



# TABLE TALK

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## NEW RAIL TIMETABLES

### Sydney Trains 18 April and 6 June 2015

A new Sydney Trains Passenger WTT dated **18 April** (Weekends, book 2) and **20 April** (Weekdays, book 1), version 4.10, has been introduced. (This is in addition to the ARTC, Sydney Freight and NSW Country Regional Network WTTs of the same date noted in the April *Table Talk*, page 1.) This simultaneity is not an accident – it is a long-standing policy. It could hardly be otherwise as the various railways have to pass trains from one to the other. It used to be an Australia-wide policy, but Victoria, seems to have pulled out of the arrangement, even though they run trains on ARTC track.

A new Sydney Trains Passenger WTT has also been published for introduction from **6 June** (Weekends, book 2) and **9 June** (Weekdays, book 1), version 4.15. In reality it is unlikely that an edition issued so far in advance will remain unamended before introduction.

### John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network 19 April and 7 June 2015

JHR NSW CRN has issued a new Working Timetable dated **7 June**. It is, as usual, on their website at [www.jhrcrn.com.au/Documents.asp?ID=67](http://www.jhrcrn.com.au/Documents.asp?ID=67) or just look under "Working Timetable". The only alterations seem to be to the length of some freight trains. However, the format has changed slightly. Originally, JHR NSW CRN, like ARTC, had individual links to the WTTs for each line. The last couple of issues have instead been one each for north, west and south. Now there is a combined WTT for all JHR NSW CRN lines. Maps of the network have been added. The maps differentiate between lines with timetabled trains, and those without. An endearing oddity is that Sunday trains are placed after Friday but before Saturday. Another oddity is the inclusion of a JHR "Work train" on Tuesdays from Narrabri West to Burren Junction. This train, in this direction only, is the only timetabled train on this line.

Following are details of the minor alterations to freight trains in western NSW in the JHR NSW CRN WTT of **19 April** (the introduction of which was noted in April *Table Talk*, page1):

- On Sundays, no 1847 (Southern Short Haul, SSH) Saturdays will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 0104 (Mon), Coxs River 0115, arrive Wallerawang 0118, depart 0144, pass Tarana 0215, Raglan 0250, Kelso 0254, Bathurst 0300, Newbridge 0349, Murrobo 0408, Blayney 0411, Polona 0424, Spring Hill 0432, Orange East Fork Jct 0442, arrive Orange

0447, depart 0452, pass Kerrs Creek 0527, Stuart Town 0559, Wellington 0632, Combo 0658, Geurie 0705, Wongarboon 0719, arrive Dubbo 0739 thence as tabled by ARTC

- On Wednesdays and Fridays, no. 1847 will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 0054 (Thu / Sat), Coxs River 0105, Wallerawang 0107, Tarana 0136, Raglan 0211, Kelso 0215, Bathurst 0221, Newbridge 0310, Murrobo 0329, Blayney 0332, Polona 0345, Spring Hill 0353, Orange East Fork Jct 0403, Orange 0407, Kerrs Creek 0440, Stuart Town 0512, Wellington 0545, Combo 0611, Geurie 0618, Wongarboon 0632, arrive Dubbo 0652 thence as tabled by ARTC
- On Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, no. 8148 will run as tabled by ARTC to pass Dubbo 1600, pass Wongarboon 1626, Geurie 1636, Combo 1645, Wellington 1708, Stuart Town 1759, Kerrs Creek 1844, Orange 1930, Orange East Fork Jct 1934, Spring Hill 1951, Polona 2001, Blayney 2010, Murrobo 2014, Newbridge 2033, Bathurst 2108, Kelso 2117, Raglan 2128, Tarana 2207, Wallerawang 2245, Coxs River 2247, Hermitage 2302 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains.

There were minor alterations to freight trains in the Griffith area of southern NSW:

- Pacific National (PN) freight Mondays will depart Junee 2010, pass Old Junee 2024, arrive Marrar 2045, depart 2120 (1000m), pass Coolamon 2150, Grong Grong 2241, Narrandera 2302, Yanco 2332, arrive Leeton 2347, depart 0117, pass Murrumbidgee 0147, arrive Griffith 0236.
- PN freight Wednesdays and Thursdays will depart Junee 2300, pass Old Junee 2316, arrive Marrar 2338, depart 0011, pass Coolamon 0041, Grong Grong 0133, Narrandera 0155, Yanco 0225, arrive Leeton 0240, depart 0325, pass Murrumbidgee 0355, arrive Griffith 0445.
- PN freight Mondays to Fridays will depart Griffith 0830, arrive Wumbulgal 0905, depart 1135, arrive Murrumbidgee 1150.
- PN freight Mondays to Fridays will depart Murrumbidgee 1220, pass Wumbulgal 1229, arrive Griffith 1245.
- PN freight Mondays to Fridays will depart Griffith 1345, arrive Murrumbidgee 1424, depart 1454, arrive Leeton 1525, depart 1610, pass Yanco 1630, Narrandera 1700, Grong Grong 1728, Coolamon 1835, arrive Marrar 1850, depart 1920 (1200m), pass Old Junee 1941, arrive Junee 1955 thence as tabled by ARTC.

# RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

## Major northern rail project proposed

The Northern Territory government will spend \$1 million over two years into feasibility studies for a potential new railway linking Tennant Creek to Mount Isa. "A new 600 km rail project linking these two centres has the potential to provide enormous economic opportunities, particularly in the resources industry," NT Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

"This rail connection would provide a standard gauge rail link to the Port of Darwin from north western Queensland via the AustralAsia line, at the same time as opening up access to a broad new area of the NT. Previous investigations indicated a number of mining companies in the Mt Isa area had an interest in shifting their exports of bulk materials through the Port of Darwin, instead of Townsville, if the cost of transport was right. Linking northern and eastern markets would provide incentives to explorers and producers to invest in the NT, creating jobs and driving money into the economy," Mr Giles said. We're investing \$1 million to investigate the possible corridor acquisition and construction of the rail spur. This business case is expected to take two years to complete. This is a project of national significance and the Australian government will be asked to match this funding in line with its commitment to developing the North. The corridor has the potential to include a railway link, pipelines and telecommunications infrastructure. There are significant potential cost savings by focusing on a multi-purpose corridor rather than treating these as individual projects. The proposed link may also provide the opportunity for a new rail experience for tourists if it could connect with existing passenger rail services such as the *Inlander* in Queensland and the *Ghan* here in the Territory. This would be a long term project with a price tag in excess of a billion dollars but its benefits would be exponential to the Territory and I'm keen to explore whether it's economically viable," he said

The Department of Defence has also expressed strong interest in this project. If an initial business case proves positive, detailed environmental impact studies, geotechnical investigations, engineering design, sacred sites and heritage clearances would need to be done to refine the project, costings and construction plan.

## Great Southern Rail sold

Great Southern Rail, operator of the Indian Pacific east-west transcontinental, Ghan north-south transcontinental and Overland Melbourne-Adelaide passenger trains has been acquired by private equity investment firm, Allegro Funds. Allegro founder and managing director, Adrian Loader, said "We want to grow the business and make it prosperous. It is our intention to invest in the carriages and to make the business a lot better."

## Perisher Skitube railway sold

Murray Publishers, owned by James Packer, and Transfield on 31 March sold its Perisher/Smiggins Holes/Blue Cow, NSW, ski resorts to the American company Vail Resorts. The transaction included the Bullocks Flat to Perisher to Blue Cow Skitube electrified rack railway. The railway is 8.5 km long and rises from 1120 metres above sea level to 1875 metres. All of the railway is operated by rack. Most of the railway is in tunnel, although the first portion near the valley station of Bullocks Flat provides very fine mountain views. Currently the railway only operates in the ski season from June to early October. As there is no road access in winter to the Blue Cow ski resort, occasional trains are operated as "Mixed" with an ex NSW Railway S wagon conveying food and other supplies up and taking rubbish down. The railway operates strictly according to the rules for rack railways of the Swiss Federal Transport Department.

## ARTC Adelaide and Junee Control centres

ARTC's Adelaide and Junee rail control centres may close in the next five years under a plan revealed by management on 31 March/1 April. They informed staff in Junee and flagged their intention to consolidate operations into a single centre at Newcastle. Around 50 people are currently employed at the Junee centre and their long-term future is unclear.

## Pacific National traffic

Pacific National reports that in 2014 its coal traffic overall increased by 5%: In Queensland traffic is up 8.5%, In NSW it is 6.8% down. Container traffic rose by 3.6%.

## NSW Train Link: QR code use

A leaflet advising alterations for trackwork on the Central Coast/Newcastle line on Sunday 29 March included a QR (Quick Response) code for internet access to the replacement bus timetable. This is possibly the first such use by an Australian railway of a QR code in their publicity.

## Sydney Trains: Going digital

From 1 May **Network Local Appendices** are no longer printed and will only be available on the RailSafe website at <http://railsafe.sydneytrains.nsw.gov.au>

From July **Weekly Notices** will no longer be printed and will only be available on the RailSafe website at the same web address. Bound copies of Weekly Notices dating back to 1933 will be moved to the NSW State Archives repository at Kingswood.

## New South Wales: Railways and heavy rain do not go well together

### Sydney

Since 1855 railways in the greater Sydney area have suffered from time to time from extreme rainfall. This was the case again on the afternoon of 21 April when the **Sydney Trains** lines from Chatswood to Hornsby and Edgecliff to Bondi were closed. On 22 April there were delays across the entire network as storms continued and repairs commenced. Lewisham and Bardwell Park stations were flooded. **ARTC's** Sydney Metropolitan Freight Network into Port Botany also experienced widespread but localised surface flooding, but operations resumed quickly.

The next ferocious storm, on the afternoon of 25 April, caused the closure of the Chatswood-Hornsby line, but only for a short time.

### Newcastle area

On 21 April **Transport for NSW's** line north of Wyong was closed as were **ARTC's** Hunter Valley lines. **NSW Train Link** services from Gosford to Hamilton, Hamilton to Scone and Dungog and Oak Flats to Kiama were stopped. Long-distance trains between Taree and Sydney and v.v. were replaced by buses, as were NW services. One XPT set was trapped in Maitland yard and two sets caught north of Taree doing shuttles from there to the north. Although the situation in Sydney was very serious, the centre of the storm was in Newcastle. Dungog on the North Coast line was particularly seriously affected. Initial track inspections by **ARTC** indicated more than 18 sites with significant washaways or landslips requiring significant reinstatement works. One of these landslips was a large embankment, approximately 8m high and 75m in length, washed out and across the rail line. The damage was worse than the impacts of the 2007 floods in the region. On 24 April ARTC spokesperson Jane Lavender-Baker said efforts to repair the lines had been hampered by further flooding. "All trains, be they coal, freight or passenger trains that would operate on the Hunter Valley network, are suspended," she said. "Floodwaters remain

high and the flood gates have been closed at Maitland, which means we have seen more water move onto the track." She said a line to the Newcastle port could open soon, but it would take much longer to fix the main Sydney-to-Brisbane line through the devastated town of Dungog, which was damaged by floods and landslides.

Passenger and freight services on the North Coast and Hunter Valley lines ceased until at least 26 April. One estimate was that it might take a month to repair the North Coast line.

## Victoria: Information for Google maps and apps

Public transport timetable information will be released to Google Maps and other apps in General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) format. While timetable information is already available in Application Programming Interface (API) format, GTFS is the format preferred by Google and most other app developers. Google has public transport information for other major cities on their maps application. However, due to local timetable data not being available in its preferred format, it has never integrated Victorian-specific information. The data is available on the Data Victoria website, [www.data.vic.gov.au/data/dataset/ptv-timetable-and-geographic-information-2015-gtfs](http://www.data.vic.gov.au/data/dataset/ptv-timetable-and-geographic-information-2015-gtfs)

Public Transport Victoria will hold an open access event for developers in mid-2015. This will consist of a series of data innovation events and workshops which will enable developers to get an understanding of public transport in Victoria, with the aim of producing in-market digital products by the end of the year.

## V/Line: Maryborough extra trains

The small town of Clunes in central Victoria has become a second-hand bookshop centre. Each year it holds a Booktown Festival. To convey eager book buyers to this year's festival on 2 and 3 May, V/Line operated three additional services Ballarat-Clunes-Maryborough and return. The extra trains departed Ballarat at 0945, 1200 and 1530 and Maryborough at 1050, 1325 and 1635. This provided an opportunity for a day return trip from Melbourne to Maryborough, which on the usual timetable is not possible.

## V/Line: Shepparton replacements

On 2- 3, 5-8 and 11-14 May V/Line Shepparton passenger trains were replaced by buses between Shepparton and either Seymour or Melbourne because of scheduled trackwork.

## V/Line: Albury line woes

On Monday 13 and Tuesday 14 April the only V/Line trains that operated on the Victorian North East line were the 0635 up from Albury and the 1802 down from Melbourne. Other services were run by the dreaded buses. According to V/Line's circular this was "Due to a shortage of carriages". How can this be when the NE line timetable requires two locomotive and carriage sets and V/Line has three standard gauge sets to operate the service? Each locomotive and carriage set is given a maintenance and cleaning overhaul each month. This takes one week. In other words, there is only one week each month when there is a spare set available to cover untoward events.

## Metro Trains: Stony Point line woes

Services on the Frankston-Stony Point line were suspended and replaced by buses from 31 March for an indefinite period. This decision was taken after level crossing barriers failed to operate.

## Metro Trains: Dandenong line upgrade

The former Victorian Coalition government contracted with a private consortium to upgrade the Dandenong line. This arrangement has been scrapped by the incoming Labor

government, which will now proceed with an enhanced upgrading. Under the revised plans, 37 new high-capacity trains, capable of carrying 20% more passengers than a current Melbourne train, will be ordered - more than the 25 high-capacity trains included in the original proposal. The trains are expected to enter service from 2018, the government said. Four stations – Carnegie, Murrumbena, Hughesdale and Clayton – will be upgraded, instead of three originally proposed. Nine level crossings between Caulfield and Dandenong stations will be removed, instead of four formerly proposed. These are at Grange, Koornang, Murrumbena, Poath, Clayton, Centre, Corrigan, Heatherton and Chandler Roads. The government says that leaving five level crossings in place would have resulted in boom gates being lowered for up to 90 minutes in the two-hour morning peak.

However, it is believed that changes will cost the government \$30 million to be paid to the Rail Transformation Consortium, consisting of MTR, John Holland and UGL Rail, for the intellectual property it has put into the original project. The project's original cost was \$2-to-\$2.5 billion and the consortium would have received 20 years of availability payments for operating the line, from 2019.

## Metro Trains: Loop suspensions

On the weekend of 25-26 April all Burnley group and northern/western trains were suspended around the City underground loop for an "upgrade to the electrical infrastructure". Then on the weekends of 2-3 and 9-10 May all Clifton Hill and South Yarra group trains were suspended around the loop for the same reason.

## Yarra Trams: Patronage

There are approximately 3.5 million passenger trips on the Yarra Trams network every week, including more than 500,000 on weekends. According to Yarra Trams' website, patronage for routes in 2014 (in millions of trips) was:

Rank	Trips	Route
1	15.6m	109 Box Hill to Port Melbourne
2	15.5m	86 Bundoora RMIT to Waterfront City Docklands
3	15.4m	96 St Kilda Beach to East Brunswick
4	12.3m	112 West Preston to St Kilda
5	11.4m	19 North Coburg to City
6	10.2m	59 Airport West to City
7	9.3m	75 Vermont South to City (Spencer St)
8	9.1m	8 Moreland to Toorak
9	8.2m	16 Kew to via St Kilda to Melbourne Uni
10	7.8m	1 East Coburg to South Melbourne Beach
11	7.5m	48 North Balwyn to Victoria Harbour
12	6.8m	55 West Coburg to Domain Interchange
13	6.4m	67 Carnegie to Melbourne Uni
14	6.2m	72 Camberwell to Melbourne Uni
15	5.6m	57 West Maribyrnong to City
16	5.5m	3/3a East Malvern to Melbourne Uni
17	5.4m	6 Glen Iris to Melbourne Uni
18	5.4m	70 Wattle Park to Waterfront City Docklands
18	5.0m	64 East Brighton to Melbourne Uni
20	4.1m	5 Malvern to Melbourne Uni
21	2.4m	78/79 North Richmond to Prahran/St Kilda Beach
22	2.4m	Other Routes (e.g 11, 24, 30, 31)
23	1.5m	82 Footscray to Moonee Ponds

## Yarra Trams electronic timetables

From mid-March 2015, printed timetables at Melbourne tram stops began to be replaced by electronic devices showing the next three trams in real time. The devices are designed to fit into the same space as that used by the former printed timetables. They have been noted on Route 75 (East Burwood).

## TasRail freight

It is believed that Tasrail plan to commence haulage of bauxite from Conara Junction to Bell Bay at the end of May. There will be fairly small tonnages at first but in about twelve months time (subject to all the vagaries of mineral transport) there may be one or two trains a day, six days a week.

## Auckland Transport: Electrification progress

Over the four days of the Easter period, the complete suburban railway system was closed and replaced by buses for "important improvements and maintenance works".

A new timetable came into effect on the Western line from Tuesday 28 April. It is believed that from this change some trains are now electric. At present, weekday trains are still operating on the outer Swanson-Waitakere section which is not being electrified. The general frequency on the line remains at trains every 30 minutes, and every 15 minutes in the peaks.

The new electric trains are being bugged by computer software and braking problems, which have brought engineers out from Spain in search of remedies. Auckland Transport is trying to bring forward from August the completion of its rollout of its \$NZ400 million fleet of electric

trains. Some of the new trains are having to be shut down for their on-board computers to be reset, and a sophisticated new control system designed to prevent collisions "has a tendency to randomly apply" emergency brakes when passing certain signals. Meanwhile, the remaining old diesel trains still in service are suffering breakdowns.

## Auckland tramway contraction

The Auckland waterfront tourist tramway closed in early April for roadworks. It will be closed for 18 months.

## Christchurch tramway extension

An extension to the Christchurch city centre tourist tramway comprising a loop along Oxford St, Cashel Mall, Lichfield St and High St was opened by the Prime Minister, John Key, and the Mayor of Christchurch, Lianne Dalziel, on 15 February.

## Canadian restored

Operation of the transcontinental *Canadian* train resumed between Winnipeg and Toronto on 11 April restoring it for its full journey after being suspended on 10 March because of congestion (see April *Table Talk* page 5).

Via, the Federal government passenger train operator, is looking at building or acquiring its own tracks in the Windsor-London-Toronto-Ottawa-Montréal-Québec corridor to improve performance and allow for higher speeds.

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# LETTER TO THE EDITORS

**David Cranney writes:** I would like to briefly comment on the item "**Japanese high-speed and not so high-speed timetables**" in the April issue. That item mentions the new Hokuriku Shinkansen line and consequent reduction in services on existing conventional lines serving the same locations. The Hokuriku Shinkansen provides cities along the north-west coast of Honshu with high speed services from Tokyo and utilises existing Shinkansen tracks as far as Nagano, with new construction through Toyama and currently terminating at Kanazawa. Further construction in a south-westerly direction along the coastal zone is underway and possible routes are being considered to eventually reach Kyoto and Osaka which are located on the Tokaido Shinkansen line.

Construction of Shinkansen lines has inevitably meant the reduction or elimination of express services on parallel conventional lines. For example, on the heavily trafficked Tokaido corridor between Tokyo and Osaka there are no through express trains on the conventional line. While the fastest category of Shinkansen train (Nozomi) takes around 2.5 hours, a journey on the conventional line typically takes around 9 hours with several train changes en-route.

In some cases, Shinkansen construction has resulted in the relevant JR company relinquishing sections of parallel conventional line to another owner. Such lines are unlikely to be profitable with the elimination of express traffic and the new ownership seems to rest largely with local governments

and perhaps a private investor. These are known as "third sector" lines (along with the nationwide JR network and the traditional private railways).

So it is with the Hokuriku Shinkansen. The section of traditional line parallel to the new construction has been divided into four "third sector" lines, owned largely by the local governments through which they pass. These lines are unlikely to make much if any profit, being largely restricted to local traffic.

The practice of JR companies divesting themselves of unwanted sections of line also has implications for Japan Rail Pass users. The pass allows travel on lines owned by the six JR companies without the need for further payment. However some JR trains venture onto so-called private railways for part of their journey and a supplement may or may not be payable for that part of the journey. Furthermore, in a few cases JR branch lines may be orphaned when part of the main line is disposed of, leading to free travel for Pass holders to and from the junction station but to no other station on the "third sector" line. This applies to two such lines created in the wake of the Hokuriku Shinkansen construction.

If that sounds complicated, it is explained in detail with maps on the official Japan Rail Pass website <http://japanrailpass.net/en/>

# BUS NEWS

## Australia Capital Territory

### Network '15

ACTION have announced that amendments will be made to Weekday Network '14 as of 18 May, with overall weekday school day trips to drop slightly from 3,402 to 3,385 per day. The current network has been operating since 1 September.

Highlights include:

- Better off-setting interpeak 25, 26 and 27 services between Woden and Cooleman Court – currently route 25 and 27 services depart within 5 minutes of each other, creating long gaps
- A second route 161 service in the AM peak ex Tuggeranong at 0747 and PM peak at 1752, while a new route 164 providing a return service direct to City, providing more one-seat options for those in Monash, Oxley and Wanniasa, avoiding the Woden transfer
- 61/161 and 64/164 now travel via Erindale Shopping Centre, improving access for Monash, Oxley and Wanniasa locals and more frequent connections between Woden and Erindale.
- Blue Rapid Routes 318 and 319 to Lanyon now continue until last service, eliminating the Tuggeranong transfer at night
- More frequent morning Blue and Red Rapid services to meet demand, especially outbound to Gungahlin
- Revised run times to be introduced across the network, particularly on the Red Rapid to account for long term works on Constitution Avenue.
- Six dedicated school services will be introduced to meet demand at Trinity Christian School, St Anthony's PS, Wanniasa High School, Merici College and Daramalan College.

ACTION has also listened to feedback that morning commuter Xpresso express services were moved too early in September, no longer catering for 9am starts. Trips on many routes have moved later with some services have been consolidated. Routes 717 & 775 have been extended to improve coverage. Among the changes:

- Southbound 705 from Belconnen to Tuggeranong moved from 0642, 0712 and 0813 to 0714, 0742 and 0819
- Outbound 712 to Spence reduced from 4 trips to 3, with the 1735 and 1805 trips ex Barton merged into a 1745 departure
- 717 from Kippax & Higgins will be reduced from 4 to 3 in both directions, with 0645 trip canned, and the 0710 and 0735 trips moved forward to 0701 and 0722. Outbound, the 1737 and 1807 trips merge into a 1751 service. The route now travels via Macquarie, Aranda plus Jamison Park & Ride, providing a new direct ride to the Parliamentary Triangle
- The 0714 trip on 718 Xpresso ex Lanyon now departs 21 minutes later
- Inbound 720 ex Frarrer reduced from 4 to 3, trips consolidated from 0654, 0717, 0802 and 0837 to 0709, 0740 and 0814
- Inbound 719 ex Lanyon moved from 0620, 0651 and 0721 to 0647, 0714 and 0745
- Early morning 725 buses ex Cooleman Court buses now depart around 20 minutes later at 0702 and 0723, with the later 0746 trip retained
- Weston Creek 726 passengers see trips moved from 0649 and 0703 to 0656 and 0723, with an extra late bus at 0836 arriving into the CBD by 0915, which may suit those returning home on the 1740 service
- Inbound 732 ex Woden via Curtin moved from 0653, 0714, 0744 to 0721, 0758 and 0834

- Morning 744 departures brought forward by around 10 mins to 0642, 0714 and 0744
- Inbound 765 trips ex Tuggeranong & Isabella Plains moved from 0625, 0646 and 0716 to 0655, 0715 and 0744
- Inbound 767 trips ex Tuggeranong & Calwell moved from 0610, 0630 and 0650 to 0640, 0659 and 0725
- 775 now commences in Gordon at Woodcock Drive / Claire Dennis Avenue, travelling via Banks and Condor prior to Lanyon Marketplace, providing improved links to the Parliamentary Triangle. These areas are also served by the 318 and 319 Blue Rapid for those travelling into Civic. Inbound trips now arrive around 10 minutes earlier than previously.
- Extra 792 from Woden to Fairbairn Park at 0650

Updated weekday bus books will be available from 4 May from bus stations, ACT Public Libraries, Canberra Connect Shopfronts and the call centre. It appears that the trial of Nxtbus stop numbers on timetable pages in the Christmas Timetable Bus Book was a success, as these are now included on the PDF timetables available for download.

## New South Wales

### Busways new 729

On 19 April Busways introduced a new 729 service linking Blacktown with Mt Druitt via Kildare Road, Bungarribee, Great Western Highway and Minchinbury. Buses run half-hourly during peak periods, hourly at other times. On weeknights buses operate until 2230, on Saturdays until 2300 and Sundays until 2000. Trips are timetabled at around 40 to 45 minutes each way.

Bungarribee residents enjoy weekend buses for the first time along with improved trips on weeknights, while Minchinbury locals have access a two-way route offering more direct options and more weekend services. The service also improves access to Featherdale Wildlife Park, Pinegrove Memorial Park, plus on weekends to Arndell Park Industrial Estate.

Due to significant overlap with existing services such as 725, 726, 739, 739V, 737/9 and 739/7, a review of all services on the south side of Blacktown and Mt Druitt will take place in the near future, which will include community consultation.

## South Australia

### More O-bahn trackworks

O-bahn services between Paradise and Park Terrace were diverted away from the guided busway in both directions Sunday 26 April from 0545 until 1600 due to trackworks. Passengers at Klemzig were directed to stop 17 on the O.G. Road overpass, while stop 2 on Hackney Road (east side) was skipped - passengers were directed to catch 281 (City – Paradise) instead.

## Tasmania

*(Tas Correspondent: Ian Cooper)*

### Launceston GO Corridor

Following the success of the Turn Up & Go corridor between Hobart and Glenorchy along Main Road, introduced in November 2013, Metro added a similarly branded service in Launceston on 22 February. The new corridor is a joint partnership with University of Tasmania (UTAS). The new "Go" corridor operates along Invermay Road between the City Centre and UTAS's Newham campus via Invermay and Mowbray and combines existing Routes 6, 7 and 10 with a

renumbered 8 service. Similar to the upgrade in Hobart, much of the upgrade has occurred with smarter timetabling of existing services on the corridor rather than a significant funding boost.

Due to different runtimes between various routes along the corridor, Metro have not been able to market a single frequency to passengers, however the three key messages for weekday travel are:

- 10 minute wait inbound between Mowbray and City (outbound waits vary on a 10-5-15 minute pattern)
- 15 minute wait outbound between City and UTAS
- Maximum 20 minute wait inbound between UTAS and City (waits actually vary on a 10-20 minute pattern)

Most significantly, services via UTAS have effectively doubled from the previous half-hour service provided solely by Route 2. Weekend service levels have not changed with passengers generally having waits of 30 – 40 mins on Saturdays and hourly on Sundays. Route 2 services, which previously ran express between the City & Mowbray along Gooderich St on outbound journeys, have now been renumbered as Route 8, now operating all stops each way, however continue to operate every half-hour.

To enable the increase of services for the uni, Routes 6 and 7, which continue to a bi-directional loop of Alanvale and Mayfield, now operate via the UTAS campus all times (previously there was a single 7 service that operated into the campus at 1829 each night, after the last 2). Although this effectively increases travel times by up to 5 minutes in each direction, it appears that the extra runtime has largely been absorbed into the existing timetable. A minor alternation in Alanvale sees both routes travel directly via Franmaree Road and Alanvale Road, no instead of the residential streets of Mallard Place, Bronzewing Avenue and Teal Crescent

The amendment 6 and 7 via UTAS also provides students with a greater span of services than the previous Route 2 (and single 7U) offering. The first bus to class now leaves at 0620 instead of 0727, with the last bus into town now departs at 1905 instead of 1829, with counter-peak span also extended by 45 minutes at either end of the day. At night students must still rely on Route 10 on Invermay Road, roughly a 10 minute walk away.

Saturday services on 6 and 7 also travel via UTAS, providing a service within the campus roughly every two hours, although again more frequent buses depart on Invermay Road.

Minor adjustments were made to eight selected peak trips across Routes 6 and 10 from 15 March to ensure on-time running, with an amendment flyer issued. The online PDF timetable has been re-issued, however the February edition is still downloadable from

<http://metrotas.com.au.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/20150222-Launceston-North-Timetable-Final.pdf>

### Devonport updates

MerseyLink have issued updated timetables dated 12 January for the following services:

- 15 (West Devonport)
- 25 (Central Devonport)
- 30 (South Devonport)
- 40 & 45 (LaTrobe)
- 60 & 65 (East Devonport)
- Saturday Network – 15, 35, 40, 60, 65 and 80

It does not appear there are any notable changes – indeed the MerseyLink website was still showing the 20 March 2014 versions as of late April.

### Hobart updates

Metro introduced weekday timing revisions in Hobart on 19 April, including:

- 3 (West Hobart - Hobart): 0755 ex Hobart on school days discontinued
- 28 (Tolosa Park - Hobart): 0747 ex Tolosa Park moved 6 minutes earlier
- 42 (Ten Mile Hill - Hobart): 0643, 0659, 0733 and 0815 ex Ten Mile Hill commence 4 - 6 minutes earlier
- 48 (Fern Tree - Hobart): 0820 ex Fern Tree now deviates via Anglesea St and Macquarie St as 48A to serve South Hobart Primary School
- 620: Clarendon Vale - Hobart) and 625 (Rokeby - Hobart): New intermediate times in the Rokeby and Clarendon Vale areas. Buses on 620 and 625 now operate along a new 750m section of Tollard Drive, recently completed in association with the duplication of the South Arm Highway and installation of traffic signals at the intersection of Tollard Drive, thus enabling Metro to eliminate the tortuous routing through Diosma, Stanfield, Morrisby and Kanooka Streets. The previous routing was necessary because of the incomplete status of Tollard Drive. The new route will serve new house construction in this area of the City of Clarence.
- 640 (Opossum Bay - Hobart): 640P ex Hobart at 0800 has revised timings
- X1 (Bridgewater - Hobart): 0713 and 0735 ex Cove Hill Fair commence 6 - 10 minutes earlier
- X3 (Bridgewater - Hobart): Updated runtimes for the 0636, 0702, 0732, 0750, 0955 and 15:18 ex Cove Hill Fair plus 1205, 1405, 1541 and 1745 ex Hobart
- X4 (Hestercombe - Hobart): 0638, 0659, 0800 and 0853 ex Hestercombe commence 1 - 5 minutes earlier
- X9 (Brighton - Hobart): Updated runtimes for the 1305, 1515, 1620, 1720 and 1820 ex Hobart

Selected school routes have also been revised to take account changes in patronage observed during term 1.

The following timetables have been reissued:

- Glenorchy (Express): X1, X3, X4, X7 to X9
- Glenorchy (Tolosa St): 27, 28 and X6
- Austins Ferry: 42, X4 and X10
- Bridgewater: 110, 111, 117 to 122, X1 and X7
- Brighton & Gagebrook: 113 to 115, 117 to 122, 126 to 128, 697, 698, 800, X1B, X3, X7, X8 and X9
- Clarendon Vale & Rokeby: 620 and 625
- Shoreline Central & Rosny: 606, 608, 613, 614, 615, 620, 625, 630, 632, 638, 640, 642, 644, 646, 648, 650, 652, 660, 662, 664, 665, 668, 685, 668 and 694
- Opossum Bay: 638, 640, 642 to 644, 646 and 648
- Fern Tree via Huon Rd: Routes 44 to 49
- West Hobart: 4 to 9, 27 and X6

At the time of writing the CBD Metro Shop was only providing A4 printouts rather than the fold-up versions, however one would assume this is due to printer delays.

### Victoria

#### Back to the drawing board for Transdev

On 14 April ALP Transport Minister Jacinta Allan announced that the Victorian State government would not be proceeding with Transdev's proposed changes to bus services, and instead would be directing PTV and Transdev to come up with a more balanced network based on further community consultation. The Greenfields changes, which are a requirement of the contract, were controversially released to the public on 1 December, presumably signed off by former Liberal Transport Minister Terry Mulder however before the new government was sworn in or a Transport Minister was appointed. A brief consultation period then followed in the lead up to Christmas. The changes, as detailed in January's

*Table Talk*, would have seen major revisions to the local and City networks including route truncations, removal of duplication and significant changes to service frequencies, including service reductions in many suburbs. The orbital SmartBus network was also earmarked to be split up to improve reliability, reduce duplication and redistribute service levels to reflect current patronage, with a focus on upgrades in the east at the expense of service rationalisation in the northern and western suburbs.

A report published by the *Age* the previous evening to the announcement outlined the full extent of cuts in the west and north based on leaked internal documents, with some routes being cut by over 20%. Quoted weekly reductions included:

- 216 (City – Caroline Springs): Cut from 347 to 242
- 223 (Highpoint – Yarraville): Cut from 340 to 218
- 912 (Doncaster – Melbourne Airport) – largely replacing northern half of 902: Cut from 292 to 206
- 913 (Northland – Essendon) – replacing northern third of 903: Cut from 297 to 187
- 933 (Essendon – Altona) – replacing western third of 903: Cut from 298 to 187, not counting further reductions south of Sunshine at night

Ms Allan also outlined ALP's pre-election commitments to establish a Ministerial consultative group and new transport forums based around local government areas, looking at ways to expand and improve public transport, including buses, along with the \$100M funding boost to improve the network.

#### **Bendigo changes delayed**

Jacinta Allan, also local member for Bendigo East, has meanwhile announced that proposed bus changes in Bendigo due to commence in June with the opening of the

Regional Rail Link will now be postponed to allow community feedback to be incorporated into the network design. Drop-in sessions will be held concurrently with consultation for the proposed Bendigo Metro suburban rail service to ensure the changes to network will feed the proposed rail service. The second stage of consultation is due to take place during May with feedback provided during December to be incorporated into revised plans. In particular, Spring Gully locals were furious that their current direct service would be modified to take a cooks tour of Kennington and Strathdale to reach town, and no doubt this will have been rectified.

#### **2015 School Extras**

To cater for increased loadings due to the relocation of approximately 400 students at PEGS (Penleigh and Essendon Grammar) to the Infinity campus, PTV have funded unadvertised extras on Kastoria's 475, departing Essendon at 0748 and returning after school at 1545. It was reported on Local MP Ben Carroll's Twitter Feed that the trips were introduced on 23 February.

Meanwhile, Dysons used Twitter to announce to passengers new 572 services during school peak added from 16 March linking the growing estates of Mernda with South Morang station. The morning extras depart at 0713 and 0743, increasing frequency to 15 mins. After school extra trips operate at 1542 and 1642. Previously there was a large 42 minute gap after school between the busy 1527 and 1609 services.

**Thanks to:** Jason Blackman, Damon Cooper, Ian Cooper, Geoff Foster, Victor Isaacs, Phillip Boyle, Alex Smith, Lourie Smit, & various contributors on *Australian Transport Discussion Board*

## **AIR NEWS**

### **International**

Indonesian budget airline **Air Asia X** commenced twice weekly flights from Melbourne to Bali on 18 March. These will increase to five times a week from 1 May.

**Qantas** will re-instate flights from Perth to Singapore. From 26 June there will be five flights weekly. The route had been discontinued in May 2014.

**United** has increased its Melbourne-Los Angeles service from six a week to daily.

### **Domestic**

In 2013-14 38.7 million passengers passed through Sydney Airport, 31.2 million at Melbourne, 22.1 million at Brisbane, and 14.9 million at Perth. For each passenger, Sydney Airport made \$16.03, followed by Perth at \$12.47, Brisbane at \$10.94 and Melbourne at \$9.90, largely from car parking fees.

**Qantas** will introduce two additional direct flights a week between Perth and Brisbane, to a total of fifteen weekly each way.

## **BUS NEWS CORRESPONDENTS WANTED**

Are you interested in bus timetable news? The Bus Editor of *Table Talk*, Craig Halsall, is seeking correspondents to help with the supply of Bus news in each state. How about you? Help record our Bus timetable history and help keep members informed. Please indicate your interest in these new positions to Victor Isaacs at [abvi@iinet.net.au](mailto:abvi@iinet.net.au) or Craig at [craig.halsall@gmail.com](mailto:craig.halsall@gmail.com),

### **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. The deadline is the last weekend of the month, but contributions are welcomed at all times. ABN 74248483468.

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Back issues of **Table Talk** are available on the Australian Timetable Association's website, [austta.org.au](http://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](mailto:abvi@iinet.net.au)