

TABLE TALK

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TOP TABLE TALK: ELECTION PROMISES: HIGH SPEED RAIL

The Report of the High Speed Rail Advisory Group was released on 26 August by the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, and Deputy Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese. The Report can be accessed at http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/rail/trains/high_speed/files/20813_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

Mr Rudd and Mr Albanese said if Labor won the election, it would pass legislation to preserve a 1748 km corridor between Brisbane to Melbourne. They promised a line from Sydney to Canberra by 2030 and on to Melbourne by 2035, and pledged \$52 million to get the project started. This would go towards the establishment of a new High Speed Rail Authority to finalise station locations and to develop a business case for the massive project with Infrastructure Australia. Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott, said the coalition would focus on road projects that can be started in its first term of office. "I'd much rather spend money now to get better outcomes tomorrow, rather than in 40 years' time."

Mr Rudd made the announcement after receiving the recommendations of the High Speed Rail Advisory Group chaired by Lyn O'Connell, the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, and including former Deputy Prime Minister (and AATTC member) Tim Fischer and Business Council of Australia chief executive Jennifer Westacott.

The High Level Group summarised their Report by stating:

"The time for studies has passed. Now is the time to commit to high speed rail and begin implementation: moving immediately to corridor protection, creating a dedicated Authority, opening the project to private sector innovation—and turning the vision into reality." Their Recommendations are that the Commonwealth government should:

- Formally commit to High Speed Rail and settle arrangements with state and territory governments.
- Protect the route corridor, initially through Commonwealth legislation.
- Refer High Speed Rail to Infrastructure Australia for initial assessment.
- Establish a High Speed Rail Authority/.

The High Level Group proposed the following timetable in the first three years:

31 Dec 2013: Intergovernmental arrangements settled
28 Feb 2014: High Speed Rail Authority established
30 June 2015: Corridor protection arrangements settled and Commonwealth legislation passed

30 June 2016: Authority's initial work on market testing and business plan development completed
31 Dec 2016: Authority's work on site suitability and analysis (including geological and land survey work) completed.

A basic finding of the High Level Advisory Group, expressed in a polite but firm way, was that the High Speed Rail project proposed by the Consultants (see *May Table Talk*) was of such a huge headline cost of \$114 billion and lengthy timescale, until 2058, as to be un-imaginable to Australians. High Speed Rail should therefore be regarded as a series of projects, each one following on the success of the segment before - as has been the case with High Speed projects in other countries, and that the time scale had scope for being speeded up.

The proposed commitment of \$52m across the forward estimates is only a fraction of the total cost of the Melbourne to Brisbane link, which the feasibility study forecast at \$114 billion, with the project to be completed by 2058.

Mr Rudd said, "This is an exciting project for Australia's future." Mr Albanese said the challenges of high speed rail in Australia were great, but between Brisbane and Melbourne it would be viable. He said that \$2.10 would be returned from every single dollar invested in the link between Sydney and Melbourne, via Canberra. "This is a project that stacks up," Mr Albanese said. "What's more it would lead to the creation of jobs, some 10,000 jobs during the construction phase."

A trip between Sydney and Melbourne would take 2 hours and 44 minutes on the proposed fast rail line. As well as Canberra, the journey would also take in stops in the Southern Highlands, Wagga Wagga, Albury Wodonga and Shepparton.

The Sydney to Canberra link could be operational from 2030 – five years earlier than the feasibility study proposed, and the development of a business case could help attract private investment in the scheme, Mr Albanese said. The second stage of the project, between Sydney and Brisbane, would be built via the Central Coast and Newcastle.

One of the most challenging elements of the high-speed rail project would be accessing Sydney's CBD, with a 67km tunnel found to be the only viable option. "It's certainly a cracker of a tunnel, there's no doubt about that," Mr Albanese said as he released the consultants' study earlier this year.

The rail link would decrease pressure on the nation's air network, taking up to 40% of patronage from the airlines

on major routes.

MELBOURNE–BRISBANE FREIGHT LINE

The Coalition promised to advance building of the 1,731 km Melbourne to Brisbane inland freight railway with \$300 million allocated to finalise plans. 41% of the route would run over existing lines (Melbourne – Illabo and Stockingbingal – Parkes), which would require only minor upgrading work, 25% would use existing tracks requiring major upgrades (Parkes-Narromine and Narrabri - North Star), and 34% would require completely new track and alignments. The most difficult and expensive section – 44% of all capital expenditure - will be a new line under the Great Dividing Range near

Toowoomba including a 5 km tunnel and a 500 metre tunnel. But this section is also likely to bring benefits from increased coal traffic. Then the proposal continues as a new line from Rosewood to Kagaru south of Brisbane. The Coalition has now promised that this will partially be in tunnel to overcome objections on the grounds of coal dust and noise pollution. The new railway will then continue via Acacia Ridge to the Port of Brisbane (see map June *Table Talk*, page 4). Travel time from Brisbane to Melbourne could be cut to as little as 14 hours – a saving of seven hours.

RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Thomas Cook Timetable

The final edition of the Thomas Cook European Timetable, August 2013, has been published. It contains no message indicating that it is the last edition, merely a few clues for those already in the know:

- The front cover contains a number of photographs described as “a selection of photographs from previous editions”,
- In advertisements, the prices of most Thomas Cook travel publications are heavily discounted, and
- In a page devoted to commemorating the 140th anniversary of the Timetable, the final sentences are:
“We would like to thank our readers for their loyalty and wish you happy travelling for the future. We should particularly like to thank the rail, bus and ferry operators, and the many correspondents who have contributed to the timetable over its long history.”

Copies are available from
www.thomascookpublishing.com

We are still awaiting details of the replacement publication.

Electronic timetable links

To cater for the increasing number of timetables which are only available electronically, the Fahrplancenter timetable shop in Switzerland (operated by AATTC member Samuel Rachdi) now offers links at this web address:

<http://www.fahrplancenter.com/Kursbuchlinks.html>

Urban rail projects: Federal funding

On 2 August Mr Tony Abbott, Leader of the Federal Opposition, re-affirmed that if the Coalition wins government, there will be no Federal funding for the proposed Melbourne urban east-west underground railway.

The Federal government has pledged \$3 million for planning for a railway to Perth Airport. The study will examine passenger numbers, environmental impacts, and safety requirements for tunnelling under the airport's runways. Deputy Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on 28 July the money would help get the project "shovel ready". He said providing funding for planning would assist the State government to determine how to best use \$500 million set aside in the Federal government's most recent Budget for the Perth Public Transport

Package. Possibly the Federal government was also trying to contrast itself with the coalition which has pledged nil funding for urban rail projects.

QR CityTrain: Kippa-Ring line

Queensland's Department of Transport & Main Roads has awarded Thiess Contractors a \$650m contract to build the Moreton Bay Railway. The 12.6km double track electrified suburban line will connect Petrie to the Moreton Bay region with six stations at Kippa-Ring, Rothwell, Mango Hill East (previously Kinsellas Road), Mango Hill, Murrumba Downs and Kallangur. Major construction will start early next year for completion in June 2016. When open in late 2016 the link will offer a journey time of around 57 minutes from Kippa-Ring to Brisbane's CBD.

QR TravelTrain: Major changes 28 October 2013

Queensland Rail TravelTrain's new Diesel Tilt Train will commence operation from Monday 28 October on the Brisbane-Cairns route. The Tilt Train will take over the train name of **Spirit of Queensland**. Initially, with only one Tilt Train set, there will be two round trips a week. By the end of 2014 the two existing Diesel Tilt Trains will have been refurbished and will return to service. This will presumably mean there will then be six Tilt services a week, at least in the peak tourist season. These will replace the locomotive hauled Sunlander trains, after sixty years of service, having commenced in June 1953.

The new Tilt Train consist will be: Power car, 2 RailBed carriages, Club Car, 3 Premium Economy carriages, Power car. The RailBed is a new concept for Australian railways. It is described as a spacious and comfortable seat with a personal state-of-the-art entertainment system. At night the seat converts to a lie-flat bed. This class will include an at-seat meal service. Seats will include a reading light, footrest, drink holder, power adapter and USB port. A toiletry and personal amenity pack, towel, sheets, duvet and pillow will be provided. In other words, amenities will be similar to aircraft Business class facilities. This accommodation replaces cancelled Sleeper carriages. There will be showers in all carriages.

There are strong rumours that the Queensland government has decided to scrap the twice-weekly Townsville-Mt Isa **Inlander** passenger train in the near future. It is believed that this decision will not be announced until after the forthcoming Federal election to avoid political repercussions, especially in the electorate of Kennedy held by Bob Katter. In 2012-13 patronage on the Inlander was 6094 passengers. That is an average of 29 per journey. Of these passengers, 4184 paid concession fares. It is claimed that the subsidy per

passenger is \$2000. The future of the **Westlander** Brisbane-Charleville must also be regarded as insecure.

Another change in QR TravelTrain procedures is that from October their reservations system will be separated from the NSW TrainLink reservations system.

The Tilt Train timetable of 28 October is:

| Read Down | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| MON, FRI | | |
| 1545 | BRISBANE | 0900 |
| 1640 | Caboolture | 0810 |
| 1745 | Nambour | 0708 |
| 1807 | Cooroy | 0645 |
| 1846 | Gympie North | 0604 |
| 1956 | Maryborough West | 0454 |
| 2053 | Bundaberg | 0401 |
| 2240 | Gladstone | 0154 |
| TUE, SAT | | |
| 0002 | ROCKHAMPTON | 0027-0037 |
| | | THUR, MON |
| 0222 | St Lawrence | 2153 |
| 0310 | Camilla | 2113 |
| 0400 | Sarina | 2023 |
| 0425-0450 | MACKAY | 1928-1953 |
| 0620-0630 | PROSERPINE | 1748-1758 |
| 0710 | Bowen | 1708 |
| 0820 | Home Hill | 1558 |
| 0835 | Ayr | 1543 |
| 0905 | Giru | 1513 |
| 0945-0955 | TOWNSVILLE | 1428 |
| 1140 | Ingham | 1243 |
| 1236 | Cardwell | 1153 |
| 1400 | Tully | 1108 |
| 1500 | Innisfail | 0955 |
| 1535 | Babinda | 0915 |
| 1615 | Gordonvale | 0835 |
| 1640 | CAIRNS | 0805 |
| | | WED, SUN |
| | | Read Up |

Queensland: Galilee coal project

The Queensland Coordinator-General has approved the \$6.4 billion coal mine and railway project in the Galilee Basin in Central Queensland proposed by Clive Palmer. The railway will run from near Alpha to Abbot Point near Mackay. The mine will be a combination of open cut and

underground. It is projected to produce 40 million tonnes per annum of thermal coal for export over an expected life of about 30 years.

Queensland Rail: Toowoomba Range

The Queensland government will enlarge tunnels on the Toowoomba Range at a cost of \$17 million to accommodate containers.

Sydney Trains publicity

Sydney Trains has issued a pamphlet entitled "Getting around with Sydney Trains: Maps, apps and more" which includes a "Welcome to Sydney Trains", the familiar diagrammatic map of the Sydney rail network minus the interurban lines now transferred to NSW TrainLink, and the following list of transport apps which are available:

- TripGo: Shows door-to-door transport options in Sydney,
- Triptastic: Where you can go from your current location and the next available services, plus interactive maps of routes, stops and frequency,
- TripView: The next time for train, bus and ferry trips and a full offline timetable viewer,
- Arrivo Sydney: to view where your train or bus is, and the location of ticket sellers and alerts when you are close to your stop,
- Hidden City: Secrets and wonders in Sydney, using public transport,
- Transit Times: Trip planner, offline timetables, service alerts and wheelchair accessibility. Also timetables for over 70 cities in Australia, NZ, USA and Canada,
- Jaunt! Sydney: Bus and ferry information for 150 Sydney attractions.

One consequence of the change to Sydney Trains has been the disappearance of wall sheet timetables at stations. In their place are posters extolling the new apps.

Airport Link publicity

Airport Link, operator of the stations at Sydney Airport, has published undated pamphlets of "Precinct Maps" of the areas around Central, Town Hall, Wynyard, Circular Quay, St James and Museum stations.

Sydney Light Rail closedown

The Sydney inner west tram line will be closed on the weekends of 24-25 August, 31 August-1 Sept, 14-15 Sept, 28-29 Sept and 2-3 November. The closedowns are to allow upgrades in advance of the extension of the line to Dulwich Hill in early 2014, and to facilitate removal of the adjoining monorail.

Sydney: International Fleet Review 3-11 October

More than 5,000 extra public transport services will run during the International Fleet Review on Sydney Harbour from 3 to 11 October, with more than 1.7 million visitors expected during the event. Sixteen tall ships from around the world will arrive on 3 October, followed by more than 40 Australian and international warships the next day.

More than 1,100 extra train services and more than 4,000 extra bus services will be added to the timetable over the week-long event, especially on Saturday 5 October. There will be a train shuttle between Central and Bondi Junction from 1800 to 0200, from Sunday 6 October to Thursday 10 October.

SydneyTrains: Freight Working Timetable 20 October 2013

SydneyTrains have issued Freight Working Timetables – Book 4 Weekdays effective from Monday 21 October, and Book 5, Weekends from Sunday 20 October. These are in the same style as their predecessor, CityRail. These WTTs show freight operations over SydneyTrains tracks, but, of course, these freight trains are not operated by SydneyTrains, but by other operators.

ARTC: North-South mainline

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau has completed its safety review of the interstate rail line between Melbourne and Sydney. Since the Australian Rail Track Corporation embarked on a major investment program to upgrade the line between Melbourne and Sydney in 2007, there have been a number of incidents and the condition of the line has attracted adverse comment regarding its safety, mostly in relation to rough rides and the development of mud-holes. On 16 August 2011, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Anthony Albanese MP, requested the ATSB to examine the safety of the line's operations.

The ATSB has found that while the treatments applied to date are likely to correct most ballast and drainage problems, the treatments are unlikely to correct the more deep-seated formation problems. Among various issues, the ATSB has found that the track structure between Melbourne and Sydney had historically been particularly vulnerable to degradation in vertical alignment, resulting in the mud-holes and poor ride quality. While this was the result of a number of factors, major contributors were ballast fouling and the weakness of the track formation. In some locations, the track upgrade has increased this pre-existing vulnerability as a result of the process of installing new concrete sleepers.

The track deterioration following re-sleepering has required both short-term management and development of a longer-term major rectification program to maintain operational effectiveness. Until that takes place, the safety of train operations has been maintained largely through the application of speed restrictions. The speed restrictions, together with increased maintenance activities, have resulted in extended train running times. While the treatments applied to date are likely to correct most ballast and drainage problems, they are unlikely to correct the more deep-seated formation problems. Unless additional treatments are applied to improve the formation, it is possible that water will continue to weaken the structure in some locations. That would, in turn, require an increased regime of track maintenance (or some localised formation reconstruction) and the application of new or further speed restrictions.

The ATSB is satisfied that, taken as a whole, the necessary steps have been taken to address any issues that might otherwise compromise the safety of rail operations on the Melbourne to Sydney line where track quality is below acceptable operational standards. However, the actions taken to ensure safe operations have come at the expense of operational efficiencies through increased train running.

The report can be accessed at www.atsb.gov.au/newsroom/news-items/2013/sydney-melbourne-railway-line.aspx

ARTC: Hunter Valley closedown

The latest in the programmed series of closedowns of ARTC Hunter Valley lines was from 13 to 16 August. During this period a weighbridge was certified, 22 km of new rail laid, two km of track reconditioned fully, and 94.5km of track grinded.

Petrol-heads choose NSW TrainLink

As for last year, a special NSW TrainLink service will operate on Sunday 13 October for the Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000 races. Departure from Sydney Central will be at 0514, and after picking up at Strathfield, Parramatta, Blacktown and Penrith, will arrive Bathurst at 0915. Return from Bathurst will be at 1825, arriving Sydney at 2237.

NSW TrainLink, ARTC and NSW Country Regional Network to Griffith

The down (southbound) line between Bethungra and Junee was closed from 12 August to 6 September for upgrading work. So what? Closures of this nature are common these days. But one consequence was uncommon. The weekend only NSW TrainLink passenger train Sydney-Junee-Griffith and v.v. was not cancelled as was the usual practice in the recent past. Instead, it ran normally between Sydney and Cootamundra on Saturdays. Then it was deviated onto the usually freight only line from Cootamundra to Stockingbingal (controlled by ARTC), and from Stockingbingal to Griffith (controlled by John Holland Rail Country Regional Network). Return on Sundays was via the same route. Perhaps this indicates a new willingness to find rail alternatives to closedowns, rather than automatically turning to buses. Melbourne trains will be altered by a few minutes as this is about where the trains in either direction pass each other.

Works between Bethungra and Junee were laying of more than 30,000 concrete sleepers, sledging of hundreds of metres of ballast, laying over 60,000 tonnes of new ballast, resurfacing and reconditioning track, and drainage improvements.

John Holland Rail Country Regional Network has re-issued the Working Timetable for Junee-Narranderra-Griffith-Hillston and Stockingbingal-Griffith lines dated 16 July 2013. The weekend TrainLink passenger train Junee-Narranderra-Griffith is **not** included. Presumably this is because of the deviation indicated above. The WTT shows five Pacific National freights from Griffith to Melbourne each week and two from Narranderra to Port Kembla and v.v. There are no trains scheduled on the Stockingbingal –Griffith or Griffith-Hillston lines in either direction.

SydneyTrains: Woes 20 to 22 August

On **20 August** a signal failed at Wynyard during the evening peak. There were delays on the Northern, Western and North Shore lines of 50 minutes. Town Hall station was closed because it could not handle the crush of waiting passengers.

On **22 August** a faulty repair to the electricity network caused a general failure of electricity throughout the Inner Western suburbs. There were no trains in the evening peak on the Sydenham to Bankstown line when the main and the back-up electrical supply failed. This had consequential effects across the network. Also a freight train breakdown near Loftus in the morning peak caused a closedown of the Illawarra/South Coast line.

Yarra Trams: Tram Tracker ends

Yarra Tram's tramTRACKER SMS service will end on 30 September. It has operated since 2006. At its peak it handled more than 7,000 requests every week. However, since Yarra Trams introduced iPhone and Android applications, and upgraded Passenger Information Displays at stops to show real-time information, the use of SMS tramTRACKER has decreased dramatically. Use of tram Tracker has declined to just over 600 requests a week.

Avalon Airport connection

The CEO of Avalon Airport has asked the Victorian government to scrap plans for a \$250 million train line. Instead, he proposes a 4 km light rail connection to a new station between Lara and Little River.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Real time information

"Rainbow boards" - multi-coloured, live service information screens that are a feature of the London Underground - are to be installed as part of the three-year, \$100 million bayside rail project the government announced in May to upgrade the Frankston line. It is expected rainbow boards will eventually appear at all Melbourne stations as part of a new, city-wide system to inform passengers on the status of the public transport network. The boards will display live updates about train delays on the network, as well as information on the status of connecting trams and buses. The screens will "not take the place of 'next train' information - but rather provides a high-level overview of disruptions that are occurring across the network". The boards will use different colours to differentiate between lines and modes.

V/Line App

V /Line introduced an app from 24 July called My Line. It is for iPhone and Android devices. Customers can set up the app to deliver push notifications about any disruptions to services on their line at the times they normally travel. It is in addition to V/Line's Twitter feeds which provide up-to-date service information for all lines.

V/Line: Talbot and Epsom on line

Construction of a new station at Talbot on the Maryborough line will commence in October at a cost of \$2.5 million. It is expected that V/Line trains will be stopping there by the end of this year. Talbot, population 260, will be the smallest town in Victoria with a passenger station. Patronage of Maryborough trains in 2012-13 was 13,026, an average of 35 per trip.

Construction on the \$7.76 million Epsom and Eaglehawk rail improvements project will begin in early 2014. Upon opening, four trains each weekday will serve the new station of Epsom on the Echuca line (south of Howard St). One extra morning train will be extended to commence at Eaglehawk, providing a total of eight trains each weekday.

V/Line closedowns: Regional Rail Link works

V/Line will hardly operate on the weekend of 5 and 6 October due to Regional Rail Link works and Metro works. The only line not replaced by buses will be to Geelong. That line's turn comes the next weekend, when it will be closed for RRL work. The following big closedown will be 27 December-19 January.

V/Line: NE woes

From 25 to 29 August V/Line's Melbourne to Albury service was again reduced to one train a day, with buses substituted for the other services. The reason this time was a train hitting a tree across the line on Saturday 24 August. There was no spare standard gauge locomotive available, so the only train that operated was the most patronized, the morning up and evening down.

V/Line: Alexandra-Seymour bus

The V/Line North Eastern region public timetable booklet of 28 April includes a bus service not hitherto regarded as part of the V/Line network. A bus is shown leaving Alexandra at 0900 Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, Yea 0930 and arriving Seymour at 1005, connecting with the 1034 train to Melbourne. On Wednesdays, this bus runs 35 minutes earlier presumably to facilitate shopping: Alexandra 0825, Yea 0855, Seymour 0930. On return the connection is from the train arrival at 1512. Departure from Seymour is at 1600, Yea 1630 and arrival at Alexandra at 1705.

Or perhaps this is not a V/Line bus. There is no other V/Line timetable for it, including its not being included on V/Line's website. On Public Transport Victoria's website, the service is included among non-V/Line services. Most rural V/Line buses are part of the V/Line network. Others are designated "non V/Line". Then there are some buses which are ambiguous, with some V/Line characteristics, but not others. For a discussion of this conundrum, see *Table Talk* June 2008 pages 1 and 14, August 2008 page 5 and September 2008, page 5.

Victoria the Freight State

The Victorian government released on 14 August a planning document entitled *Victoria – The Freight State*. It aims to "maintain and increase Victoria's competitive edge as Australia's freight and logistics capital".

Along with a number of road and port proposals, the Plan proposes development of the South East Rail Link to provide a dedicated freight railway between Dynon, Dandenong and a major port development at Hastings. More speculatively it envisages:

- An outer suburban freight railway bypassing Melbourne from Little River on the SW line to Beveridge on the NE line,
- A standard gauge railway to Mildura. This could junction from the existing Western SG line at Ararat and run via Maryborough, or junction at Murtoa and run via Donald or junction at Murtoa and run via Hopetoun, and
- Investigation of a railway from Mildura to Broken Hill.

The Plan proposes encouragement of a privately operated port shuttle rail service, preparation of a rail freight network development strategy and a mode shift incentive scheme.

To download a copy of *Victoria – The Freight State* go to www.dtpli.vic.gov.au/freight

The state of Victorian freight

Following the collapse of rail operator El Zorro (see July *Table Talk* page 3), operation of the daily freight train from Melbourne to Warrnambool and v.v. from June was taken over by an El Zorro affiliated company, Regional Port Enterprises, using El Zorro's track accreditation. The three rakes of grain wagons operated for AWB by El Zorro were initially left stranded. At the request of AWB, Pacific National is now operating the two standard gauge and one broad gauge rakes.

Adelaide Metro: Noarlunga and Tonsley re-openings

The Noarlunga railway will re-open as scheduled in September, following electrification and other upgrading works. Re-opening of the Tonsley branch – which is also being partially duplicated - however will be delayed eight weeks until November. The lines have been closed since 2 January.

On 23 August, the Federal and SA governments announced the bringing forward of \$63 million to duplicate part of the Tonsley branch and upgrade existing track as quickly as possible.

The SA government anticipates patronage increases of about 450% at Clovelly Park station and 600% at Tonsley by 2015.

The next stages of the Tonsley Park Public Transport Project include the:

- Rebuild of the Clovelly Park station to service the Tonsley Park development and to link to park-and-ride facilities.
- Rebuild of Tonsley station to connect rail and bus services.
- New bus interchange at the intersection of South and Sturt roads.
- Extension of Flinders Drive to Sturt Road to better connect to bus services.
- Minor works on Sturt and South roads to improve the efficiency of local bus services.

Adelaide Metro: Belair line timetable 19 August

A new timetable designated “Temporary” applies from 19 August. The weekday off-peak frequency has been improved from the 30 minute frequency in the timetable of 20 July. In the up direction it is now a peculiar 24/26 minutes. In the up direction it is every 25 minutes.

Following complaints, two morning peak trains which formerly terminated/started at Blackwood have been extended to/from Belair. There are still one morning and four evening peak runs to/from Blackwood. On evenings and weekends a 60 minute frequency applies.

This timetable will apply until the new Wayville station is operational, which is likely to be some months away. The platform base works are barely done, and there are lifts and escalators to be installed. The map shows the new Wayville station as “to open in late 2013”.

TransPerth: Early morning trains end

The experimental very early morning (or, if you prefer, very late night), free trains departing Perth on Saturday and Sunday mornings at 0400 ceased with the timetable change of 18 June, due to low patronage. The 0215 trains on these days continue.

WA Budget

Transport items in the WA Budget presented on 8 August were:

- \$174 million over four years to commence the \$2 billion Airport Rail line, which will have three new stations, an additional 3,000 parking bays and involve 18 new railcars. Construction will start in 2016 with a scheduled finish in 2019.
- \$432 million over four years towards building the 22 km MAX Light Rail, connecting the growing northern suburbs and the Perth CBD, east to Victoria Park and west to Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre in Nedlands. Construction will start in 2016 and is scheduled to finish in 2019.

- \$46.5 million over the forward estimates to construct a new secure, multi-storey car park at Edgewater station.
- \$56m for a new station at Aubin Grove between Cockburn Central and Kwinana on the Mandurah line.
- \$219m for the Perth City Link - sinking of the Wellington St Bus Station.
- Delivery of an additional 66 suburban carriages, the first of which will arrive later in 2013.
- \$237m for upgrading of the bus fleet.

The Treasurer, Troy Buswell, is investigating private investment options to ease the cost of constructing the Airport line and the MAX Light Rail system.

The **AvonLink** Railcar service is to be discontinued.

The Budget provides for improving the level of cost recovery on public transport, with a target cost recovery rate of 40% by 2016-17 (up from the current 31%). This is expected to save \$8 million in 2014-15 and \$84 million across the three years to 2016-17. Increased fares are therefore probable. The Budget anticipates savings of \$27.6 million from the discontinuation of, or reduction in, a number of public transport programs that are assessed as not delivering value for money, including the 0400 trains on Saturdays and Sundays (see preceding item), the Fremantle Night Rider bus service and the AvonLink Railcar service.

TransWA: Avonlink to end

The Avonlink service Mondays-Fridays Northam-Midland and return, and Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays Perth-Merredin and return will be discontinued (as mentioned in the previous item) from 30 December. and replaced by buses and additional stops by the Prospector service. Savings of \$1.2 million per annum are estimated.

TransPerth: Stadium station

Belmont Park station is to close from 13 October, the end of 2013 winter horse race season. It will be replaced with a new Stadium station, to serve the new Perth Stadium when it opens in 2018. Stadium station will have three island platforms to move 28,000 people by train within one hour of completion of an event.

Belmont Park Station is a special events station which operates only on race days and other planned events. The closure will not affect other services operating on the Armadale/Thornlie line.

WA: Roy Hill project

Calibre Global has been awarded a \$26 million contract for the design of approximately 330 km of heavy haul main-line railway, passing loops and other associated civil infrastructure, for the Roy Hill Holdings project in WA. This is a major new Pilbara iron ore project planned to include a 55 mtpa mine, heavy-haul railway, and new berths at Port Hedland.

NZ freight flows

Details of freight flows in New Zealand are at www.transport.govt.nz/ourwork/Sea/FIGS One feature is the heavy freight flows between Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga and paucity of freight elsewhere.

Auckland electrification completion date

Current projections by KiwiRail are that suburban electric train services will commence in Auckland about April 2014, a few months later than originally anticipated. The line from Papakura to Britomart will be electrified in time for the first batch of about nine new trains to start carrying passengers in April, although "testing and tuning" of the system will need to continue until 2015.

Metlink Wellington: Earthquake 16 August

Following the Wellington earthquake on Friday afternoon 16 August, all Wellington suburban train services and all freight services between Christchurch and Palmerston North were suspended for the rest of the day pending inspections of the tracks.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Agnes Boskovitz, Scott Ferris, Peter Hobbs, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Samuel Rachdi, Lourie Smit, Roger Wheaton, Brendan Whyte, www.railpage.com.au, *Newsrail* (ARHS Victoria), *New Zealand Railway Observer*, *Rail Express*, *Railway Digest*, *Today's Railways Europe*, *Age*, *Australian*, *New Zealand Herald* (Auckland) and *North West Star* (Mt Isa) for Railway news.

BUS NEWS

Australian Capital Territory

Tertiary open day shuttle

Two special free charter routes operated on 31 August allowing prospective students to attend various tertiary open days. Loop 1 (Eastern Loop) linked the City with the Australia Defence Force Academy (ADFA) and Airport, while Loop 2 (Northern Loop) served Australian National University (ANU), Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Bruce, University of Canberra and Australia Catholic University. Both services ran hourly from 09:00 to 15:00.

Updated bus stop signage

In conjunction with the upcoming launch of NxtBus real time information on the ACTION network, bus stop signage across Canberra is being replaced over coming months with a new look blue & yellow signs that will include stop IDs. Interestingly, the signage doesn't appear to carry the ACTION brand, instead only referring to the ACT Government and the central transport.act.gov.au website.

New South Wales

More contracts awarded

In late August the NSW government announced the successful winners of the latest round of the competitively tendered bus contracts. The new contracts are due to commence in mid 2014 and cover the next 5 years with possible 3-year extensions in operators meet performance targets. They will see the delivery of 60 new buses across the 4 regions from day one, improved customer service monitoring, and the requirement for 95% of services to depart termini on-time. Combined with the other regions previously awarded across suburban Sydney, taxpayers are set save \$45 million annually.

Most notably, region 15 around Campbelltown will be transferred from current incumbent Busways to Busabout. In the previous round of tendering in 2012, Busways picked up the entire contract for region 1 in Blacktown, Penrith & Richmond, previously shared with Westbus (CDC) and Hawkesbury Valley Buses (Busabout), whilst Busabout lost the rights to operating some of their services in neighbouring region 3 when Transit Systems Australia won the contract.

Region 2, which covers 100 buses around Liverpool & Ingleburn, has been awarded to Interline. Currently the region is shared with Busabout, and is unclear if this arrangement will continue or whether Busabout will focus of their new acquisition.

Singapore-based Comfort Delegro Cabcharge (CDC) will continue to operate region 4 under their Hillsbus brand, which operates 500 buses and over 50 routes throughout Blacktown, Rouse Hill, Castle Hill and Parramatta, including the popular City routes via the M2. As part of the new contract, the operator has promised to implement improved running times on 42 routes and improve frequencies on the North-West T-way corridor to ensure buses come at more even intervals. Extra services are planned for 17 key routes, including:

- 601 (Parramatta – Rouse Hill)
- 606 (Parramatta – Winston Hills)
- 607X (Rouse Hill – City)
- 610X/M61 (Rouse Hill – Castle Hill – City)
- 611 (Blacktown – Macquarie Park)
- 619 (Rouse Hill – Macquarie Park)
- 620X (Dural – City)
- 630 (Blacktown – Macquarie Park)
- 642X (Round Corner – City)
- 700 (Parramatta – Blacktown)
- 705 (Parramatta – Blacktown)
- 711 (Parramatta – Blacktown)
- M60 (Parramatta - Hornsby)
- T64 (Parramatta – Rouse Hill)
- T65/T66 (Parramatta – Rouse Hill)

Retaining of the largest and most lucrative region will provide some comfort to CDC after they lost the right to operate their Wesbus services in region 1, along with region 3 in Liverpool & Fairfield (the latter of which went to Transit Systems Australia) during the earlier round of tendering.

Punchbowl Bus Company will continue operating services around Mortdale and Punchbowl in region 5. This operation covers 14 daytime routes along with 6 Nightrider services.

Growth Buses keep growing

The next stage of the NSW government's Growth Buses program will see a further \$92 million investment over the 2013-2014 financial year. This will boost fleets across the state by 76 buses along with the replacement of a further 125 buses. These buses are in addition the 60 additional buses the government announced with the new bus contracts. 88 of the buses have been assigned to operators in metropolitan Sydney, including 9 growth buses for the following 5 routes:

- 194 (St Ives Chase – City) – service improvements introduced on 22 July – as reported in August's *Table Talk*

- 260 (Terry Hills – North Sydney) – new route introduced by Forest on 22 July – as reported in *August's Table Talk*
- 418 (Burwood – Bondi Junction)
- 461 (Burwood – City)
- E85 (Mona Vale – City)

A further 65 new buses will operate across Western Sydney, including 49 growth buses for the following 15 routes:

- 602 (Rouse Hill – North Sydney)
- 611 (Blacktown – Macquarie Park)
- 613X (Bella Visit – City)
- 614X (Crestwood – City)
- 615X (Kellyville – City)
- 627 (Castle Hill – Chatswood) – new route
- 723 (Blacktown – Mt Druitt)
- 748 (Colebee – Blacktown) – new route
- 794 (Glenmore Park – Penrith) – new route
- 824 (Elizabeth Hills – Liverpool) – new route
- 825 (Prairiewood – St Marys via Western Sydney Employment Area & St Clair) – new route
- 869 (Liverpool – Ingleburn via Edmondson Park) – new route
- 887 (Campbelltown – Wollongong)
- 893 (Camden – Campbelltown)
- T65 (Rouse Hill – Parramatta)

It would appear that these extra services are in addition to the extra services CDC will deliver as part of their new contract for region 4 (see previous article).

The Hunter region benefits from eleven new buses, two for proposed routes 166 (Kurri Kurri – Maitland) & 186 (Aberglasslyn – Rutherford), while seven new buses will be delivered to Illawarra region, including one for a new Brooks Reach – Dapto route 32, with the Central Coast also set to receive five replacement buses. The remaining 25 buses, including 15 growth buses, will be available for new school runs, to respond to changes in demand or new buses as part of the new metropolitan bus contracts.

City2Surf boost

Hillbus increased early Sunday services to get participants and spectators to the annual 14km City2Surf run on 11 August. 607X ran an extra 9 services from Rouse Hill between 05:53 and 08:08, while a dozen trips were added on 610X from Castle Hill between 05:50 and 08:20, some of which commenced prior to Castle Hill at either James Mileham Dr or Rouse Hill. Sydney Buses also provided additional services on most major routes, especially those taking participants home from the finish line at Bondi Beach. The run is the biggest fun-run internationally, with over 80,000 participants. Race entry includes free public transport travel.

More operators tracked in real-time

Forest and Hillsbus have joined the growing list of operators whose services can be tracked by the public using Smartphone applications. A list of apps can be found on the 131500 website.

Northern Territory

Special events buses in August

A range of mostly free shuttle buses were provided to several events held in Darwin during early August:

- A free shuttle ran between Fannie Bay Racecourse & Darwin CBD between 17:00 & 19:00 on 3 August following the Palmerston Sprint
- On 5 August, the Darwin Cup saw a regular shuttle bus service operate to & from the Darwin CBD,

Casuarina and Palmerston. Oddly, passengers were required to pay for their journey to the racecourse but received a free ride home

- Free buses departing the Gardens Amphitheatre to Darwin CBD, Casuarina & Palmerston at 21:50 on 8 August following the Darwin Festival's Santos Opening Night Concert. Passengers were required to use Routes 4 & 10 to reach the event
- Following the NT Ingenious Music Awards on August 10, free buses left the Gardens Amphitheatre at 23:50 to Darwin CBD, Casuarina & Palmerston. Again passengers had to find their own way to the awards via Routes 4 or 10.

Queensland

Sunshine Coast SEQ Review changes

As part of upcoming SEQ Review timetable changes on the Sunshine Coast from late 2013, Translink held community information sessions during August to explain the changes to Sunbus services. Community feedback had previously been sought in late 2012 and early 2013. Interactive route maps and summaries of service frequencies and span have also been made available online on the Translink website. Key aspects of the new network will include:

- Introduction of new high frequency corridors between major centres
- Improvements to Friday and Saturday night services on Routes 600 & 620
- Better train-bus connectivity
- Better services to University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) including services better timed for classes and enhanced train-bus connections
- More direct services for Cotton Tree, Pelican Waters and Slippy Downs
- New routes in parts of Bli Bli and Brightwater
- Services on selected routes reduced to reflect current demand

Opening of the new Maroochydoore bus station

Changes by route include:

- 600 (Caloundra – Maroochydoore): Increased weekday frequency and more direct route through Cotton Tree
- 601 (Caloundra – Maroochydoore): Route removed due to low patronage
- 602 (Caloundra – Maroochydoore): Service realigned on Maroochy Bvd with some AM and PM services removed
- 603 (Bellvista – Corbould Park Racecourse): Some AM and PM services cut
- 605 (Caloundra to USC): Now travels via Kawana Town Centre and Shoppingworld. Trips better timed for uni classes
- 607 (Caloundra to USC): Now travels via Kawana Town Centre and Shoppingworld. Trips better timed for uni classes
- 609 (Caloundra – Pelican Waters): More direct route for Pelican Waters residents
- 610 (Nambour – Maroochydoore): Truncated at Maroochydoore. Some AM and PM services removed
- 612 (Nambour – Maroochydoore): Slightly extended into Bli Bli. Some AM and PM services removed
- 613 (Twin Waters – Maroochydoore): Removed due to poor usage
- 614 (Maroochydoore – Kiawana): Some AM and PM services removed
- 615 (Maroochydoore – Landsborough): A number of extra trips added to ensure more trains are met
- 616 (Maroochydoore – USC): Timetable aligned with uni classes

- 617 (Maroochydore – USC): Realigned route in Sippy Downs and along Maroochy Bvd in Maroochydore. Timetable aligned with uni classes and some AM and PM services removed
- 618 (Minyama – USC): Now serves Brightwater Estate. Timetable aligned with uni classes but services cut from half-hourly to hourly
- 619 (Maroochydore – Kawana): Some AM & PM services removed
- 620 (Maroochydore - Noosa Heads): No longer travels via Bli Bli at night. Changes to Sunday morning services.
- 622 (Maroochydore – Noosa): No longer travels via Bli Bli
- 626 (Sunrise Beach – St Andrews Dr): Updated run times and some AM and PM services removed
- 627 (Sunshine Beach – Tewantin): Updated run times and some AM and PM services removed
- 628 (Noosa Junction – Noosa Parklands): Updated run times and some AM and PM services removed
- 629 (Noosa Junction – Tewantin Central): Updated run times and some AM and PM services removed
- 630 & 631 (Noosa – Nambour): Extra trips added to ensure more trains are met
- 632 (Noosa – Cooran): No change
- 636 (Nambour – USC): Trips better timed for uni classes
- 639 (Nambour town services): No changes to any of the 5 loops however further reviews of this route will take place

Ipswich SEQ Review

Similar Translink community information sessions will be held during mid September for proposed changes to Bus Queensland services in the Ipswich region, which are due to commence in December in conjunction with the extension of rail services from Richlands to Springfield Central. Key network changes in Ipswich will include:

- Connections to Springfield Central station with the opening of the rail extension
- Route 500 frequency improved and now operates Sundays
- Combined 522/530 will operate every 30 mins during the week
- Extending and simplification of specific routes and improving links to key destinations such as Riverlink, Ipswich CBD, Goodna, Redbank and Booval
- Improved services in high growth areas around Springfield

Specific route changes are:

- 500 (Riverlink – Goonda): Additional trips
- 506 (Riverlink – Leichhardt) & 516 (Riverlink – One Mile) merged, providing improved off-peak frequency
- 512 (Brassall – Riverlink) expanded to cover parts of 513 (Woodend loop) which will be withdrawn
- 514 (Tivoli – Booval) will extend to Booval Fair Shopping Centre
- 515 (Brassall – Yamanto) will be extended to Willowbank, incorporating 508 (Yamanto – Willowbank)
- 522 & 530 (Orion Springfield Town Centre – Goodna Shops) combined into one route with increased frequency and extended to serve Springfield Central Station
- 526 (Orion Springfield Town Centre – Redbank): Extended to Springfield Central Station
- 534 (Orion Springfield Town Centre – Browns Plains): Extended to Springfield Central Station

- 535 (Orion Springfield Town Station – Richlands): Service removed due to opening of rail extension. Passengers can access 522 to reach Springfield Central Station.

Other services in the Ipswich region will continue to operate to their existing routes. Maps and frequency information were not yet available online at time of writing but should be released in the near future.

Updated Toowoomba timetable

In conjunction with minor timetable adjustments in May, new timetables have been issued for Bus Queensland's Toowoomba operation and are available on the Qconnect website. Footnotes for school deviations are now more detailed and an improved network map has been designed. Separate timetables and route maps are also available online for each of the main town routes, but it unclear if these have been produced in printed form. The timetable for the Kango demand responsive service in the Rangeville no longer features a supplementary timetable for the fixed-route school trips, but it is understood these still operate.

South Australia

Feedback sought on new network maps

Adelaide Metro is currently seeking feedback on a proposed move away from their large detailed network map to smaller & more simplistic diagrammatic network maps. New maps have been made available on their website, one covering the Adelaide O-bahn network throughout the north-eastern suburbs, while the other focuses on routes in the Adelaide Hills. Key differences include:

- Route lines are more simplistic and no longer show individual side streets or bends on major roads
- Map is no longer at scale
- Background cross-streets have been removed as have stop locations
- Some landmarks such as schools & parkland is no longer shown however hospitals, shopping centres & tertiary institutions remain
- Interchange inset maps are no longer included

A major criticism is the draft maps omit routes for adjoining networks – for instance the Adelaide O-bahn map doesn't show routes that solely form part of what presumably considered the northern suburbs network around Elisabeth and Salisbury, therefore leaving out routes 415, 591, 593 and G40 in Golden Grove & Greenwith area. The maps could also highlight the various Go-Zone corridors.

Victoria

Transdev commences in Melbourne

The first month of operation of the Metropolitan Bus Franchise by Transdev has been largely successful after they commenced operations on 4 August, with a business as usual approach. Although timetables were unchanged from the previous operators, substantial roster and depot changes took place. Among the more notable changes:

- Routes 270, 271, 366 & 367 have returned back to Doncaster depot after 4½ years, with Ventura Croydon's depot now solely operating Routes 688, 689 & 690 along with a number of local school services.
- Although Keysborough depot was not included in the franchise, Transdev have since purchased it from Ventura. Route 901 buses & drivers previous based at Dandenong now have moved here, along with Route 903 shifts based at South Oakleigh

- Route 901 & 902 buses previously based out of the Dysons & East-West depot in Bundoora have been relocated to the Dysons Reservoir depot
- Doncaster depot is now involved with the operation of the 901, ending involvement of Ventura's Lilydale depot (formerly Invicta) who had traditionally provided buses along Stud Road
- Route 903 buses and drivers that moved from North Fitzroy depot to Ivanhoe depot in January have returned to North Fitzroy depot. Ventura had undertaken a major depot expansion at the Ivanhoe depot for this short-lived move, presumably in the hope it would land them the new contract.
- Route 903 shifts previously operated out of CDC's Westrans Altona depot are now based at Footscray depot
- Ventura have relocated shifts primarily involving Routes 709, 811, 812, 858 & 885 from the sold Keysborough depot to their Dandenong depot, along with a number school buses

One hiccup since the takeover has been the SmartBus information system appears to be struggling to cope with the new rosters, with many trips not being tracked by the system, causing passenger confusion.

Western Australia

August timetable changes

Transperth introduced new timetable changes on selected routes on 11 August:

- 460 (Joondalup – Whitfords)
- 461 (Joondalup – Whitfords)
- 462 (Joondalup – Whitfords)
- 480 (Clarkson – Butler)
- 490 (Clarkson – Two Rocks)
- 557 (Rockingham – Port Kennedy) was split into 557 (Rockingham – Warnbro) & 560 (Warnbro – Port Kennedy)
- 558 (Rockingham – Mandurah)
- 559 (Rockingham – Secret Harbour)
- 561 (Rockingham – Secret Harbour West)
- 562 (Rockingham – Secret Harbour East) was split into 562 (Rockingham – Warnbro) & 563 (Warnbro – Secret Harbour East). 562 now operates every 30 mins weekdays and hourly Saturdays.
- 564 (Rockingham – Baldivis) now operates from Warnbro to Baldivis with enhanced 562 services replacing 564 on Wilmott Dr
- 567 (Warnbro – Baldivis East) – new service along Safety Bay Rd and Baldivis Rd. Operates every 20 mins during peaks and hourly off-peak.
- 568 (Warnbro – Baldivis North) – Baldivis East section replaced by new 567
- 825 (Fremantle – Rockingham)
- 920 (Fremantle – Rockingham)

The following timetables were reissued:

- Northern 65 (Routes 460, 461 & 462)
- Northern 83 (Routes 480 & 490)
- Southern 125 (Route 920)
- Southern 126 (Route 825)
- Southern 130 (Routes 557 & 562)
- Southern 131 (Routes 558, 559 & 561)
- Southern 134 (Routes 597 & 598)
- Southern 135 (Route 564, 567 & 568)
- Southern 138 (Route 560 & 563)

Clovedale terminus change

The Clovedale terminus for Route 38 (Perth – Cloverdale) was moved on 19 August to facilitate

Gateway WA works. Buses now depart from Abernethy Rd near Scott St. When works complete, buses will move to a new terminus on Dempsey St before Tighe St.

Proposed changes in Dawesville

Transperth undertook public consultation in August for proposed route changes in Dawesville which would see the introduction of a new 593 service between Mandurah & Dawesville along Old Coast Rd. Current Route 592 (Mandurah – Dawesville) would be shortened to run only as far as Wannanup, while 594 (Mandurah – Dawesville East) would be co-ordinated with Route 593 providing improved frequency along Old Coast Rd.

New high-frequency route proposed

Transperth are also seeking feedback on a proposed new high frequency Route 950 service linking Morley Bus Station and QEII Medical Centre via Beaufort St, the Esplanade Busport & University of WA. The service would operate every 3 to 4 mins in peak periods (with extra services between Esplanade Busport and University of WA), every 7.5 mins interpeak, at 10 min intervals during the day on weekends and every 15 – 30 mins at night. The service would compliment existing Routes 23 (Perth – Claremont), 67 & 68 (Perth – Mirrabooka), 102 (Perth – Cottesloe) and 103 (Perth – Fremantle). Route 950 would however Routes 21 & 22 (Morley – Esplanade Busport), 78 (Esplanade – University of WA) and 79 (Esplanade Busport – QEII Medical Centre) would be withdrawn. If introduced, Route 950 will be the first through service via the Esplanade Busport since July 2004.

An additional service, Route 348 would also operate between Morley Bus Station and Bayswater Station via Embelton. It would run every 20 minutes in peak times every 30 mins off-peak and Saturdays and at 60 - 90 min intervals on Sundays. The service would partly replace Route 21.

Long Distance

Review of Adelaide Central Bus Station

The Adelaide City Council are currently reviewing the long-term viability of the Central Bus Station due to reduced usage and the potential to sell the site to private investors or convert the site into public parking. Reports state annual passenger numbers departing the station have fallen by 40,000 to 190,000 between 2009 and 2012 due to a range of factors including passengers interchanging to Adelaide Metro services on the suburban fringe, cheaper airfares and reduced tourism as a result of the GFC and high Australian dollar. Coach services have dropped from 1500 to 1200 per year as operators rationalise services.

Goondiwindi trial under threat

Local Goondiwindi resident, Margo Hancock, has expressed her concern to her local paper, the *Goondiwindi Argus*, that the trial bus service provided by Bus Queensland linking residents into Toowoomba is under threat due to low use. Despite over 3000 residents signing a petition for the service to be trialed, only a handful are reported to be using the service each week.

Thanks to: Tony Bailey, Barry Blair, Hilaire Fraser, Victor Isaacs, Lourie Smit, Roger Wheaton and various contributors on *Australian Transport Discussion Board*.

FERRY NEWS

Werribee South – Port Melbourne ferry

A ferry from Werribee South to Station Pier, Port Melbourne, is likely to be operating by 2015. A 40 minute journey is envisaged with two 226 passenger vessels, operated by Queenscliff operator Riverside Marine and financed by local developer Lyons Capital. The return fare is anticipated to be \$22. If speed in the Yarra River could be increased, the proponents would like to operate to Docklands.

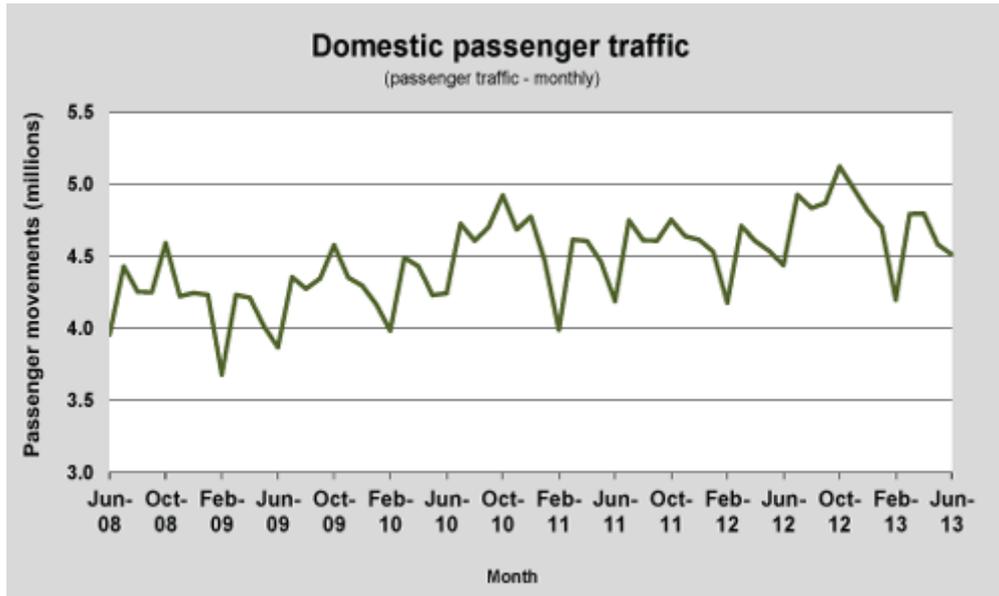
Darwin Ferry (Not often that this heading appears!)

SeaLink Travel Group will take over from Fast Ferries as operator of the Mandorah ferry from 1 September. They will use a 22.5m three-level vessel. This will eventually be replaced by a newly purchased 18m Incat Crowther design catamaran. This 2010-built, air conditioned boat has 110 seats including a sun deck for 35 passengers.

Thanks to Tony Bailey for Ferry news.

AIR NEWS

Domestic



The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport & Regional Economics reports that there were 4.71 million passengers carried by Australian domestic commercial aviation (including regional and charter operations) in June 2013, an increase of 2% on June 2012. In June 2013 there were 56 373 aircraft trips, an increase of 2.7% on the previous June. 4.51 million passengers were carried on scheduled flights in June 2013, an increase of 1.7% on June 2012. For the year ending June 2013 there were 57.13 million passengers, an increase of 3.9% on the year before. Regular revenue passenger kilometres were 5.34 billion in June, up 1.9% on June 2012. Capacity, measured by available seat kilometres, increased 5.1% compared with June 2012 to a total of 7.08 billion.

In June 2013, Sydney remained Australia's busiest domestic airport with 1.97 million passenger movements, followed by Melbourne with 1.76 million passenger movements and Brisbane with 1.37 million passenger movements.

Total cargo movements at Australian airports on domestic regular flights were 33.2 thousand tonnes in June 2013, a decrease of 5% compared to June 2012. Fixed-wing charter operators carried over 198 thousand passengers in June 2013, an increase of 9.6% on June 2012.

International

Qantas will increase its Los Angeles-Brisbane service to daily from December.

China Southern Airlines will increase its Guangzhou-Brisbane route to daily from 21 November.

Low cost airline **Air Asia X** is to add Adelaide to its network from 30 October with four flights weekly. They will depart Kuala Lumpur at 2355, Tue, Thur, Fri Sat, arrive Adelaide 0945 next day, depart Adelaide 1100, arrive KL 1620. Air Asia X also flies to Sydney, Melbourne, the Gold Coast and Perth.

Malaysia Airlines will add an additional flight to Adelaide between 20 December and 18 January in addition to the present daily service. Departure from Kuala Lumpur will be at 2045, arriving Adelaide at 0615; from Adelaide at 1000 arriving KL at 1445. Malaysia Airlines is increasing frequency from KL to Melbourne from double to triple daily services effective 21 November. Flight MH147 will depart KL everyday at 1950 and arrive in Melbourne at 0645 the following day. MH146 from Melbourne at 0855 arriving KL at 1415.

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

ODD SPOT

The Metro in Praha (Prague), Czech Republic, is to introduce designated carriages for singles, "to encourage people to mingle and get acquainted". It is hoped this will help reverse the declining number of marriages and birth rate. Yet another advantage of public transport!

About *Table Talk*

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Table Talk Newswire is an advance monthly email of Rail news. To obtain this, ask the Rail Editor at abvi@iinet.net.au