



TABLE TALK

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TOP TABLE TALK – SYDNEY METRO

The first stage of the Sydney Metro from Chatswood to Cudgeong Road is expected to have a train every four minutes in the peak - 15 an hour. Trains will be fully automated.

On 16 November, NSW Premier, Mike Baird, announced the desired route for the second stage of the line, which will connect Chatswood to Bankstown via a new rail tunnel under the harbour and CBD. New stations will be built at Crows Nest and Victoria Cross (north of the harbour), Barangaroo and Pitt St, and new underground platforms at Martin Place and Central.

The planned **Crows Nest** station would be located on the western fringe of Crows Nest village, with access via the corner of Clarke and Hume Streets, and the corner of Pacific Highway and Oxley St. **Victoria Cross** station would be in the northern section of North Sydney's CBD. Access would be via the eastern side of Miller St, between Berry and Mount Streets. **Barangaroo** station will be part of the new development on the north-western corner of the CBD. The Metro development at **Martin Place** will be integrated with the existing station underground between Castlereagh and Elizabeth Streets. It will include "a world-class" subterranean rail interchange which means customers won't need to go to the surface to change trains. **Pitt St** Metro station is proposed below Pitt and Castlereagh Streets and north of Park St, servicing the CBD and the George and Pitt Streets retail precincts. The underground station at **Central** would link to existing intercity and suburban rail services.

Nineteen buildings in the central business district – some as high as 22 storeys – could be demolished over the next two years for construction of stations for the metro line beneath the city. Another 17 buildings in North Sydney and Crows Nest will be torn down to allow stations to be built for the new \$10 billion 15-km metro line. In all, 52 properties will be compulsorily acquired across Sydney.

While inevitably causing disruption in the CBD, Sydney metro project director Rod Staples said construction of new stations at Martin Place and Pitt St near Town Hall was akin to "keyhole surgery" compared with the massive excavation works required for the city circle line in the 1920s, most notably the station at Wynyard. "It's like having four major building developments in this area between Martin Place and Pitt Street," he said. Mr Staples said the project team had poured considerable effort into selecting the locations for the new stations in order to avoid heritage properties such as the Commonwealth Bank building in Martin Place. He declined to reveal the cost to the government of purchasing the buildings, although he conceded it would run into the hundreds of millions of dollars. The ground beneath Sydney's CBD has become akin to Swiss cheese over the decades as it is criss-crossed by tunnels for pedestrians, train lines and roads, as well as building basements and shopping areas. Mr Staples said planners were very mindful

about navigating the tunnels for the new line beneath the city. "You do have to weave your way through a whole series of constraints," he said. The main holes dug for the station at Martin Place will be to a depth of about 30 metres, before excavation work begins for platforms and tracks. The station will have two main entrances. Mr Staples said it was too early to reveal what buildings were likely to eventually emerge above the stations as detailed talks with developers and other businesses was still some time away.

The total cost of the second stage of the project was put at between \$9.5 billion and \$11 billion last year, which includes property acquisitions. However, the cost is under review because of additions such as stations at Barangaroo and either Waterloo or Sydney University. Two of the buildings in the CBD set for demolition are owned by Transport for NSW. The main construction work on the stations will begin in 2017 and will take longer than building office towers because areas for platforms and concourses have to be mined out of the earth.

Construction of the first stage of the metro line between Rouse Hill in the city's north-west and Epping is due for completion in 2019 at a cost of \$8.3 billion. That section will link to Chatswood on the existing Epping to Chatswood line. The second stage of the project via the CBD is due to open in 2024 and will connect to the Bankstown line, which will be converted to take the new driverless metro trains.

The government is deciding whether the Metro will continue via the Waterloo redevelopment area, or via the University of Sydney, on the section between Central and Sydenham.

Mr Baird and Transport Minister Andrew Constance also announced investigations will begin into potentially extending the metro rail from Bankstown to Liverpool. This could cut travel times to the CBD by up to 15 minutes and reduce crowding on the existing T1 Western Line and T2 South Line, they said.

A challenge confronting engineers will be the need to straighten curved platforms at 11 existing stations from Sydenham to Bankstown to cater for new single-deck metro trains. Unlike the existing trains, the driverless metro trains will need to stop at exact positions on platforms to allow for barriers to open for passengers. While train drivers will be sacrificed, the benefits for passengers will be level access and smaller gaps between carriages and platforms. In contrast, some existing platforms in Sydney require passengers to make a small step on or off carriages.

Mr Franzmann, Sydney Metro program development director, has said the conversion of the existing line to one that was capable of handling high-frequency driverless trains would be a challenge, especially given the rail corridor was more than a century old. The project team had to consider a "major overhaul" of all of the stations on the Bankstown line because of the desire to "achieve a metro product", which

includes platform edge barriers, better accessibility for passengers and lifts at every stop.

The environmental impact statement for the metro line from Chatswood to Sydenham will be released in the middle of 2016, while that for the conversion of the existing Bankstown line will be out several months later. The total cost of the second stage of the project from Chatswood to Bankstown has been put at between \$9.5 billion and \$11 billion and \$8.3

billion Northwest line from Cudgegong Road to Epping and Chatswood.

The existing Epping to Chatswood Line will be closed for seven months in late 2018 or early 2019 to make it able to handle the metro trains. However, the NSW government is yet to say how long the Bankstown Line will be shut.

RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

East Coast Very Fast Train

On 25 November in a speech to the AusRail Conference in Melbourne Labor infrastructure spokesman Anthony Albanese advocated the East Coast Very Fast Train. He referred to Japan's new super-fast maglev trains, capable of travelling in excess of 600km/h. He said that not only has technology lifted the magnetically driven trains to speed records but the construction approach of tunnelling where possible has altered the economics and efficiency of high-speed train travel. Federal Labor is arguing increased property values and "turbocharged regional development" could help attract finance for the development of a high-speed train link between Melbourne and Brisbane, as well as a rail link to a new Sydney airport.

He believes the rapid regional development along a high-speed Melbourne-Brisbane train line, via Canberra and Sydney, would accelerate development in areas such as the Gold Coast, Newcastle and Goulburn in NSW and Wodonga and Shepparton in Victoria. A VFT would revolutionise interstate travel. "It would also turbocharge development in the regional centres along its path, with stations proposed for Gold Coast, Casino, Grafton, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Taree, Newcastle, the central coast, Southern Highlands, Wagga Wagga, Albury-Wodonga and Shepparton," Mr Albanese said. "That's important for job growth in those communities, but also for our congested cities. Linking regional cities to high-speed rail will allow those cities to take some of the development pressure off our capitals."

Mr Albanese has introduced a private member's bill in parliament seeking to restore the \$50 million planning budget allocated by the previous Labor government to look at high-speed rail.

Pacific National: Freight Terminals

Pacific National is studying locations for freight terminals in outer Melbourne, Albury-Wodonga, near Toowoomba and west of Brisbane as part of its plan to increase rail share of freight between Melbourne and Brisbane to 50%, and as planning for the proposed Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Freight Railway.

QR CityTrain: Northern suburbs lines 2016 timetable

Draft timetables for 2016 for the northern suburbs lines were placed online on 2 November. TransLink is seeking feedback from commuters. These are for the new Kippa-Ring (or Moreton Bay) line expected to open in mid-2016, as well as for the Caboolture, Sunshine Coast and Inner North services. The proposed 2016 services are:

- Half-hourly Kippa-Ring trains will serve the new stations at Rothwell, Mango Hill East (previously Kinsellas Road), Mango Hill, Murrumba Downs, Kallangur then all stations Petrie to Northgate, then express to Bowen Hills,
- Kippa-Ring trains will run through to Springfield,
- Trains from Kippa-Ring every 6-12 minutes during peak periods (consistent with the current frequency at Petrie),
- A 55-minute journey from Kippa-Ring to Brisbane Central,

- 650 services a week from Kippa-Ring to Brisbane Central,
- Half hourly Caboolture trains which previously operated all stations to Central will now operate express from Petrie to Northgate, Northgate to Eagle Junction and Eagle Junction to Bowen Hills,
- Nambour trains, operating every 90 minutes, will also have the same stopping pattern as Caboolture trains. Previously Nambour trains ran express from Caboolture to Petrie, then express to Northgate, then all stops to Central. Nambour trains are now integrated with Caboolture trains and run through to Ipswich,
- Shorncliffe trains will continue to operate all stations to Central then proceed to Cleveland,
- Short runnings will start at Northgate operating all stations to Central, then proceed to Cannon Hill, giving a combined fifteen minute service between Northgate and Cannon Hill,
- Doomben trains will continue to operate half-hourly all stations to Central and Roma St.,
- Airport Trains will continue to operate half-hourly all stations to Central, then to Varsity Lakes.

The draft timetables are online at

<http://translink.com.au/travel-information/service-notices/63151/details>. Electronic file copies of the draft QR CityTrain 2016 timetables are also available from the December 2015 ATA Distribution List

Details of bus alterations are in the Bus News section below.

ARTC Train Control

From 20 July the areas controlled by Junee, NSW Train Control were revised. The new boundaries are:

- Sydney 1: Botany Yard to Enfield (exclusive),
- Sydney 2: Enfield Yard to Flemington Junction (exclusive) and to Leightonfield,
- Sydney 3: Leightonfield (exclusive) to Berrima Junction (exclusive) and Mittagong Junction to Braemar,
- Main South A: Berrima Junction to Harden (exclusive) and Moss Vale to Unanderra (exclusive),
- Main South B: Harden to Albury (exclusive) and Cootamundra West to Stockingbingal,
- Main South C: Albury to Somerton and Benalla to Oaklands,
- Stockingbingal to Parkes (exclusive) to Broken Hill (transferred from Mile End, SA).

Sydney Trains Working Timetables

13 December, 27 December and 4 January

November *Table Talk* (page 2) reported the introduction of a new Sydney Working Timetable from 13 December, the main change being the incorporation of Leppington line services into the main network. We now have more details. Alterations in this WTT will be:

- Integration of the South West (Leppington) line with the South line to the City via Granville.
- Generally, trains every 15 minutes on the Leppington line on weekdays, every 30 minutes on weekends,
- Altered Glenfield platform working,

- Extension of Glenfield terminators to Leppington,
- Leppington trains stopping at Casula,
- Alteration of train numbering, stabling arrangements and train rosters for the majority of Sector 2 services, and
- Minor time alterations at various stations.

The WTT of 13 December is designated version 5. A mere two weeks later on 27 December, a new weekend WTT, version 5.05, comes into effect! This is probably a record for the shortest duration of a WTT. Modified weekend schedules will operate for the week between Christmas and New Year. Hence, the weekday WTT will be replaced by the new version 5.05 three weeks later on 5 January 2016.

A minor, new puzzle is that the morning up and midday down Canberra trains have separate schedules printed for Wednesdays only, yet they are identical to other weekdays.

Western Sydney plans

Plans for major new rail links between Western Sydney, the CBD and the second airport at Badgerys Creek were launched by the Federal and NSW governments on 13 November. A 12 month study will report on options, routes and funding for rapid rail services to link Campbelltown, Liverpool, Penrith and the new airport. The Ministers said that they are planning for the airport to be 'rail ready' when it opens with space for a station and tunnels excavated, as well as investigating the best options for the rail link—the right route, when to build it and how best to fund it. "There is no doubt there will need to be a rail line one day linking the proposed Western Sydney Airport and surrounding communities. The options plan will help us determine the type of rail, when it will be required and how much it will cost to lock-in the right transport solution for the future. The scoping study will also consider funding and financing issues, including whether techniques to raise revenue from increases in land value could assist in meeting the funding requirement. We have already committed to ensuring the proposed airport is 'rail ready' from day-one, meaning that we can start running services as soon as the demand is there. At the same time, the NSW Government has been consulting the community on possible North-South rail alignments from Leppington to St Marys," they said.

Record grain train

On 2 December, a historic length wheat train operated from near Narrabri to Newcastle port. The train was 1,250 metres long and conveyed 5,000 tonnes, with five locomotives provided by Southern Shorthaul Rail and 73 wagons. It carried 5000 tonnes of wheat loaded at the Louis Dreyfus Commodities facilities at Narrabri and Moree, with these two trains joining up at the GrainFlow site north of Bellata.

ARTC crossing loops to be extended

On 2 November the Infrastructure and Regional Development Minister, Warren Truss, announced the expenditure of \$15 million to extend five passing loops between Melbourne and Adelaide to boost east-west freight efficiency. Passing loops at Mile End, SA, and Pyrenees, Murtoa, Pimpinio and Diapur in Victoria will be extended to allow for 1800-metre trains. Construction started at Pyrenees immediately. "By facilitating longer 1800-metre trains, we will enable an expected 20% increase in capacity for each rail freight service at little additional cost to operators, ultimately, enhancing the competitiveness of Australian businesses," Mr Truss said. The project will be completed by mid-2016.

ARTC: Albury-Melbourne closedown

Due to an ARTC closedown, V/Line trains will be replaced by buses between Melbourne and Albury from 26 to 29 December, and NSW Train Link trains from 26 to 31 December.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Timetable 3 January 2016

Metro Trains will introduce a new Working Timetable from Sunday 3 January 2016. We do not yet have details, but it is believed there will be augmentations to services on the northern and western lines.

A consequential alteration for **V/Line** is that the 1627 Sundays from Swan Hill will depart at 1623, run four minutes earlier throughout, and arrive Melbourne Southern Cross four minutes earlier at 2041.

Melbourne grand plans

Planning is underway by Public Transport Victoria for major enhancements to the Melbourne suburban railway system, in addition to the cross-city north-south Metro tunnel. The centrepiece is a new east-west Metro 2 railway in tunnel from Clifton Hill under the CBD to the Fishermans Bend development area and then continuing under the Yarra to Newport to connect with the Werribee line. The cost of the 15 km Metro 2 would be in the vicinity of \$9-11 billion. Public Transport Victoria is planning that the Parkville interchange being built for the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel be designed to also serve a future Metro2 link. Planning includes new lines from Albion to Melbourne Airport and from Clayton via Monash University to Rowville. Also envisaged is extension of the South Morang line to Mernda (already announced), and extension of electrification from Sunshine to Melton, from Werribee to Geelong and Waurin Ponds, from Craigieburn to Wallan and from Frankston to Baxter.

Metro Trains Melbourne: System break-up

Metro Trains and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union have agreed on a wage agreement. As part of this, Metro will break Melbourne's rail network into three groups, and cut the length of time it takes to become a fully qualified train driver from 73 weeks to between 41 and 50 weeks. This is far short of what Metro sought during acrimonious negotiations earlier this year. Metro wanted to divide the rail network and its 1000 train drivers into six sectors, moving Melbourne towards a simpler, Hong Kong-style metro rail system. It argued this simplified system would reduce disruption and make it easier to add extra services, but the union argued drivers would become bored by repetitively running up and down the same line all day, risking safety. Now, Metro will break its operations into two groups, Metro North and Metro South, along the same geographical line the system was divided into when the Bayside and Hillside rail franchises were created in 1999. A third group at Flinders St station will be formed to avoid the many operational problems that characterized the failed Bayside-Hillside model, which collapsed in 2004.

Level crossing city

Level crossings on Scoresby Road and Mountain Highway in Bayswater, on the Belgrave line, will be replaced as part of the level crossing removal program, with work to be complete by late 2017. They will be removed with a combination of lowering the line and raising the roads, meaning that trains can continue to access the maintenance yard between the crossings. Bayswater station will be rebuilt with new platforms below road level, better cycling facilities and improved pedestrian access.

Construction has begun on the removal of the Centre, North and McKinnon Road level crossings on the Frankston line in an endeavour to complete the work earlier than previously announced. Major construction had previously been scheduled for the end of 2016, but has been brought forward to the middle of the year, meaning the crossings will be removed earlier in 2017. This means that the 34 day closure of the Frankston Line between Caulfield and Moorabbin will occur before the closures for the nine level crossings on the Cranbourne and Pakenham line. There will be other impacts

while the level crossings are removed, including the temporary closure of one of the three tracks on the Frankston line from 16 November 2015 until June 2016.

During this time express trains will be altered to stop at all stations in the morning and afternoon peaks - all weekday express services are cancelled. McKinnon, Ormond and Bentleigh stations will also be closed for several months in 2016 while new stations are built. The removal of these crossings is being delivered as part of a package of works that includes the removal of the level crossing at Burke Road and the rebuilding of Gardiner station. Four weekday services will be temporarily cancelled to enable the express services to stop at all stations:

- 0825 Moorabbin to Flinders St
- 0909 Flinders St to Mordialloc
- 1721 Frankston to Flinders St
- 1825 Flinders St to Mordialloc.

Journey times may be extended by up to 10 minutes. There will be no changes to Frankston line off-peak or weekend services.

This change in the timetable will mean that passengers at Hawksburn, Toorak, Armadale, Glenhuntly, Ormond, McKinnon, Bentleigh, Patterson, Moorabbin and Highett stations will have a train approximately every five minutes during the morning and afternoon peaks. Express trains that become stopping all station trains will travel direct to and from Flinders St, not via the City Loop. Altered peak hour timetables are online at <http://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/live-travel-updates/article/temporary-timetable-alterations-on-the-frankston-line-monday-16-november-mid-june-2016>

There will be complete line closures for nine days in late January, for three days in early March, for eight days in late March/early April (presumably Easter), and for 34 (repeat 34!) days in June/July between Caulfield and Moorabbin.

The work also means that car parks at Ormond, McKinnon and Bentleigh stations will be closed.

Contracts to remove 12 more level crossings will be awarded in 2017, the Victorian Premier has announced. This will remove eight "dangerous and congested" level crossings on the Frankston line at:

- Station St/Bondi Road, Bonbeach
- Station St, Carrum
- Charman Road, Cheltenham
- Edithvale Road, Edithvale
- Skye/Overton Road, Frankston
- Balcombe Road, Mentone
- Eel Race Road, Seaford, and
- Seaford Road, Seaford.

Other level crossings will be removed at:

- Melton Highway, Sydenham
- Abbotts Road, Dandenong South
- Thompsons Road, Lyndhurst
- Kororoit Creek Road, Williamstown

These are in addition to 19 already under contract to be removed, or already part of a tendering process.

Melbourne City Loop shutdown

On Thursday 26 November about 0930 a trespasser was spotted near Melbourne Central in the City Underground Loop, causing a brief closedown of services. Trains were delayed across the entire suburban network.

TasRail: Rehabilitation

A \$119.6 million contract has been awarded for track works on TasRail's Melba and Western line. VEC Civil Engineering Pty Ltd will lay around 48,000 sleepers and 30 kms of rail

commencing in December and are expected to be completed in mid 2017.

Adelaide Metro: Special services

Saturday 14 November, the day of the Annual Christmas Pageant in Adelaide, was sunny and up to 200,000 people lined city streets. Adelaide Metro as usual ran extra services. There were many extra trains. Most notable were short workings from many points, especially Brighton, (Brighton is no longer used as a short working point on normal services, despite having a central platform to enable this), Gawler, Salisbury and Osborne. There were no services to Tonsley, which does not run on Weekends. Trams terminated at South Terrace and the Railway Station.

The special train and tram timetables for the occasion are available from the December ATA Distribution List.

On 1 November 2015 a special event at Clovelly Park on the Tonsley line saw operation of an hourly train service during daylight hours - probably the first Sunday operation of trains on the line.

North-South railway disruption

A minor derailment of a Genesee & Wyoming Australia freight train 30 km north of Marla, SA, on 31 October disrupted train services for a couple of days. This included cancellation of Great Southern Rail's Ghan due to depart Adelaide on 1 November and consequently also the southbound service due to depart Darwin on 4 November.

South Australia track access

The Essential Services Commission of South Australia reported in August on track access in SA. The railway infrastructure covered by the Access Regime includes: the Adelaide Metro broad gauge network within metropolitan Adelaide, the Genesee & Wyoming Australia lines in the Murray-Mallee, Mid-North and Eyre Peninsula, and the Great Southern Railway passenger terminal at Keswick. The Commission's final recommendation is that the Access Regime should continue for at least the next five years. This is based on the following findings: There is the potential for misuse of market power by rail infrastructure service providers, which justifies access regulation. However, there is no evidence of the misuse of market power, which suggests that only light-handed regulation is required.

Providers of railway infrastructure services have market power where they do not face significant competitive pressures. While road transport may be competitive for low freight volumes or short freight distances, the railway infrastructure services subject to the Access Regime are primarily used for the haulage of minerals and grains, which generally involve high volumes and long transport distances. Railways have significant economies of scale compared to road transportation, providing railway operators with market power. In addition, the SA rail industry is vertically integrated, with GWA and the SA government owning and operating both below rail and above rail infrastructure. The potential for vertically integrated operators to misuse market power to the detriment of competition for above rail services remains. There is no evidence of misuse of market power. Access seekers are successfully negotiating access to railway infrastructure services. No access disputes have been referred to the Commission since the Access Regime commenced. There are few users of the SA rail infrastructure services. Demand for those services, has declined slightly since 2009, albeit subject to seasonal fluctuations. Utilisation of the railways continues to be low and, this trend is likely to be similar in the future. In this environment, access seekers have countervailing bargaining power, as there is a strong incentive for railway operators to increase utilisation of the railways in order to recover their fixed costs. This limits the extent to which an operator might seek to misuse market power.

This is the total freight task on SA intrastate railways in recent years:

	Tonnes	Change
2010	794,736,344	
2011	892,984,625	+12%
2012	666,592,058	-25%
2013	710,287,941	+7%
2014	625,481,584	-12%

The Commission's report is available at

<http://www.escosa.sa.gov.au/library/20150907-SARailAccessRegimeReview-FinalReport.pdf>

ARTC: Dry Creek-Outer Harbor line

ARTC plans to remove the broad gauge third rail between Dry Creek and Outer Harbor in northern Adelaide in early 2016. Since the Penrice Quarry trains ceased in early 2015 there have been no broad gauge trains, and there is no prospect of any. The removal of the third rail will simplify track arrangements and maintenance.

Adelaide Metro: Millswood

SA Transport Minister, Stephen Mullighan, has stated that Millswood station on the Belair line will remain open. In the year since it re-opened on a trial basis in October 2014 there were 15,000 passengers.

WA grain lines access

Brookfield Rail and CBH have agreed to a 12-month extension of the current interim rail access agreement, with a cost increase on access in line with CPI. Brookfield Rail says this provides CBH with access and certainty for grain growers in 2016. The interim agreement provides access to all Tier 1 and Tier 2 lines, including the Miling branch which Brookfield Rail had indicated that they were not planning to offer access to. However no access to Tier 3 lines was offered. CBH has agreed to meet a minimum volume which is greater than the current average volume carried by the line, in order to secure access to the Miling line. Earlier this year, CBH was forced to remove its trains from the Brookfield Rail-managed lines after both groups failed to reach agreement on access. Eventually, after CBH agreed to a price increase the current interim access deal was struck, which is due to expire on December 31 in the peak of harvest deliveries for many areas.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Agnes Boskovitz, Scott Ferris, Peter Hobbs, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Len Regan, www.railknowledgebank.com, www.railpage.com.au, *Age*, *Australian*, *Farm Weekly*, *Herald Sun*, *Railway Digest*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Transit Australia* for Rail news.

EDITORIAL

Table Talk will, usually, no longer report railway and tramway closedowns for scheduled civil engineering work. The Rail Editor's reasoning is that these are now so commonplace they are not news. However, *Table Talk* will still mention closedowns when they are notably large (such as the Frankston and Albury lines closedowns reported in this issue) – either because of very lengthy duration, large geographic spread or city centre closedown; or have some unusual feature; or throw some light on how railways are operated or managed.

REVIEW – TRAINLINE 3

Trainline 3 outlines the key role freight, urban and non-urban passenger rail plays in the national economy. It is a joint annual publication from the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) and the Australasian Railway Association (ARA). According to the paper, Australian railways moved almost 1.3 billion tonnes of bulk freight in 2013/14, with WA iron ore transport being

about 70% of that figure. On the passenger side, Australia's rail network transported approximately 627 million passengers in 2013-14, with Sydney Trains carrying 272.5 million, followed by Yarra Trams with 177 million passengers. Trainline 3 is available online at www.bitre.gov.au

ODD SPOT

On 29 September Sydney Trains staff at Auburn station assisted a woman who gave birth at the station. The baby has been presented with an Opal card.

Beware of rail operators trying to be helpful. It is best not to trust one system providing the timetables of other systems. V/Line's Staff Reference timetable of 21 June – provided by ATA's August Distribution List – is a very useful document overall. Why it is not a Public timetable is one of life's great mysteries. It usefully includes a section summarising the main rail passenger services of other Australian operators. This is a most commendable effort. However, this section would be even better if it was accurate. The times in Table 11 for NSW Train Link's Sydney-Canberra service are

correct, but the days of running are not. In one direction the evening service is shown as operating four times weekly. In fact, it has been daily for the past two years.

In Brazil a passenger train service has been restored after 45 years – but only for a two week trial and using carriages from a local railway museum. From 19 October a pair of trains operated on weekdays between Criciuma and Iacara, 10 km. During the trial, the train operated at capacity level. The state of Santa Catarina may introduce the service permanently at a later time.

AIR NEWS

Lots of people; or, don't believe statistics

by Victor Isaacs and David Cranney

It is sometimes said that Sydney to Melbourne is the **third** busiest air route in the world. Perhaps. In 2014, according to airline-associated IT company Amadeus, the busiest routes were:

Seoul – Jeju, Korea, 10.5 million passengers,
Tokyo-Fukuoka, 8.3 m,
Sydney-Melbourne, 7.8 m,
Tokyo-Sapporo, 7.0 m,

Beijing-Shanghai, 5.8 m.

(In 2012, these routes were followed by Sao Paulo-Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo-Osaka, Hong Kong-Taipei, Tokyo-Okinawa, Cape Town-Johannesburg.)

But neither Qantas nor Virgin Australia use the services of Amadeus, so the Australian figures are really estimates. They use competing company, Sabre. The FlightStats organization places Sydney-Melbourne as the **fifth** busiest route in the world. Their 2013 figures are:

Tokyo-Sapporo, 14.8 million passengers
Seoul-Jeju, Korea, 13.8 m
Sao Paulo-Rio de Janeiro, 12.2 m
Tokyo-Fukuoka, 11.8 m,
Sydney-Melbourne, 10 m.

According to ABS, the 2013 figures for busiest Australian routes were:

Sydney-Melbourne 8.3 million passengers,
Sydney-Brisbane, 4.4 m,
Melbourne-Brisbane, 3.3 m,
Sydney-Gold Coast, 2.6 m,
Melbourne-Adelaide, 2.3 m,
Melbourne-Perth, 2.2 m,
Sydney-Adelaide, 1.8 m,
Sydney-Perth, 1.8 m,
Melbourne-Gold Coast, 1.8 m.

International

China Eastern will commence direct Brisbane-Shanghai flights thrice weekly from November 2016.

Xiamen Airlines commenced Sydney-Fuzhou flights five times a week from 30 November and twice weekly Sydney-Xiamen flights from 6 December.

Domestic

Virgin Australia will withdraw from Perth to Albany and Esperance routes in early 2016. The WA Department of Transport is arranging tenders / contracts for the routes. Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive Russ Clarke said that Skippers Aviation or Rex may be better suited to the routes. It is understood there is no

tenderer for the Busselton air service which Virgin withdrew from in April 2015. **Skippers** will continue to service the routes from Perth to Carnarvon, Kalbarri, Shark Bay / Monkey Mia, Mt. Magnet, Leinster, Leonora, Laverton, Wiluna and Meekatharra beyond 27 February 2016 when current agreements are due to expire. The WA government will extend the current arrangements. Flights will remain unchanged.

The WA government has named Regional Express (**Rex**) as the preferred tenderer for the Perth-Albany and Perth-Esperance routes. Subject to final negotiations, Rex will enter a five-year agreement with the Department of Transport for the routes from 28 February, 2016. Rex has indicated it would like to increase flight frequency and seat capacity on the Albany and Esperance routes as compared with the existing service. Rex intends to start its services from Albany and Esperance, allowing business people to fly to Perth and return the same day without having to pay for accommodation. The WA Department of Transport is still exploring options with the industry on the Perth-Carnarvon-Monkey Mia, Perth-Derby and the northern Goldfields air routes, and an announcement about these routes is expected soon.

Rex will introduce Sydney-Cooma services five times a week from late March 2016. Cooma has been without scheduled air services since December 2013 when Brindabella Airlines went into receivership.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Ian Cooper, David Cranney, Victor Isaacs, David Whiteford, the *Australian* and the *West Australian* for Air news

BUS NEWS

Australia Capital Territory - ACTION

As usual in December, Nightrider services will operate all night at infrequent intervals on 4-5 December, 11-12 December, 18-19 December and 31 December-1 January. The service takes passengers to the bus stop closest to their house and costs passengers \$5 – cash only. Timetables are at www.action.act.gov.au/news/news_articles/nightrider-is-back-in-2015-taking-you-to-a-bus-stop-close-to-home

On Christmas Day services will run on 14 bus routes, including route 900 from Belconnen to the City, Woden and Tuggeranong, and route 950 between Gungahlin and the City. All travel will be free.

Buses will run to a reduced weekday timetable from December 21 until December 24. Sunday timetables (ie, no evening services) will be in place on 26, 27 and 28 December. Reduced weekday timetables will operate on 29, 30 and 31 December. Sunday timetables will again operate on 1, 2 and 3 January. Schedules are at www.action.act.gov.au/news/news_articles/action-christmas-holiday-timetable

Reduced weekday timetables will return on 4 to 8 January and normal services from 9 January.

New South Wales - Northern Beaches

On 9 November the NSW Premier, Mike Baird, announced the introduction of a rapid bus service between Mona Vale (northern beaches) and the CBD, to be called B-Line, from late 2017. The 27 km route will use a fleet of new double decker buses and will run at least every 10 minutes during the day. "The B-Line will transform bus travel on the Northern Beaches and, in just two years, customers will be able to rip up their timetable and catch a bus at least every 10 minutes," Mr Baird said. "New double decker buses will have plenty of comfortable seats, architecturally designed B-Line stops will include modern facilities and real-time service information, and customers will be encouraged to park and

ride with about 900 new commuter parking spaces." The project will include:

- Nine modern B-Line stops at Mona Vale, Warriewood, Narrabeen, Collaroy, Dee Why, Brookvale, Manly Vale, Spit Junction (Mosman) and Neutral Bay with real-time information, seating and weather protection;
- New commuter car parks at Mona Vale, Warriewood, Narrabeen, Dee Why, Brookvale and Manly Vale providing about 900 spaces;
- New double decker buses with improved on-board capacity and comfort;
- Roadworks including new bus lanes, bus bays, minor lane widening to support bus services; and
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle links to connect customers with B-Line stops.

The Minister for Transport, Mr Constance, said that ahead of the new B-Line opening, about 480 additional weekly bus services will be added between February and October 2016 to address the immediate need for improved services.

Busways Western Sydney Service Changes 29 November 2015 by Hilaire Fraser

Transport for NSW has announced a number of changes to improve bus services in the Blacktown, OPenrith and Hawkesbury areas. All Busways western suburbs timetables were changed on 29 November 2015. The main feature is a heavily revised network to the south of the railway between Blacktown and Mount Druitt, designed to create a simpler, more direct and consistent network.

725 Blacktown to Douglas Road Dooside via Kildare Road and 727 Blacktown to Tallawong Avenue, 737 Mt Druitt to Rooty Hill, 739 Mt Druitt to Minchinbury, 737/739 and 739/7 Combined will be replaced by:

- 728 (new) Blacktown to Mt Druitt via Tallawong Avenue, Douglas Road, Bungarribee and Rooty Hill
- 729 Blacktown to Mt Druitt via Kildare Road and Minchinbury (revised to run via Rosenthal St, rather than Bungarribee)
- 721 Blacktown Station to Blacktown Hospital. Route altered due to internal street changes at Blacktown Hospital as part of the current upgrade
- 722/724 Combined discontinued as routes 722 (Blacktown-Prospect) and 724 (Blacktown-Arndell Park) will operate full time as separate routes
- 726 Blacktown to Doonside via Monash Road, will no longer extend to Bungarribee. Bungarribee will be served by route 728
- 751 Blacktown to Colebee, additional services during the middle of the day on weekdays
- 759 Mt Druitt to St Marys via Willmot, route altered to run between Willmot and Ropes Crossing via Australis Drive
- 739V Mt Druitt South Loop, route will no longer run along Ropes Creek Road, Mt Druitt Road and Palmerston Road
- 680/2 Richmond to Bowen Mountain/Kurrajong, improved services to Kingsford-Smith Village at North Richmond.

All Busways Western Sydney timetables changed 2015, with minor adjustments to trip times in many areas and increased number of wheel chair accessible services

Queensland

Proposed New Moreton Bay Transport Network by Hilaire Fraser

With the opening of the Moreton Bay Rail Link due in mid 2016, Translink placed draft timetables for the new rail and bus network for Moreton Bay on their website on 2 November. Details of the proposed Train timetables are in the Rail news section above. The new bus network associated with the Moreton Bay Rail Link will be:

660 Caboolture Station -Redcliffe will now divert via Kippa-Ring Stn

662 Rothwell Stn-Deception Bay Shops via Deception Bay South. A new route formed from the Deception Bay South section of former 668 to provide a link from Deception Bay South to Rothwell Stn

665 Rothwell Stn-Deception Bay North, extends the Deception Bay local service to Rothwell Stn

668 Narangba-North Lakes, previously Narangba to Deception Bay Shops via Deception Bay South

676 Murrumba Downs-North Lakes via Kallangur Stn replaces 675/6 Petrie Station-Murrumba Downs

679 Murrumba Downs-North Lakes via Griffin and Murrumba Downs Stn replaces 677 Petrie Station-Griffin and 679 Murrumba Downs-North Lakes via Griffin

680 Chermside-Redcliffe will now divert via Kippa-Ring Stn

681 Mango Hill Stn-North Lakes/ Kinsellas Rd West (am loop), previously Petrie Stn-Kinsellas Road West

682 Mango Hill Stn-Kinsellas Rd West/North Lakes (pm loop), previously North Lakes-Kinsellas Road West

683 Kallangur Stn-Dakabin, previously Petrie Station-Kallangur

684 Kallangur Stn-North Lakes via Kallangur East, previously Kallangur-North Lakes

685 Kallangur Stn-North Lakes via Kallangur West, previously Petrie Station-Kallangur West

686 Petrie Stn-Frenchs Forest, altered route

687 Mango Hill Stn-North Lakes, previously Petrie Stn-North Lakes

688 North Lakes Loop (clockwise) changed times

689 North Lakes Loop (anti-clockwise) changed times

690 Sandgate Stn-Redcliffe will now divert via Kippa-Ring Stn

691 Sandgate Stn-Scarborough will replace 315 Brisbane City-Scarborough

- 694 Kippa-Ring Stn- Redcliffe via Woody Point West** replaces, 693 Redcliffe-Kippa-Ring, 694 Kippa-Ring-Redcliffe and Clontarf section of 695 Sandgate Stn-Rothwell
- 696 Kippa-Ring Stn-Redcliffe via Woody Point East** replaces, 696/7 Kippa-Ring-Margate
- 698 Rothwell Stn-Kippa-Ring Stn via Morris Road** replaces Rothwell section of 695 Sandgate Stn-Rothwell
- 699 Kippa-Ring Stn-Redcliffe via Scarborough** replaces 698 Kippa-Ring-Redcliffe, 699 Redcliffe-Kippa-Ring.

South Australia

The J1X Jet Express bus service from the Airport to the city, which currently only runs in the morning and afternoon (because of the paucity of flights in the middle of the day), will, from January, run throughout most of the day.

Tasmania – Hobart Metro

While no official announcement has been made by Metro Tasmania or the Minister, it is believed that the new timetable for Hobart services will be introduced in January.

Local politicians expressed disappointment at being advised by the Infrastructure Minister on 2 December that Metro would not extend its operation to Sorell – a fast growing municipality east of Hobart Airport. Tasmanian Redline is currently licensed to operate from Hobart City to Sorell and Dodges Ferry via Rosny Park and Midway Point. However, Minister Hidding did acknowledge that any deficiencies in the privately operated bus service would be examined prior to the renewal of private bus contracts in 2018. Six departures in each direction are currently provided on weekdays with two journeys on Saturday, all operated by late model low floor buses. There is no Sunday service. In addition ten school buses provide an extensive network of services in the Dodges Ferry, Sorell and Midway Point area.

Victoria - Northern suburbs new routes

From 4 January new route 509 will be introduced in the Brunswick area. It will follow a similar route to the previous route 509 with the new service extending further along Sydney Road, providing easy access to local services and shopping precincts. There will be

- Buses every hour between 0900 and 1430 (Err, that is what PTV's publicity says, but 0900 to 1430 is not an hourly frequency) Monday to Saturday.
- Extended coverage with services travelling along Sydney Road to Barkly Square Shopping Centre.
- Better access to train services with buses coordinated with trains at Brunswick station.

From 3 January route 561, which currently operates between Macleod and Coburg, will be extended to Pascoe Vale via Bell and Gaffney Streets. The revised route 561 will replace the temporary route 560 shuttle operating between Pascoe Vale Station and the new Coles supermarket on the corner of Gaffney St and Sussex St in Coburg North. There will be:

- Buses every 20 minutes on weekdays
- Better access for local residents with services travelling along Stockade Avenue through the Pentridge residential development
- Better access to Upfield line train services with the bus stopping closer to Coburg station
- Direct bus services between La Trobe University and the Craigieburn train line
- Operation on all public holidays
- Better connections to trains on the Hurstbridge, South Morang, Upfield and Craigieburn lines.

Public consultation has started for altered and additional bus services for Whittlesea, Greensborough, Diamond Creek, South Morang, Doreen and Mernda. This will include a service from South Morang station to Diamond Creek station

via Doreen. A Whittlesea to Greensborough service will also be reinstated.

Melbourne Airport services

On 30 November a new bus interchange at Melbourne Airport opened at Domestic Terminal Four (T4). The former bus interchange located at Terminal 1 (T1) has been closed. The new T4 interchange provides direct access to Tiger Airways, Jetstar and Regional Express services, with other airlines departing from T1, T2 and T3. Routes at the new T4 interchange are:

- 478: Airport West to Melbourne Airport
- 479: Airport West to Sunbury via Melbourne Airport and return
- 482: Airport West To Melbourne Airport (via South Centre Road)
- 901: Melbourne Airport to Frankston (SMARTBUS Service)

Moves are under way to incorporate Syybus into the myki electronic ticketing system. This will not bring in cheaper zone-one fares for SkyBus travellers - a one-way trip between Melbourne Airport and Southern Cross Station will still cost \$18. It will make SkyBus the only public transport service in Melbourne to offer passengers a choice between using myki or buying a one-off paper ticket.

SkyBus will also transform its drab bus interchange at Southern Cross Station into an "airport gateway", complete with flight information screens and facilities for passengers to remotely check-in at Melbourne Airport.

The next best public transport option, a train ride to Broadmeadows station and the connecting route 901 bus to the airport, costs \$3.76 full fare but takes at least one hour, or longer if the train-bus connection is poorly timed. Public transport options to the airport are so sparse that an attempt to plan a journey there on Public Transport Victoria's journey planner often ends in being advised to "take a taxi".

SkyBus carries about 3.2 million passengers a year, or about 12,000 on a busy day, on its 25 minute run.

Public Transport Victoria has previously investigated giving SkyBus a dedicated lane on the Tullamarine Freeway to improve the service's reliability when the freeway is congested. However, the proposal was rejected. A spokeswoman for the Minister for Roads said SkyBus passengers would still benefit from the freeway widening,

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.

The **deadline for Table Talk** is the last weekend of the month, but contributions are welcome at all times.

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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

which will add an extra lane in each direction. The CityLink-Tullamarine widening project will provide immediate benefits to SkyBus users, reducing travel times by up to 16 minutes in the morning peak and 17 minutes in the afternoon peak as well as improving journey time reliability, a spokeswoman said.

Real time information

From 30 September a further 30 bus routes were added to the **Next 5** real time information section of PTV's website and PTV's mobile app. These were for routes:

- 688, 689, 690, 694, 695, 696, 697 and 699
- 701, 704, 706, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 740, 742, 745, 753, 754, 755, 757, 758, 765, 766, 767 and 768.

On 2 November the following routes were added:

- 631, 663, 664, 670, 671, 672, 673, 675, 676, 677, 679, 680, 691, 693.
- 705, 708, 709, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788.
- 800, 802, 804, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 828, 832, 833, 843, 844, 845, 848, 849, 850, 857, 858, 861, 862, 885, 886.
- 966, 968, 970, 980, 981 (NightRider buses)

However, information on routes 800, 802, 811, 812, 813, 821, 824, 844, 845, 850, 857 and 861 was disabled for further testing.

Western Australia

From Saturday 7 November **TransPerth** route 97 (Subiaco Shuttle) has not operated on weekends due to poor patronage.

From Sunday 22 November new route 301 began operating from Midland Station to the new Midland Health Campus on Centennial Place as a circular route every 10 minutes in peaks, every 15 minutes during the day on weekdays, and every 60 minutes on Saturday. From the same date routes 294, 297, 307 had time and route changes due to the completion of works on Lloyd St.

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