the normal Balmain Wharf at Thames St.
- Darling Harbour/Balmain East 17 December 2011 Reprinted September 2012.
- Manly, Reprinted September 2012.

Spirit of Tasmania patronage declines

A survey by Tourism Tasmania shows a decline of 16% in patronage on the Spirit of Tasmania from Devonport to Melbourne in 2011-12 compared to the previous year. 112,400 outbound passengers used the ship, a drop of 22,000. Visitors to Tasmania in 2011-12 dropped 4% in total.

Thanks to Lourie Smit and the *Examiner* (Launceston) for Ferry news.

About Table Talk

Table Talk is published monthly by the Australian Association of Timetable Collectors Inc. (Registration No. A0043673H) as a journal of record covering recent timetable news items. The AATTC also publishes the **Times** covering timetable history and analysis. Contributions are very welcome and should be sent to the appropriate Editor. ABN 74248483468.

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