



TABLE TALK

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TOP TABLE TALK – GRAIN TRANSPORT BY RAIL

GrainCorp: silo closures.

East Coast grain handling company **GrainCorp** has announced that it will close 72 of its 252 silos. GrainCorp says the closures will be of smaller silos which handle only 10% of its receivals. The remaining 180 silos handle 90% of its receivals.

Genesee & Wyoming: SA grain line closures

It is believed that SA intrastate train operator Genesee & Wyoming may close two lines in the SA Mallee wheatbelt by the end of 2014. These are from Taillem Bend to Tookyerta (near Loxton) and from Taillem Bend to Pinnaroo.

Brookfield Rail: WA grain line closures

It is believed that WA rail infrastructure lessee Brookfield Rail in WA was planning to close lines in the WA wheatbelt by the end of June 2014. This is as WA faces the task of getting the biggest harvest in history - worth an estimated \$5.3 billion - to market. **Brookfield Rail** and grain handlers **CBH** have been locked in a bitter dispute over access to Tier 3 lines, which carry about 4% of movements on the State Government-owned rail network. The contract between them expired at the end of June, and negotiations have been referred to the WA Economic Regulation Authority. CBH chief executive Andrew Crane told a parliamentary inquiry that the closure of the lines would imperil the WA grain industry's ability to exploit growing Asian demand. "The deterioration of the rail network in WA has been a looming crisis for many years. These are just symptoms of something that's not quite right here in the way we invest in the lines and maintain their viability. For the benefit of the state's economic development, the development and of the agriculture industry, its ability for it to capitalise on the Asian century, we have to deal with this issue," he said. He described the situation as a "ticking time bomb" as the lines continued to deteriorate without any clear indication of who was responsible for their maintenance. Tier 3 closure 'will degrade country roads.' Mr Crane said if the lines closed on June 30, CBH would have to transport 500,000 tonnes of grain in trucks rather than on rail. "There will be more wear and tear on the roads," he conceded. "We're going to do our best to minimise the impact on the community."

Brookfield's chief executive Paul Larsen told the inquiry grain transported on Tier 3 lines had been steadily declining in the past four years. He said Brookfield's contract was varied after a 2009 review of the grain freight network found at the time it was cheaper to put grain on road rather than rail. "The reality is grain on rail also requires help from the Government," he said. "This was recognised when the Government privatised the railway." Brookfield "remains open" to running Tier 3 lines commercially. Mr Larsen said the lease was varied to reflect a move to mothball Tier 3 lines after a \$120 million investment by the State Government in the road network was complete. Brookfield

remains open to operating Tier 3 lines commercially if an agreement could be reached which underwrote investment into the lines, he said. Mr Larsen told the inquiry his company had paid the Government for the right to negotiate access to the rail network, and it would not consider leasing the rail to CBH. Brookfield has a 50-year lease on the lines. In a statement to ABC News, Mr Larsen said the core problem was that road freight transport did not pay the true cost of using roads. Mr Larsen said, for the rail industry to remain competitive, it could not charge access rates that covered costs. He said Brookfield had invested more than \$2 billion into the railway to increase freight volumes. "Despite challenges with Tier 3 lines, over the last six months our rail network has supported a record harvest of 15.85 million tonnes, transporting grain on rail at an annualised rate of over 10 million tonnes to WA ports," he said. "This demonstrates that our grain freight network is capable of handling record grain movements."

A determination from the ERA on the floor and ceiling price Brookfield can charge CBH to use the lines is expected to be handed down in the next few weeks.

Qube Holdings expands

Logistics group Qube Holdings will invest \$50 million in a joint venture with Hong Kong based agricultural group Noble to build a new grain handling depot at Port Kembla, NSW. The depot, which will be known as Quattro Grain, will export up to 1.3 million tonnes of grain annually. Noble will use Qube Logistics' rail services to transport grain to Quattro Grain on a "take or pay" basis. Grain traders Emerald and Cargill have also agreed to use Quattro Grain and Qube's rail services, and other grain groups are also welcome to use the depot, which is expected to start operating in early fiscal 2016. Maurice James, Qube's managing director, has pitched the deal – which will create direct competition to the east coast's dominant grain handler, GrainCorp – as moving the company away from import-related businesses in both its container and bulk handling divisions. "The diversification strategy is deliberate to diversify into export-related activities," Mr James said, adding that Qube was expanding into bulk haulage and agricultural commodity businesses in response to demand for logistics services between regional areas and ports.

The general situation

by Victor Isaacs

The days of grain being a predominant traffic on Australian rural railways are now just a memory. In fact, current attitudes are that it is sometimes regarded as a marginal traffic. This is because of its very seasonal nature. Operators now do not look kindly upon maintaining lines or rolling stock which is intensively used for only a few months of each year. Hence, there is a tendency now to favour grain receivals at locations on the interstate mainlines, but not on grain only

branchlines. Similarly, the days of monopoly, State government-owned grain handling authorities are gone. These are now privatised. Current grain handlers are:

GrainCorp, the dominant grain handler in Australia with a network covering Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. It handles about 85% of Eastern Australian grown grain. It was originally the NSW Grain Elevators Board. It was one of the first privatisations in Australia in 1992. In 2000 it acquired Vicgrain, in 2003 it acquired Grainco of Queensland and in 2007 Hunter Grain. In 2002, it entered a joint venture with Cargill of the US, but on 29 November 2013 the Federal government vetoed a full takeover by Cargill. GrainCorp has a capacity of over 20 million tonnes. It operates its own grain trains in NSW and Victoria. It owns 18 or 20 (sources vary) 48 class locomotives, originally of the NSW Government Railways, and then of Pacific National.

CBH (Co-operative Bulk Handling) is the second biggest grain receiver and transporter. Its network covers the Western Australian grain belt with 107 receival sites, some at non-rail locations. It was formed in 1933 when bulk handling of grain was introduced. It is the only grain handler owned by growers. It has about 4200 members. Its receival and handling capacity exceeds 20 million tonnes. Its average annual receivals are about 10 million tonnes. 60% of its grain

is normally transported by rail. 95% of WA's grain is exported. Until 2010 grain trains in WA were operated by QR National (now Aurizon), but in 2010 CBH awarded its grain handling train contract to Watco, a US train operator. Watco has 17 narrow gauge and 5 standard gauge locomotives for this traffic, designated CBH class.

Viterra covers South Australia. It evolved from the SA Co-operative Bulk Handling and the Australian Barley Board. These were acquired by the Canadian grain trading company, Viterra in 2009. Then Viterra was acquired by the Swiss company, Glencore, in 2013. Viterra's Australian operations have two networks, in Central SA where it leases two grain train sets and on the Eyre Peninsula where it now has one grain train set (see June *Table Talk*, page 7 for news of its cutbacks).

Emerald Grain is the smallest player in this field with only seven silos in NSW and eight in Victoria (three at non-rail locations). It commenced operations in 2004. It is owned by Sumitomo of Japan. It leases three grain train sets. Last season it handled 4 million tonnes.

The large Japanese Mitsui company is now reported as wanting to invest in Australian grain handling, rail and port assets.

NEW RAIL AND TRAM TIMETABLES

Queensland Rail TravelTrain: 13 October 2014

From 13 October:

- The 1100 Brisbane-Rockhampton Electric Tilt Train (daily except Wednesdays) will arrive Rockhampton five minutes later at 1830.
- The 0750 Rockhampton-Brisbane Electric Tilt Train daily is significantly speeded up. It will depart Rockhampton 40 minutes earlier at 0710 and arrive Brisbane 75 minutes earlier at 1440.
- The 1545 Mon, Fri Spirit of Queensland (Diesel Tilt Train) will run on Mon, (Tues from 9 December), Wed, Fri and Sat, instead of just twice a week. It is significantly speeded up and will arrive Cairns 55 minutes earlier at 1545 the next day.
- The 0805 Spirit of Queensland Wed, Sun will run on Mon, Wed (Thurs from 11 December), Fri and Sun; instead of just twice a week. It is significantly speeded up. It will depart Cairns 55 minutes later at 0900, and arrive at Brisbane at the same time as now, at 0900 next day.
- The 1325 Tues, Thurs Sunlander from Brisbane at 1325 will no longer run. The 0900 Sunlander on Sundays will run only until 28 December. It will arrive Cairns ten minutes later than now at 1555 next day.
- The 0715 Sunlander from Cairns on Thurs and Sats will no longer run. The 0715 departure from Cairns on Tuesdays will run only until 31 December. It will arrive Brisbane 25 minutes earlier than now at 1310 next day.
- The 1810 Spirit of the Outback from Brisbane on Tuesdays will arrive Longreach 15 minutes later at 1915 next day.
- The 1310 Spirit of the Outback on Saturdays is significantly slowed down. It will depart Brisbane 45 minutes later at 1355 and arrive Longreach 95 minutes later at 1535 next day.
- The 0755 Spirit of the Outback on Mondays and Thursdays is significantly slowed down. It will depart Longreach 2 hours and 5 minutes later at 1000 and

arrive Brisbane 2 hours 45 minutes later at 1200 next day.

John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network: 22 June 2014

A new JHR CRN WTT has applied from 22 June, to co-incide with new ARTC and Sydney area WTTs (see June *Table Talk*, page 3). As usual, it is on their website. There are minor changes to a few freight trains in NW and West NSW. Look under Network Operations & Access or go to www.jhrcrn.com.au/Documents.asp?ID=67&Title=Standard+Working+Timetable+%28SWTT%29

Sydney Trains: 21 June 2014

Minor alterations occurred to a few South Coast Endeavour and North Intercity services from 21 June. The 1435 Nowra (Bomaderry) train now departs at 1507. It no longer spends twenty minutes crossing a freight train at Berry and arrives at Kiama at 1534, instead of 1522. The connection is then to the same train to Sydney, departing at 1555 – still a long connection, but not as long as formerly. The 0403 and 2210 trains ex Nowra now depart two minutes later, but arrive at Kiama at the same time as formerly. These improvements are attributed to the replacement of the Electric Staff system in this line by the Rail Vehicle Detection system (see June *Table Talk*, page 6).

V/Line: 27 July 2014

New V/line timetables will come into operation from 27 July. This marks the bringing into service of the main part of the Regional Rail Link. All Ballarat and Bendigo line trains will operate via the new platforms at Sunshine, the new RRL line between Sunshine and Melbourne Southern Cross and the Dynon flyover. These trains will no longer stop at North Melbourne. However, all Ballarat and Bendigo line trains now stop at Footscray.

The pattern of services remains the same, but, in the usual V/Line way, there are minor changes across the entire rail system. Consequently, there are also minor alterations to some connecting bus services.

There are few changes on the South West line, but the big changes there will occur late this year with the opening of Grovedale station (on the down side of Marshall) and again next year when the next section of the Regional Rail Link

opens from Deer Park West to Werribee West, and SW line trains are diverted to the new line.

There are few changes to NE Broad Gauge services. There are also few changes to NE Standard Gauge services, although the 1200 down to Albury now leaves at 1205 and operates five minutes later throughout.

Many Eastern line trains are slowed through the suburban area. On weekdays there are two additional services to/from Bairnsdale. Buses now depart Bairnsdale at 0425 and 1515, connecting with trains at Traralgon. In the down direction buses connect with trains departing Melbourne SX at 0813 and 1656, departing Traralgon at 1100 and 1920 respectively.

As the new timetables were obtained right on the deadline for this edition of *Table Talk*, analysis is not yet complete. If there is anything further significant, it will be noted in the next edition of *Table Talk*, and prior to that in *Table Talk Newswire*, the email newsletter (see end of magazine for advice of how to obtain *Table Talk Newswire*).

The new Public timetables are posted on www.vline.com.au

A special VLocity DMU train with a Ministerial inspection party operated on 18 June to inspect the Regional Rail Link.

Metro Trains Melbourne: 27 July 2014

Services will be increased on the Caulfield group of lines. There will be two extra morning and afternoon peak trains to/from Cranbourne. Between the peaks, 0900 to 1500, trains will now operate every twenty minutes to both Cranbourne and Pakenham, giving a ten minute services as far as Dandenong. (Formerly, trains operated every 30 minutes to Cranbourne and Pakenham, giving a 15 minute

frequency as far as Dandenong.) There will be 39 additional trains on weekdays.

There will be two additional trains from Frankston in the morning peak.

Yarra Trams: 27 July 2014

Route 112 from West Preston via the City to St Kilda, Fitzroy St via Gilbert Road, Miller St, Saint Georges Road, Brunswick St, Collins St, Clarendon St, Albert Road, Mills St, Danks St and Park St will be replaced by two routes. Route 11, which was formerly a part-time route will now operate full time from Victoria Harbour, Docklands via the City (Collins St) to West Preston. New route 12 will operate from St Kilda via Middle Park and the City (Collins St), Victoria Parade and Victoria St to Victoria Gardens shopping centre, Richmond.

Route 78 from North Richmond via Church St and Chapel St now operates full-time. Formerly, in the evenings, it was replaced by route 79, which at the southern end of the route, turned west along Carlisle St to St Kilda Beach.

Adelaide Metro: 20 July 2014

A new timetable for the Seaford and Tonsley lines comes into effect from 20 July, but it appears to be similar to the one it replaces, which was the inaugural timetable for electric trains.

TransWA: 30 June 2014

TransWA re-issued its Public timetables for all rail and most bus services from 30 June 2014. However, there are no changes to train services.

Thanks to Victor Isaacs, *Herald Sun* and *Illawarra Mercury* for Timetable news.

RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

www.rome2rio.com: Timetable resource

www.rome2rio.com is a website providing a major timetable resource. It covers public transport throughout the world – air, rail, bus, ferry and taxi – long-distance and local. It summarises what transport is available between any nominated places and provides links to the relevant detailed timetables.

www.rome2rio.com is based in Melbourne. It appears to have been established in late 2010.

Melbourne-Brisbane inland freight line

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) and Port of Brisbane have signed a Deed of Cooperation which provides ARTC with access to Port of Brisbane's pre-feasibility study which investigated a dedicated freight rail corridor from the west of Toowoomba Ranges to the port. The Deed sets out the relationship between ARTC and the Port of Brisbane with a view to progressing development works related to the freight corridor and Inland Rail. ARTC chief executive John Fullerton said the information will provide a vital building block to future planning of the Inland Rail program, and in particular the Federal Government's commitment to investigate a 24/7 rail link to the Port of Brisbane.

The Australian Government has tasked ARTC, under the guidance of the Inland Rail Implementation Group, to develop a plan for constructing Inland Rail over a staged, 10-year period, including detailed consideration of the most appropriate dedicated rail freight link from the interstate line to the Port of Brisbane. "Key to the program's success will be linkages to regional and metropolitan ports, opening up businesses to new and existing domestic and export markets – and that's why this Deed of Cooperation is so important," Fullerton said.

Port of Brisbane chief executive Russell Smith said the Deed of Cooperation represented significant progress in investigating a dedicated freight rail corridor to the port. "Dedicated freight rail access to the Port of Brisbane is a critical part of future-proofing Queensland and New South Wales' economic growth by expanding export capacity and reducing the logistics chain costs for our key east coast export industries, particularly agriculture," Smith said.

In June former deputy prime minister John Anderson AO and ARTC's Inland Rail project team visited locations in the northern area of the Inland Rail program including Ipswich and Toowoomba in Queensland, and Narrabri, Dubbo and Parkes in NSW, as part of a first tranche of stakeholder information and consultation activities. Anderson said the purpose of the meetings was to provide a brief to local community and industry leaders about the current status and plans for Inland Rail and seek feedback about the next stages and priority projects. "It's also an important chance for the team to meet with local stakeholders in person and get an understanding of the unique local opportunities and issues of each region," he said. "Inland Rail is a major, complex program and it will be important to capture local ideas and look for ways to deliver this project as innovatively as possible. We recognise the need to engage a wide spectrum of stakeholders and in coming months the ARTC Inland Rail project team will be creating opportunities for a range of groups to become part of our Inland Rail community. Local Councils and communities have been vital in helping bring Inland Rail to life through their support and advocacy and we recognise the community will continue to play an important part in the program's future success, particularly as we progress through its design, planning and construction phases."

ARTC has been tasked with developing a 10-year program to deliver Inland Rail under the guidance of the Inland Rail Implementation Group, chaired by Anderson.

Queensland Budget: Townsville-Mt Isa line

The Queensland Budget presented on 2 June included proposals for privatisation of various State assets to raise money. This includes a proposed long-term lease of the Townsville to Mt Isa railway (specifically from the junction with the North Coast line at Stuart to Mt Isa, 967 km, plus the branch from Flynn to Phosphate Hill, 66 km). However this will not take place until after the next State election in 2015. Money raised will be applied towards infrastructure projects, including the proposed Normanby to Dutton Park Bus and Train (BaT) north-south tunnel under central Brisbane.

Queensland: Rail freight

On 16 June the Chairman of the Queensland Parliamentary Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, Howard Hobbs MLA, tabled the recommendations of an inquiry into ways to incentivise the agricultural and livestock industries to use more rail freight. He described rail freight as shambolic, outdated, inefficient, unreliable and inflexible. Mr Hobbs said the Queensland government needed to act immediately if it was genuine about doubling the value of Queensland's food production by 2040 to respond to global food demand. The committee made a total of 45 recommendations on rail freight including:

- Creation of a bipartisan, high-level Freight Authority to be headed up by an executive officer
- Establishment of an independent Infrastructure Taskforce reporting to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to oversee the development and implementation of a state-wide rail infrastructure plan
- That the Infrastructure Taskforce give high priority to the development of a rail infrastructure master plan for the South West, Western and West Moreton lines to provide certainty for the agricultural and livestock sectors
- That the Queensland government work closely with the Federal Inland Rail Implementation Group to prioritise the Inland Rail Project
- That the Infrastructure Taskforce investigate the potential of a privately funded extension of the Inland Rail line to the Surat Basin coal mines and ensure such an extension provided opportunities for agricultural commodities to be freighted to the Port of Brisbane
- That the subsidy of livestock rail freight through a Transport Services Contract continue and enable greater flexibility and responsiveness to industry, including split loads and smaller trains
- That the subsidy for general freight continues until such time as the general freight becomes competitive and commercially viable
- That the benefits of additional subsidies for the freight of non-livestock agricultural products such as cotton, grain and sugar be investigated.

The report can be accessed at www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/committees/THLGC/2014/INQ-RAIL/rpt_rail_16June2014.pdf

Aurizon cutbacks

In late June Queensland based freight operator Aurizon cut another 100 jobs, took tens of millions of dollars off the value of its assets and coal terminal projects and mothballed 20 locomotives and 195 wagons. Aurizon also said its proposed capital infrastructure programs at the Dudgeon Point coal terminal and phase two of the Wiggins Island coal terminal, both in Queensland, were not expected to progress in the foreseeable future.

Sydney: Second Harbour Crossing

In an announcement on 10 June, NSW Premier, Mike Baird, indicated the State government's intention to sell off its electricity distribution network. Proceeds from this sale will be applied to infrastructure projects. The biggest of these will be a Rapid Transit line via a new Second Harbour Crossing. This will extend the North West Rail Link at present under construction from Cudgeong Road and Rouse Hill to Chatswood. This line would be extended from Chatswood to St Leonards and then in tunnel under North Sydney, Sydney Harbour and the CBD. There would be new stations at Victoria Cross, Martin Place and Pitt St. The project would then take over existing tracks from near Central to Bankstown. Trains will operate automatically. A frequency of every two minutes in peaks is promised. Other rail improvements in Western Sydney are also promised.

NSW Budget

The NSW Budget was presented on 17 June. Significant Rail and Tram initiatives funded were:

- \$400 million to identify the highest priority corridor for the introduction of light rail in the Parramatta area.
- \$2.8 billion (to 2024) to deliver a new fleet of around 65 intercity trains.
- \$1.6 billion (to 2019) to deliver light rail from Circular Quay along George St to Central station then to Kingsford and Anzac Parade and Randwick via Allison Road.
- \$863 in continuing funding for the North West Rail Link.
- \$103 million in continuing funding for the South West Rail Link.
- \$66 million for upgrading Wynyard station.

Sydney Trains: Rail Operations Centre

On 20 June NSW Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian announced investment of \$11.4 million in a new Rail Operations Centre. She said the centre will deliver significant benefits, including faster communication and much better co-ordination during incidents, which will ultimately help reduce delays and improve punctuality. It is expected to open in around 2017. Sydney Trains chief executive Howard Collins said the new centre will bring together the functions currently performed at a number of different sites across Sydney. He said there are currently 2,800 passenger train movements on Sydney Trains network each day, as well as 300 freight services, with around one million passenger journeys every weekday.

Sydney Trains: Paramedics at railway stations

On 23 June NSW Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian announced that paramedics are to be based at busy Sydney train stations in a move set to ease delays caused by sick passengers. She said 30% of delays on Sydney train services are caused by seriously ill passengers boarding trains despite requiring immediate medical attention. A team of 14 paramedics is now in place at the busiest stations in the morning and afternoon peak periods, to respond to medical emergencies. The paramedics will rotate through Town Hall, Wynyard, Redfern, Parramatta, Lidcombe, Epping, Strathfield, Sydenham, Hornsby, Chatswood, Glenfield, Blacktown, Bankstown, and Wollri Creek stations. "By providing a team of paramedics at key Sydney stations – we can quickly provide medical treatment to a sick or injured customer and get trains moving again", Ms Berejiklian said.

ARTC: Hunter Valley closedown

The latest in the regular closedowns by ARTC of the Hunter Valley coal network for upgrades was from 22 to 24 June. NSW Train Link passenger trains to NW NSW were replaced

by buses. Freight trains were altered and coal trains cancelled.

NSW Train Link: Newcastle closure

Local rumour in Newcastle is that trains between Broadmeadow and Newcastle will cease by the end of this year, in preparation for conversion of a portion of the line to light rail.

Sydney: North West Rail

On 27 June NSW Premier, Mike Baird, announced that the Northwest Rapid Transit consortium had been selected as the preferred operator to operate the NW rail line currently under construction. The consortium is made up of: MTR Corporation (Australia), John Holland, Leighton Contractors, UGL Rail Services and Plenary Group. This is the same consortium as operates Metro Trains Melbourne. The contract includes:

- Building the eight brand new railway stations and 4,000 commuter car parking spaces;
- Supplying the fully-automated trains;
- Building and operating the stabling and maintenance facility at Tallawong Road;
- Installing tracks, signalling, mechanical and electrical systems;
- Upgrading and converting the railway between Epping to Chatswood to rapid transit status; and
- Operating the North West Rail Link including all maintenance work.

The Premier also announced that the first Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) is now on its way to Australia from France and will be on the ground in October. It has been named Elizabeth after colonial pioneer Elizabeth Rouse. A second TBM will be working by the end of this year.

NSW Train Link: Major trackwork

On weekdays from Wednesday 18 to Friday 20 June and Monday 23 to Thursday 26 June buses replaced trains between Oak Flats and Nowra (Bomaderry). Late at night and on the weekend of 21 and 22 June buses replaced trains between Wollongong and Nowra. This is to allow track reconstruction between Dunmore and Berry and the replacement of Electric Staff working Kiama-Berry-Nowra (referred to in June *Table Talk* page 6).

From Monday 7 until Sunday 13 July trains between Sutherland and Cronulla were replaced by buses for "maintenance and upgrades" On the weekend, trains were replaced from Central to Cronulla and to Waterfall.

NSW Train Link: What's in a name?

The station under construction on the Illawarra line at 109 km from Sydney which will replace Dunmore (Shellharbour) station was originally going to be called Flinders. Then it was proposed to be called Shell Cove. The NSW Geographical Names Board has objected to both names, as the new station is not within the boundaries of either suburb. Other suggestions have included Shellharbour or Shellharbour Junction – but it is not a junction. A decision will be made next month. The new station will open by the end of this year.

ACT Budget: Canberra Tramway

The ACT Budget presented on 2 June included proposed expenditure of \$21.3 million to get the Capital Metro project "investment ready". The ACT government will seek expressions of interest to build and run the line in the first half of 2015, with construction to begin in 2016.

Victoria: Live updates

From 2 June details of Victorian train, tram, and bus services have been updated on the Public Transport Victoria (PTV) website at <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/live-travel-updates/>. This

incorporates information that is displayed on network status boards which are currently being piloted at three stations on the Frankston Line, as well as the more detailed information that is usually available on the 'Disruptions' tab of the website. The 'Disruptions' tab on the website is re-designated 'Live travel updates'. Train lines have been colour coded as per the colours used on the new draft train network map.

Melbourne: Proposed Rowville line

In early June the Victorian government released their stage two report into the Rowville corridor. The report can be read online on the PTV website -

<http://ptv.vic.gov.au/projects/rail-projects/rowville-rail-feasibility-study/rowville-rail-feasibility-study-publications/> The report mainly focuses on interim plans to upgrade bus services. Main rail recommendations are:

- A range of measures should be developed to continue improving public transport in the area in the interim period leading up to completion of the Rowville rail line.
- The Dandenong rail corridor upgrade (the recently announced Cranbourne-Pakenham Rail Corridor Project) and the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel (now the Melbourne Rail Link), upon which the Rowville rail line depends, should be delivered as early as possible.
- A preferred Rowville rail line project scope should be confirmed in greater detail and measures should be put in place as quickly as possible to protect it using appropriate planning controls.
- Should the government proceed further with the Rowville rail line, the next stage of the work should include more detailed patronage analysis, the development of a business case including a benefit-cost analysis, and an assessment of wider economic effects of the project.

Details of the recommendations relating to bus services are in the Bus Section of this edition of *Table Talk*.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Calder Park stabling sidings

On 18 June Victorian Minister for Public Transport Terry Mulder announced a \$65 million project to build new train stabling at Calder Park between Watergardens and Sunbury. The project involves:

- stabling roads, signals and overhead lines to store six trains;
- an amenities building and carpark for train drivers and maintenance staff;
- an upgrade to the existing power substation;
- an access road and security entrance to facility lighting; and
- CCTV coverage around the yard and perimeter fence.

Once the new facility is complete, two trains which are currently stabled at St Albans will be transferred to Calder Park to free-up land for the Main Road St Albans level crossing removal project.

Victoria: Major V/Line closedown

Work relating to the Regional Rail Link will cause the partial closure of lines between Southern Cross and Franklin Street and between Footscray and Albion. As a result there will be a complete replacement of trains by buses between Melbourne and **Ballarat** (with trains beyond to Ararat and Maryborough), and between Melbourne and **Bendigo** (with trains beyond to Swan Hill and Echuca) from 28 June until 15 July. **Seymour** trains will be replaced by buses between Melbourne and Broadmeadows. **Shepparton** trains will be replaced by buses for the entire journey. On the North East

line from Saturday 21 June until Thursday 10 July NSW Train Link **Sydney XPTs** will be replaced by buses between Southern Cross station and Broadmeadows. V/Line's morning and evening trains to and from **Albury** will also be replaced by buses between Southern Cross and Broadmeadows (with empty carriages between South Dynon and Broadmeadows). However, V/Line's midday Albury line trains in both directions will be replaced by buses for the entire journey. (A copy of V/Line's circular advising of these alterations is available via the Australian Timetable Association's July Distribution List.) Passengers on **Warrnambool** trains will be required to change trains at Geelong from Sat 28/6 until Tues 15/7 with journey times extended by up to 30 minutes, with railcars operating the service between Southern Cross and Geelong in lieu of the usual loco-hauled service. Metro Trains' **Craigieburn, Sunbury** and **Upfield** services via the Northern loop will operate clockwise to Flinders St via the City loop all day on weekdays from 30 June until 11 July. This is likely to be the last major closedown for Regional Rail Link works.

See the item above about the new V/Line Working Timetable of 27 July in the Working Timetable Watch section.

V/Line: Future

The Victorian Government has ruled out any privatization of V/Line despite freedom of information documents revealing the state could terminate the country rail operator "without cause". An internal memo between Public Transport Victoria — the statutory authority that manages Victoria's train, tram and bus services — and Transport Minister Terry Mulder reveals a termination clause in the new services agreement - established last year between V/Line and PTV. "One fundamental difference between the services agreement and previous franchise agreement is the ability of PTV to terminate the agreement without cause by providing V/Line three months written notice," the document says.

The Opposition said the termination clause sounded alarm bells for country commuters. Opposition public transport spokeswoman Jill Hennessy said Mr Mulder was "clearly putting the measurers in place" to sell V/Line. Transport Minister Terry Mulder said V/Line would not be privatised. A Government spokeswoman said the termination clause in the new agreement was designed to allow PTV flexibility to bring in a new contract sooner if necessary to improve service delivery.

Public Transport Users Association regional spokesman Paul Westcott said the change in the agreement was consistent with growing rumours that V/Line would be privatised. He said if the Government did sell V/Line it would be highly unlikely until after the 29 November state election because it would be "too controversial".

ARTC & V/Line: Albury line

The speed limit for V/Line passenger trains on the line between Melbourne and Albury has been increased to 115 km/h.

V/Line: Ararat line slowdown

Commencing 15 June down V/Line trains were slowed between Beaufort and Ararat, arriving Ararat five minutes later, due to "long term speed restrictions".

V/Line: Vandal attack

On Monday 16 June vandals cut a signaling cable between Bacchus Marsh and Ballan. As a result the 1547 Wendouree-Southern Cross, 1456 Wendouree-Southern Cross, 1408 Southern Cross-Wendouree and 1406 Ballarat-Southern Cross had to be replaced by buses, and the 1210 Ararat-Southern Cross was delayed by 30 minutes. Over a period of a few weeks, there were four attacks by vandals on signaling cables near Rockbank.

V/Line: Warrcourt Loop

Warrcourt Loop on the Warrnambool line was commissioned on 22 April. On 1 May, when special trains operated for the Warrnambool Cup, it was used for follow up moves. The first cross was on 7 May, when the evening down passenger train and up goods crossed there.

V/Line: Bendigo area improvements

Work has commenced on the new Epsom station on the Echuca line as part of a \$7.76 million Epsom and Eaglehawk rail improvements project. The station will be completed before the end of the year. Four trains each weekday will stop at Epsom when it opens.

Improvements at Eaglehawk on the Swan Hill line will enable longer, six-carriage trains to access the station. An extra morning Bendigo-Southern Cross weekday train will stop at Eaglehawk.

There will be an extra Bendigo line train in the morning and evening peaks when the Regional Rail Link project is completed in the first half of 2015.

V/Line: Adelaide overnight bus withdrawal

March *Table Talk* reported the withdrawal of the overnight bus from Ballarat to Adelaide from an unknown date. It is now believed the withdrawal was from 20 April 2012.

Daylesford Spa Country Railway

Daylesford Spa Country Railway reopened their line from Musk to Bullarto on Sunday 29 December 2013. Four services operate to Bullarto departing Daylesford at 0945, 1100, 1215 and 1345 (return services departing 1020, 1200, 1315 and 1445) and one service to Musk departing at 1500 and returning at 1520. All services are Sunday only.

TasRail: Hobart-Bridgewater closure

TasRail freight services between Hobart and Bridgewater ceased on 22 June when freight terminal operations were centralized at the new Bridgewater terminal.

TasRail: Future

The Federal Productivity Commission has recommended the sale of Tasmanian ports, rail and the Bass Strait Ferry Service. Its report into the state's shipping and freight industry highlighted the parlous state of Tasmania's economy. It found less emphasis should be placed on subsidy schemes and more on reforms that bring both national and state benefits and enhance competitiveness. The Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme, which has been in operation since 1976, has cost \$2 billion so far and will cost another \$2 billion over the next 15 years, the commission found.

South Australia: Budget

The South Australian Budget was presented on 19 June. Among a number of tough measures - blamed on Federal government cutbacks - the only rail measure to survive was expenditure of \$152.5 million to electrify the railway from Adelaide to Salisbury, but not electrification beyond at this stage.

Adelaide Metro: Millswood station re-opening

Timing of re-opening of Millswood station on the Belair line, promised in the recent election campaign, will be subject to studies of the site and will then be subject to a twelve months trial.

Adelaide City lockdown

King William St South and adjoining cross streets were closed to all traffic on the morning of Thursday 5 June as police laid siege to a city brothel to catch a criminal on the run, Rodney Clavell. The lock-down commenced at approximately 0100 when there was no traffic but lasted

approx 13 hours causing traffic chaos during the morning peak. The Glenelg tram line was closed between South Terrace and the Entertainment Centre and passengers transferred to buses to complete their journey as the last tram was well beyond South Terrace on the way to the Depot at the commencement of the siege. Buses travelling through the closed off area also had to be diverted.

Brookfield Rail: Cockburn-Robb Jetty line

A new crossing loop is under construction between Cockburn North and Robb Jetty, south of Perth, maintained and controlled by Brookfield Rail. Spearwood Loop will be at 26.5 to 28.3 km.

Fremantle port rail extension

Fremantle port's rail extension project reached practical completion at the end of June. It is designed to increase capacity, supply chain efficiency and productivity by extending the existing rail terminal from 400 metres to 690 metres. Intermodal Group is currently experiencing an increase on its Forrestfield service rail capacity to 14 trains a week. The company currently operates a number of rail

services between Fremantle port and an inland terminal located within the Forrestfield industrial area.

Veolia Auckland: October timetable

A new timetable will be introduced in Auckland towards the end of this year, probably in October. This will take advantage of the enhanced capabilities of the new electric trains, and will coincide with the introduction of electric trains on the Eastern line. Since electric trains commenced on the Onehunga line on 28 April, they have operated there to the old diesel timings. This was a decision to identify any problems before introducing improvements.

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BUS NEWS

Australia Capital Territory

\$1 early bird fares extended

The early bird trial that ACTION undertook during May was extended until 27 June, with special \$1 fares applying for those boarding a bus with a smartcard ticket before 0730 weekdays, a saving of \$1.84 on the regular adult single fare. The fare aimed to encourage travel outside the height of the peak and for passengers in the Parliament triangle to try buses before paid parking is introduced. The normal 90-minute free transfer period applied, meaning passengers making complex or longer distance journeys could travel in theory travel on these fares up until 0900 in some cases. The ACTION website advises the trial produced positive results and will now evaluate the success of the trial along with customer feedback to see if they may make it a permanent feature in the future.

New South Wales

2014-2015 Growth buses package

The 2014-2015 NSW state budget has outlined details for the next round of growth buses set to be rolled-out during the new financial year as part of a \$91 million funding boost. The budget includes replacement of 108 ageing buses along with a further 91 additional vehicles to deliver service improvements.

New routes include:

- 706 (Parramatta - Blacktown via Winston Hills and Kings Langley) – unclear if this is an extension of the existing 606 or an additional service
- 729 (Mount Druitt - Blacktown via Minchinbury)
- 858 (Oran Park - Leppington)
- 869 (Liverpool - Ingleburn via Edmondson Park)

Other routes set for frequency or span improvements in metropolitan Sydney include:

- 136 (Chatswood - Manly)
- 194 (St Ives Chase - Sydney CBD)
- 271 (Terrey Hills - Sydney CBD)
- 301 (Eastgardens - Sydney CBD)
- 348 (Bondi Junction - Wollie Creek via St Peters and Alexandria)
- 418 (Burwood - Bondi Junction via Marrickville)
- 521 (Eastwood - Parramatta)
- 525 (Parramatta - Burwood via Sydney Olympic Park)
- 573 (Turramurra - Fox Valley via Warrawee)
- 601 (Rouse Hill - Parramatta via Kellyville)
- 602X (Rouse Hill - North Sydney Via T-way and M2)
- 603 (Rouse Hill - Glenhaven)

- 607X (Rouse Hill - Sydney CBD via T-way and M2)
- 612X (Kellyville - Milsons Point via M2)
- 615X (Kellyville - Sydney CBD via M2)
- 616X (Kellyville Ridge - Sydney CBD via M2)
- 617X (Rouse Hill - Sydney CBD via T-way and M2)
- 619 (Castle Hill - Macquarie Park via M2)
- 688 (Emu Heights - Emu Plains and Penrith)
- 945 (Hurstville - Bankstown)
- L80 (Dee Why - Sydney CBD)
- L88 (Avalon - Sydney CBD)
- L94 & X94 (La Perouse - Sydney CBD)
- M52 (Parramatta - Sydney CBD)
- M60 (Parramatta - Hornsby via Castle Hill)
- M91 (Hurstville - Parramatta via Padstow, Bankstown and Chester Hill)
- T63 (Rouse Hill - Parramatta via Glenwood and T-way)
- T65 (Rouse Hill - Parramatta via T-way)
- T80 (Parramatta - Liverpool via T-way)
- X40 (Clovelly - Sydney CBD).

The Hunter region will see the introduction of Route 189 (Thornton Station - Stockland Green Hills via Chisholm) along with improvements on 263 (Cameron Park - Charlestown) & 267 (West Wallsend - Stockland Glendale).

Residents in the Illawarra district will gain 41U (Dapto to University of Wollongong) along with 52 (Flinders - Shell Cove).

The growth buses list features several corridors outlined for short-term improvements as part of the state government's *Sydney's Bus Future* plan released late last year however it is unclear if any of recommended route changes will take place over coming months or whether the funding only covers increases on the existing network for now, to at least partially begin to deliver the plan.

Sydney Olympic Park network changes

Online travel advice for the Super Rugby match at ANZ stadium on 28 June noted that Special Event Routes 2B (Glebe via Gladesville) and 3 (Macquarie via Ryde and Macquarie Park) would no longer be operating from that weekend onwards due to historically low passenger loadings. Passengers boarding 2B at Gladesville Hospital were advised to take any Victoria Rd bus and connect at the stop at Hepburn St, while those previously using route 3 can either catch 1A or 1B along Lane Cove Rd or alternatively make use of train services from Macquarie Park to Epping, where they can change to a service onto Olympic Park. It is

believed that this change will apply for all future special events held at Sydney Olympic Park.

Forest improvements

Forest introduced new timetables across their network on 30 June, with new timetable booklets available for:

- 194 (St Ives Chase – City)
- 195 (Gordon – St Ives Chase), 196 (Gordon – Mona Vale) & 197 (Macquarie Uni – Mona Vale)
- 260 (Terry Hills – North Sydney)
- 270/L70 (Terry Hills – City), 271 (Austlink Business Park – City) & 274 (Davidson – City)
- 277 (Castle Cove – Chatswood) & 278 (Killarney Heights – Chatswood)
- 279 (Chatswood – Frenchs Forest), 281 (Chatswood – Davidson), 282/3 (Chatswood – Belrose) & 284 (Chatswood – Duffys Forest)
- 280 (Chatswood – Warringah Mall)

Key changes include:

- Additional peak services on 194 (St Ives Chase – City), 270 (Terry Hills – City) & 271 (Austlink Business Park – City)
- Additional three afternoon peak services on 260 departing North Sydney for Terry Hills, with span extended from 1700 – 1840 to 1610 – 1910. Services also retimed to better meet employee knock-off times
- The last 274 now departs the City for Davidson at 1910 instead of 1830, with evening 271 services also retimed to better meet Davidson connections
- Daytime weekend services on 278 (Killarney Heights – Chatswood) replaced with the Killarney Heights shuttle bus that previously only operated during weekday inter-peak times. Services run every 20 mins connecting with onward services to Chatswood, City and Warringah Mall at Jamieson Square in Forestville. This is a significant boost for local residents, with services previously hourly on Saturdays and every 2 to 3 hours on Sundays.
- Thursday night shopping trips on 280 between Warringah Mall and Forestway Centre now run Monday to Friday, extending span by over 2 hours until 20:49 ex Forestway Centre and until 21:15 ex Warringah Mall
- Sunday services on 280 (Warringah Mall - Chatswood) now operate every 30 mins instead of hourly

The timetable changes see Forest timetables issued in the Transport NSW format for the first time, replacing the former fold-out pocket timetables. Footnotes indicating connecting services at Jamieson Square and Forestway Centre do not appear to be as widespread as in previous editions although presumably drivers will continue to wait for relevant connections where appropriate. An improvement to the route maps sees route lines drawn in using a greatly expanded colour palette, rather than trying to use several different shades of blue, black and grey which will no doubt improve contrast, especially for vision impaired customers. The generic blurb regarding pre-paid stops is used, which unfortunately doesn't highlight the various suburban locations that Forest asks passengers to go 'cashless' including Chatswood, Gordon, Mona Vale and Warringah Mall, although this information was absent from the July 2013 timetables in the Forest's variation of the TransitGraphics format as well.

SanLink boost

An improved timetable on Transdev's 589 (Hornsby – Seventh Day Adventist Hospital (the SAN)) 'SanLink' service commenced on 30 June. On weekdays, three additional morning trips along with an extra afternoon bus have been added in both directions, eliminating the previous four-hour gap between 0830/0900 & 1230/1300, as well as offering a trip an hour later, leaving the SAN at 1900. Saturday services now extend from Thornleigh to Seventh Day Adventist Hospital with an additional trip added around

midday, with five trips now running in each direction. Services on 573 (Turramurra – Fox Valley) which also serves the SAN are unchanged.

Hunter Valley upgrades

Hunter Valley Coaches introduced a new 189 service on 30 June, linking Rutherford and Aberglasslyn, providing service to McKeachies Run residents. Services run approximately hourly Monday to Saturday and every two hours on Sundays. Timed connections are offered with Route 181 (Aberglasslyn – Woodberry via Rutherford Shops and Maitland).

Weekend services on 278 (Morisset – Silverwater) & 279 (Morisset – Sunshine) have been boosted with a two-hourly service now operating on Saturdays and three new Sunday services.

Additional weekday and new Saturday services will also be introduced on route 280 between Cooranbong & Morisset, with some trips also operating via Morisset Industrial Area.

Revised timetables were also introduced on Routes 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 145, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 187, 192, 260, 261, 262, 263, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 273, 274, 275, 276, 278, 279 & 280.

Region 2 updates

Interline issued new timetables across region 2 on 1 June as part of their takeover of services previously provided by Busabout, although only minor changes were implemented.

Further advice appeared on their website in late June advising that due to minor upgrades to the timetable on 1 July some timetabled services from Westfield Liverpool may not continue to your destination and passengers should any Interline bus to Liverpool Station in time to connect with your required service. It is assumed the later changes are the result of a revised roster.

Regions 2 and 15 – a short history

Robert Henderson has kindly provided the following short history of the development of bus companies in south-western Sydney which saw another chapter in June when Busabout (now 100% owned by the Calabros family) took over region 15 buses in Campbelltown from Busways and Ingleburn Bus Service trading as Interline assumed full operation of services in region 2, ending their joint partnership in the area with Busabout.

Nevilles

The Neville family first became involved with buses in the Liverpool area when they obtained Route 58 in November 1947. They took over Route 94 in April 1955. They later traded as Nevilles Bus Service. In 1994, the Calabro family took a 50% shareholding in Nevilles Bus Service and changed the trading name to Busabout. In 2001 took the Calabros got the remaining shareholding of Nevilles Bus Service. That ended the Neville family's involvement with buses in the Liverpool area, even though the legal name of one of the companies owned by the Calabro family is still Nevilles Bus Service.

Calabros

The Calabros first entered the bus industry in August 1951 when they took over Routes 40 and 41. Route 41 went to the Oliveris in December 1954 and Route 40 Westbus (Bosnjak family) in June 1989. In 1990 they also took over Hawkesbury Valley Bus Service in the Windsor district. As above, the Calabros bought into Nevilles Bus Service between 1994 and 2001.

Rowes

Dick Rowe, together with Roger Graham and Jim Newport, trading as Campbelltown Transit Co, took over Campbelltown Bus Service (which ran Route 93) in the Campbelltown area in May 1967. It was not until 1970 that the Rowes became full owners of Campbelltown Transit. In 1988-89 the various Rowe companies were rebranded as Busways.
78 – 888, 890 – 896 & 899 plus all school services.

Also, a few corrections on my item from last month: Routes 850, 870-872 were jointly operated by Busabout and Interline prior to 1 June, but now solely Interline. Meanwhile, Routes 889 and 898, as well as 883K, 884W and 894X, were also transferred from Busways to Busabout.

Opal rollout continues

The rollout of the Opal Smartcard on buses continued during June with the card accepted on Forest services in the northern suburbs from 10 June, followed by the Hillsbus network across the north-western Hills district from 30 June.

South Australia

Southlink industrial dispute resolved

The industrial dispute between Southlink and their drivers resolved in May with TWU members accepting an offer by the company following unofficial mediation by the State Attorney General and Industrial Relations Minister John Rau. The dispute had been on-going for a considerable period since January and included at times the non-collection of fares as well as stop work meetings and strikes.

Victoria

Over 3000 extra weekly services start late July

In the lead-up to the November state election, the Victorian Liberal State Government has announced the introduction of more than 3,260 additional weekly bus services across the state due to commence on 27 July affecting around 130 services, although the splitting of a handful of routes has likely inflated this number.

The changes are being made in conjunction with improvements to train services on the Pakenham, Cranbourne and Frankston lines along with changes to inner suburb tram services. A major investment in bus services just prior to the Victorian State election has become a tradition over the past decade, with the former Labor State Government also introducing significant bus improvements in the lead-up to the 2002, 2006 and 2010 elections. Interestingly, no mention was made of these widespread changes in the 2014-2015 budget announcements, and a look through budget papers only hints at improvements to buses in the Wyndham area to coincide with the Regional Rail Link upon opening next year.

The changes cover much of the metropolitan area along with selected regional towns. In addition to timing changes to meet the revised train timetables, changes also include network revisions in Transdev's operating area (who operate on a separate contract model), implementation of a new network in the north-western suburbs in the municipality of Brimbank, upgrades to local routes serving Melbourne Airport, additional span and Sunday services in Werribee and surrounding suburbs, along with changes to weekday frequencies in south-east to better harmonise with the 20 min weekday off-peak train services on the outer branches of the Pakenham-Cranbourne line, which previously received a 30 min service. Selected regional towns will also see improvements.

A raft of changes will take place on Transdev network as part of their first timetable change since taking over the Melbourne bus franchise in August 2013. Although these

changes are separate to the eventual Greenfields network due for implementation by the middle of 2015, one would reasonably assume these initial changes form a stepping-stone towards the new network. Early draft plans for the premium Greenfield network were outlined in *Table Talk* in May.

Significant changes from 27 July include:

- 201 (City – Doncaster Shoppingtown via Kew Junction) replaced by new 304 service operating via Eastern Freeway and Victoria Parade instead of Kew Junction, complimenting the existing 302 freeway service on Belmore Road
- 207 (City – Donvale via Kew Junction) truncated at Doncaster Shoppingtown and new alignment through North Kew to provide a high frequency corridor along Kilby Road with 200
- 219 (Gardenvale – Sunshine Park) now terminates at Sunshine South and no longer serves Sunshine Park & Sunshine West which are served by 903 and 471 respectively along with the new 428.
- 232 (Queen Victoria Market – Altona North) no longer operates via Port Melbourne
- 246 (Elsternwick – La Trobe Uni via Clifton Hill) no longer operates between Clifton Hill and La Trobe Uni on weekdays, removing duplication with 250
- 250 (Garden City – La Trobe Uni), 251 (Garden City – Northland) and 253 (Garden City – North Carlton) replaced between Garden City & City with new 234 and 236 services
- 270 (Box Hill – Ringwood via Mitcham) now runs Box Hill – Mitcham only with new 370 Mitcham – Ringwood service
- 271 (Box Hill – Ringwood via Park Orchards) modified to skip Tunstall Square and operate via Blackburn instead of Kerrimur to replace deleted 286
- 284 (Box Hill – Doncaster Shoppingtown) and 285 now terminate at Doncaster Park+Ride instead of Doncaster Shoppingtown
- 295 (Box Hill – The Pines) no longer operates to Box Hill, operating between The Pines and Doncaster Shoppingtown only
- 305 (City – The Pines) now only runs between Doncaster Shoppingtown and City during peak periods. Previously all weekday services ran to the CBD, with weekend services connecting with the 305 at The Pines. School peak Warrandyte Bridge extension deleted.
- 340 (City – La Trobe Uni) renumbered back to 350 with trips between 10:30am & 2pm removed.
- 366 (Ringwood – Croydon via Croydon Hills) and 367 (Ringwood – Croydon via Ringwood East) replaced by new 380 (Ringwood – Croydon – Ringwood loop service)
- Peak hour Warrandyte Bridge – Ringwood extension on 906 (City – Warrandyte Bridge) abolished
- 908 (City – The Pines via King St) now only operates between Doncaster Park+Ride and The Pines outside peak times, although retains SmartBus standard. Passengers can transfer to 907 to reach CBD.
- Changes in CBD termini and routing affecting Routes 200, 207, 232, 235, 237, 302 and 350 along with new 234, 236 & 304.
- Several routes have also been deleted to streamline the network, which either have significant duplication with other services or only operate limited services: 202 (Box Hill – East Kew), 203 (City – Bulleen via Eastern Freeway), 205 (Melb Uni – Doncaster Shoppingtown), 238 (City – Port Melbourne), 286 (Box Hill – The Pines via Blackburn Rd), 303 (City – Ringwood North via Blackburn North and Park Orchards), 313 (City – Doncaster Park+Ride via North Kew) and 315 (City – Box Hill via North Kew and Mont Albert North)

- New hourly Saturday services on 285 (Camberwell – Doncaster Park+Ride) along with full weekend services on 235 into Fishermans Bend
- Increased frequencies and later finishes on a number of routes to compensate for network changes.

The City of Brimbank will see the introduction of a major network changes as proposed for community consultation at the end 2013 as outlined in December *Table Talk*. Major routing changes include:

- 408 (St Albans – Sunshine) to operate a modified route in St Albans East and Sunshine North
- 418 (St Albans – Caroline Springs) replaced in Kelba by 421
- 419 (St Albans – Watergardens via Sunshine Ave) replaced in Keilor Lodge by 421
- New 420 service linking Sunshine & Watergardens via Sunshine West, Deer Park, Brimbank Central Shopping Centre & Kings Park replacing parts of 422, 451 and 454
- 421 (St Albans – Watergardens via Keilor Downs) modified to serve Kelba and Keilor Lodge
- 423 (St Albans – Brimbank Central Shopping Centre) modified to serve Deer Park North to replace parts of 451
- 424 (St Albans – Brimbank Central Shopping Centre) modified in Kings Park
- 425 (St Albans – Watergardens) to operate a revised alignment through Kings Park and Delahey.
- New 427 and 428 (Sunshine – Sunshine West) forming a loop service replacing parts of 451 and 454
- 476 (Moonee Ponds – Hillside) now operates through more of the residential sections of Hillside, allowing 460 (Watergardens – Caroline Springs) to operate directly along Melton Hwy with the exception of a school deviation
- Deletion of 422 (St Albans – Delahey), 451 (Sunshine – Deer Park North) and 454 (Sunshine – Sunshine West) services, although passengers can continue to access 400, 420, 424, 425, 427 or 428
- Improved frequencies and operating spans on a number of services in the region

Buses to Melbourne Airport have been streamlined and further improved to complement the previous introduction of 901 in 2010, resolving a long standing complaint of sub-standard public transport from surrounding suburbs. Routes 478 and 479 (Moonee Ponds – Melbourne Airport – Sunbury) now commence at Airport West instead, but now offer a combined 30 min weekday headway, a massive improvement on the skeleton service currently provided on weekdays. The hourly weekend service is largely consistent with the existing offering, although a second trip to/from Sunbury has been added. Passengers travelling from Moonee Ponds, Essendon or Niddrie can travel via the 59 tram or 477 bus to connect with the truncated routes.

A new hourly industrial peak service known as 482 has also been added between Airport West and Melbourne Airport, serving pockets of Tullamarine currently inaccessible by bus. Route 500 between Sunbury and Broadmeadows has been abolished, although TAFE students living in Sunbury travelling to Broadmeadows can interchange to between 479 & 901 at Melbourne Airport.

Growing estates in north-eastern Greenvale receive their first bus connection, with modifications and extensions to the existing 541 (Broadmeadows – Roxburgh Park) route.

Wyndham residents benefit from improved span on selected routes, while 439 (Werribee – Werribee South) has been modified to operate via the new Wyndham Harbour development. Sunday services will be added to 441

(Werribee – Westleigh Gardens) and 441 (Werribee – Hoppers Crossing via Tarneit), with all thirteen local routes in Werribee, Hoppers Crossing and Tarneit running seven days for the first time. Express running on 445 has also been removed.

A new 798 service will be introduced between Cranbourne & Selandra Rise estate in the expanding suburb of Clyde North, while several other routes will operate to alerted weekday frequencies to enable better harmonisation with the upgraded inter-peak services on the Pakenham and Cranbourne lines.

Regionally, Bacchus Marsh will receive a new network of three routes replacing the single town bus, while amended routes will be introduced in Hamilton, Warragul and Traralgon and surrounding localities.

A more comprehensive look at the specific changes will feature in the August *Table Talk*.

Rowville line interim bus upgrades

As reported earlier in this edition of *Table Talk*, the Victorian Government has released Public Transport Victoria's stage-two report into the potential rail extension between Huntingdale and Rowville. With construction of the line effectively postponed for several years until the completion of grade separations and high capacity signaling on the Pakenham-Cranbourne corridor and the Melbourne Metro tunnel project, the report also recommends interim upgrades to SmartBus routes 703 and 900 that could be delivered in the short-term. The 900 service follows the proposed rail corridor along North Road and Wellington Road, while improvements to 703 would aid access to Monash University for the eastern suburbs and parts of the surrounding science precinct, key travel generations of the proposed rail service. Previous upgrades in mid-2011 saw the introduction of a high-frequency 601 shuttle service between Huntingdale and Monash University which has greatly improved access for students.

PTV recommends the 703 (Blackburn – Middle Brighton) service be split at Clayton to avoid the major bottleneck caused by the level crossing on Clayton Rd, already due to be grade-separated in coming years. The low-patronised deviation to Forest Hill Chase during off-peak times would be discontinued to speed up travel times for students travelling to Monash University from the Belgrave-Lilydale line (this deviation was previously removed from Springvale Rd SmartBus services). Peak and inter-peak services on the north-south section along Blackburn Road would be boosted from 15 mins to 10 mins, while services along Centre Rd would be reduced to 20 mins. Upon announcing the report, Transport Minister Terry Mulder advised the state government does not support the recommendation to cut frequencies along Centre Rd, and that existing service levels would be retained.

Weekend and evening services along 703 currently fail to meet the SmartBus specifications as the service was introduced as a part of the original pilot in 2002, and unfortunately the report does not make any clear recommendations in resolving this.

Weekday services along the entire length of the 900 (Caulfield – Stud Park) would see an upgrade to 10 mins on weekdays (currently 15 mins) although no recommendations have been made to harmonise or upgrade evening or weekend services to match train frequencies.

The report also recommends improvements to bus interchange facilities used by 601 and 900 at Huntingdale and Stud Park along with further upgrades to bus stops and priority measures along Wellington Rd, although fails to

indicate if the limited stop pattern would be retained. There is also a lack of recommendations made to rationalise other services sharing the corridor.

None of the interim recommendations for bus improvements were funded in the state budget and have also failed to be introduced as part of the 27 July improvements, however it's likely the interim bus plans will form a pre-election promise by one or both of the major parties in the lead-up to the 2014 state election.

A bus to a campus with no students

The Liberal State government was left red-faced in late May when Nine News exposed the government had continued funding Route 670 buses to operate to the gates of Swinburne University and TAFE's closed Lilydale campus, which shut in July 2013 after state budget cuts to tertiary education had forced the institute to rationalise campuses. Buses had previously been boosted in October 2010 to offer a 15 min peak service on weekdays, eliminating the 1km walk for student to the nearby station and providing a link to neighbouring suburbs along Maroondah Hwy. The PTV website timetable was quickly updated to amend to show the route as terminating at Lilydale Marketplace, the intermediate stop between Lilydale Station and the closed campus, although at the time of writing the route map had yet to be updated.

601 to Oakleigh

Eastrans extended their 601 shuttle service from Huntingdale to Oakleigh on 17 April due to weekday rail replacement buses being in operation between Oakleigh and Dandenong as part of grade separation works at Springvale. Advice on the PTV website incorrectly suggested that students for Monash Uni should catch the bus on the south side of the station, however buses actually departed from the northern side of station on Portman St alongside Routes 802, 804, 862 and 900 which normally provide a link to the university from Oakleigh. This also avoided students needing to find their bus amongst the myriad of rail buses.

More Springvale works

The Queens Birthday long weekend saw further grade separation works at Springvale affecting road traffic, with Springvale Road closed from 8pm 6 June until lunchtime on 9 June. Northbound buses on 813, 814 and 902 once again diverted via Westall Road, however southbound buses operated as normal other than a detour to use an additional rail bridge on the down side of Springvale Road built as part of the project. Transdev once again operated a special shuttle bus from the northern side of the works site to Springvale Junction following the 902 timetable.

Works continue on constructing new bus bays outside the station, however buses on 885 have begun utilising the new overpass between Sandown Road and Lightwood Road in lieu due to a permanent reversal of the one-way direction of Sandown Road.

World Cup buses red-carded

A decision by City of Melbourne not to telecast any of the overnight World Cup soccer matches at Federation Square during June or July meant that PTV decided not to offer any additional overnight services for fans that choose to watch games at smaller public venues screening the action. During the 2010 tournament, to cater for the thousands of fans braving the cold to watch early morning games at Federation Square, special overnight NightRider buses were offered for those wishing to witness Australia's matches. Extra outbound trains ran at 2am in 2010 following one of the games with a kick off around midnight.

Recent Reprints

Further timetables have surfaced in PTV's new fold-out A3 format for reprints with lower demand for printed timetable material. Effective dates as shown on reprints.

- 439 (Werribee – Werribee South) – 2 May 2011
- 441 (Werribee – Westleigh Gardens) – 2 May 2011
- 443 (Werribee – South Ring Road) – 2 May 2011
- 472 (Williamstown - Moonee Ponds) - 22 April 2012
- 475 (Moonee Ponds – East Keilor) – 9 November 2008
- 484 (Broadmeadows – Roxburgh Park)
- 501 (Moonee Ponds – Niddrie) – 25 January 2010

Meanwhile, the standard booklet timetables for the following Transdev routes have been issued:

- 200/3 (City – Bulleen), 205 (Melb Uni – Doncaster Shoppingtown) 313 (City – Doncaster Park+Ride) and 315 (City – Box Hill) – 4 October 2010 (print date 0813)
- 201 (City – Doncaster Shoppingtown), 202 (East Kew – Box Hill) and 302 (City – Box Hill) – 22 April 2012 (print date 1013)
- 207 (City – Donvale) – 22 April 2012 (print date 0813)
- 215 (Caroline Springs – Highpoint) and 223 (Yarraville – Highpoint) – 18 November 2012 (print date 1013)
- 216 (Caroline Springs – Brighton Beach) and 219 (Sunshine Park – Gardenvale) – 18 November 2012 (print date 0813)
- 220 (Sunshine – Gardenvale) – 18 November 2012 (print date 0813)
- 232 (Altona North – Queen Victoria Market) – 18 November 2012 (print date 0413)
- 270/1 (Box Hill – Ringwood) - 22 April 2012 (print date 0813)
- 280/2 (Manningham Mover) – 4 October 2010 (print date 0813)
- 281 (Templestowe – Deakin Uni), 767 (Box Hill – Southland) & 768 (Box Hill – Deakin Uni) – 22 April 2012 (print date 0813) *NB: 767/8 are Ventura routes*
- 284 (Doncaster Shoppingtown – Box Hill) and 285 (Doncaster Shoppingtown – Camberwell) – 20 January 2013 (print date 0813)
- 303 (City – North Ringwood) and 309 (City - Donvale) – 22 April 2012 – (print date 0813)
- 305 (City – The Pines) and 318 (City – Deep Creek) – 22 April 2012 (print date 0813)
- 340 (City – La Trobe Uni) – 22 April 2012 (print date 0214)
- 600, 922 & 923 (Southland – St Kilda) - 22 April 2012 was reissued in February (print date 0214)
- 905 (City – The Pines) – 4 October 2010 (print date 2013)
- 906 (City – Warrandyte Bridge) – 31 May 2012 (print date 0813)

It will be quite interesting to see which timetables are produced in the traditional booklet format with the changes on July 27 and those issued in the new lower-cost format or a standard approach is adopted for all routes.

***Bus Editor's Apology** to our valued readers from SA, WA and QLD for the lack of news from these States in this month's issue, as well as the absence of regional news for NSW. Unfortunately, time constraints by your sole bus news sub-editor have meant that state budget news and other timetable changes, in particular on the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast have to be held until August.*

Thanks to: Tony Bailey, Jason Blackman, Ken Chapman, Damo Cooper, Robert Henderson, Victor Isaacs, Paul Kennelly, Ben Knight, Matthew McCann, Mike Marshall, Paul Nicholson, Peter Parker, Lourie Smit, Alex Smith, Knowles Tivendale, Roger Wheaton & various contributors on *Australian Transport Discussion Board*.

AIR NEWS

International

Philippines low cost airline **Cebu Pacific Air** will commence a service from Sydney to Manila on 9 September. It will fly four times weekly. Qantas and Philippines Airlines also fly this route.

Qantas is reducing services to New Zealand. One Melbourne-Auckland flight each day and one Sydney-Auckland flight each day will be cancelled from 26 October, and a daily Brisbane-Auckland flight reduced to five times weekly. Low-coast subsidiary **Jetstar** will cancel its thrice weekly Adelaide-Auckland flight from 24 August but will also take over the other cancelled Qantas services.

Since 29 April **Qantas** operated direct flights Melbourne-Los Angeles thrice weekly.

Domestic

Vincent Aviation has gone bankrupt and ceased trading on 28 May. **Qantas** has taken over its Sydney-Narrabri route, itself taken over from Brindabella Airlines when Brindabella went bankrupt. **Airnorth** has taken over Vincent's route Darwin-Groote Eylandt-Cairns. The fate of other routes from Darwin to northern mining sites is not yet determined.

Tasmanian Air Adventures is planning to operate a sea plane service from Hobart to Launceston and Hobart to Strahan.

Thanks to Victor Isaacs, Tris Tottenham, the *Australian* and the *Mercury* (Hobart), 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.

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Back issues of **Table Talk** are available on the Australian Timetable Association's website, austta.org.au, after three months.

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