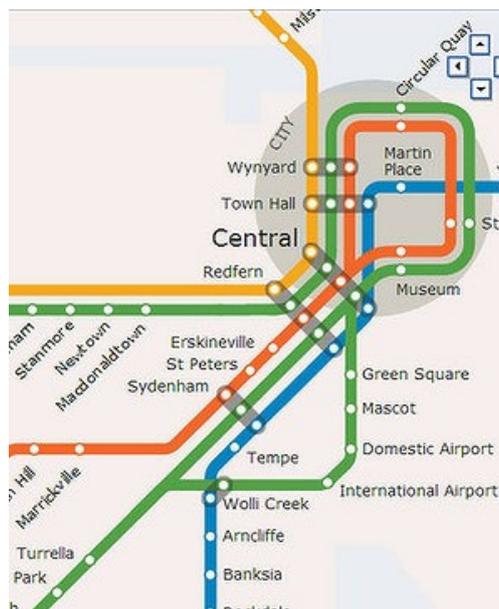
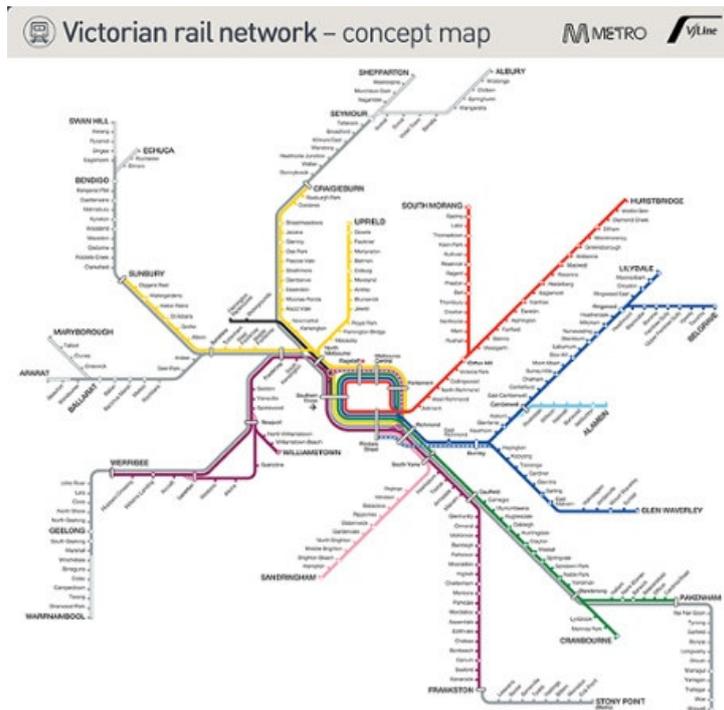




TABLE TALK

AUSTRALASIAN TIMETABLE NEWS
No. 261, May 2014 ISSN 1038-3697 RRP \$4.95
Published by the Australian Timetable Association
www.austta.org.au

**Two big cities, two new rail maps, two different concepts –
two articles on page two.**



Victoria: New Rail Map

With the forthcoming, promised abolition of fare zones in Melbourne, the familiar yellow-and-blue train network map is no longer appropriate. A new map has been designed. This distinguishes each line by a separate colour. The map also extends to V/Line's regional rail network. It shows where myki is valid and where paper tickets are still in use. The map is on trial display at Malvern, Bentleigh and Moorabbin, and at the PTV Hub at Southern Cross station. Public Transport Victoria expects to make several changes following public feedback before officially launching the map.

Sydney: New Rail map

A new rail map of Sydney has been released (extract on prior page – full version at http://www.sydneytrains.info/stations/pdf/suburban_map.pdf). In contrast to the new Melbourne model, which has replaced a two colour map, with easy-to-read individual colours for each line, the new Sydney map has dropped individual colours for each line. It removes the purple Inner West line, the red Northern line and the light blue South line. Instead, there are only six colours used – one each for all Northern and Western lines, one for the various Southern lines, one for the various routes through Bankstown and one for the Eastern Suburbs/Illawarra lines. The only lines with distinctive colours are the least important ones: Olympic Park, Carlingford and Cumberland lines.

Public transport advocates and experts claim this is confusing and potentially misleading. Dr Rolf Bergmaier, a transport consultant who has designed public transport maps for cities through Europe and Asia, said maps needed to show passengers how to make a direct connection between two points, or, if that is not possible, where to interchange to travel between those two points. He said the new Sydney map did neither. Daniel Bowen of the Victorian Public Transport Users' Group says, "Maps should always be designed from the point of view of passengers, particularly occasional passengers such as tourists, who are more likely to need help to get where they're going."

A spokesman for Transport for NSW said the design of Sydney's new maps was based on customer research that said people wanted "maps to be more visible and easier to understand while they are travelling on the network. Network maps are just one of the methods customers use to navigate the system, with more customers now using tools such as transportnsw.info, real time apps and Google Transit."

The new map also excludes the light rail line although it now includes a direct interchange with Dulwich Hill station. It does show the South West line and the North West lines as "under construction."

RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Queensland inland freight railway

Queensland Deputy Premier, Jeff Seeney, has described plans for an inland railway from Toowoomba to Gladstone as a priority for the state. He said he would work with the Federal government to ensure the missing rail connection would become a vital cog in Queensland's future prosperity. "In planning the Queensland section of the inland rail, we'll be pursuing the establishment of a rail connection from the Darling Downs to Gladstone as a priority for Queensland's long-term future," he told Queensland Parliament on 2 April. "The completion of a proposed rail line ... often referred to as the southern missing link, will one day link up the Surat Basin and allow for the export of significant volumes of coal through the Port of Gladstone. The Queensland government has already laid significant groundwork for this strategy. The Surat Basin infrastructure corridor state development area, a 214km rail corridor between the towns of Wandoan and Banana, which will accommodate the proposed inland rail, is already in place. An exclusive mandate granted to the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture to develop the rail connection on this corridor ended last year." Mr Seeney said "a number of parties" had since approached his department expressing an interest in building the longer rail connection from Toowoomba to Gladstone, incorporating that existing corridor.

QR Travel Train: Cyclone Ita

Tropical Cyclone Ita caused the following alterations:

- cancellation of the northbound Spirit of Queensland between Townsville and Cairns on 12 April and southbound on 13 April,
- cancellation of the northbound Sunlander between Townsville and Cairns on 11 April and southbound on 12 April;
- cancellation of the northbound Sunlander between Brisbane and Cairns on 13 April and southbound on 15 April.;
- the northbound Spirit of Queensland from Brisbane on 14 April was deferred for 24 hours and terminated at Rockhampton, with a substitute bus as far as Townsville;

- the southbound Spirit of Queensland on 16 April was cancelled from Cairns, and a substitute bus was provided from Townsville to Rockhampton, connecting to the Rockhampton Tilt Train;
- the northbound Spirit of Queensland on 18 April operated as far as Mackay, with a substitute bus thence to Cairns;
- the southbound Spirit of Queensland was a bus from Cairns to Mackay;
- the southbound Sunlander on 15 April did not operate from Cairns, and was a substitute bus from Townsville connecting at Rockhampton into a train formed by a Spirit of Queensland set;
- the northbound Sunlander on 15 April operated to Mackay with a substitute bus beyond;
- the northbound Sunlanders on 17 and 19 April operated to Mackay, thence as a bus to Cairns; and
- the southbound Sunlander on 17 April was a bus from Cairns to Mackay
- the southbound Spirit of Queensland on Sunday 20 April was a bus from Cairns to Mackay where transfer was made to the train
- the vulnerable Cairns-Kuranda line was closed from 11 to 16 April.

QR TravelTrain: Inland services

Rumours continue about the withdrawal later this year of the Inlander train Townsville-Mt Isa and the Westlander Brisbane-Charleville. In addition, there are now reports that the Spirit of the Outback train Brisbane to Longreach may be altered to operate only in the peak winter tourist season.

ARTC: Hunter Valley shutdown

The latest in the regular series of Hunter Valley coal network shutdowns for engineering works was from Tuesday 29 April until Thursday 1 May. ARTC states that 120 projects worth \$20 million were completed.

Federal government plans for airport rail line, but will not build it

by Jacob Saulwick, Sydney Morning Herald, 17 April 2012 (abridged)

The Abbott government will not build a train line to a new [Sydney] airport at Badgerys Creek, but says it wants to allow for a rail link to be easily added to a working airport later. This would mean digging tunnels for train lines and a station at the same time as runways are prepared for the airport but not using them for years. "We are very much attracted to the idea of ensuring that any work associated with the railway is incorporated in the design of an airport at Badgerys Creek," federal Transport Minister Warren Truss said. "If, in fact, it is going to be necessary for that line to be underground, and that's possible on the basis of the preliminary planning that's been done, it would be our view that we would probably build the actual tunnels underneath the runways so that it won't disturb the runway at a later stage," Mr Truss said. "There's also a view that we would probably build a space, an underground space for the station that would be at the airport," he said.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott has a view that federal governments should not pay for public transport. On Wednesday, he promised \$1.2 billion would be spent on upgrading at least three roads around the Badgerys Creek site: Bringelly Road, Elizabeth Drive, and the Northern Road.

Design experts say the practice of building empty tunnels underneath airports to be filled later with rail equipment is increasingly common. "You don't have to have it for day one of operations," the head of aviation at engineering firm Arup, Ronan Delaney, said of a rail line, but it would be "foolish not to allow for that within your planning" In Bangkok, tunnels were dug under a new airport terminal building but have not yet been used. "We safe-guarded tunnels that go under the terminal building," Mr Delaney said. "There are mothballed stations that are not yet opened."

The most likely rail connection to a Badgerys Creek airport will be an extension of the south-west rail link to Leppington, which is expected to open next year. The rail link adds stations at Glenmore Park and Leppington beyond where it connects to Sydney's existing train system at Glenfield. But in contrast to the area around the north-west rail link, there has been only patchy development directly next to the south-west line. Next to Leppington, for instance, where a vast new station has been built with underground platforms and a cavernous concourse area, the closest property remains a hydroponic lettuce farm.....

Second Harbour crossing

NSW Transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian said on 23 April that she will press for construction of a second Sydney harbour crossing to start this decade. The north-west rail link is due to open from Rouse Hill to Chatswood by about 2019. She hopes that the government would then extend that line from Chatswood across the harbour, with new stations in the central business district, and link it to the Bankstown Line and Illawarra Line south of the Harbour. Asked if this project could be accelerated to start before the north-west rail link was finished, Ms Berejiklian told the *Sydney Morning Herald* that "I will be talking to the Premier [Mike Baird] about opportunities there, definitely." But Ms Berejiklian said she would need to convince the public that the main beneficiaries of the second crossing would be those travelling on existing lines, where service frequencies could increase because of the space created by the crossing. "With all due respect to my own constituents, the real benefit of the second harbour crossing is for western Sydney," the member for the north Sydney seat of Willoughby said of a project estimated to cost \$10 billion or more. "The second harbour crossing and converting part of the south-west to rapid transit will give us 60% more capacity on the existing network."

Sydney Trains: Minor timetable change

From 7 April the 0651 train from Mortdale to Port Kembla has had additional stops at Loftus, Engadine, and Heathcote. It arrives at Waterfall five minutes later than formerly at 0716, and departs Waterfall to Port Kembla one minute later.

Sydney Trains: Olympic Park line

Sydney Alliance transport spokesman Professor Kurt Iveson has suggested that express trains from a park-and-ride site at Olympic Park to the City could help alleviate traffic congestion in western Sydney. He says, "This site is perfectly located next to the M4 [motorway] and adjacent to the Olympic Park rail line. There already is under-utilised car-parking capacity at the site next to the Olympic Hockey Centre, with the potential for significant expansion," he said. The estimated cost would be about \$300 million.

Sydney Trains: South West line

On 21 April, the new Premier of New South Wales, Mike Baird, announced that the South West line from Glenfield to Leppington will open next year, earlier than expected. It is likely that this line will later be extended to Badgerys Creek Airport.

Sydney Light Rail

Randwick City Council has proposed that the proposed Sydney Eastern Suburbs Tram be extended along Anzac Parade from Kingsford to Maroubra Junction. This is part of a \$68 million package which mainly includes a multi-story car park at Kingsford Interchange to offset loss of parking caused by construction of the tramway.

Wheat transport in NSW

Competition seems to be coming to the transport of wheat by rail in NSW. WA-based CBH Group has expressed interest in entering the NSW market and expects to make a decision on whether to commit to an expansion later this year. Meanwhile, transport logistics group Qube Holdings will invest \$50m in a new multi-user export grain handling facility at Port Kembla and in new rail equipment to service the facility. This is part of a new joint venture between Qube and Hong Kong-based trading house Noble Group which will trade as Quattro Grain. The proposed facility will have an annual capacity of around 1.3 million tonnes and is expected to be operational in mid-2015. Noble has committed to use rail services provided by Qube for the transport of grain from inland storage sites to the new facility on a 'take or pay' basis. Grain marketing businesses, Emerald and Cargill have also committed to use the facility and to acquire rail services under 'take or pay' arrangements and have options to join the Quattro Grain business. The rail haulage agreements build upon other existing haulage arrangements with Noble, Emerald and Cargill, which commenced earlier this year, putting pressure on incumbent rail operator Pacific National, and to a lesser extent Aurizon.

Victorian promises

Premier Denis Napthine on 13 April, during an address to the Victorian Liberal Party state council meeting, said that it was time a **railway to Melbourne airport** was built. He said the rail link will deliver efficient, high-capacity regular services. The project will be outlined in the upcoming May state budget. "I'm pleased to announce that my government will build the much needed Melbourne airport rail link," he told the conference. This project has been on the books for over 40 years," he said. "It is time this rail link was built." Melbourne airport attracts 30 million passengers a year and this was expected to double in 20 years, he said

It is reported that the Victorian government is likely to announce soon the **construction of a station at Southlands**, adjacent to the large shopping centre between

Highbury and Cheltenham. This was promised before the 2010 election, and is now likely to be a no-frills version.

The Victorian government is also said to soon announce the refurbishment of a number of suburban **tram depots**, enabling maintenance to be carried out there, rather than trams having to go to the workshops.

A **passing loop near Ballan**, on the Ballarat line, will be built. Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder said on 16 April an announcement would be made soon on the project, which was a promise made by the then Liberal opposition in the lead-up to the 2010 election.

Victorian Rail Map

With the promised abolition of fare zones in Melbourne, the familiar yellow-and-blue train network map is no longer appropriate. A new map has been designed. This distinguishes each line by a separate colour. The map also extends to V/Line's regional network. It shows where myki is valid and where paper tickets are still in use. The map is on trial display at Malvern, Bentleigh and Moorabbin, and at the PTV Hub at Southern Cross Station. Public Transport Victoria expects to make several changes following public feedback before officially launching the map.

Victoria: Regional Rail Link – Easter closedown

Travel in Victoria over the Easter-Anzac Day period was very difficult. From Easter Saturday 19 April until Anzac Day 25 April V/Line trains on the Ballarat and Bendigo lines were replaced by buses due to Regional Rail Link works. Metro Trains to Sunbury were replaced by buses to/from North Melbourne from 19 until 27 April. In addition, Metro Werribee and Williamstown trains and V/Line Geelong trains were also to be replaced by buses on the weekend of 26 and 27 April. Metro Trains between Oakleigh and Dandenong and V/Line Gippsland trains will also be disrupted because of work to eliminate the Springvale Road level crossing. Buses replaced V/Line trains between Melbourne and Pakenham. In contrast, there was little disruption on the Sydney network. In fact, since this Easter-Anzac Day period, Regional Rail Link works in Melbourne are well advanced, and it is therefore probable that there will be very much less disruption in future around Melbourne (at least, until the next big project).

V/Line: Bairnsdale slowing

Introduction of speed restrictions slowing Bairnsdale V/Line line trains by five minutes in each direction, reported in the April *Table Talk*, was deferred one week to commence 13 April.

V/Line to Booktown

V/Line will run two extra return shuttle trains from Ballarat, Creswick, Talbot and Maryborough to the Clunes Booktown Festival on Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 May. The Booktown Festival comprises over 60 book-traders from around Australia bringing stock to the village and setting up shop for the weekend. The timetable for both days is:

- Ballarat depart 0950, Creswick 1006, Clunes 1018, Talbot 1031, Maryborough arr 1045. (train from Southern Cross arrives Ballarat at 0940)
- Ballarat depart 1200, Creswick 1216, Clunes 1228, Talbot 1241, Maryborough arr 1255. (train from Southern Cross arrives Ballarat at 1155)
- Ballarat depart 1530, Creswick 1546, Clunes 1558, Talbot 1611, Maryborough arr 1625 (train from Southern Cross arrives Ballarat at 1450)
- Maryborough dep 1050, Talbot 1059, Clunes 1112, Creswick 1125, Ballarat arr 1145
- Maryborough dep 1325, Talbot 1334, Clunes 1347, Creswick 1400, Ballarat arr 1420 (train departs at 1431 to Southern Cross)

- Maryborough dep 1635, Talbot 1644, Clunes 1657, Creswick 1710, Ballarat arr 1730 (train departs at 1803 to Southern Cross)

V/Line: Free wifi

The Victorian government will call expressions of interest for the installation of wireless internet on VLocity trains. The package, for implementation by the end of 2014, will also provide improved mobile reception along rail lines.

V/Line: Freight network

Victoria's rail freight network is in desperate need of a massive upgrade, according to industry experts at the Victorian Farmers Federation Grains Group conference in Ballarat on 31 March. The Conference heard from a panel of grains industry experts on the barriers and bottlenecks that impede the efficient flow of grains from farm to port. This highlighted that costs average about \$70 a tonne to get grain to port in Victoria, which is about 30% of growers' cost of production. There are lines where you could "jog past the trains, they're going that slow because of the poor condition of the track," VFF Grains Group president Brett Hosking said. "Poor tracks mean longer delivery times, slower turnaround times, and reduced track capacity - all resulting in reduced efficiency and higher freight costs to growers. Getting rid of our dual gauge lines in Victoria, so that it's all standard gauge, will deliver enormous efficiencies and cut freight costs." The VFF called on the Coalition government and Labor to commit \$250m to the standardisation and upgrade of the state's rail freight lines.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Springvale opening

The new Springvale station and road bridge to replace the level crossing were officially opened on 23 April.

Yarra Trams

Timetables on all Yarra tram lines were re-issued as from 6 April (even for four routes re-issued from 23 March - routes 11, 24, 30 and 112). Alterations seem to be minor. (Yarra Trams says they have 29 tram routes in Melbourne but route 77 and 78 operate basically along the same streets but have different southern terminals; Prahran for 78 and St Kilda Beach for route 79 (evening services). They were once shown on the same timetable. Also, route 11 is a sub-route of route 112, while route 31 is a sub-route of route 109 from Hoddle St/Victoria St to Docklands, instead of Port Melbourne, along Collins St in the city - it operates on weekday mid-day hours only.)

Adelaide Metro: Tonsley line re-opens

The Tonsley line re-opened from Monday 5 May following electrification, partial duplication and other works costing \$18.2 million.

By train to the Footy in Adelaide – if you can get on

The first Footy Expresses of the AFL Season ran in Adelaide on Saturday 29 March. Adelaide played Port Adelaide at the first game at the re-developed Adelaide Oval. The media was full of the need for patrons to use public transport and leave cars at home. Advertising was too successful - at least re trains. Trains had to run express over half their journeys on the up, as they were already overcrowded. Extras were run as planned but nowhere near enough. Interestingly the special buses were under-patronised. In "round" figures, just over 50,000 have attended the first two matches at the Oval. Of these 35,000 or more used public transport - including over 15,000 on trains, 10,000 each on trams and buses. With just the four lines, and everyone arriving and leaving within an hour or so, there were crowds, probably unseen before in Adelaide.

The new Transport Minister said there would be earlier and more trains on the following weekend. In that second week, trains after the match left the Adelaide station as soon as they were full. Apparently this worked somewhat better than per timetable.

Adelaide Metro: Seaford and Belair lines

The Seaford and Belair lines were closed overnight and periodically during the day in April to complete works. While the majority of previous works have been undertaken during scheduled closures and overnight possessions, some remaining works were scheduled for the Easter and School Holiday period. Substitute buses were available with additional Footy Express substitute buses. Train services temporarily returned on Friday, 25 April for ANZAC Day services. The works included signalling and electrification works along the Seaford and Belair lines, final Tonsley line works and other minor works.

Seaford line

- Monday, 7 April to Thursday, 17 April – full overnight closures from 2100 (excluding Saturday, 12 April for AFL services). Full line closure from 2000 on Thursday, 17 April to Tuesday, 22 April.
- Partial line closure between Brighton and Adelaide from 0500, Tuesday, 22 April to Friday, 25 April. A shuttle train operated between Seaford and Brighton, with substitute buses between Brighton and Adelaide. Full line closures from 2100.
- Friday, 25 April to Wednesday, 30 April – full line overnight closures from 2100 (excluding 27 April for AFL Services).

Belair line

- Monday, 7 April to Thursday, 17 April – full line overnight closures from 2100 (excluding Saturday, 12 April for AFL services).
- Partial line closure between Mitcham and Adelaide from 2100, Thursday, 17 April to Tuesday, 22 April. A train shuttle operated between Belair and Mitcham, with substitute buses between Mitcham and Adelaide (excluding Sunday, 20 April with train services operating as normal until 2100 for AFL).
- Tuesday, 22 April to Wednesday, 30 April – full line overnight closures from 2100 (excluding 27 April for AFL Services).

TransPerth: Northern Suburbs line

The extension of the Northern Suburbs line from Clarkson to Butler (4 km) is expected to open in September 2014.

Perth: Light Rail

New WA Transport Minister Dean Nalder has vowed to get Perth's delayed \$2 billion light rail back on track – saying it may be faster and "smarter" to split the project into two parts.

General

Daylight Savings ends

The early hours of 6 April saw clocks across New South Wales, Australia Capital Territory, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia wound back an hour at 0200 as Daylight Saving concluded for another year. This of course poses an interesting challenge for bus operators, as there is an extra hour of service to cover compared to an ordinary Saturday night. A review of key all night services in various capital cities would suggest that operators who operate special dedicated services (such as the Nightride / Nightrider buses in Sydney and Melbourne) do not extend their service span by an hour, or factor in an hour gap to compensate for the time shift, but simply continue to operate services as per the Daylight Savings Time until last scheduled service. For

He considers the north-south route connecting Mirrabooka with the CBD a priority ahead of the proposed east-west line between Victoria Park and Nedlands. He hopes staging the 22km scheme would allow construction of the Mirrabooka-CBD corridor to be brought forward "as much as possible" from 2019.

Train-speak

For a useful glossary of railway terms (not all of it relevant to Tasmania), go to Tasrail's website, at http://www.tasrail.com.au/glossary-of-train-speak#gloss_Z

Recommended reading

"Corridor conundrum", *Trains* magazine (US), April 2014, pages 24-35, by Fred Frailey. This article provides an eye-opening view of the operational problems of Amtrak's US North Eastern corridor line, and of possible solutions with impossible price tags.

Recommended website

For a real time view of live signaling information in Britain, view www.opentraintimes.com and click on "Maps".

Electric Auckland

The first Auckland suburban electric trains commenced public operation on Sunday 27 April from Britomart (City) to Onehunga with free, publicity trips. Regular, scheduled trips commenced next day, Monday 28 April. There seems, however, to be no change to the timetable. Electric operation will gradually be extended to other lines, as far as Swanson and Papkura, by July 2015.

Maxx Auckland

No services operated on Good Friday. On other days of the Easter weekend, trains on the entire network were replaced by buses due to trackwork.

Auckland Tram

The Auckland tourist tram loop is currently closed while urban redevelopment takes place in the area. It will re-open in October.

Chile

The recent earthquakes in Chile and devastating fire in Valpariso have not affected the railways of Chile or the urban elevators in Valpariso.

Thanks to David Beres, Ian Brady, David Cranney, Scott Ferris, Peter Hobbs, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, James Ng, Samuel Rachdi, Len Regan, Lourie Smit, Roger Wheaton, Brendan Whyte, www.railpage.com.au, www.opentraintimes.com, www.theguardian.com/au, *Age* (Melbourne), *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Railway Digest*, *Trains*, *Transit Australia* for Rail news

BUS NEWS

passengers who might wind their watches back an hour (or in the case of mobile phones, wound back automatically), the last bus in effect departs an hour earlier than usual. In Melbourne, the last Nightrider service on most routes is normally 0530, however on this night the last bus operated at 0430 instead, potentially leaving some customers stranded until normal services resumed. Other than upsetting partygoers and hospitality staff, in some cases, all night bus services provide an opportunity to connect with the first train the next morning (for instance the 981 Cranbourne loop), and those relying on this connection could also be affected, especially as they are waking up in the new time period. An exception to this rule would appear to be routes that operate 24 hours on weekends, such as the Sydney Buses 380 or Hillsbus 610X, with extra services reportedly added to cover the bonus hour.

Australia Capital Territory

Anzac Day shuttles

ACTION ran special free shuttle buses from Belconnen/City, Tuggeranong/Woden and Gungahlin between 0400 and 0430 for those attending the Dawn Service at the Australian War Memorial on ANZAC Day, 25 April, with return buses 20 mins after the Dawn Service concluded. Free return shuttle bus services also operated from the Russell Hill car park and Majura Park for both the Dawn Service and National ANZAC Day Ceremony at 1015. Qcity Transit also ran a free shuttle bus to the event departing the Queanbeyan Interchange at 0430.

Groovin the Moo

Those attending Grooving the Moo music festival at University of Canberra on 27 April could catch regular Sunday services on Routes 900, 932, 934, 952, 958 or 960 to the event. Special free charter buses departed between 2100 and 2330 taking revellers to the five bus stations across the metropolitan area.

New South Wales

April improvements and new depots

An additional 225 bus services a week were added across the Sydney metropolitan area in late April and early May along with the opening of two new depots in Western Sydney. A media release highlighted the latest changes are on top of 6269 extra weekly bus services previously introduced by the Coalition NSW state government since March 2011.

Sydney Buses extra services from 27 April include:

- 324 (Watsons Bay - City): 3 additional afternoon peak trips between Edgecliff and Watsons Bay
- 352 (Marrickville Metro – Bondi Junction) received 117 extra weekly trips, with new services introduced every 40 to 45 minutes on weeknights and half hourly during the day on weekends. Previously no service was provided at these times.
- A supplementary school days trip departing Coogee at 0750 for Bondi Junction will be added on 353 (Bondi Junction – Eastgardens) from 5 May to ease loadings and cater for customer demand.
- 461 (Burwood – The Domain) now operates an additional 9 peak services in each direction. Services on 480 and 483 (Strathfield – The Domain) have been revised to ensure appropriate spacing with the extra 461 services.
- M20 (Gore Hill – City – Botany Shops) will operate 4 additional AM shoulder peak trips along Botany Road into Wynyard arriving between 0957 and 1043.
- M54 (Parramatta – Macquarie Park) has two new later weeknight trips at 2126 and 2156 ex Macquarie Park, extending span by an hour

There continues to be a lack of printed timetable for the Metrobus services provided by Sydney Buses, however full times are displayed on the Transport Info website. Updated flyers for M20 and M54 however have been issued showing the latest changes.

Transit Systems added 80 new trips to their 817 (Fairfield – Cabramatta) route on 28 April, with increased and extended services on weeknights, a doubling of Sunday services to half hourly, and extension of the weekend span until 2130. Combined with 800, a 15 min service is now provided along Polding St, Fairfield on Sundays, complimenting the existing Monday to Saturday combined corridor service.

A new peak hour 835 service was also introduced between Prarieewood T-Way Station and UWS Penrith, providing a

half-hourly link through the employment centres of Wetherill Park, Eastern Creek and Erskine Park, a connection into St Marys along with direct access to WSI TAFE and UWS Penrith for students. Journey time is around an hour.

The new services coincide with the opening of Transit System's new \$14 million depot in Smithfield, which will house 80 buses.

Previously on 1 April, Busways announced their new depot on Mullins Rd, Penrith had opened replacing the temporary facility on Castlereagh Road.

On 28 April, Hillsbus introduced updated timetables on Routes 620/620N/620X (Dural – City), 621 (Castle Hill – City), 622 (Dural – Milsons Point), 642/642X (Dural – City), 650/650X (West Pennant Hills – City), 651 (Castle Hill – Macquarie Park - City), 652X (Knightsbridge Shops – City) and 653 (West Pennant Hills – Milsons Point) to reflect current travel times following the completion of roadworks along the M2, with substantial reductions to AM peak journeys. The 0846 ex Macquarie Park on 621 has been deleted, but an additional bus added at 1616, plugging a gap of over an hour.

Brooks Reach residents have a new weekday Route 32 service to Dapto introduced by Premier Illawarra on 28 April, with services running every 20 to 60 minutes across the day, mostly conforming to an awkward 25-35 min headway to ensure train connections, with a few hourly gaps.

And lastly, Rover Coaches introduced a raft of improvements from 28 April including:

- More consistent and direct 160 (Cessnock – Newcastle) services operating via the Hunter Expressway with the majority of services now serving University of Newcastle and Mater Hospital
- Additional 164 services between Cessnock and Maitland 7 days, including doubling Saturday services to hourly and doubling Sunday services to every two hours along with a later weeknight round trip extending span by an hour to 20:10 ex Maitland
- A new weekday 166 service every two hours linking Kurri Kurri and Maitland via Pelaw Main, Stanford Merthyr, Heddon Greta, Gillieston Heights and, Saddlers Ridge
- 171 (Kurri Kurri Hoppa) will be replaced by the 166 in Pelaw Main with a fourth shopper return trip to Weston added
- Minor timetable changes to other services.

Opal rollout steps up

Following the successful rollout of Opal across the entire rail network in March and April, the smartcard ticketing system is also now accepted on all Transdev buses in the Hornsby and Turramurra area as of 14 April, along with selected Sydney Buses services out of their Waverley Depot (Routes L24, 326, 327, 355 and 361) from 28 April. Route 333 has accepted the tickets since late last year.

As a result of the rollout, PET (Pensioner Excursion Tickets), Family Funday Sunday tickets and MyMulti DayPasses were removed from sale onboard Sydney Bus services in the eastern Sydney from 28 April, with the remaining Sydney Buses routes withdrawing their sale from 1 June. Passengers must now pre-purchase these tickets from one of 1,600 ticket resellers across the metropolitan area, with a directory available that lists the outlet locations. Later in the year a Gold Opal card for seniors and pensioners will be launched to replace the current magnetic ticket.

South Australia

Buses to The Gardens

Adelaide Metro introduced a deviation of selected 404 and 405 (Sainsbury – Paralowie loop) services on 27 April to serve the The Gardens Lifestyle Village in Paralowie. Four weekday trips operate into the retirement village as 404R and 405R. Minor timetable changes have been implemented on 415/415V (Sainsbury – Greenwith) and 430 (Elizabeth – Sainsbury) as result due to through-routing with these trips.

Victoria

Early greenfields plans

Indicative plans for Transdev's new greenfields network, due to be introduced in the first half of 2015, have become available in the public domain following a presentation by the operator to the Glen Eira Council on 8 April providing an introduction to the operation and an overview of their improvement plans to service delivery and improving customer experience. Key to the greenfields plans is a new hierarchy of routes, as previously outlined in the contract documents (see March *Table Talk*). The operator plans to split services into 3 categories – 23 premium routes, 16 local direct services and 7 local coverage routes. A five step approach, known as CLEAR, has been applied to the network design: Clarity of routes, Levels of service, Efficiency, Amenity and Readability of Schedules.

Among the presentation was a copy of an early network map showing the operator's thoughts for overhauling the premium network. A number of major changes are being considered, which could see the orbital routes (which range from 76km to 115km) split into smaller sections, with underperforming sections no longer receiving high service levels and modifications to incorporate duplicative local services. The Doncaster Area Rapid Transit (DART) network would also be revised sustainably along with changes to the key corridors in the inner suburbs.

Key proposals include:

- The southern sections of the 216/219 along Williams Road and 220 along Orrong Road would no longer operate into the City, instead operating to Victoria Gardens Shopping Centre, reinstating bus services along Burnley St after 25 years. Both corridors would terminate at Elsternwick, abolishing the poorly used sections in Gardenvale and Brighton that duplicate other routes and the Sandringham line train.
- 232 services would skip Port Melbourne and extend to Altona, replacing the unusual and isolated Park and Ride terminus at the Mobil refinery in Altona North (adjacent to the former Paisley station)
- 250 and 340 services would be amalgamated into a single premium corridor along Grange Road, with 251 services upgraded through Thornbury to compensate.
- Ventura's 703 between Monash Uni and Blackburn would appear to have been joined to the Blackburn Road section of 901 between Blackburn and The Pines. It is unclear how this arrangement would work in practice, especially given the 703 operates from Middle Brighton currently.
- Remaining sections of the 901 would be split into two routes. The northern half would operate along the existing alignment between Broadmeadows and Greensborough, before operating onto Eltham via the current 902, while Frankston – The Pines section would now operate via Warrandyte instead of Blackburn, replacing the 364 and part of the 906.
- 902 trips along Springvale Road from Chelsea would no longer turn into Doncaster Road at Donvale, but instead continue north to The Pines and terminate, incorporating the 273. The northern half would commence at

Doncaster Shoppingtown, and incorporate the 293 through Montmorency as well as operating to Melbourne Airport instead of Airport West. There is no premium route suggested between Airport West and Gladstone Park, however this could be rectified if the stage 3 of the green orbital (Airport West – Werribee via Sydenham and Deer Park) was committed to by one of the major political parties in the lead up to the November state election.

- A split of the 903 is also being considered. The eastern half would now operate to La Trobe Uni instead of Northland. The north-western half of the service would originate here (but still serve Northland), with major changes beyond Essendon. The route would now operate via Highpoint instead of Keilor East to reach Sunshine. From Sunshine the bus would now operate into Footscray via Brooklyn, Yarraville and Seddon, instead of operating to Altona via Millers Road. This would replace part of their 223 service. It would also appear Ryans would be asked to give up their 468 service along this alignment in return for reinstatement of the exclusive right to operate along Buckley St, one of Melbourne's busiest rail feeder routes. It is not clear if this change would impact the proposed Brimbank network changes proposed by PTV
- Most 905 services would no longer join the freeway at Bulleen Rd, instead operating via Kilby Rd in North Kew first, replacing the 200 and 203 service
- 906 services are no longer shown as a premium route, with the extended 703 and 901 covering Blackburn Rd. The route enjoys strong peak patronage from Blackburn Road, so one would hope at the very least a peak express service would be retained
- 907 services would be through-routed with 216/219 services via Footscray and Braybrook to Sunshine. The western half of 220 is oddly left off the plans, despite also offering a premium route to this area
- Alignment for 908 services is unchanged
- 305 services along George St in East Doncaster would be upgraded to a premium route, however instead of running along Manningham Road, would operate via Doncaster Road onto the freeway
- 309 would be upgraded to a premium route between The Pines and the City, replacing the 901 service along Reynolds Rd.
- Belmore Rd and Johnston St services are also part of the premium network offering however it's not clear from the map how exactly services may change

The plans also outline the operators desire to simplify services through the CBD into three corridors – Lonsdale St, Russell St and Queen St. Those wishing to see the plans for themselves, along with plenty of lively discussion from bus and timetable enthusiasts can do so by visiting the Melbourne section of the Australia Transport Discussion Board (www.busaustralia.com/forum)

Western Australia

May changes

Transperth changes from 4 and 5 May include:

- Routes 400 (Scarborough Beach – Perth City) and 408 (Scarborough Beach – Glendalough) along Scarborough Beach Road will be renumbered as Route 990 adding to the series of high frequency corridors across the metropolitan area, although the number of full-length services into the City will be largely unchanged, with gaps of 30 mins on Saturdays and hourly Sundays. Services in peak periods will be boosted to every 5 mins between Scarborough Beach and Glendalough (currently 10 mins), and every 7.5 minutes during the interpeak (currently 15 mins).
- 422 and 426 will merge into a single service known as

422 operating between Scarborough Beach and Stirling via Karrinyup Bus Station

- The trial of the 456 service between Greenwood and Hillarys Boat Harbour has proved unsuccessful, and will be dropped, with passengers directed to use Routes 423, 441 – 444 or 458 instead
- Summer services on Route 458 (Whitfords – Scarborough Beach) will be downgraded to reflect current patronage. The weekday service will now only operate between the peaks, no longer offering afternoon peak services during school holidays and weekend services have been cut from half hourly to hourly and now finish an hour earlier around 1700
- An additional 558 service introduced departing Comet Bay College at 0723 to Mandurah, replacing the morning 741 school special. This service will continue to

John Tonkin College, Assumption Catholic Primary and Frederick Irwin Anglican School as a 586 service. Students from Madora Bay can catch a 584 bus and change.

- School Special 747 replaced with an additional 594 departing Mandurah at 1502 deviating via Mandurah Christian College

Timetables 61, 62, 68 and 77 have been reissued.

Thanks to: Hilarie Fraser, James Sinclair, Lourie Smit, Roger Wheaton and various contributors on *Australian Transport Discussion Board*.

AIR NEWS

International

Jetstar will introduce non-stop Brisbane-Honolulu flights departing Brisbane on Tuesdays and Fridays. A third flight, departing on Saturdays, will operate during the peak season from mid-December.

Qantas will operate direct flights from Perth to Auckland from 5 December 2014 until 26 April 2015. Departure from Perth will be at 2030 on Fridays and Saturdays, arriving Auckland at 0805. Departure from Auckland will be at 1030 on Saturdays and Sundays, arriving Perth at 1310.

Singapore Airlines will reduce its services to Sydney from twice to once daily from 30 May and decrease capacity on the daily service to Melbourne from 30 October. This is a reaction to perceived current overcapacity in the Australia to Singapore market, with Qantas, Jetstar, Scoot and Tigerair also flying on the route.

Domestic

Qantas will introduce new routes:

- Brisbane-Miles double return services on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, plus a single return on Thursdays from 14 April,
- Brisbane-Port Macquarie daily return from 1 May;
- Sydney-Hervey Bay return on Saturdays and Sundays from 17 May;
- Melbourne-Coffs Harbour return on Saturdays from 7 June;
- Sydney-Hamilton Island return on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 2 July plus return on Saturdays during the peak season.

Small Tasmanian airline **Par Avion** extended its services from 17 March to operate between Melbourne and Griffith, NSW. It departs Griffith at 0800 and 1530 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, arriving at Melbourne Essendon airport ninety minutes later. Return flights depart Essendon at 1000 and 1730 on the same days. Par Avion's only other route departs Launceston at 1050 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, arriving Cape Barren Island at 1135. Departure from the Island is at 1400, arriving Launceston at 1435.

Thanks to Ian Cooper, Victor Isaacs and *Australian* for Air news.

About Table Talk

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

Editor, Rail and Tram, Air, Ferry: Victor Isaacs, abvi@iinet.net.au, 11 Blacket St Downer ACT 2602.

Editor, Bus: Craig Halsall, craig.halsall@gmail.com, 27 Edithvale Road Edithvale VIC 3196.

Production and Mailout: Geoff and Judy Lambert.

Proofreaders: Agnes Boskovitz, David Cranney and Geoff Hassall.

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Membership of the Australian Timetable Association includes monthly copies of the *Times*, *Table Talk*, the Distribution List of timetables, and the monthly Auction catalogues. The membership fee is \$60 (Adult) and \$36 (Junior) pa. Membership enquiries should be directed to the Membership Officer, Michael Smith, at volvob10m0007@hotmail.com

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