



TABLE TALK

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RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Pacific National future

Table Talk has not been reporting the ins and outs of the prolonged corporate shenanigans concerning ownership of Pacific National, being waged by Brookfield and a consortium including Qube. However, it is relevant for students of timetabling to note the following about this battle:

If Brookfield's bid is successful, there is concern about the possibility of market dominance. One area of concern is that Brookfield already controls the WA rural railway network. Hence, if they are successful, this would partially recreate an integrated railway, contrary to government policies of recent years. On 22 December Brookfield provided an assurance to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission that they would divest PN's limited bulk freight operations in WA. More importantly, Brookfield also pledged that they would divest PN's interstate intermodal business. That is, they would retain only PN's large bulk coal train operations in NSW's Hunter Valley and Central Queensland. This therefore raises the possibility of a new operator entering the interstate intermodal business.

The ACCC seeks submissions on the proposal by 22 January – so you had better be quick in getting your submission in, and/or organising your counter bid for the company, and/or organising your new interstate train operating company.

ARTC future

The Federal Government will consider the future of the ARTC in the context of the 2016-17 Budget. On 14 December the Government announced the appointment of advisers for the scoping study into options for the future management, operations and ownership of the Corporation. Macquarie Capital has been appointed as business adviser and Herbert Smith Freehills as legal adviser. The scoping study will also consider the implications of the Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Rail project for the ARTC. In particular, the possible opportunity for ARTC to participate in any private sector financing, delivery and operation of the project. During this process, the ARTC will continue to operate as usual and services will not be affected.

The Terms of Reference for the Scoping Study are available on the Department of Finance website at <http://www.finance.gov.au/procurement/scoping-studies/>

Queensland freight contracts

The Queensland Government announced on 31 December that two key regional freight contracts with Aurizon have been renewed - the Regional Freight Transport Services Contract and the Livestock Transport Services Contract.

Transport Minister Stirling Hinchliffe said the renewals would ensure more than 900 rail freight services would continue to run each year for Queensland producers and farmers.

"These contracts will ensure cattle producers continue to have access to more than 300 cattle train services each year to transport livestock from regional hubs such as Cloncurry, Julia Creek, Winton, Clermont and Quilpie. That's in addition to the 624 rail freight services which will continue to be provided annually to support the import and export trade in Queensland and general freight rail services in the Central West." The contracts have been improved in a number of ways, [including] the introduction of performance targets and an increased focus on customer service. Additionally, the Palaszczuk Government has also agreed to purchase new cattle crates to provide more diverse transport options for customers and rail operators," he said.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads will undertake an open tender process for rail services beyond 2017.

Aurizon: Julia Creek derailment

A major derailment of a train conveying 200,000 tonnes of sulfuric acid occurred at Julia Creek, 648 km west of Townsville on 27 December, closing the Mt Isa line, and causing the Inlander passenger train to be cancelled.

Queensland Rail: Lengthy shutdown

From 24 December until mid-morning 31 December the line from Northgate to Caboolture was closed for engineering works. Suburban trains were replaced by buses running every fifteen minutes on working days and to normal weekend frequencies on other days. Long distance passenger trains were replaced by buses between Brisbane and Nambour or Gympie North. Work was carried out on new bridges over the South Pine River and Tributary Creek, works to progress the Moreton Bay Rail Link, points insertion, signalling upgrades and track maintenance.

Gold Coast line duplication

On 16 December the Queensland Government awarded a tender for the duplication of the only single track section of the Gold Coast line. This is between Coomera and Helensvale, 8.7 km, and includes the lengthy bridge over the Coomera River. The work is expected to be completed in late 2017, just in time for the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast. When the project is complete, it is claimed that the peak hour frequency of trains will be improved from every ten minutes to an average of every 7.5 minutes.

Gold Coast tram progress

Gold Coast tram patronage has increased significantly, with an extra 640,000 fares to make 1.88 million in the July to September quarter compared to the same time the previous year. "Light rail has become the spine of public transport on the Coast," Queensland Transport Minister, Stirling Hinchliffe said.

Tenders for the 7.3km stage 2 of the project closed on 23 December. The project will be completed in late 2017 or

early 2018, just in time for the Commonwealth Games. The new track will run adjacent to the Smith Street Motorway and link to the heavy rail at Helensvale Station.

Bromelton Intermodal terminal

An Intermodal terminal will be constructed at Bromelton, south of Brisbane, at a cost of \$9.6 million. Works will include construction of 6 kms of new rail track and civil infrastructure at the site. It is expected that the facility will handle up to 795,000 tonnes of freight annually from 2020–21. (However, the government publicity does not state who will construct and own the facility.)

Transport for NSW shuts public access to its website

Transport for NSW is the NSW Government organisation which controls the transport infrastructure and services (including passenger WTTs) around Sydney. Some features of operations—particularly the freight WTTs and Special Train Notices remain the responsibility of RailCorp (which still exists). For many years, RailCorp ran an open access “dark” website containing such material and much more besides. However, on 9 December 2015, RailCorp removed Open Access from the site, after a railfan publicised the site too widely. The decision was made for security reasons, in light of recent events overseas. The site still exists, but now requires a username and password. One document from this web-site—the TOC manual—is replicated on the public RailSafe site.

An article about Australian WTTs available on the internet is in the January 2016 issue of our sister magazine, the Times.

Transport for NSW Freight Working Timetable 27 December

December *Table Talk*, pages 2/3, recorded the introduction of a Transport for NSW passenger WTT dated 27 December 2015. A freight WTT was also issued effective that date, in the usual format of weekdays, book 4, and weekends, book 5.

Transport for NSW Passenger Working Timetables 24 January and 6 March

A new passenger WTT for Transport for NSW is dated 24 January, version 5.10. This is a mere three weeks after the WTT dated 4 January, which itself came into effect a mere three weeks after the WTT of 13 December! The main alteration is a build up in the size of some North line trains.

The next TfNSW WTT will be version 5.15 to be dated 6 March. This will have South Coast line improvements.

ARTC Working Timetable 24 January

A new nation-wide WTT for Australian Rail Track Corporation is dated 24 January.

One alteration is that, for the first time in a number of years, regular freight trains are scheduled on the line between Iluka Siding (7 km south of Hamilton) and Portland, Victoria. A train departs Iluka Siding at 1115 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, arriving Portland at 1245; returning from Portland at 1620 on the same days to Hamilton arriving at 1655.

The WTT can be accessed at www.artc.com.au/customers/operations/mtp/2016-01-24/

JHR NSW CRN Working Timetable 24 January

A new WTT for John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network is dated 24 January.

The main alterations are to the two coal trains to/from Airly Balloon loop (on the Kandos line) each day. On weekdays these now arrive Airly at 0942, depart 1210; and arrive Airly 1747, depart 2044. On weekends they now arrive Airly at 0943, depart 1135; and arrive Airly 1508, depart 2100.

In what seems an unusual move, schedules for JHR NSW CRN Work Trains have been added for most lines. These are scheduled at 30 km/hr and are sometimes scheduled in one direction only. Presumably it is easier to schedule these trains and cancel them if necessary, than to produce the paperwork for them to run as additional trains. They are:

- 0700 Werris Creek-Armidale Mondays
- 0903 Armidale-Werris Creek Fridays
- 0800 Narrabri West – Burren Junction Tuesdays (this train already appeared in the preceding WTT of 4 October)
- 0830 Burren Junction-Merrywinebone Wednesdays
- 0635 Joppa Junction (Goulburn)-Canberra Mondays and Fridays
- 0730 Stockinbingal-Temora Mondays (the only scheduled train on this section)
- 0900 Temora-Ardlethan Mondays (the only scheduled train on this section)
- 0900 Griffith-Hillston Tuesdays (the only scheduled train on this section)
- 0800 Ardlethan-Griffith Tuesdays (the only scheduled train on this section)
- 0800 Junee-Narranderra Thursdays
- 0745 Griffith-Narranderra Thursdays
- 0700 Orange East Fork Junction-Parkes Mondays and Thursdays
- 0645 Orange-Stuart Town Mondays and Thursdays
- 0800 Stuart Town-Dubbo Mondays and Thursdays
- 1215 Hermitage (Lithgow)-Bathurst Mondays and Thursdays
- 0755 Bathurst-Orange East Fork Junction Tuesdays
- 0645 Bathurst-Orange East Fork Junction Fridays
- 0900 Bathurst-Hermitage Mondays and Thursdays
- 1215 Wallerawang-Charbon Colliery Junction Wednesdays
- 0800 Nevertire-Nyngan Mondays
- 1100 Nevertire-Warren Mondays (the only scheduled train on this section)
- 0700 Narromine-Nevertire Tuesdays, and
- 0800 Nyngan-Cobar Wednesdays.

The WTT can be accessed at www.jhrcrn.com.au/Documents.asp?ID=67

NSW Train Link: Hunter patronage

In the three months after the Hunter line was closed between Newcastle and Hamilton, January-March 2015, there was a decline of 55,000 in patronage, compared with 12 months earlier. The NSW government claims this is because of the different way that information is being collected now with data from Opal cards. There were 128,018 journeys recorded compared with 183,333 in the same period in 2014 – an apparent decline of 32%.

Hunter floods

Commencing from the evening of 5 January the Hunter line was closed due to flooding at Sandgate. NSW TrainLink local and long-distance trains were replaced by buses (but not to Dungog, which was not possible). Coal and freight trains were cancelled. Services resumed on the afternoon of 7 January.

ARTC: Hunter coal pricing

ARTC wants to shift to a simplified pricing scheme on the Hunter Valley network, due to a "lack of consensus by industry" on the existing access regime outlined in the Hunter Valley Access Undertaking of 2011. The undertaking, is regulated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and is due for renewal this year. The ARTC submitted its proposed changes to the ACCC on 23 December.

One key change proposed concerns how the non-variable aspect of pricing for each operator is determined for access to the railway. "The 2011 Hunter Valley Access Undertaking (HVAU) recognised that different train configurations may represent the most efficient utilisation of Coal Chain Capacity on different parts of the Hunter Valley Network, given infrastructure constraints," the ARTC explains in its proposal. The 2011 HVAU required ARTC to define an 'indicative service', the characteristics of which were intended to provide pricing signals to access holders. Trains which differed from the configurations defined by the 'indicative service' would be charged accordingly. "Services with different characteristics to that of the indicative service were priced differentially, taking into account a number of matters that are set out in the 2011 HVAU." The problem with this is there are a number of divergent views within the industry, as to a fair way of determining a "final" indicative service for the network.

So, for the 2016 HVAU, the ARTC would like to move away from this method, and replace it with a 'path based' approach to pricing. "A 'path based' price is made up of a fixed Take or Pay (TOP) component, on a \$/Train km basis, that applies to all train services within a specified range," the corporation outlines. "Consistent with the 2011 HVAU non-TOP pricing structure, the variable access charge component will continue to be charged on a gross tonne km (GTK) basis, based on actual usage."

The ARTC believes path based pricing will allow for every train within a broad criteria to be priced the same, with variations in price based solely on the distance travelled on the network. "This has a number of advantages both for ARTC and access holders, not the least of which is that it significantly simplifies pricing for the majority of coal train services and is not reliant on ARTC imposing train service characteristics on access holders which it considers to represent the most efficient consumption of Coal Chain Capacity."

The ARTC says the majority of access holders, when consulted, support the change, albeit some have reserved their position.

The ACCC expects to release a consultation paper on the proposal this month.

Sydney Metro

The Sydney Metro between Central and Sydenham will be built via Waterloo, rather than via the alternative proposal through Sydney University. This was part of an announcement by NSW Premier, Mike Baird, on 17 December, of a major urban development project at Waterloo. There are expected to be an additional 30,000 residents in the suburb by 2035.

Parramatta light rail

On 8 December NSW Premier, Mike Baird, announced the construction of a light rail line system centred on Parramatta. A 22 km line is proposed from Westmead via Parramatta, Camelia and Olympic Park to Strathfield. Construction will begin in 2019. A branch from Camelia will take over the Carlingford railway. The Carlingford line is currently considered to be under-utilised with just 800 passengers during the morning peak.

ARTC: NSW Train Order project

The last sections of railway in NSW, and among the last in Australia, to be controlled by the Staff system of safeworking are being converted to Train Orders by ARTC. These are the Werris Creek-Binnaway-Merrygoen-Dubbo and Merrygoen-Gulgong lines. The project was to have been completed by early 2015, but is now forecast to be finished in the first half of 2016. ARTC says this is due to design changes. These lines are controlled by ARTC because there is a possibility that portions of them may be incorporated in the Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Freight Railway. Unlike most lines controlled by ARTC, they convey very little traffic. In the ARTC WTT of 24 January 2016, there are only four Pacific National mineral trains a week between Gulgong and Dubbo (Mon, Wed, Thur, Sat westbound; Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat eastbound). Between Binnaway and Werris Creek there are no scheduled trains.

Aurizon Western Sydney terminal

Aurizon has signed an agreement with NSW Ports to lease and operate the Enfield Intermodal Logistics Centre in Western Sydney. Aurizon will relocate its intermodal terminal operations from Yennora commencing in March. Aurizon says that the terminal will support longer trains, improve scheduling and cycle times, and reduce train shunting. It will also allow faster transit times on the Melbourne and Brisbane corridors and an opportunity to target increased volumes for both north-south and east-west interstate operations.

The 60 hectare Enfield site is 18 kms from Port Botany on the Sydney freight network, and has direct access to the interstate mainline corridor and has close proximity to the M4 and M5 motorways. The site includes an intermodal terminal, warehousing and other buildings with vacant land for the development of rail related warehousing, freight forwarding, transport and distribution facilities. Aurizon says this will enable it to develop business while the Moorebank Intermodal Terminal is being developed. The Moorebank terminal is a joint venture between Qube (67%) and Aurizon (33%).

Aurizon recently added 175 new wagons into its national intermodal operations, a commitment for a new intermodal terminal in Townsville and the introduction of new freight management technology to improve customer service and grow the business.

Metro Trains Melbourne alterations

From Thursday **31 December**, evening Watergardens (Sydenham) trains were extended to Sunbury seven days a week. All services to and from the City and Watergardens between 1900 and 0200 have been extended. There are also improved weekday frequencies with services from the City to Sunbury at least every 20 minutes from 1500, and every 30 minutes from 2000. Six down Watergardens services are extended to Sunbury, and seven on Friday and Saturday nights. Four additional up Watergardens weekday services, and five on Saturdays, now commence from Sunbury.

From **1 January** Flagstaff station is open seven days a week. Hitherto it was only open on weekdays. The north western part of Melbourne's CBD has seen much development in recent years and there are now 30,000 residents in this area.

The new Public Timetables are online at www.ptv.vic.gov.au/timetables/

Metro Trains Melbourne: No go to Flemington Racecourse

The Victorian Government has rejected the idea of a regular train service on the Flemington Racecourse line, which would serve thousands of new residents in apartment towers planned on land at Flemington Racecourse. Public Transport Victoria and the Transport Department say adding more trains to that part of the rail network will hurt other parts of the system. Upgrading the rail line to run regular commuter services was not an option, PTV says, because trains would get in the way of the heavily loaded Craigieburn line. And disrupting Craigieburn line trains by supplying rail services to Flemington Racecourse could also disrupt Sunbury and Upfield line trains. Upgrades to allow Flemington Racecourse to be served daily would "require significant and expensive infrastructure works".

The Public Transport Users Association's Daniel Bowen described PTV's attitude to bringing daily services to an existing railway station as both "disappointing" and "defeatist". Residents argue the massive apartment project was being inappropriately fast-tracked by the Victoria Racing Club and its development partner, the Greenland Group. Residents who already live near the planned developments say it will cause gridlock unless there is adequate public transport.

The line is used for a handful of race days, and for special events - in particular, the Royal Melbourne Show. It was also used during the recent shut downs of the Sunbury line for the Regional Rail Link project. The racing club says it "firmly believes" developing apartments next to the rail station "should act as a catalyst to a larger transformation of the under-utilised railway corridor".

Metro Trains Melbourne: Bushfire planning

The final four stations on the Belgrave line – Upper Ferntree Gully, Upwey, Tecoma and Belgrave - will be closed when a Bushfire Code Red is declared, to protect the safety of Metro Trains staff. However, the decision has been criticised by community workers who say the decision will leave disadvantaged residents who rely on public transport stranded and in danger. Belgrave is deep in the Dandenong Ranges, one of the most dangerous bushfire zones on Melbourne's outskirts.

Level crossing city

Work to remove the level crossings at High St, Reservoir and Bell St, Preston will commence in 2018, Victorian Public Transport Minister Jacinta Allan said on 4 January. Reservoir and Bell stations will be rebuilt as part of the project.

Melbourne passenger information

Yarra Trams and Public Transport Victoria have installed tramTRACKER passenger information screens at 44 Melbourne stations to boost multi-modal travel. 67 large tramTRACKER screens have been installed at the stations, which all have nearby tram connections. They display next tram arrival predictions, information about disruptions and special events, and the direction and distance to the nearest tram stop.

V/Line alterations

From **30 November** the 1948 M-F Seymour-Melbourne Southern Cross has departed at 1955 and operated correspondingly later, and the 2145 M-F Melb SX-Seymour has departed at 2150 and operated correspondingly later.

From **1 January** restrictions preventing Sunbury and Pakenham passengers using V/Line services were removed for most services. There had been significant local agitation

against these restrictions, introduced with the 21 June 2015 timetable.

From **31 January** more extensive changes occur. All weekday outbound Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong line trains will depart Footscray one (usually) or two minutes earlier.

Adjustments to some **Ballarat** line services are aimed at reducing delays on the busiest sections of the line. Some trains have altered departure and arrival times to better reflect the trip durations and altered stopping patterns.

- The 0514 from Melbourne to Wendouree will leave Southern Cross at 0510 and the 0513 from Wendouree to Melbourne will leave one minute earlier. These changes are to reduce congestion at Bacchus Marsh.
- The 0704 and 0740 from Bacchus Marsh will not stop at Ardeer.
- Most trains will depart earlier from Deer Park and Ardeer.

Patronage on the Ballarat line in the first quarter of the financial year increased 16% on the same period last year. Eight new carriages have been added to the busiest trains.

Construction has started on the Rowsley Crossing Loop near Bacchus Marsh which is another step towards improving performance on the Ballarat line. This is scheduled to be completed by mid-2016.

Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan, told the Ballarat *Courier* on 8 January that planning and consultation for the next timetable change will now take place. This will be influenced by the opening of Rowsley Loop and the opening of a new station at Caroline Springs.

Adjustments to some **Geelong** line services are aimed at reducing delays.

- Four AM peak Geelong trains will not stop at Sunshine.
- The 0716 from Wyndham Vale will now depart at 0713 and stop at Ardeer instead of Deer Park. It will arrive at SX one minute later.
- Two Wyndham Vale AM peak trains will have adjusted times to reflect that they are operated by Sprinter trains. The 0736 will now depart at 0735 and arrive at SX three minutes later at 0814. The 0755 will now depart at 0754 and arrive at SX four minutes later at 0834.
- Some off-peak Geelong line trains to Melbourne have adjusted departure times.

Patronage on the Geelong line has increased 58% in the first four months of this financial year, compared with the same period last year. Tarneit Station is now the busiest V/Line station after Southern Cross.

Two **Warrnambool** trains will have adjusted timetables.

- The morning train will leave Warrnambool eight minutes earlier at 0600 and arrive Melbourne at 0931 instead of 0934. The new timings are aimed to reduce delays which have been experienced due to a cross with the Pacific National down freight train at Camperdown.
- The 1912 Mon-Fri from SX will have five minutes recovery inserted, and so arrive Warrnambool five minutes later 2249, to better reflect the actual journey time.

Connecting V/Line bus times will be adjusted to reflect the change in train times.

There will be one additional morning train and an extra PM peak service on the **Bendigo** line.

- A new three-carriage VLocity train from Epsom 0700, Bendigo 0708-0710 to arrive Melbourne at 0907. This will be an off-peak train.
- An additional three-carriage train from Melbourne at 1602 arriving in Bendigo at 1755. This will help ease some of the demand on the 1625 train which is typically very busy.
- The 1415 SX to Bendigo (Monday to Friday) will be altered to stop all stations and is scheduled at Bendigo eight minutes later at 1608-1613 and then be extended to Epsom 1626.
- Trains extended from Bendigo to/from Epsom will be extended from four to 14 each weekday (in addition to Echuca trains);
- An additional train is extended from Bendigo to Eaglehawk on weekday evenings; and
- All trains will stop at Kangaroo Flat.

The Bendigo line has had 2.5% growth in patronage so far this financial year, compared with last year.

Some **V/Line buses** will have timetable adjustments to reflect traffic conditions and journey times. Other routes will have an extra stop while some are changing by a few minutes to ensure better connections with trains.

Buses will now stop at Congupna, causing minor changes to timetables on the Murraylink bus between Albury and Kerang and also on the Shepparton-Cobram and Seymour-Tocumwal routes.

V/Line buses between Dandenong and Inverloch will have scheduled stops at Deep Creek Street near Grantville, Wonthaggi North and Inverloch Police Station, and some departure times will change by up to 19 minutes. The Bay Road stop on this route will be renamed Jam Jerrup.

There will be minor changes to:

- Mildura and Swan Hill/Bendigo
- Warrnambool and Heywood/Mt Gambier
- Ouyen and Ballarat/Ararat
- Dandenong and Yarram
- Maryborough and Castlemaine
- Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo
- Speedlink Adelaide-Melbourne (Murrayville to Adelaide section).

Train and bus timetables are available online at vline.com.au and ptv.vic.gov.au; on the V/Line **smartphone app**

Improved bus services in the Bendigo area from this date are detailed in the Bus news below.

Victoria: Dismal rail freight

From 24 December:

- Rail haulage of cement from Waurin Ponds by Pacific National ceased. The daily Waurin Ponds-Somerton and return freight trains are cancelled. It is understood that the Waurin Ponds operation is scaling down, and is now getting a different type of raw material from another quarry, further away from the Rail facilities.
- Rail haulage of stone from the Kilmore East quarry by Pacific National ceased. The twice daily Kilmore East-

Brooklyn and daily Kilmore East-Westall freight trains were cancelled. It is understood that PN upped their rates. From 4 January operation of replacement trains commenced, but now operated by Qube. These are:

- 0930 empty Brooklyn-Kilmore East Quarry Siding Mondays (Tue-Fri if required),
- 2000 empty Brooklyn-Kilmore East Mondays to Friday,
- 0955 empty Westall Quarry Siding-Kilmore East Tuesdays to Fridays,
- 1345 quarry train Kilmore East-Brooklyn Hanson Siding Mondays to Fridays
- 2305 quarry train Kilmore East-Westall Mondays to Thursdays
- 2305 quarry train Kilmore East-Brooklyn Fridays (Mon-Thur if required).

A recent report to the Victorian government showed that there are currently 2.58 billion tonnes of freight offloaded at Melbourne port. Of this only 9.4% is conveyed by rail. This is down from 12.7% a year ago and half of the proportion of years ago.

Ballarat freight terminal

The Victorian and Federal Governments have invited freight, logistics and manufacturing firms to submit Expressions of Interest to lease or purchase land for the establishment of a Freight Hub in the Ballarat West Employment Zone. The site is alongside the broad gauge Melbourne to Ararat railway with access to the Ports of Melbourne and Geelong.

Adelaide Metro: Timetables 27 January

New tram timetables will operate from 27 January 2016 with increased frequencies.

Adelaide Metro: Closedowns

The Seaford line will be replaced by buses for most of January for replacement of 35 kms of faulty overhead electrical cable. The full length of the Seaford line will be closed on 27 and 28 December after 2000, and for the full days of 2 and 3 January. In addition, there will be a partial closure of the Seaford line between Brighton and Seaford from 4 to 25 January.

The problems are extensive, with the government deciding to replace faulty electrical wiring which has plagued the line over the past 18 months. SA Transport Minister Stephen Mullighan said the government originally believed it could manage maintenance with night-time closures, but that wasn't possible given the extent of the problem. He said it was "incredibly disappointing" to close the line, even though it was the quietest time of the year. The government was "absolutely furious" to have spent hundreds of millions to provide a good service to commuters only to be "let down" by a supplier. "We are aiming to have the services back in time for Australia Day and the new school year," he said. He said the government had decided to replace faulty overhead wiring which had failed twice on the Seaford line, but the bill would be paid by the contractor, not taxpayers. "When the catenary wire split at Seaford in June 2014 it was thought to be an isolated incident. After a second split at Christies Beach in May this year, more extensive investigations of the wire and manufacturing process have been undertaken, and instead of replacing the sections first thought to be affected, the decision has been made to replace the entire lengths provided by the manufacturer. This will take much longer than previously estimated and to minimise risks to ongoing services, the closure in January will reduce the chances of ongoing interruptions to commuters."

The government ensured third-party oversight of the manufacturing of the new cable to make sure it was fit for the job. Mullighan said the original contractor, Laing O'Rourke, would take responsibility for the cost of replacing the wiring

as well as communication with passengers. Laing O'Rourke said its supplier, Olex Australia, had provided the company with a faulty batch of catenary wire "which we are dealing with through other processes".

The Belair line was also closed over the holiday season, but only from 26 to 29 December for maintenance including bank stabilisation, signal and communication cable testing and level crossing works.

Adelaide Metro: Special events

As usual, a special tram service was operated on Melbourne Cup Day, with all trams proceeding through to Glenelg instead of having the West Terrace-South Terrace shuttle service during the day.

The annual Christmas pageant was held in the Adelaide CBD on 14 November. Started in 1933 by the retailer John Martin and Co, it has been held annually since then, except for the period of WW2. It is now known as the Credit Union Christmas Pageant with the staff from the various Credit Unions providing staffing on the floats on a voluntary basis supplemented by various bands etc. It traditionally attracts increased patronage on public transport. There was no printed publicity available, but details were available on the [adelaidemetro](#) website for details of inbound traffic to allow spectators arrive in time to take up positions along the route. However, some spectators were reported to have arrived well before the first service. Additional trains were provided from on all routes except Tonsley which had no service as usual on a Saturday. Additional trains started from Brighton, Outer Harbor, Osborne, Gawler Central, Gawler and Brighton. No details were shown of the intended schedules of additional services for the return traffic after the pageant. Additional trains were, however, operated including short workings.

A full tram service schedule was posted. As in previous years, this operated in two sections until King William St was cleared - from Glenelg Moseley Square to South Terrace (six minute service) and Adelaide Railway Station to the Entertainment Centre (ten min service). The first through service was scheduled at approx. 1230.

TransPerth: 31 January timetable

From Sunday 31 January there are significant changes. Esplanade Station has been renamed Elizabeth Quay Station.

Joondalup Line: W pattern services (as shown in the Public timetables) now stop at Greenwood. C pattern services now stop all stations. Additional weekday trips run at the beginning and end of peaks.

Mandurah Line: C pattern services now stop all stations. Additional weekday trips now run at the beginning and end of peaks. Services begin earlier in the morning from Mandurah.

Armada Line The 1946 weekdays Armadale-Perth now stops all stations. The 2018 weekdays Perth-Thornlie now departs at 2017.

Fremantle Line no longer has K and L stopping patterns in the peaks - these services now stop all stations and have time changes.

Bus alterations are in the Bus News below.

Perth Airport line

The Federal government has approved construction of the proposed railway to Perth Airport. While it will be funded entirely by the WA state government, this is a key to the planning of the line, as 4 km will be within the airport precinct. Works will include twin-bored tunnels running east-west under the main runway and cross runway, and the

construction of a new below-ground Airport Central Station with pedestrian linkages to existing and future terminals.

WA bushfires

Bushfires in the Harvey-Yarloop-Waroona area around 8 January caused the suspension of train services, including the Australind passenger service.

Pilbara automated heavy rail

Mineral Resources Limited plans a new unmanned, automated iron ore rail system in the Pilbara. The railway would run 330 kms from the Iron Valley Project, 90 kms north-west of Newman, to Port Hedland inner harbour. It would be operated remotely from Perth and replace the current road haulage system.

TranzScenic

TranzScenic, the long-distance passenger arm of KiwiRail, said in early December that patronage on the **TranzAlpine** train from Christchurch to Greymouth increased by 10% in the past year, that is, it is recovering from the effects of the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010 and 2011. It expects that patronage will be back to pre-earthquake levels in three or four years. TranzScenic's statement also confirmed that the TranzAlpine is the only profitable passenger train they operate. Patronage is about 70% international and 30% domestic tourists.

The **Northern Explorer**, the thrice weekly Auckland-Wellington and v.v. passenger train, will probably be evicted from the new, convenient, central Britomart station in Auckland. This is because the success of Auckland's new electrified suburban passenger train system is stretching capacity at Britomart. The Northern Explorer is likely to be moved to the old Auckland station a couple of kilometres from the city centre in a dreary location.

Auckland suburban

A timetable change for Auckland suburban trains is likely early this year. Changes are expected to be:

- Introduction of a 15 minute off-peak frequency on the Western line on weekday mornings. (This frequency already applies on afternoon off-peak weekday services.)
- Trains to stop at the new Parnell station between Britomart and Newmarket. Construction of this station is approaching completion.
- Freeing of some morning peak capacity at Britomart by the eviction of the Northern Explorer train (see preceding item).

For the first time in about ten years, some parts of the Auckland rail network remained open throughout the holiday period. However, buses replaced trains on the Southern (including Manukau) and Onehunga lines from 27 December to 4 January.

Patronage on the Auckland suburban system has increased from 3 million passenger trips in 2003 to 14 million last year (before full completion of electrification).

Preliminary work on utilities relocation for the City Rail Link underground tunnel commenced on 21 December. However, the government has still not committed funding.

Wellington Suburban

KiwiRail has lost its bid to have its contract to operate Wellington suburban trains renewed. A new contract has been awarded to a consortium of Greater Wellington Regional Council, Transdev and Hyundai Rotem. The new contract will operate from 1 July 2016 for 15 years.

There was extensive replacement of Tranz Metro trains by buses from 26 December to 4 January for various upgrading, in particular between Wellington and Upper Hutt for the replacement of a bridge at Eastern Hutt Road, Silverstream.

KiwiRail freight

In early October KiwiRail and Solid Energy signed a new contract to continue the transport of coal from Ngakawau on the West Coast of the South Island for export from the port of Lyttleton on the East Coast of the South Island. The contract is for ten years and includes a penalty clause if Solid Energy ceases mining. However, because coal prices have decreased, the number of daily return coal trains has decreased from seven to four.

The coal mine at Huntley East, which was served by the 3.5 km Kimihia branch, ceased production in October. This resulted in the closure of the branch from 21 October.

In Auckland's southern suburbs, a third track of 1.5 km has been brought into use from Middlemore to Westfield freight yard.

New Zealand Public timetables checklist

Current NZ Public passenger timetables are:

TranzScenic	October 2015
TransDev Auckland Manukau)	Southern line (including 28 Sept 2015
	Eastern line 20 July 2015
	Western line 20 July 2015
	Onehunga line 20 July 2015
MetLink Wellington	Kapiti line 24 August 2015
	Johnsonville line 25 Oct 2015
	Hutt Valley and Melling lines 21
Nov 2013	Wairarapa line 1 June 2014

Dunedin Railways

Dunedin Railways is the name used since 2014 for the Taieri Gorge Railway. As well as maintaining its daily passenger train from Dunedin along the Taieri Gorge line to Pukerangi (sometimes extended to Middlemarch), for some time it has also operated north from Dunedin along the South Island Main Trunk railway. The trains operate every few days to

either Waitati or Palmerston. Recently, some trains were extended to run further to Oamaru.

German sleeper trains to be withdrawn

DB German Railways says that, as part of its planned cost reductions for next year, it will cease operating all overnight trains with sleeper, couchette and specially-equipped overnight seating coaches from 15 December 2016. DB says it has tried to "rescue" the night train network in recent years, but it remains stubbornly unprofitable. DB has released figures showing its night trains were used by 1.3 million passengers over the last year (around 1% of all long distance passengers). The trains made a loss of €32m on a turnover of €90m and DB predicts similar numbers for 2016.

From December 2016, DB says it will offer a new concept for overnight travel. The company is clear that this will not include any traditional overnight trains but there will be more overnight ICE services. DB suggests that these services, together with new DB-operated international IC Bus links, could maintain some of the international connections currently available through the sleeper network.

DB's long-distance bus competitors in Germany already run a network of overnight buses using their daytime fleets. DB says it will support other rail operators from neighbouring countries that want to continue operating traditional night trains into Germany. Talks are already underway with Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) concerning the continuation of its overnight services. DB may continue operating these trains on a contractual basis, but would no longer have any commercial interest in the services beyond December 2016. Other private German rail operators may also take on this work if ÖBB is unable to reach an arrangement with DB.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Scott Ferris, Geoff Hassall, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Len Regan, Roger Wheaton, www.railknowledgebank.com, www.railpage.com.au, *Age*, *Australian*, *Ballarat Courier*, *Greymouth Evening Star*, *Herald Sun*, *International Railway Journal*, *Newcastle Herald*, *NZ Railway Observer*, *Railway Digest*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Transit Australia* for Rail news.

ODD SPOT

On the front cover of the Canadian Pacific Railway public timetable of 8 January 1933:

"A Timetable is a Concise Record of Passenger Train Schedules. It is not a mystery, nor a puzzle, and not even difficult for anyone willing to be initiated."

Worth repeating on timetables today.

AIR NEWS

International

A report by air timetable publisher *Official Airline Guide* about on-time airline performance can be accessed (registration required) at http://info.oag.com/great-expectations-on-time-performance?utm_campaign=Great Expectations - OTP&utm_medium=E-blast&utm_source=

Air Canada will introduce daily flights between Vancouver and Brisbane from June 2016, ie an additional four services per week.

Domestic

From 27 March **Jetstar** will introduce four services weekly from Avalon to Hobart and thrice weekly from Avalon to Adelaide.

Since 2010, passenger numbers at Australian airports have risen by 4% per annum. However, **Canberra Airport** has experienced falls since its new terminal opened in 2010. In 2011 there were 3.17 million arrivals, a decrease of 3.4% from the preceding year. In 2012 there was a further decrease of 4.5% to 3.03 million, in 2013 a decrease of 3.2% to 2.93 million, in 2014 a decrease of 4.5% to 2.8 million and to October 2015 a further decrease of 0.3%. Canberra Airport Managing Director Stephen Byron criticised Federal government expenditure cutbacks which he blamed for the decreases, as less official travel is undertaken.

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

FERRY NEWS

New **Manly** fast ferries commenced on 23 December. The Ocean Tracker and Ocean Wave are 24-metre catamarans added to the Manly Fast Ferry fleet. Both vessels feature two gangways and double doorways that are designed to load 260 people in minutes. Manly Fast Ferry operates under a seven-year contract with the NSW government that allows the private company a monopoly. But Opal Cards cannot be used on the fast ferries. The trip between Manly and Circular Quay takes around 17 minutes on the fast ferries, compared to 38 minutes on other ferries. Another two new ferries are

due to arrive later this year, each measuring 33 metres with the capacity to carry 375 people.

On 31 January **TransPerth's** City terminal moved from Barrack Street Jetty to Elizabeth Quay Jetty.

Thanks to Geoff Lambert, Victor Isaacs and ABC news for Ferry news.

BUS NEWS

New South Wales

Sydney Buses: From the start of Term 1 in 2016, most School Special bus services will be renumbered to eliminate any duplication of route numbers that may have caused confusion to students in the past. The lengthy list of new numbers can be accessed at

http://www.sydneybuses.info/news/New_School_Routes_Final_V5.pdf

South Australia

Adelaide Metro: Timetables 27 January by Hilaire Fraser

New bus timetables will operate from 27 January 2016. There will be:

- improved access to Adelaide Airport and West Beach,
- New Glenelg bus interchange in Colley Terrace,
- New bus service providing greater coverage in Lightview,
- Improved access to Lyell McEwin Hospital and Flinders Medical Centre, and
- Increased services along Greenhill Road and a new design of the City Connector timetable.

98 99 City Connector
100, 101 Arndale-Glen Osmond and Flinders Uni
115, 117, 118 City-West Lakes/Port Adelaide via Crittenden Road
140, 144, 147 City-Glen Osmond/Beaumont
141, 142 City-Stonyfell/Burnside
150, 350 City-Port Adelaide/Osborne via Port Road
155/7, 376 City-West Lakes/Port Adelaide/Largs Bay and West Lakes-Delfin Is
167, 168 City-Glenelg via Richmond Road
171, 173 City-Mitcham Square and Blackwood via Fullarton Road
190 City-Glenelg via Raglan Avenue
195, 196, 197X City-Blackwood via Unley Road
200, 200B City-Marion via Clapham
202, 203, 209F, N202 City-Tea Tree Plaza via Hampstead Road
206, 208, 528 City-Northgate/Paradise
222 City- Mawson Interchange
224, N224 City-Elizabeth via Salisbury Highway
225 Gepps Cross or Mawson Lakes-Salisbury via Northbri Avenue
228 City-Smithfield via Main North Road
229 City-Para Hills via Pooraka
230, 232 City-Port Adelaide via Harrison Road
235, 238, 239 City-Kilburn/Mawson Lakes/Arndale
241, 245, 248 City-Warradale/Marion
251, 252 City-Mansfield Park/Port Adelaide via Liberty Grove
253, 254, N254 City-Mansfield Park/Port Adelaide via Hanson Road
262, 263, 265, N262 City-Marion via Glenelg

271, 273 City-Tea Tree Plaza via North East Road
281 City-Paradise
286, 287, 288 City-Henley Beach/West Lakes via Ashley St
300 Suburban Connector
333 Outer Harbor-Port Adelaide
400, 421 Elizabeth-Salisbury North and Salisbury-DSTO
401, 403, 900 Salisbury-Paralowie/Virginia
404, 405 Salisbury-Paralowie
411 Salisbury-Mawson Interchange via Parafield Gardens
415, 415H, 415V, 430 Salisbury-Greenwith/Hillbank
440, 441, 442, 443 Elizabeth-Munno Para/Smithfield
451, 452, 461 462 Elizabeth-Munno Para
491, 492, 493, 494 Gawler Local Services
500, 501, 502, N502 City-Elizabeth/Mawson Lakes
544 M44 Marion-Golden Grove
545 City-Golden Grove via McIntyre Road
556, 557, 559 City-Tea Tree Plaza via St Agnes
560, 565 Elizabeth-Tea Tree Plaza and Mawson Interchange-Ingles Farm
600, 601, 605 G30F Old Reynella-Marion and Darlington-Blackwood
640, 719, 720, City-Flinders Uni/Old Reynella Interchange
645, 646 Marion-Seaview Downs/Seacombe Heights
681, 682, 683 Hallett Cove Beach Station-Hallett Cove/Sheidow Park
721, T721, N721 City-Noarlunga Centre Interchange via Main South Road
722, T722 City-Noarlunga Centre via States Road
723F, 723X, 733 City/Marion-Colonnades Shopping Centre via Woodcroft
724, 734 Colonnades Shopping Centre-Marion
725 City-Noarlunga Centre Interchange via Acre Avenue
737 Chanders Hill-Old Reynella
741 750 751 752 755 756 Colonnades Centre-Maslin Beach/Sellicks Beach
743, 744 Hackham West Circuit
745, 747, T748 Seaford Circuit
820, 821, 822 City-Burnside, Carey Gully and Stirling
823, 840X, 860F, 863, 864, N864, T843 City-Aldgate and Mt Barker
830F, 834, 835 Lobethal-City/Verdun/Mt Barker
837/841F, 842F, T842 City-Nairne
838, 839 Mt Barker East and West
850, 852 Macclesfield/Strathalbyn/Echunga
861, N864 City-Glen Osmond
865, 866 868 City-Aldgate and Crafers-Stirling
B10, B12 Magill-West Lakes, Tennyson via Grange Road
C1, C2, N1 City-Elizabeth and Greenwith
G10, N10, N21, Blair Athol-Marion
G20, G21, G22, 320, N10, N21 City-Aberfoyle Hub
H20, H21, 580 Paradise-Glenelg via Marion Road
H30, N30, X30 Paradise-West Lakes via Henley Beach Road
J1, J3, 163 Jetbus
J7, J8, 371, 372 West Lakes-Marion
Glenelg Tram
Total 73

- G21 City-Old Reynella Interchange now City-Aberfoyle Hub
- J2 City-Harbour Town now J3 City-Glenelg
- 162 City-West Beach (Rio Vista Avenue) now 163 City-West Beach (Military Road)
- 204 City-Northgate now 206 City-Northgate via Lightsview
- 600/1 Marion –Aberfoyle Park extended to Old Reynella Interchange
- 820/820S City-Carey Gully now 821/822
- 820 (new) City-Burnside via Greenhill Road
- City Connector (98A/98C/99A/99C) now in leaflet entitled “Free City Connector, Explore Adelaide By Bus” 98A travels by Currie St rather than Franklin St.

The new timetables are at

<http://www.adelaidemetro.com.au/Announcements/Planned-Disruptions/Bus-and-tram-timetable-changes-from-Tuesd>

Tasmania Summary by Hilaire Fraser

New Hobart Network 10 January 2016

Southern Suburbs

- 401 Hobart City-Sandy Bay via Churchill Avenue (Full Time)
- 402 Hobart City-Sandy Bay via Sandy Bay Road (Full Time)
- 407 Hobart City-Blackmans Bay via Outlet and Kingston Beach (Mon-Sat)
- 408 Hobart City-Blackmans Bay via Outlet and Maranoa Heights (Mon-Sat)
- 409 Hobart City-Blackmans Bay (Suncoast Drive) via Outlet and Auburn Road (Peak)
- 410 Hobart City-Kingston Central via Outlet (Mon-Fri)
- 411 Hobart City-Howden via Kingston Beach (Peak)
- 412 Hobart City-Margate (Peak)
- 413 Hobart City-Snug (Mon-Sat)
- 415 Hobart City-Woodbridge (Mon-Sat)
- 416 Hobart City-Middleton (Peak)
- 417 Hobart City-Gordon (Peak)
- 418 Hobart City-Cygnets (Peak)
- 426 Hobart City-Taroona (Mon-Sat)
- 427 Hobart City-Blackmans Bay via Taroona and Kingston Beach (Night/Sun)
- 428 Hobart City-Blackmans Bay via Taroona and Maranoa Heights (Night/Sun)
- 429 Hobart City-Huntingfield via Taroona (Mon-Sat)
- 446 Hobart City-Marlyn Road (Mon-Fri)
- 447 Hobart City-Strickland Avenue via Marlyn Rd (Peak)
- 448 Hobart City-Fern Tree via Huon Road (Mon-Fri)
- 449 Hobart City-Fern Tree via Marlyn Road and Strickland Avenue (Night/Weekend)
- 457 Hobart City-Mt Nelson (Night/Weekend)
- 458 Hobart City-Mt Nelson via Hobart College (Mon-Fri)
- X58 Hobart City-Mt Nelson via Tolmans Hill and Hobart College Express (Peak)

Northern Suburbs

- 500 Blackmans Bay-Glenorchy via Maranoa Heights and Outlet (Peak)
- 501 University-Glenorchy (Mon-Fri)
- 502 Hobart City-Glenorchy (early and late trips)
- X02 Hobart City-Glenorchy Express (Peak)
- 503 Hobart City-Tolosa Park (Full Time)
- 504 Hobart City-Jackson St (Full Time)
- 510 Hobart City-Austins Ferry (Full Time)
- X10 Hobart City-Granton Express (Peak)
- 511 Hobart City-Claremont Plaza (Full Time)
- X11 Hobart City-Claremont Plaza Express (Peak)
- 512 Hobart City-Cadbury Estate (Mon-Sat)
- 513 Hobart City-Chigwell (Mon-Sat)
- 520 City-Bridgewater (Mon-Fri early and late trips/Sat)
- X20 City-Bridgewater Express (Mon-Fri)

- 521 Glenorchy-Brighton (Mon-Sat)
- X21 Hobart City-Brighton Express (Peak)
- 522 Hobart City-Gagebrook via Bridgewater (Night/Sun)
- 530 Glenorchy-Bridgewater via Old Beach and Gagebrook (Mon-Sat)
- X30 Hobart City-Bridgewater via Old Beach and Gagebrook Express (Peak)
- 540 Hobart City-Mt Stuart via West Hobart (Full Time)
- 541 Hobart City-Metro Springfield via Florence Heights (Mon-Fri)
- 542 Metro Springfield-Glenorchy via West Moonah (Mon-Sat)
- X42 Hobart City-Glenorchy via West Moonah Express (Peak)
- 550 Hobart City-Glenorchy via Lenah Valley (Mon-Fri)
- X50 Hobart City-Glenorchy via Lenah Valley Express (Peak)
- 551 Hobart City-Lenah Valley (Night/Weekend)
- 552 Hobart City-Lenah Valley via Girrabong Road (Peak)
- 553 Hobart City-Lenah Valley via Pottery Road and Ruth Drive (Mon-Fri)
- 560 Hobart City-Glenorchy via Goodwood (Mon-Fri)
- 561 Hobart City-Glenorchy via Lutana and Goodwood (Night/Weekend)
- 562 Hobart City-Springfield Metro via Lutana (Mon-Fri)

Eastern Shore

- 601 University-Shoreline Central (Mon-Fri)
- 605 Glenorchy-Shoreline Central (Peak)
- 606 Hobart City-Shoreline Central via Waverley St (Mon-Fri)
- 614 Hobart City-Tranmere via Bellerive Bluff (Mon-Fri)
- 615 Hobart City-Tranmere (Peak/Weekend))
- X15 Hobart City-Tranmere Express (Peak)
- 616 Hobart City-Tranmere via Howrah Heights (Full Time)
- X16 Hobart City-Tranmere via Howrah Heights Express (Peak)
- 624 Hobart City-Clarendon Vale via Goodwins Road (Full Time)
- 625 Hobart City-Clarendon Vale via Rokeby (Full Time)
- 634 Hobart City-Roches Beach (Mon-Sat)
- X34 Hobart City-Roches Beach Express (Peak)
- 635 Hobart City-Seven Mile Beach via Roches Beach (Weekend)
- X44 Hobart City-Opossum Bay via Rifle Range Road Express (Peak)
- X45 Hobart City-Clifton Beach via Cremorne Express (Peak)
- 646 Hobart City-Opossum Bay via Cremorne (Mon-Sat Limited)
- 654 Hobart City-Mornington via Mornington Heights (Full Time)
- 655 Hobart City-Mornington via Warrane (Full-Time)
- 664 Hobart City-Seven Mile Beach (Mon-Fri)
- X64 Hobart City-Seven Mile Beach Express (Peak)
- 665 Hobart City-Seven Mile Beach via Acton Park (Mon-Fri)
- X65 Hobart City-Seven Mile Beach Express via Acton Park (Peak)
- 676 Hobart City-Rosny Park via Montagu Bay (Mon-Fri)
- 684 Rosny Park-Geilston Bay via Lindisfarne (Full Time)
- 685 Hobart City-Geilston Bay via Lindisfarne (Peak)
- 694 Rosny Park-Glenorchy via Risdon Vale (Full Time)
- 695 Hobart City-Risdon Park (Full Time)
- 696 Rosny Park-Bridgewater via Risdon Vale (Mon-Fri).

- 44-98, 154-158 Southern Routes replaced by 400 series routes
- 4-42, 100-190 Northern Routes replaced by 500 series routes
- 600 series Eastern Shore routes altered
- 10 minute Turn Up and Go introduced between Hobart City & Shoreline Central 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday
- Saturday Hobart City-Glenorchy Turn Up and Go increased to 15 minute frequency, although timetable cover still says 20 minutes.

- Many Northern services operate as feeders to and from Glenorchy
- Many Eastern Shore services operate as feeders to and from Rosny Park
- Most 521 operate as feeders to 520 and X20 to and from Bridgewater Plaza
- Off Peak 606 inward trips terminate at Waverley St/High St Bellerive, outward trips commence from Rosny Park
- Some loop services are provided such as 407/408, 615/616, 624/625, 654/655, 664/665
- To avoid duplication with X routes, Northern routes end with 0, 1, 2 or 3 (eg 510, 511, 512, 513), Eastern Shore routes end with 4, 5 or 6 (eg 614, 615, 616) and Southern routes end with 7, 8 or 9 (eg 407, 408, 409). Among exceptions are Channel services 411-418, Taroona 426 and Marilyn Rd 446.

Launceston Changes 10 January 2016

A new Launceston North timetable has been issued effective 10 January 2016.

6 City-Mayfield-Alanvale-Newnham-City and 7 City-Newnham-Alanvale-Mayfield-City have been recast as 6 City-Alanvale via Mayfield and 7 City-Alanvale via Newnham. However, they combine to provide a loop service. 8 City-University now does not run during university vacations.

Comments by Ian Cooper

The new service structure is the most comprehensive and fully co-ordinated change to routes and timetables since the staged introduction of MX (Metro Xpress) services in the early 1990s.

Extensive public consultation had earlier identified the concern expressed by many residents that Metro's services were excessively complex with many deviations incorporated into a multiplicity of routes. As a result, the Metro service was difficult to promote to a population which is highly geared towards the use of private cars. One of the main objectives of this latest exercise was to simplify the total operation while simultaneously improving the overall network. In so doing Metro claims that the allocation of individual route numbers has been reduced from 145 to 83. I have calculated the number of footnotes on timetables – before and after. They have been substantially reduced from approximately 195 to 77.

Another aim of Metro was to offer more direct routes by deleting the number of routes which operated on streets not designed for buses. On this score Metro had operated, for many years, several "Doorstopper" services using mini and midi buses in which buses would deviate from trunk routes into the "back streets" to provide a "dial-a-bus" operation. At the end of the "Doorstoppers" Metro had only two such routes remaining, the 180 and 190 in North Hobart, New Town, Moonah and Glenorchy. Both services have been observed carrying few passengers. Metro plans to retire the last four of its MAN midi buses after 10 January. As a result of the re-allocation of resources the number of "X" numbered Express routes has increased from nine to sixteen: eight in the Northern Suburbs, seven on the Eastern Shore and one in South Hobart.

Following the success of the Glenorchy "Turn Up and Go" high frequency service along the Main Road to Hobart City, Metro has introduced a similar service between Shoreline Central in Howrah, along Clarence St, a high density residential area on the Eastern Shore, to Rosny Park, the Eastern Shore's town centre to Hobart City. A 10 minute frequency is planned for the Rosny Park "Turn Up and Go" services – the same as the Glenorchy service. In both the Glenorchy and Shoreline/Rosny Park cases, the average

headway between buses will be 7.5 minutes in the peak periods.

Metro has been one of the last major bus service operators in Australia to introduce a network of services to the University. Metro is now introducing direct services to the University at Sandy Bay from Glenorchy, in the Northern Suburbs (route 501) and Shoreline and Rosny Park on the Eastern Shore (Route 601), which will supplement, to a degree, seven days a week services from Hobart City Interchange (routes 401 and 402). Reflecting the changes in tertiary education and the high level of research activity at UTAS, routes 501 and 601 will operate five days a week and outside the standard semesters, although at reduced frequencies. During semesters buses will operate every 30 minutes from UTAS to Glenorchy and to Rosny Park. Route 401 will operate from the University to Hobart City Interchange via Sandy Bay shops while the 501 will link the University directly with Glenorchy via Antill St and Fitzroy Place with the 601 connecting Shoreline Central and Rosny Park with the University via Antill St and Fitzroy Place. The 401 continues to Sandy Bay via Churchill Avenue and the 402 will continue to Sandy Bay via Sandy Bay Road. All services on weekdays up to 1830 will operate every 30 minutes with six buses per hour between the City and the University. From 1830 to the close of operations, an hourly operation to Hobart City will be provided by Route 402 with the last bus departing at 2204 on Friday night. On Saturdays however, the last bus at night to the City will depart the University at 0102. Route 402 buses to the City will operate on Saturdays every 30 minutes and every 60 minutes on Sundays.

Metro is also attempting to increase its penetration of new residential areas by extending routes into, for example, Tranmere, Howrah and Oak Downs on the Eastern Shore and Summerleas at Kingston. For example, buses in the relatively new estate at Summerleas, Kingston (Route 429), offer improved accessibility when compared with former route 62.

An improved spread of operating hours, especially at weekends, has, in many instances, added an extra hour to the start of services and an extra hour to the afternoon/evening conclusion of service. Some Sunday services now have buses every hour instead of every two hours between 0830 and 1930 replacing a service which formerly ran every two hours between 0930 and 1930.

Surveys conducted by Metro have obviously revealed the small patronage on some diversions of the former network. For example, route 154 from Sandy Bay to the City via Battery Point has been discontinued. The Battery Point to City route was the last remnant of one of the oldest city bus services in Hobart, having been commenced by the Hobart Municipal Tramways in November 1925. The deletion of this diversion and those on the 180 and 190 routes and diversions in Mount Stuart and West Hobart did not surprise me. However, an addition to direct routes to the City – Bellerive Bluff to Hobart City on route 614, did provide a surprise after an earlier deletion of the Bellerive Bluff diversion of buses travelling to Hobart City.

Metro has also claimed that better connections at interchanges have been introduced. Interchanging is an important aspect of the new operational model because greater use of the interchanges is to be made so as to reduce the number of buses travelling, for example, "nose to tail" across the Tasman Bridge during the day, each carrying a handful of passengers.

Presentation of the new network

Possibly the most significant change to the presentation of timetables and route maps concerns the introduction of diagrammatical route maps in association with the display of

departure times across the page rather than in the traditional Metro vertical format. The new maps appear to have reduced the complexity of the display of the network but as there is, as yet, no comprehensive route map for the entire operation, the “jury” will reserve judgement at this point.

Unfortunately the colours chosen for the identification of many of the maps continue to disappoint. This situation is especially so where the colour is one of pastel classification rather than bolder and darker colours, especially where the route numbers are delineated in white on a pastel ground.

Unfortunately, in attempting to present a massive volume of information, it is perhaps inevitable that a few gremlins have crept into the marketing department. For example: On the timetable for Routes 614, 615, X15, 616 and X16, there is a note that buses on the above routes stop in Campbell and Liverpool Streets on the inbound journey to Hobart City. Unfortunately there is no stop in the very short section of Liverpool St traversed by buses with buses stopping in Campbell St followed by the only Hobart City terminal stop in Collins St.

In a few instances there are variations between the description of the suburban streets used for terminating buses and the location of the terminus according to the actual street signs. It is assumed that residents will quickly determine the precise location of the terminus.

Victoria by Craig Halsall, Graeme Reynolds and Victor Isaacs

Details of V/Line bus alterations are in the Rail News above.

Epping North and Wollert

From 24 January 2016 a new bus network for Epping North and Wollert will commence. Former Route 575 is replaced by three new bus services to extend to local areas. Key features are:

- More direct services to Epping Station, Epping Plaza, Epping Secondary College and the Northern Hospital.
- More frequent services, with buses every 20 minutes in the peak and 40 minutes in the off-peak and on weekends.
- Better connections at key interchange points for rail and bus services.
- Extended coverage into Wollert, Wollert West and Wollert East.
- New Route 356 Wollert East to Epping Station will extend coverage, with new services running north of the Hayston and Epping Road junction and link to Route 358 at Epping station with connections to Epping Plaza Shopping Centre and the Northern Hospital.
- New route 357 Wollert West to Thomastown replaces 575. It will extend coverage to Wollert West to include new services on Lyndarum Drive, Edgars Road and Eaststone Avenue with more frequent services to Epping Plaza.
- New Route 358 Wollert to Epping Station via Epping Plaza via Miller Street and Greenfields Drive, will connect with route 356 providing more frequent services to Epping Secondary College and improve services to the Northern Hospital and better connections to key interchange points for rail and bus services.

Keysborough South consultation

Residents of Keysborough South in Melbourne’s south-east are set to finally gain a bus service by mid 2016 after PTV undertook community consultation in November on a

proposed bus service to the suburb which has gradually grown over the past decade, with over 7000 residents calling it home at the last census in 2011. Option A would see a new route between Noble Park and Keysborough South before returning to Parkmore Shopping Centre, while Option B would see the existing 709 from Mordialloc extended to Noble Park, but potentially no longer operating via residential streets in Waterways – a feature lake would cause some residents to walk over a kilometre to the buses on Springvale or Governor Roads. No changes are proposed to existing routes within Keysborough. Daytime services are proposed to operate every 40 minutes, with evening services until 2100 departing hourly.

Lexton loses out

Gold Bus advises the shuttle bus operating between the township of Lexton and Talbot on the Maryborough line closed on 20 June after 18 months of operation. The service began in December 2013 with the reopening of Talbot Station, and offered free fares for the first six months. The Littles’ bus between Maryborough and Ballarat continues to serve Lexton on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Dandenong CBD shuttle cutback

The free Dandenong CBD shuttle service, which does a loop of Dandenong via the market, hospital and plaza, has operated to a reduced time span since May, with services now only operating 1000 – 1500 Monday to Saturday instead of 0900 – 1730. Ventura operates the service on behalf of Greater Dandenong Council.

Bendigo

A new network will start on 31 January, with new and improved services for Spring Gully, Huntly, Eaglehawk, Jackass Flat and Epsom. Key features are:

- A new cross town service from Huntly to Kangaroo Flat, and a new route to Jackass Flat and growth areas in Strathfieldsaye and Huntly.
- Buses better coordinated with trains, and three routes to La Trobe University, including a new fast, direct and frequent service from Bendigo Station.
- Buses every 30-60 minutes on most routes, but a more frequent service between Bendigo and Eaglehawk every 15 minutes on weekdays.

Improved train services in the Bendigo areas from this date are detailed in the Rail news above.

Real time information

On 29 December the final group of bus routes returning real time information in metropolitan Melbourne was released. Phased over the past six months, this project provides real time information for all Melbourne buses via the PTV website and PTV mobile app. Real-time information can be accessed via the Next 5 app and is shown as a countdown timer in minutes, instead of a clock time. The latest routes to be added were:

- 150, 151, 153, 160, 161, 166, 167, 170, 180, 181, 190, 191 and 192
- 400, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 414, 415, 417, 418, 419, 421, 423, 424, 425, 439, 441, 443, 465, 467, 468, 477, 478, 479, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 494, 495, 496, 497 and 498
- 503 and 506
- 601, 605, 606, 612, 623, 624, 625, 626, 630, 681 and 682
- 789, 790, 791, 795, 796, 797, 798 and 799
- 800, 802, 811, 812, 813, 821, 824, 831, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 844, 845, 846, 847, 850, 857, 861, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897 and 898

- 925, 926, 927, 928 and 929.

Work will now commence on releasing bus routes in regional Victoria.

Western Australia by David Whiteford and Victor Isaacs

Adams Coachlines took over transport on Rottnest Island in November after being awarded a ten year lease to run the free shuttle bus service between accommodation hubs. Adams will also run the train services between Thomson Bay and the Oliver Hill gun emplacement. The Rottnest Island Authority had been running the services, with considerable volunteer input, particularly on the trains. Adams was providing four wheel chair accessible, air-conditioned buses for use during the high-demand summer period.

TransGoldfields commenced a six month trial service of two return services between Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Coolgardie (Route 865 on Thursdays from 12 November) and Kambalda (Route 866 on Saturdays from 14 November). The Coolgardie service departs Kalgoorlie 0830, Coolgardie 0910, Boulder 1530, Coolgardie 1620. The Kambalda service departs Kalgoorlie 0700, Kambalda West 0800, Kalgoorlie 1600, Kambalda West 1700. The morning outwards and afternoon inwards services on both routes run express with most stops omitted.

TransPerth: From Sunday 31 January there are significant changes. Esplanade Busport is renamed Elizabeth Quay Bus Station.

Circle Route: Route 98 is renumbered as 998. Route 99 is renumbered as 999. The Circle Route has time changes. Route 380 has time changes.

Northern Bus Services

Route 344 deviations to the Malaga Industrial area have a route change.

Route 365 deviations to Casserley Avenue are withdrawn due to poor patronage.

Route 370 has additional trips replacing some Route 870 trips.

Route 403 now has some short services to/from Stirling Station.

Route 412 has an additional weekday trip.

Route 449 is withdrawn due to poor patronage.

Routes 461, 467, 468 and 469 have additional weekday trips.

Routes 480, 481, 482, 483 and 484 - a small number of trips are withdrawn due to poor patronage.

Route 870 - a small number of trips are withdrawn and replaced by changes to Route 370 services.

Routes 14, 15, 19, 20, 346, 347, 352, 371, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 402, 404, 406, 407, 410, 413, 414, 415, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 427, 428, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 450, 460, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 470, 471, 473, 474, 490, 491, 990 and Joondalup CAT have time changes only.

Southern Bus Services

Routes 208, 506, 508, 509 and 515 are now fully accessible services.

Routes 516, 517, 518 and 519 - some Weekday services are extended via Fiona Wood Road to Challenger Institute and will now run as fully accessible services.

Route 521 is withdrawn and replaced by changes to routes 516, 517, 518 and 519.

Route 568 has an additional weekday trip.

Routes 100, 101, 150, 160, 170, 176, 177, 179, 204, 205, 206, 207, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 507, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 520, 522, 525, 526, 527, 530, 531, 532, 540, 541, 542, 543, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 586, 587, 588, 589, 591, 592, 593, 594, 597, 598, 600, 604, 605, 825 and 920 have time changes only.

South Eastern Bus Services

Routes 210 and 211 now run between Thornlie Station and Gosnells Station.

Route 212 now runs between Thornlie Station and Huntingdale.

Routes 223, 228 and 229 are now fully accessible services. **Routes 568** has an additional weekday trip.

New Route 930 (Route 925 during the consultation period) runs a high frequency services between Elizabeth Quay Bus Station in Perth and Thornlie Station. This service will run via Shepperton Road, Albany Highway and Spencer Road.

Western Bus Services

Routes 81, 82, 83, 84 and 85 have time changes only.

Rail changes are in the Rail News above. Thanks to Ian Cooper, Hilaire Fraser, Craig Halsall, Victor Isaacs, Graeme Reynolds, David Whiteford, various contributors on *Australian Transport Discussion Board*, the *Age* and the *Canberra Times* for Bus news.

About Table Talk

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

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