



TABLE TALK

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TOP TABLE TALK – MELBOURNE'S GROWTH

Population flip: All out, All change

by Bernard Salt, the Australian, 13 October

Melbourne is doing what no other Australian city is doing: flipping. The focus of the southern capital's growth for 160 years was east towards the Dandenong Ranges and then southeast towards Cranbourne, Pakenham and Berwick. However, Melbourne's future growth lies nowhere in the east but everywhere in the west and north. New tracts of developable residential land west of Deer Park, north of Hoppers Crossing and north of Broadmeadows are taking Melbourne in an entirely different direction.

On the one hand this can be viewed as the mere machinations of a city's changing demography. But on the other hand this flip-city act represents perhaps the greatest shift in capital city property values since the completion of the Harbour Bridge opened up Sydney's north shore in the 1930s. But the land deals in the pathway of Melbourne's western, southwestern and northern surges have long been done. The big players are right now carving new residential estates from Tarneit and Truganina to Plumpton, Delahey and Craigieburn. And yes, there are infrastructure plays that will help unlock and deliver fluidity to the west. The Westgate Bridge will need to be replicated in form or in function. The Western Ring Road will need to and indeed is being upgraded.

Hipsters have already colonised Yarraville and I am told there have been beard sightings on The Strand at Williamstown. Not only that but Sunshine is surely a hipster hotspot in waiting: all that ethnic eclecticism; all that industrial chic authenticity. Mark my words.

But all of this is a mere chimera. The main game in property revaluation has yet to play out. And partly, I suspect, because no-one has put all the pieces together in Melbourne's extraordinary flip-city reconfiguration. Melbourne is lopsided because the locals have always preferred the undulating hills of the east over the flat basalt plains of the west. This meant railway lines evolved to harness the east's commuter reserves. There are 10 lines serving the east from Flinders St, namely (clockwise): South Morang, Hurstbridge, Lilydale, Belgrave, Alamein, Glen Waverley, Pakenham, Cranbourne, Frankston and

Sandringham. These lines channel commuters from three-quarters of Melbourne's population mass into Flinders St, which now manages around 30 million passengers a year, up from 25 million less than a decade ago.

Melbourne's workers and city-shoppers have always spilt out of Flinders St and made a beeline to Collins St offices and retail stores (Myer and David Jones) in Bourke St. So intense are these ant tracks that over time a series of arcades have evolved to allow shoppers to get to Bourke St via the Block Arcade, The Royal Arcade, The Causeway, Port Phillip Arcade, the Degraes St Subway and others.

But about a decade ago Melbourne's growth began flipping. The city's southeast growth municipalities of Casey and Cardinia began giving way to the west's power couple, the municipalities of Wyndham and Melton, as Victoria's and then Australia's growth hotspot. Bolt on the City of Hume to the north and Melbourne's flip is underway, delivering more and more commuters into Southern Cross station in the process.

The west's flat plains may have been shunned by Melburnians for more than a century but this is where the focus of metropolitan growth will remain in the first half of the 21st century. And the reason is simple: Melbourne's western growth front offers affordable housing that is closer to the CBD than the eastern and southeastern edges. The Melbourne flip was always going to happen; it's happening now and it's written into the city's strategic plan to 2050.

This is important because Melbourne's new western growth front is serviced by railway lines that connect not into Flinders St but into Southern Cross, including lines to (clockwise): Williamstown, Werribee, Geelong, Melton, Sunbury, Craigieburn and Upfield. Spencer St, the name of Southern Cross's predecessor station, was always Flinders St's less glamorous cousin.

Southern Cross, Spencer St's reincarnation, not only wrangles suburban commuters from the burgeoning west and north but it also snares bus interchange travellers to the airport and beyond, and the entirety of the Victoria's rural railway system. Melbourne visitors from Bendigo, Ballarat, Mildura and Bairnsdale alight

at Southern Cross. In this regard the new Southern Cross station is more like a sleeping beauty that has been reimagined ... and it ain't going back to the way it was.

The completion of the Regional Rail Link in 2015 accentuated the western flip by streaming commuters from new stations such as Tarneit and Wyndham Vale into Southern Cross, whose patronage now tops 25 million, up from barely 13 million almost a decade ago. Make no mistake, Southern Cross is stalking Flinders St for supremacy as the point of access to CBD offices, shops and other attractions. If, by the middle of the 2020s, Southern Cross was to deliver, say, 35 million commuters and Flinders St only 33 million, then new retail space must be developed either within Southern Cross and/or in the precinct.

In a highest and best use of land consideration, office space gives way to retail space, so Melbourne's retail anchors would then contort to capture the new foot-traffic hot spots.

It is true that the proposed Melbourne metro tunnel will divert some of the west's rising commuter flows to new stations along the CBD spine, but most will channel through to Southern Cross to get to workplaces in Docklands and Collins St West.

Residential property values around new stations at Melbourne University and the Domain in particular will reflect the premium associated with access to the best jobs and cultural infrastructure in the state of Victoria.

No capital city has been transformed the way the Melbourne CBD will be transformed by the city's demography-inspired flip leading to a power shift from Flinders St to Southern Cross. The commuter flows tell the story of a rising force that is unstoppable. Pump more people into the catchment of railway lines that feed into Southern Cross and the CBD's primary access point and property valuations will shift from the gracious arcades around Flinders St to the pulsing heart of Southern Cross station.

Melbourne at eight million people by mid-century will be serviced by two landmark railway stations just as London and Paris at eight and 10 million today are serviced by several big stations. The question is whether well before mid-century Melbourne won't also have a second CBD, possibly based around new technology and located somewhere along the longest urban corridor at say Box Hill or at, say, Monash-Chadstone.

Meantime it is not possible to retain old CBD configurations and property valuations when a city is taken from four million residents through to five million and beyond. Melbourne is expanding in a new direction; the CBD will expand in a new direction.

It's time to think about the way in which CBD property values will be reshaped by the reconfiguration of the greater metropolitan area of Melbourne. And one of the first signs to watch out for in this story of the rising influence of the west will be the sighting of hipsters in places like Sunshine.

Franchises

The Victorian Government is considering new seven year franchises for suburban rail and tram. Operators will be required to abide by conditions which will include prohibition of skipping stops at stations to make up late running, and standards for reliability, accessibility and maintenance. Operators of trains and trams would face spot infrastructure audits. Last year, about 300 services became instant expresses to avoid late running penalties. However, after widespread condemnation, the number of station-skipping incidents has dropped from almost 200 a quarter to 46 in the most recent three-month period. Public Transport Minister, Jacinta Allan said all scheduled stations would be measured for punctuality under new contracts, effectively putting an end to station skipping. At present, trains and trams are measured at just a few points on their journey.

Metro Trains and Yarra Trams are favourites for the new seven-year agreements. Under the current franchise agreements, the government must negotiate exclusively with Metro and Yarra Trams about a new seven-year deal. If the two companies satisfy government demands, they would negotiate new deals, but if they fail to meet requests the process could be opened to other bidders.

Soon to be non-level crossing city

A consortium led by CPB Contractors will remove four level crossings on the Belgrave and Lilydale lines. There will, however, be dire consequences for train services in the short term. Acting Premier Jacinta Allan announced the work at Blackburn Road in Blackburn, Heatherdale Road in Heatherdale, and Mountain Highway and Scoresby Road in Bayswater from 15 October, "well ahead of schedule".

The Minister said Bayswater station will close and be demolished, before being rebuilt to suit the new track alignment. Belgrave line trains will run express through Bayswater during this time, with buses running from stations either side.

The Belgrave line will fully close between Ringwood and Belgrave for a 37-day construction blitz beginning in November, with 63,000 cubic metres of soil and rock to be excavated to lower the rail line, before road bridges are built over the tracks, to replace level crossings at Mountain Highway and Scoresby Road, in Bayswater.

Buses will replace trains between Box Hill and Ringwood stations for 34 days from 27 December to 29 January while 800 workers lower the rail line under Blackburn and Heatherdale Roads, upgrade Blackburn station, and build the new Heatherdale station.

Infrastructure Victoria

On 4 October Infrastructure Victoria released a draft infrastructure strategy for the next 30 years. It is now open for consultation. The draft covers everything from education to transport, telecommunications, energy and justice. It makes 134 recommendations worth around \$100 billion to address the Victoria's current and future needs.

Public transport recommendations are:

- Geelong/Werribee/Wyndham rail: New stations, extra tracks and electrification. 5-15 years. Cost: Up to \$3 billion.
- Level Crossing removals: Develop plan within five years to remove more crossings beyond current target of 50.
- Melbourne Metro 2: Tunnel linking Clifton Hill to Fishermans Bend, then Newport needs investigation in next five years and could be required in 15-30 years. Cost: More than \$10 billion.
- A railway to Wollert and Epping North within 15 to 30 years.
- High capacity signalling upgrades on the metropolitan rail network.
- Upgrades to some of Melbourne's busiest train stations, including South Yarra and Caulfield.
- New mass transit light rail or bus networks for major metropolitan employment centres – such as Monash and Latrobe – to connect with rail lines.
- Introduce new regional bus services to connect regional towns with regional cities.
- Expand bus services in growth suburbs, as well as SmartBus services and improved DART services to Doncaster.
- Reconfigure the City Loop to increase capacity on the Craigieburn and Upfield lines.
- Remove barriers to innovative rideshare and carpooling schemes.
- Trams: Extend services to Fishermans Bend and Footscray. 5-10 years. Cost: Up to \$3 billion.
- Reserve land for possible railway to Torquay (see item below).
- Melbourne Airport Bus: Create priority bus lane to Airport within 10 years. Cost: Up to \$100 million.
- Metropolitan bus network: Overhaul routes within 5 years.

But the report recommends deferring construction of a railway to Melbourne Airport, saying it will only be needed once SkyBus is full in 15 to 30 years. It also finds new rail lines to Monash University and Rowville, and to Doncaster, cannot be justified.

The full draft report can be accessed at <http://yoursay.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/30-year-strategy/>

Infrastructure Victoria concluded that the Melbourne Metro 2 project - a proposed \$19 billion train tunnel from Clifton Hill to Newport via Parkville, Southern Cross Station and Fishermans Bend - could add about \$20 billion to land values. It warned that residential and commercial properties set to benefit from big infrastructure projects might need to get used to the idea of helping pay for them. In a controversial approach to funding infrastructure known as "value capture", which is championed by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, it concluded that about one-quarter of the project costs could be funded by hitting those who benefit with a "betterment levy". Under the most likely scenario, all residential and commercial

properties within 1 km of the rail corridor would pay the new tax. In the first year of operation, the average rate would be \$435 for residential properties, or \$21 and \$10 per square metre for commercial and industrial properties.

Construction is unlikely to start until at least 2034.

A spokesman for Treasurer Tim Pallas said Infrastructure Victoria's final recommendations were due in December and would be "fully considered" ahead of a five-year infrastructure strategy due to be released by the middle of next year. With infrastructure funding a major political issue, the idea of hitting households or businesses with higher taxes to help pay for it is already proving highly controversial.

The idea of "value capture" - where the households and business that directly benefit from a project are required to help fund it - was heavily spruiked by Mr Turnbull. In April this year, he said major projects needed to harness the boost in property values that resulted from them, and called for a "cultural gear change in the way that we look at urban infrastructure".

But the details about how the concept could be put into practice to fund big projects have so far proved elusive. Infrastructure Victoria said methods of applying the concept could include "betterment" levies, developer contributions, and cashing in on property development around train stations. It said there was evidence that certain types of infrastructure such as train stations increased nearby land values, providing "significant windfall gains to land owners. A park, for instance, is more readily enjoyed by those living nearby; a train service is most beneficial for those living and working near a station. Even state-wide services, such as hospital care, are most valuable to those with ready access to them.

The concept of value capture is not a new one. It was used to help fund Melbourne's City Loop, with a variety of levies and charges. It is also being used to fund London's Crossrail project through a levy on non-residential properties.

Tram to South Morang?

Less than five years ago the first Metro train ran all the way out to South Morang. Such is the frenetic pace of urban growth in Whittlesea Shire – a population almost the size of Shepparton has moved there in the last five years – the Victorian government is already contemplating putting in a tram line just five years after the railway was opened to South Morang.

The government is investigating a possible five-km route extension of route 86 from Bundoora, as part of a \$1 million spend on readying the line for E-Class trams. "We're investigating a range of improvements to Route 86, including infrastructure upgrades for the rollout of bigger, safer, more accessible trams, and planning for a potential extension of the line in the future," Public Transport Minister Jacinta Allan said.

A tram reserve already exists in the median of Plenty Road, which would cover most of the proposed extension, before the trams would veer left along Bush

Boulevard and past Westfield shopping centre to the station.



Alahna Desiato, a spokeswoman for the community campaign, said the tram extension would benefit locals in many ways, but a new public transport route into the city would not be one of them. Passengers who caught the tram from the new terminus all the way into the city would likely face a near two-hour commute, given the ride from Bundoora already takes about an hour and a half. "I believe the tram's purpose is more for local trips, whether to access nearby facilities or to reach another form of public transport," Ms Desiato said. "It would give residents a choice, which they don't currently have." Students could reach RMIT and La Trobe universities in Bundoora without driving, and commuters could catch it to South Morang station, easing pressure on its car park, which routinely fills before 7am, she said.

Maps and article from the Age, 13 October.

Route 8 re-routing

The route 8 (Toorak) tram along Domain Road and Park St in South Yarra will be taken out of service, perhaps permanently, when work starts on a new underground railway station at the corner of Domain and St Kilda Roads. An environment effects statement for the nine-kilometre Melbourne Metro rail tunnel, published in June, said diversions to route 8 while Domain station is built would be temporary. But Public Transport Victoria is now believed to be considering re-routing route 8 along Toorak Road for good. PTV does not plan to make a decision soon and said it would first assess the performance of the Toorak Road diversion after trams begin to use it when Metro tunnel construction begins in 2018.

Tram patronage increase to lead to traffic improvement measures

Passenger numbers on Melbourne's trams have soared 12% over the past 12 months to 203.8 million trips in 2015-16. Numbers are now at levels not seen since private car travel began to overtake public transport use in the 1950s.

Public Transport Victoria has attributed the rise to the introduction of the free City tram zone in 2015 and to Melbourne's apartment boom, which is concentrated along inner-city tram corridors. "Since 2012 more than a third of building approvals for new dwellings have been nearby tram routes," it said in its annual report. "As these dwellings are built and occupied, this leads to a significant population growth in the tram catchment."

Tram speeds in Melbourne are among the slowest in the world, at a network-wide average of about 16km/h, according to Yarra Trams, and PTV's annual report noted that "trams continue to be affected by traffic congestion". In an effort to improve this, the Andrews government will introduce two trials of new technology on the roads next year. Minister for Roads Luke Donnellan said it is hoped the intelligent transport technology trial will reduce congestion. "Improving the flow of trams at intersections will make services more reliable and reduce congestion on our roads, helping to get passengers where they need to go, on time," he said. The first trial will involve installing devices inside trams and traffic signal boxes, which will communicate with each other to alert the traffic lights to approaching trams.

The co-operative intelligent transport system will be more responsive than the current tram priority signals

that sit beneath the surface of the road, which are triggered each time a tram passes, regardless of the level of congestion. The second trial will use GPS technology to track trams in relation to other traffic on

the road, feeding that information back to Yarra Trams and VicRoads' traffic control centres in real time.

Metropolitan Tram Patronage 1946-2011



VicRoads has also begun to look at measures to reduce delay on route 11, between West Preston and Docklands, which has suffered a sharp fall in punctuality this year. One in four trams on route 11 ran more than five minutes late last month, the worst performance of all routes in Melbourne. The proposed route 11 revamp is part of the authority's annual traffic light review, which targets bottlenecks in the road network. Other roads under review are Victoria Parade, the Nepean Highway, Stud Road and Derrimut Road. The \$669,000 tram priority trial will be run by the Australian Road Research Board and is funded through the government's Smarter Journeys program.

Graph and article from the Age, 17 October.

South Yarra stand-off

The Victorian Government is refusing to add a new South Yarra station to the Melbourne Metro tunnel project, despite moves by the Federal Government to send Victoria \$600 million to pay for it. Victoria is in a standoff with Canberra over a bonus owed the state under the federal Asset Recycling Initiative for the Port of Melbourne sale. The Andrews Government argues that under the original terms of the federal scheme, Victoria should receive \$1.45 billion — 15% of the \$9.7 billion the state will get from selling the port. The Commonwealth has agreed in principle to give Victoria \$877 million. But it is now debating whether to offer the rest only if a new South Yarra station is linked to the Metro project. The Turnbull Government is threatening to pay the money that is owed to Victoria only if South Yarra railway station is included. The \$10.9 billion Melbourne Metro does not currently include plans for a

stop at South Yarra, despite proposed new rail lines passing within 80 metres of the station. The State Government says it would cost too much. Public Transport Minister Jacinta Allan said the South Yarra extension did not stack up financially and would only provide a minimal return on investment. She said the potential federal offer was simply about saving Liberal MP Kelly O'Dwyer in the seat of Higgins, and accused the Turnbull Government of playing politics with money that was owed to Victoria.

Late night transport

Figures published in Public Transport Victoria's annual report show that each weekend an average of 35,000 people catch a late-night train, tram or bus that runs as part of the \$83.6 million, 12-month trial of all-night public transport on Fridays and Saturdays. Each passenger on Melbourne weekend all-night public transport is subsidised more than \$45. The trial's \$83 million cost comprises \$50 million to put on the extra services — 300 trains, 250 trams and 485 bus services — and \$34 million for extra transit police and protective services officers. The extra PSOs only patrol premium railway stations, not every stop on the Metro network, as well as working outside Night Network hours.

The Victorian government said from the outset that the trial, which commenced on January 1, would need to prove its popularity to continue indefinitely. The trial has since been extended a further six months. Public Transport Minister Jacinta Allan said more than 20 per cent of Night Network passengers worked late for a living, in hospitality and essential service. "All night public transport provides a safe, cheap and easy way for shift workers to get home and supports our night

economy, as well as helping people enjoy the world's most liveable city for longer," she said.

Torquay line?

A railway to Torquay is being investigated by Infrastructure Victoria. It would branch from the Geelong-Warrnambool line between Marshall and Waurm Ponds. The 30-year draft plan recommended the land for the rail corridor be reserved immediately and that construction begin in 15-30 years. According to the draft plan, the line would open up Armstrong Creek and Torquay for growth and reduce residents' reliance on cars. Buses could be used until the rail link was needed. Costs for the project have been estimated to be \$250-\$500 million.

Public Transport Minister Jacinta Allan would not rule out the proposal. "We'll consider Infrastructure Victoria's final report when it is released," she said. But we're already investing in more services for Geelong and Warrnambool, and planning for the extension of services to Armstrong Creek towards Torquay."

Infrastructure Victoria CEO Michel Masson said significant growth was expected in Torquay and Armstrong Creek over the next 30 years. "As the population grows and the demand for access to public transport increases, it is likely that this corridor will need a higher-capacity bus or rail link in the next 15-30 years. Infrastructure Victoria has recommended that we should take steps to protect a public transport corridor linking Torquay with Geelong within the next five years," he said.

Southern Cross station expansion

Melbourne Southern Cross station may be overhauled under a \$300 million plan to cope with an unprecedented surge in patronage that is threatening its ability to function, just ten years after the station was rebuilt. The station is already believed to have around 25 million passenger visits a year, and is approaching 30 million. The station's owner, AssetCo, a subsidiary of industry superannuation behemoth

IFM, has lodged an unsolicited bid proposal believed to be worth about \$300 million that includes a new elevated bridge running down the middle of the station to provide extra access to its 16 platforms, lengthening platforms and overhauling the dingy and inadequate coach terminal.

AssetCo is believed to have the lease to operate the station until 2034, including control of retail space. Under the terms of the contract between the state and IFM, once the station hits a capacity trigger point of about 30,000 passengers per peak period, IFM has the right to renegotiate the deal to factor in extra costs linked to overcrowding. That could cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars extra over the life of the contract. IFM is believed to want to extend the lease, in return for the meeting the costs to dramatically boost the capacity of the station.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Working Timetable 5 September

Amended weekday pages effective 5 September for the Caulfield Group and the Northern Group of lines were issued for the Metro Trains WTT. The main change was the return of the Frankston line to normal following completion of the level crossing removal project. The Stony Point changeover train now operates on Sundays rather than Mondays. There were minor fiddles elsewhere, including one additional train mid-afternoon from Lilydale to Ringwood as a NonPSR service. This is a peculiar Melbourne institution of a train additional to Metro Trains' contractual obligations, ie, Non Public Service Requirement. If a NonPSR train does not operate, there is no penalty.

An unusual twist in the layout of the WTT was moving some trains operating after 0300 on Friday and Saturday nights to the next timetable day. This was possible with the removal of earlier software restrictions on the system. However, other software restrictions mean that some trains that formerly departed at 0300 or 0301 now depart at 0302.

RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Opening of the Redcliffe Rail line

by Hilaire Fraser

We were fortunate to be able to arrange a family holiday in Brisbane to coincide with the opening of the Redcliffe Peninsula Rail Line on Monday 3 October 2016. The new line was opened at Kippa-Ring by the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, and Queensland Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, at 1000. The official party travelled on the first train with 230 members of the public who were successful in a ballot. Then free shuttle services operated between Kippa-Ring and Petrie, the junction for the line to Caboolture, Nambour and Cairns, between 1000 and 1500.

We travelled on the 1100 regular Nambour train from Roma St and joined a shuttle train at Petrie at 1150. On the east side of Petrie station a new island platform has been constructed, forming platform 4 on the western side for Brisbane bound trains from Caboolture and Nambour and platform 5 on the

eastern side for Brisbane bound trains from Redcliffe. On 3 October shuttle trains arrived at and departed from platform 5. Trains departing from platform 5 ran wrong line until a cross-over east of Petrie. The stations between Petrie and Kippa-Ring are Kallangur, Murrumba Downs, Mango Hill, Mango Hill East and Rothwell. The new line is double track throughout and all stations on the branch have two wayside platforms, except for Kippa-Ring which has an island platform surrounded by two terminating tracks, allowing trains to arrive and depart from each side. On the opening day a commentary on the history of the project and its features was given on the "next station" displays in the trains as well as by audio. Although tickets to the open day were obtained on the internet, patronage was handled well by four six-car trains operating a fifteen-minute service, and it was not necessary to check tickets as a means of controlling passenger numbers. The day was wet, but each train had a nearly full sitting load. We returned from Kippa-Ring at 1220, and

after a slight delay at Kallangur to allow a train to clear platform 5 at Petrie, we were returned to Petrie. Petrie, like other stations, had a Translink stall where a limited range of rail and bus timetables could be obtained as well as other information. Other stalls offered sausage sandwiches, soft drinks, coffee and ice-creams. We returned to Brisbane City on the 1258 train from Nambour.

The following day was a perfect warm sunny Brisbane spring day. We caught the 0952 train from Brisbane Central to Kippa-Ring. Kippa-Ring trains show a regional "Redcliffe" destination like Varsity Lakes trains, which show a "Gold Coast" destination. At Petrie, the Redcliffe train used platform 3, then passed under the relief Brisbane-bound line from Caboolture that entered new platform 4. Our train was due at Kippa-Ring at 1045, offering connections as follows: 1050 route 660 Redcliffe Jetty via Redcliffe Hospital, from Caboolture
1051 route 680 Redcliffe Jetty via Anzac Avenue direct, from Chermshire
1052 route 694 Redcliffe Jetty via Clontarf
1052 route 699 Redcliffe Jetty via Scarborough
1059 route 696 Redcliffe Jetty then Woody Point clockwise
1059 route 696 Woody Point then Redcliffe Jetty anticlockwise
1055 route 690 Duffield Rd, Clontarf
1100 route 690 Sandgate via Scarborough and Redcliffe Jetty,

All these services operate every 30 minutes Monday to Friday daytime and thus can meet every train. However, our train arrived at 1052 and consequently the 660, 680 and 699 connections had gone, so we caught the 694 to Redcliffe via Clontarf. Possibly the late arrival was due to a slower train speed on the new track, particularly at the new junction at Petrie. The Marine Parade at Redcliffe offers beautiful views over Moreton Bay and out to Moreton Island as well as a number of worthwhile eateries. The Visitors' Centre on Marine Parade had local train and bus timetables. I was assisted by a very helpful staff member.

After lunch we caught the 1256 route 680 bus to Chermshire via Kippa-Ring station, the huge North Lakes shopping centre, Petrie station and Strathpine. A 680 journey takes 90 minutes. Catching the bus to Chermshire gave us another way of returning to Brisbane and allowed us to collect an item, not available from Myer Brisbane City, from Myer Chermshire. Finally, we caught the 1600 Brisbane Transport route 333 bus back to Brisbane City for a swift trip via the Northern, Inner Northern and City busways.

The new line received much media publicity and made a very favourable impression. Hopefully, normal service trains will be able to run on time so that all bus connections will be made. The line has been promoted as offering a 55 minute service from Brisbane to Kippa-Ring.

Interim timetable as Queensland Rail CityRail struggles with staffing issues

An emergency interim timetable was introduced by Queensland Rail CityRail from Tuesday 25 October for at least two weeks as it struggled to deal with staffing shortages brought on by opening of the Kippa-Ring line. It provides for an 2.3% reduction in services. The Minister for Transport Stirling Hinchliffe directed QR to:

1. initiate the recruitment of an additional 100 drivers immediately;
2. complete the recruitment and training of 100 additional drivers and 100 additional guards approved by the Government in November 2015;
3. deliver the interim timetable to minimise the disruption to the travelling public;
4. maintain the supply of train drivers by ensuring guards are stationed and trained on the Next Generation Rollingstock – providing a pipeline of future drivers with route knowledge;
5. work with its employees to develop more flexible working arrangements, including part-time arrangements – boosting the longevity of the existing workforce and creating driver roster flexibility

He apologized that "Queensland Rail hasn't delivered to the high standards that we set for ourselves. Despite clear and repeated advice from QR that it was prepared for the extra services with the opening of the Redcliffe Peninsula line services, it is now clear that this was not achieved. On time performance for QR in August and September was between 95% and 96%. It is expected to be 91% for October. This is not acceptable to the Government and more importantly, it's unacceptable to the travelling public.

Under the interim timetable, there will be the cancellation of 30 services and the alteration or partial cancellation of 11 other services. The number of train services will be reduced from 1306 per day to 1276 per day (or 2.3%). According to the Media Release twenty-five of the cancelled services will have a wait of less than 15 minutes to the next service. The other five cancelled services will have a wait of less than 30 minutes for the next service. However on some lines it's more like a 60 minutes gap. For example, on the Ipswich line the 1037 train from Ipswich to the City is cancelled which means there's a gap of 1 hour from the service at 1007 until the next one at 1107. Likewise, in the afternoon the 1507 train Ipswich to the City is cancelled creating a gap of 1 hour between the 1437 and 1537 services. With the cancellation of the 1037 train ex Ipswich it also creates a 41 minute connection time with the Rosewood shuttle that arrives Ipswich at 1026 resulting in a wait until the 1107 train.

On Fridays, 32 services are cancelled and 21 altered or partially cancelled, reducing the number of train services from 1342 to 1310 a day (or 2.4%). The total

number of services under the interim timetable remains higher than before the Redcliffe Peninsula line became operational of October 4 when there were a total number of 1218 services on Monday to Thursday and 1244 on Friday.

New drivers and guards will be trained on the Next Generation Rollingstock – the 75 new Bombardier EMUs being delivered up until late 2018 – with Hinchliffe saying this measure will provide a pipeline of future drivers with route knowledge.

Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said "I'm absolutely furious. I don't blame commuters for being furious as well," she said. Let me make it clear - I want answers. And my Minister wants answers." Ms Palaszczuk said Transport Minister Hinchliffe is "100% focused" on fixing Queensland Rail's timetable mess and there is no prospect he will lose his job. But she had no such guarantees for QR chief executive Helen Gluer following a one-hour Cabinet briefing on the saga.

On 25 October an unnamed senior Queensland Rail executive was suspended for failing to act on driver shortages. Then on 27 October Queensland Rail's CEO, Helen Gluer, and the Chairman of the Board, Michael Klug resigned. The director-general of the Department of Transport and Main Roads, Neil Scales, will replace Ms Gluer. He was the former director-general of Merseytravel, the transport authority in northern England. He joined the Queensland Public Sector in 2012 as CEO of TransLink, responsible for the public transport network across the state.

Former Rio Tinto executive Phillip Strachan has been appointed to investigate what went wrong. The terms of reference for his investigation include:

- The adequacy of Queensland Rail scheduling, rostering, recruitment and training practices
- What circumstances led to the driver shortage
- When deficits in train crew availability were known and what action was taken
- The nature and suitability of actions taken by Queensland Rail once the train crewing issues manifested under the new timetable.

Queensland Rail has admitted it is woefully short of trainers to properly meet its own recruitment targets. This is a to the government's promise to immediately recruit another 100 drivers to deal with the staff crisis. QR said it was unable to start that driver training until April 2018.

QR also claims this arises because 25 trainers were made redundant when the Liberal National Party were in power.

Problems had first occurred on Friday 30 September when 50 train services were cancelled because drivers were busy training other staff on the new Redcliffe Peninsula line. Thousands of passengers were

delayed. A QR spokeswoman said the disruption to 48 of 1259 services was because of seven shifts being unfilled the day before the 1-3 October long weekend. An additional 31 shifts of the 600 drivers and guards rostered on needed to be covered because qualified drivers were training on the new line. "On Friday night, to facilitate intensive training requirements we needed to fill an additional 31 shifts, as qualified drivers piloted others through new infrastructure near Petrie to gain their competency," the spokeswoman said. She could not rule out future disruptions. "The intensive training schedule through Petrie is due to be completed by the end of October and we will be working hard to manage our resources and minimise disruption for our customers," she said

Disruptions continued, especially on Friday 21 October when about 100 services were cancelled. Buses replaced trains on the Springfield line between Springfield Central and Darra and on the new Redcliffe Peninsula line between Petrie and Kippa-Ring after 1900.

Brisbane cross-river rail; Brisbane Metro

On 25 October the Federal Government announced \$10 million in planning funding for Brisbane Cross River Rail, the first federal money they have committed to the \$5.4 billion rail project. However, it is contingent upon integration with Brisbane Metro, a 7 km subway system proposed by Brisbane City Council at a cost of \$1.54 billion from Woolloongabba to Herston, with stops at Mater Hill, South Bank, connecting to a new underground station at Cultural Centre, continuing over Victoria Bridge and into a new underground portal at Adelaide St linking with the King George Square, Roma St, Normanby and QUT Kelvin Grove stations. At the furthest points, interchanges will transfer bus commuters.

Cross River Rail's 10.2km rail link would connect Dutton Park to Bowen Hills via a 5.9km tunnel under the Brisbane River and CBD, with new stations at Boggo Road, Woolloongabba and Albert St. It would ease congestion on the Beenleigh, Gold Coast and Cleveland lines at the Merivale Bridge, Brisbane's sole rail river crossing in the CBD. *The Courier-Mail* campaigned for Cross River Rail during its Go Queensland series.

"We have two projects here – Brisbane Metro and Cross River Rail. They are not competing, they are complementary and it's important to make sure we get the investment right and the planning right," Mr Turnbull. Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk last month voiced strong opposition to Brisbane Metro.

The \$10m federal contribution tops up \$50 million allocated by the Palaszczuk Government in the last State Budget to establish the CRRDA and start early works.



Brisbane Metro map from Brisbane City Council

Queensland railway infrastructure information 2016

Queensland Rail has placed on their website new System Information Packs dated October 2016 for their entire network, including track diagrams. The Metropolitan System Pack’s track diagrams include the new Redcliffe Peninsula line. See <http://www.queenslandrail.com.au/forbusiness/the-regional-network>

Aurizon has also updated its System Information Packs dated July 2016. They also provide a system-wide track diagram pack dated June 2016. To access these go to <http://www.aurizon.com.au/what-we-deliver/network/network-downloads>

Queensland: Collinsville coal

Glencore’s Collinsville coal mine is to resume production after being closed for almost a year. Presumably this will provide traffic for Aurizon and/or Pacific National.

Infrastructure priorities

Infrastructure Australia has placed the Perth’s airport rail line, the Moorebank Intermodal Terminal in Sydney, and the Adelaide-Tarcoola Rail Upgrade on its Priority List for “nationally significant projects and initiatives.” IA chief executive Philip Davies said the IA board had positively assessed business cases for the three rail projects, as well as Victoria’s M80 Ring Road Upgrade project. “Adding these projects to our Infrastructure Priority List demonstrates that they are sound investments that have the potential to address some of the nation’s key infrastructure challenges, such as urban congestion and the need to improve national freight connectivity.”

The Perth—Forrestfield Airport Railway will address the lack of public transport access to the eastern region of Perth and Perth Airport, and reduce road congestion in the city’s east. Improving public transport access to Perth Airport will help manage ongoing growth, as passenger numbers double over the next 20 years.

Mr Davies said: "Development of an Intermodal Terminal at Moorebank in Sydney's south-west is part of a long-term strategy to increase the carriage of freight by rail. The updated business case shows this project will provide a significant boost to Sydney's intermodal terminal capacity, allowing for much more freight to be transported to and from Port Botany by rail."

Davies also said the Adelaide-Tarcoola Rail Upgrade would support projected growth in national freight volumes by improving capacity on the line between Adelaide and Perth. "Investment in Australia's national freight network is vitally important if we are to make the most of our population growth and our close proximity to the booming economies of China and South-East Asia."

Aurizon traffic

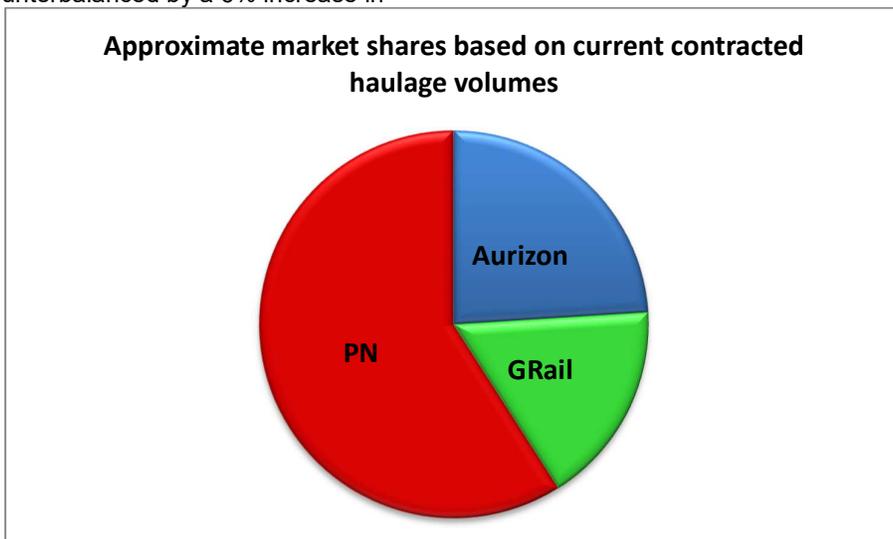
Aurizon chairman Tim Poole told the AGM on 18 October that difficult market conditions in the resources and freight sectors "were tough on our customers and this resulted in flat or lower volumes across our businesses". The operator announced a 3% decline in coal volumes in the first quarter of the new financial year compared with the 2016 fiscal year, along with a 14% decline in iron ore volumes, and a 10% decline in freight volumes. The 10% decline in freight reflects the loss of Queensland Nickel's bulk volumes between its refinery and the Port of Townsville. In terms of more traditional container freight, Aurizon was pleased to announced a 2% increase in intermodal business, to 100,000 TEUs in the September 2016 quarter. Coal volumes were impacted by a 5% year-on-year decline in Aurizon's larger Queensland haulage business, to 39.7mt. This was somewhat counterbalanced by a 6% increase in

the smaller NSW volumes, to 11.5mt, but the overall coal haulage figure for the September quarter was still down 3%, to 51.2mt. Iron ore volumes declined 14% to 5.4mt, Aurizon said, reflecting smaller volumes from a key customer.

NSW Hunter Valley coal: Glencore Rail

In the midst of consideration by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission of competing proposals for Glencore Rail to be acquired by either Pacific National or Aurizon, Genesee and Wyoming Australia stepped in and acquired the company for \$1.14 billion. On 20 October GWA announced this acquisition and the simultaneous divestment of 49% to the Macquarie group. G&W is the predominant owner of short-line railroads in the US and also owns railways in Canada, Australia, Britain, Poland and Germany. It operates SA intrastate freight (the little still surviving) and the Tarcoola to Darwin railway. In March 2015 it acquired Freightliner Australia. Glencore Rail (GRail) owns nine trains, comprising 30 locomotives and 894 wagons. These are operated for them by Genesee and Wyoming Australia, through Freightliner Australia. GWA now intends to re-deploy locomotives from SA to the Hunter Valley and purchase two additional train sets at a cost of \$50 million each.

The ACCC had provided a discussion paper raising various issues of competitiveness if either acquisition goes ahead. This can be viewed at <http://www.accc.gov.au/media-release/accc-releases-statement-of-issues-on-aurizon-and-pacific-national%E2%80%99s-competing-proposals-to-acquire-grail> The following graph from ACCC's discussion paper summarises the present market shares of coal traffic providers in the Hunter Valley.



NSW Hunter Valley coal: Aurizon

Aurizon has obtained an 8.7 million tonne per annum coal haulage contract with energy generator AGL. This will deliver coal to AGL Macquarie, from Peabody's Wilpinjong mine and Glencore's Mangoola mine, via ARTC track. AGL Macquarie includes the Bayswater

and Liddell power stations, and also consumes coal from BHP Billiton's Mt Arthur coal mine, delivered by conveyor.

The rail delivery contract is currently held by Pacific National. Aurizon will take over that business from July 2017. Aurizon says the AGL Macquarie volumes will

bring its NSW tonnage to roughly 55 million tonnes per annum.

Sydney: Infrastructure

On 20 October the NSW government announced the successful sale of the major part of its electricity distribution network for \$16 billion. This money will be applied to infrastructure projects. The biggest project is expected to be a Western Sydney Metro (ie, stand-alone line with frequent trains) from the City to Parramatta to relieve the present fully committed Western line, at a cost of \$10 billion.

Sydney: Minor infrastructure changes

From 19 November overhead will be removed from the Mortuary Platform at Sydney station. Electric train tours used to commence from that platform over the years.

Control of the ESR, from Erskineville Junction to Bondi Junction, is transferred from Sydney Signalling Complex to the Sydenham Signalling Complex, from 17 October.

The Parramatta turnback was commissioned from 17 October.

Canberra Tram confirmed

The ACT election was held on 15 October. It was an unusual election in that the major issue was whether a public transport project – the City to Gungahlin tram – would go ahead. The election resulted in the incumbent Labor/Greens coalition government being returned. Hence, the project is now proceeding. Planning for the second stage from the City to Woden will now commence.

The election was generally seen as a referendum on the proposed tram. The ACT Liberals (and others) campaigned vigorously against it. The result was a significant swing against them. The result might be seen as an indication that urban public transport projects are popular.

Espee Rail hits the ballast

When existing contracts to provide ballast/works trains are completed, Canberra-based Espee Rail will, for the time being, suspend operations. The weekly Canberra to Sydney freight train conveying scrap metal has not operated for nearly a year, due to a combination of an unsuitable loading area in Canberra and low scrap metal prices.

Sydney-Melbourne freight blues

Geoff Lambert writes: Since ARTC's August 2016 Master Train Plan, there have been big changes in the way Pacific National handles traffic on the North-South route. Previously, PN ran two trains each way each day between Brisbane and Melbourne. MB2/BM2 and MB4/BM4. The latter still run to their old timetable, but the former have been replaced by trains coded MW2/WM2. The "W" coding means Port Kembla and this implies steel traffic. However all these trains are still coded by ARTC as "Intermodal". To replace the

northern leg of the old MB2/BM2 service, PN now runs a SB6/BS6 Intermodal train between Sydney and Brisbane. The running of mixed "Steel/Intermodal" trains by PN dates from about two years ago, following falling Intermodal volumes on the route. Most Intermodal traffic on the North-South route is through traffic, but a small amount serves Sydney. It is many years since the Melbourne-Sydney and Brisbane-Sydney Intermodal traffic justified separate trains for these two short routes. However, the SB6/BS6 trains represent a reversion to this practice. Indicative of the predominance of steel on the WM/MW services are the departure and arrival times at Sydney and Melbourne – approximately 0200 departures and 1730 arrivals. This is hopeless timing for Intermodal "just in time" delivery. In addition, the transit times of these trains remains the same as it was with their MS/SM predecessors of 16 years ago. This is despite billions of dollars of expenditure designed to cut transit time by up to six hours

SCT intermodal services

On Thursday 13 October, SCT (Specialised Container Transport) ran its first train from its new intermodal terminal in Wodonga to SCT's Perth facility. The train number for the northbound train on the Albury line is 6709V, and the southbound is 6708V. So far, the northbound has been a night-runner. Interestingly, the new ARTC Working Timetable which commenced on 16 October doesn't contain the schedules for these trains. The 23-hectare Wodonga site has direct access to the mainline and features a 6000m² cross dock terminal, a 5000m² container handling area and in excess of 5km of internal rail track. The \$18 million terminal investment will be officially opened in January 2017, in conjunction with a new SCT service to Queensland. From January 2017, SCT will provide trains to its new Brisbane Terminal in Bromelton. SCT's contract with Aurizon is due to cease on 31 December, when it will be replaced by SCT's own MB9/BM9 services between Melbourne and Brisbane. Up to now, SCT has regularly provided 12 wagons (and reportedly more on some occasions) on Aurizon's MB7/ BM7 services.

V/Line: Albury line

V/Line is refurbishing an additional power van for its standard gauge Albury line trains so that it can reconfigure the present four standard gauge sets into four train sets. Currently the Albury service operates with three trains, with locomotives hauling four passenger carriages each. V/Line plans to take one carriage off each of the existing trains, and add it to the refurbished loco, to create four trains hauling three passenger carriages each. The fourth train will not be used in standard operations, but instead will be a standby train in case one of the three other trains needs to be serviced. The investment is part of a \$15 million allocation included in this year's Victorian budget. As well as refurbishing the power car, the money will go towards cleaning and repairing the

interior of the existing carriages. The funding will also go towards planning for the next generation of trains for the line. The work is being undertaken at the Downer Rail workshop in Melbourne.

Comment: *The effect of these changes is that for the two sets required to provide the service, there will be two spare sets in reserve, ie, a 100% contingency. Four carriages in a set, rather than five carriage sets, would seem to indicate the trains could run faster, but there is no indication of any changed schedules.*

V/Line Annual Report

Some points from V/Line's 2015/16 Annual Report are:

- Total patronage is up 17.5 % on the previous year of which all the growth is in rail trips; coach patronage is stagnant. Train patronage on the South West + 57 % (since opening of new Regional Rail Link stations), Western + 12 %, Northern Static North Eastern + 0.5 %, and Eastern slightly down (No trains Jan/Feb – bustitution).
- Proportion of full fare travellers steady at 62 % of pax. Concession 38 % of pax.
- Subsidy per pax journey steady at \$ 22-12 per trip.
- The extra cost involved in the VLocity wheelwear saga and resulting free travel is not detailed.

South Australia off the map: 28 September

A very severe storm hit SA on Wednesday 28 September. As a result the entire State lost power in the late afternoon. At 1615 Adelaide Metro advised that the electric train service on the Seaford and Tonsley lines and the Glenelg trams were no longer operating and a few minutes later advised that the entire metropolitan train network had ceased operating. Services were restored next morning, but with delays.

GSR: Ghan alteration

Following the altered timetable of the southbound Ghan from 14 September (see *October Table Talk*, page 6), Adelaide arrival will be altered again from 2 November. Arrival time will now be at 1255. This change is because the off-train excursion from Mangurli to Coober Pedy has been extended.

Bowmans Rail

Bowmans Intermodal, based at Bowmans, north of Adelaide, has changed its name to Bowmans Rail. It operates container trains of agricultural products from Bowmans to Outer Harbor and mineral trains from Broken Hill to Port Pirie.

TasRail future

A Tasmanian Legislative Council Committee has recommended the Tasmanian government consider splitting TasRail into above rail business (carriages and locomotives) and below rail business (tracks and

infrastructure). Infrastructure Minister Rene Hidding responded that, "Successive governments have supported this vertical integration as it is a more streamlined approach to operations." He noted committee findings suggesting the case for separation of the two business units, but not until the current \$120m below rail infrastructure investment program was ready. Other Committee recommendations include:

- The government monitor TasRail's internal management culture and staff communications;
- The government develop a long-term state freight plan; and
- The government engage relevant expertise to assist TasRail to proactively address the barriers to passenger rail services on both existing and decommissioned lines; including heritage, tourist and commuter services.

The Report can be accessed at

http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/ctee/Council/GovAd_minA_TasRail.htm

KiwiRail: re-opening

The railway from Wairoa to Napier in eastern North Island NZ is to re-open for log traffic from late 2017. Two trains will operate on both Saturdays and Sundays. The re-opening is 116 km of the 212 km line from Napier to Gisborne, which was closed in 2012.

Changes to European Rail Timetable

Since the *European Rail Timetable* was established in March 2014, it has continued with the same timetable format and system that the *Thomas Cook Timetable* previously used. The company now believes that the recently released digital edition of the Timetable has been successful, and mindful of increasing printing and distribution costs, has decided to print only six issues of the timetable per year instead of the current twelve. The digital edition will still be available to view online and download onto smartphones, tablets and computers every month. This change is effective immediately. The November 2016 edition will not be available to purchase in printed format, but will be produced as a digital edition. The printed version will then be available in the months of December 2016 (Winter), February 2017, April 2017, June 2017 (Summer), August 2017 and October 2017. (In the "Beyond Europe" section Australian/NZ schedules are in the February, June, August and December editions). Existing subscribers will have their subscriptions extended to substitute for the editions no longer printed.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Graham Duffin, Hilaire Fraser, Victor Isaacs, John Kain, Geoff Lambert, Len Regan, *European Rail Timetable*, www.railexpress.com.au, www.railpage.com.au, *Catchpoint* (National Railway Museum), ABC News, *Age*, *Australian*, *Courier-Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Herald Sun* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* for Rail news.

ODD SPOT

Excuse for performance failure no. 79

A wasp plague forced Metro Trains Melbourne to skip Parkdale station on 5 October to avoid commuters being stung by wasps. Drivers noticed a "considerable

number" congregating near the station around 1050. Metro then advised staff to run express. The wasps hung around for about an hour before dispersing and normal service then resumed. It is unclear if any commuters were stung.

BUS NEWS

National

Greyhound suspends New England route

Greyhound Australia has suspended its services between Sydney and Brisbane via inland NSW after falling passenger numbers. The company said without the numbers the service, which runs through Tenterfield, Glen Innes, Guyra, Armidale, Uralla, Tamworth and down through the Hunter, could not continue and was financially un-viable. It will continue to operate the coastal route between Brisbane and Sydney, along the Pacific Highway, which they consider "in a very healthy state."

New South Wales

Busabout Campbelltown area changes 5 September 2016

- 47 Camden-Menangle and 47/9 Camden-Menangle-Razorback renumbered 49.
- 878 Campbelltown-Campbelltown Road-Kearns returning to Campbelltown via Claymore 880 renumbered 878.
- 880 Campbelltown-Claymore-Kearns returning to Campbelltown via Campbelltown Road 878 renumbered 877.
- 880 Campbelltown-Claymore-Kearns-Minto unchanged.
- 884/5 Campbelltown-Airds-Bradbury combined night service renumbered 885A.
- New paper timetables issued for 49/889, 877/878/879/880 and 884/884W/885 (includes 885A but not on the cover) as well as a new Campbelltown/Camden network guide.
- Route 878 Extension - Campbelltown to Kearns loop (anti-clockwise) servicing Campbelltown Rd, Kearns, Eagle Vale and Claymore.

Premier Illawarra Changes 5 September 2016

Services to and from Stockland Shellharbour to Tullimbar will operate to gauge the need for a permanent bus route. There will be two AM services from Tullimbar to Stockland and two return PM services from Stockland:

Route 76 will depart Tullimbar at 0751 arriving Stockland at 834

Route 76 will depart Tullimbar at 0840 arriving Stockland at 920

Route 77 will depart Stockland at 1408 arriving Tullimbar at 1439

Route 76 will depart Stockland at 1625 arriving Tullimbar at 1647.

Premier Illawarra is still issuing the 71/76/77 paper timetable effective 20 October 2013.

State Transit Service Changes 23 October 2016

State Transit introduced additional services on 23 October as part of the Transport for NSW Growth Services Program:

- Extra weekday services operate on 169, E69, E70, E66, E76, E77, E50, E78, 179, E79, L80, 183, E65.
- 169, E69, E68, E71, E70 services from the City leave from Wynyard-Clarence St Stand T, no longer travelling via Carrington St.
- All 178 & E78 trips operate from Maybrook Manor.
- On routes 184, 188, L88, 190 and L90 extra late evening trips operate weeknights and additional trips operate on Thursday and Friday nights.
- Additional Sunday and Public Holiday morning trips operate on routes 190, L90 and 184.
- 139 now has a 30 minute frequency, improved from 60 minute, during the day on Sunday & Public Holidays.
- 143 weekend and Public Holiday services will be converted to route 144 operating between Chatswood and Manly via Royal North Shore Hospital.

New Timetables Effective 23 October 2016 on

www.sydneybuses.info

131 132 E70 171 E71 Manly & Balgowlah Heights to City & Warringah Mall

139 E65 Freshwater to Manly & City

142 E66 Allambie Heights to Manly & City

143 144 Manly to St Leonards & Chatswood

E50 Manly to Milsons Point

151 183 184 187 188 189 190 Palm Beach and Pittwater to City

153 175 178 E78 L78 179 E79 180 L80 Cromer and Dee Why to City and Milsons Point

159 E76 E77 Wingala to Manly and City

168 E68 169 E69 173 North Balgowlah & Narrabeena to Manly and City.

The summer weekend beach service, Route 362 commenced on 22 October 2016. It runs between Coogee, Bronte, Tamarama and Bondi.

There are additional services in the Northern beaches area. From 23 October 2016, there will be 360 additional services on selected routes: New timetables and flyers have been issued for routes 169, E69, E66,

E76, E77, E50, 178, E78, E79, 180, L80, 179, 183, 184, 188, L88, 190, L90, 179, 183, 184, 188, L88, 190, L90, 139, E65, 143, 144 245 and 246. There will also be minor timetable changes to the timetables of routes 136/137/L60, 155/156/158/E86, 182/E83/185/E85/L85 and 191/192.

September NSW timetables re-issue

Re the comment in October *Table Talk*, "In early September, Sydney Buses, Hunter Valley Buses and Interline uploaded new timetables. They were identical to the prior editions except for Opal information and retained their original dates," this only applied to **Interline and Hunter Valley Buses**. In the case of Sydney Buses – since the beginning of 2015 their timetables have been shown as being operated by **State Transit** and not Sydney Buses - the new Opal information was only included in the new 5 September 2016 timetables. The term Sydney Buses has become a generic term which covers all Sydney Bus operations as used in the NSW Transport Info website. The new Opal information includes specific information about the new Opal fares, which also took effect on 5 September. The new Opal information was also included in three new Busabout timetables, which also took effect on 5 September. From their website "Altered Route Numbers from Monday 5 September: Routes 47, 47/9, 878, 880 & 884/5. Also introducing Route 877 and the extension of Route 878".

New Zealand

New South Auckland Bus network

On 30 October 2016 Auckland Transport implemented a new bus network in south Auckland along the Southern train line to Papakura and Pukekohe. Although a new network was introduced on the Hibiscus Coast, north of Auckland, on 18 October 2015, this is the first major region to have its new bus network introduced. West Auckland is due to have a new network in mid-2017, Central Suburbs in mid to late 2017, East Auckland in late 2017 and the North Shore in 2018. The purpose of each network review is to provide a network which is easier to understand, having as a core frequent train and bus services with connecting and local bus services - that is fewer and more frequent services providing comparable or greater connectivity. The main features of the new network are:

New route numbers are used. 30 series route numbers are for three frequent services and 300 series route numbers for connector and local services, which usually operate at 30 or 60 minute intervals. Previously 300 and 400 series were used for South Auckland.

The new network provides three frequent 15 minute services namely:

31 Mangere Town Centre to Botany Town Centre via Papatoetoe Station and Otara

32 Mangere Town Centre to Sylvia Park via Massey Road and Otahuhu station

33 Otahuhu to Papakura.

Finally, the new network ends the procession of buses down Great South Road between Downtown Auckland and Otahuhu, a journey of 45 minutes in the off-peak. Previously routes 471 to Pahurehure via Papakura, 472 to Red Hill via Papakura, 487 to Manukau via Otara and Preston Road and 497 to Manukau via Otara and Clover Park combined to provide a 15 minute service between Downtown and Otahuhu. Now trains, taking 25 minutes, from Auckland connect at Otahuhu with route 33 to Papakura. Route 33 also feeds Manukau station making a faster journey for those travelling south of Manukau. Pahurehure is now served by 376 operating every 30 minutes, Red Hill by 373 operating every 60 minutes both from Papakura Station. 487 is replaced by route 31 and 353 Manukau station to Botany Town Centre via Preston Road, a 30 minute frequency service. 497 is replaced by 325 Mangere Town Centre to Manukau station via Otahuhu station, Otara and Clover Park operating every 30 minutes. The frequencies for 31, 325, 353 are comparable with former 487 and 497 each operating every 30 minutes between Otahuhu and Manukau with a 60 minute frequency service on each route to Downtown. A Monday to Friday service continues along Great South Road through Penrose as 321, an extension of 283 from Britomart to Greenlane Clinical Centre to Otahuhu and Middlemore Hospital. 322 peak hour services operate from Britomart to Otahuhu via Newmarket and Great South Road every 30 minutes with a journey time of 60 minutes. 322 serves industries along Great South Road. All frequencies are for Monday to Friday daytime services.

Queensland

Proposed New Toowoomba network 2017

Further to the brief report in the October *Table Talk*, the proposed new Toowoomba Bus Network to be implemented in 2017 is:

901 Harlaxton-City-Harristown-Uni of Southern Queensland (currently 1)

902 City-Glenvale (currently western part of 2)

903 City-Mt Lofty (currently eastern part of 2)

904 City-Centenary Heights-Uni of Southern Queensland (currently eastern part of 4)

905 City-Ruthven St South-Uni of Southern Queensland (currently western part of 4) (some 905 trips extended to Westbrook)

906 Airport Estate-City-Kelly's Corner-Toowoomba Plaza (currently 5 continuing beyond Toowoomba Plaza to Uni of Southern Queensland)

907 Wilsonton Heights-City-West St-Uni of Southern Queensland (currently 6)

950 City-Highfields-Crows Nest (currently 300 from Crows Nest, 301 to Crows Nest, 314 from Highfields, 315 to Highfields).

The Kan-Go City-Rangeville Taxi-Bus service is unchanged.

The new Toowoomba Bus Network will be administered by Translink rather than Qconnect.

Queensland Regional Bus networks will have route numbers in a state wide numbering system as follows:
 Cairns 100 series
 Townsville 200 series
 Mackay 300 series (from 28 November 2016)
 Rockhampton 400 series
 Gladstone 500 series
 Innisfail 801 to 805
 Sunshine Coast Hinterland 890, 891 and 892
 Caboolture to Kilcoy 895
 Toowoomba 900 series (from 2017)
 Other centres have one or two-digit route numbers.

Tasmania

New Burnie – Latrobe service

With medical services being distributed between Mersey Regional Hospital, Latrobe, near Devonport and the North West Regional Hospital, Burnie, Metro introduced a new route 85 “Hospital Link” connecting the two hospitals and bus interchanges in Burnie, Ulverstone and Devonport. This service is operated by Metro Burnie. The new route, serviced by low floor buses, commenced on 19 September. With a running time of approximately 70 minutes, there will be four return trips Monday to Friday and two return trips on Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays. The University campus is not serviced on weekends. Patronage among hospital patients and persons visiting hospital patients is paramount when one considers the likely market for the bus service as the service is free to such passengers. Receptionists at the two hospitals will provide tokens to appropriate passengers valid for a free return journey. The new timetable also shows Metro 70/74/75 Burnie-Ulverstone trips connecting with Merseylink 72 Ulverstone to Devonport trips, connecting with Merseylink 40/45 Devonport-Latrobe trips as well as 78 Sulphur Creek to Burnie and 79 Burnie to Penguin school trips.

Launceston Network Review

Metro is conducting a review of the Launceston network between 17 October and 11 November 2016. The new network is due to be implemented in July 2017. The network will be simplified from 37 routes and variations to a network of 21 routes:

- 10 Kings Meadows-City-University (a new cross-city route)
- 15 City-Rocherlea
- 16 City-Alanvale via Mayfield
- 17 City-Alanvale via Newnham
- 20 City-Waverley via Ravenswood
- 21 City-Ravenswood
- 30 City-St Leonards via St Leonards Road
- 31 City-St Leonards via Norwood (Peak Hour)
- 40 City-Youngtown via Norwood
- 41 City-Punchbowl via Talbot Road
- 42 City-Punchbowl via Abbott St
- 45 City-Youngtown via Kings Meadows
- 46 City-Youngtown (Woolven St) via Clarendon St (Peak Hour)
- 47 City-Kings Meadows (Ainslie Grove) (Peak Hour)

- 50 City-Casino via Prospect
- 55 City-Blackstone Heights via Prospect
- 56 City-Hadspen via Prospect
- 60 City-Prospect Vale via West Launceston
- 65 City-Prospect Vale via Hillside Crescent (Peak Hour)
- 80 City-North Riverside via West Tamar Road
- 85 City-North Riverside via Trevallyn.

The Turn Up and Go zone between City and Mowbray will continue and be provided by routes 10, 15, 16 and 17. A new Turn Up and Go zone between City and Kings Meadow will be provided by routes 10, 45, 46, and 47. Bi-directional loop services such as 40 City-Kings Meadows-Youngtown-Norwood-City and 50 City-Norwood-Youngtown-Kings Meadows-City will be split, in this case into 40 City-Youngtown via Norwood and 45 City-Youngtown via Kings Meadows. Possibly Norwood to Kings Meadow journeys will continue with 40 trips continuing as 45 and vice-versa. Poorly patronised and lengthy, winding routes that travel via side streets and are difficult for buses to access will be removed. This is part of a move towards operating a 100% wheelchair-accessible fleet with heavier low-floor buses for which some streets currently serviced are not suited.

Hobart

Metro Tasmania says its revamp of Hobart bus services has resulted in “unheard of” increase in passengers. Its annual report described a 2.2% in passengers statewide as “very encouraging”. Metro chairwoman Lynn Mason said the first six months of the new southern timetable led to a 3.5% increase in first boardings — a figure “unheard of for mature public transport operators”. Under a major review of Hobart services announced late last year, passengers were promised more frequent services, better weekend and evening timetables, and more express trips on key routes. The use of the cashless Greencard system has also increased markedly since last year, up from 64% to 82%. Customer surveys showed the main reasons Tasmanians caught the bus were shopping, followed by going to work, visiting friends and accessing health or welfare services.

Victoria

Cranbourne Bus Network overhaul

A major revision Cranbourne’s bus network is being implemented on Sunday 13 November, with 4 additional routes, changes to a further 13 plus the removal of two confusing circular routes. Associated changes also improve routes in the adjoining suburbs of Dandenong South, Endeavour Hills, Langwarrin and Hampton Park.

Benefits include:

- new routes into previously unserved areas
- more frequent routes
- introduction of Sunday and early evening services on four existing routes (789, 790, 796 and 799)

- more direct routes
- removal of several confusing operating patterns
- removal of route duplication
- improved train connectivity
- revised runtimes improving reliability and reducing missed train connections

Areas receiving additional bus coverage include:

- Botanic Ridge (792)
- Clyde (897)
- Clyde North (798)
- Cranbourne North (799, 847 and 899)
- Cranbourne West (792)
- Cranbourne South (792)
- Dandenong South (890)
- Lyndhurst (897)

Endeavour Hills gains a new connection to Hallam station and Hampton Park Shopping Centre (863) while Pearcedale residents will now have a reinstatement of a direct Cranbourne connection (792).

The four new routes in the network are:

- 792 Cranbourne Station – Botanic Ridge – Pearcedale (Cranbourne Transit)
- 863 Endeavour Hills – Hampton Park (Ventura Dandenong)
- 890 Dandenong – Lynbrook via Dandenong South (Cranbourne Transit)
- 899 Berwick – The Avenue Village Shopping Centre (Ventura Pakenham)

The new network discontinues the interpeak 797 Cranbourne Town Service along with the convoluted 896 Trainlink service to Cranbourne East, both Cranbourne Transit services.

A highlight of the new network is upgrading three connector routes to operate at 20 min daytime headways 7 days a week:

- 798 between Cranbourne and Clyde North
- 893 between Dandenong, Hampton Park, Lynbrook and Cranbourne
- 897 between Lynbrook, Cranbourne and Clyde

Frankston, Karingal and Langwarrin

The Cranbourne-Frankston Road/Sladen St corridor, linking Frankston, Karingal Hub Shopping Centre, Langwarrin and Cranbourne, is being streamlined with more direct services, higher frequencies and consistent operating patterns seven days a week. There were previously three different service models operating along Cranbourne-Frankston Road depending on the day of the week.

Under the old arrangement, weekday 789 trips ran between Frankston and Langwarrin North (travelling as a loop through Woodlands estate) with 790 travelling the full corridor between Frankston, Langwarrin South (Southgateway) and Cranbourne before effectively doubling-back to Cranbourne West. 791 provided one direct morning peak trip each way along with evening trips between 2000 and 2200. The last 789 ex Frankston continued to Cranbourne,

running the opposite direction through Woodlands Park to all other weekday trips.

Langwarrin North (Woodlands) residents could not easily interchange from 789 to 790 for travel to Cranbourne, as by the time the bus completed the loop, the 790 20 minutes later was already travelling down Southgateway, so the connection would be almost 40 mins, with similar issues in the opposite direction. Instead, they'd be wiser to walk as far as 1.5km to their nearest 790 stop.

On Saturdays however 789 operated through to Cranbourne West (operating bi-directionally through Langwarrin North/Woodlands) along with 790 via Southgateway with each route running an 80 min path through Langwarrin combining to a 40 min headway along the rest of the corridor. Then on Sundays, 791 was the only route of the trio operating, running direct along Frankston-Cranbourne Road through Langwarrin once an hour.

The new timetable sees 791 become a fulltime direct service between Frankston and Cranbourne station, running at 20 min intervals on weekdays right up to 2100 (doubling of the previous 790 every 40 mins) and 40 mins on weekends (a 33% increase on Sundays).

The 789 and 790 now solely act as feeder routes to/from Frankston, branching off to serve either Langwarrin North or Langwarrin South before reaching a common terminus on Centre Road south of Frankston-Cranbourne Road, where passengers can interchange to 791 to travel onto Cranbourne. Buses return to Frankston via the sister route. The 40 mins weekdays and 80 mins Saturday headways have been maintained, but new Sunday services have been added, also at 80 min intervals. 789 has been streamlined in Langwarrin North, no longer operating up Stevens Road,

A more frequent combined corridor now operates between Frankston, Karingal Hub and Gateway Plaza in Langwarrin, with services every 10 mins all day on weekdays. Weekend departures ex Frankston are every 20 mins but services into Frankston operate a lumpier 10-30-10-30 min headway (still meeting the 10 min trains at Frankston), This is a significant boost on the previous 20 min weekday, 40 min Saturday & hourly Sunday service levels.

The Frankston terminus for these routes has been relocated to Fletcher Road, which appears connected to interchange upgrade works (see separate news item below). As it is, a majority of arriving passengers into Frankston alight the bus here anyway.

Further to the frequency improvements, services should become more reliable – for several years the 789/790/791 timetable has suffered late running due to unrealistic travel times, which failed to reflect the downgrade of the 100km/h speed limits on Cranbourne-Frankston Road to 80km/h ten years ago.

Cranbourne West, Botanic Ridge, Pearcedale and Devon Meadows

The former Cranbourne station – Cranbourne West section of the 789/790/791 now forms part of the new 792 service. The former arrangement dates back to March 2003 when trips were through-routed with the then 798 feeder route, bringing the Frankston routes to Cranbourne Station (buses had continued to terminate 1 km away at Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre after the electrification was completed in 1995).

Route 792 follows a more direct route path in Cranbourne West than the former 789/790/791 but continues to pass the Sandhurst Shopping Centre. The eastern end of Duff St now receives a much more regular service than the old 797 town service. Passengers along Camms Road can catch the enhanced 897 service. The existing 40 min Monday to Saturday headway is retained, with Sunday services boosted to every 40 mins.

From Evans Road 792 continues via Hall Road, Atlas Drive and Everlasting Boulevard incorporating newer parts of Cranbourne West before continuing onto the Settlers Run estate in Botanic Ridge, an area overdue for a bus service for more than five years.

Following community requests, selected trips (generally every 2 hours) continue a further 6km through Cranbourne South to the Pearcedale Township, providing residents with an alternative option to the 776 to Frankston. Either option takes roughly 90 mins to reach Melbourne. Casey Council previously funded a trial of a shopper 794 service between Cranbourne and Pearcedale during 2005 and early 2006.

Early residents moving into the Summerhill and Acacia Estates off Craig Road benefit from a basic upgrade to the 796 timetable, buses on the loop via Botanic Ridge, Devon Meadows, Five Ways and Clyde will now running every 90 mins during peak times and 2 hourly interpeak as well as weekends for the first time. Devon Meadows briefly enjoyed a trial of limited weekend 795 services in 2005 and early 2006 funded by Casey Council.

All 796 trips now travel via Clyde village, there are no trips returning to Cranbourne direct along South Gippsland Highway from Five Ways. It is unknown if school buses are being added to serve Clyde village, as the new timetable no longer appears to cater for school students attending school locally in Cranbourne.

One criticism is the weekend 796 timetable has been designed too closely around train connections, resulting in trips dwelling at the older Clyde village for 15 minutes meaning the route fails to operate as a true circular route. Preference should have been made to meet trains in the main direction depending on the time day, at the expense of a clockface timetable.

The timetable for the complex 795 to the coastal villages of Warrnett, Tooradin, Blind Bight and

Cannons Creek is unchanged but it is unclear if school day only restrictions have been removed from the 0710 and 1620 trips (there may be an error on the PTV website).

Cranbourne East, Clyde and Clyde North

The booming suburbs of Cranbourne East, Clyde and Clyde North continue to be a focus of service upgrades in light of the lack of the proposed extension of the Cranbourne line.

The complicated 896 Cranbourne East Trainlink service has been discontinued after 13 years of operation. Like the former 571 to South Morang, the route was designed as a pseudo way to deliver the 1999 election promise of an extension (which has become expensive to deliver due to the preference to grade separate the major arterials of both South Gippsland Highway and Cameron St).

The route however was somewhat illegible, running a large circular path incorporating Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre and Casey Complex (a site of numerous community facilities, such as a library, aquatic centre, indoor sports centres/skate parks) along with the local TAFE and Casey Grammar.

Early morning and late evening trips often bypassed Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre or Casey Complex, although the July 2014 timetable introduced early morning trips from Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre to provide a frequent station connection for those in the Livingstone estate south of Berwick-Cranbourne Road.

The circular format meant passengers alighting trains had a timetabled connection to Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre 1km away but there was often no equivalent bus back to the station. This also skewed patronage figures, when many passengers alighted before the bus proceeded to Cranbourne East.

Furthermore, 896 trips often terminated mid-loop in Brindalee Place before resuming again at Hunt Club Boulevard and running through the various back streets in Cranbourne East a second time, to ensure ideal train connections at either end of the trip. Other than a poor use of resources, it meant anyone boarding the bus at Casey Complex at these times (including most weekend trips) would have to endure a lengthy trip back to the station. Similarly, until the introduction of 898 in December 2010, Camms Road effectively only had a useable service in one direction, towards the station.

Two late night Friday and Saturday evening buses ran a larger 'Nightlife Shuttle' loop incorporating Cranbourne West, but it is doubtful if they regularly carried passengers away from the standard route. This variation dates back to October 2006 when 0030 and 0100 trains were added on most lines, at a time when local youth were campaigning for a NightRider link (delivered in November 2008). Cranbourne West residents can continue to access the 982 Night Bus overnight.

Resources saved from abolishing 896 have been reinvested into strengthening the existing 798 and 898 routes and extending 897, providing three direct options accessing both the station and Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre.

798 continues to operate between Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre and Clyde North via Cranbourne station, Camms Road and Linsell Boulevard. The route has finally been extended into Selandra Rise, via Selandra Boulevard and Heather Grove.

Four extra trips have been added on Saturdays, while Sunday service has been doubled to 20 minutes, matching other days of the week. Services continue to run until 2415 on Saturdays but on other nights buses finish around two hours earlier, a reduction in span to the old 896 which ran to last train. The average peak headway has been lengthened from 15 mins to 20 mins, resulting in some 30 min gaps as the timetable is still customised to meet 15 min trains.

Hunt Club Estate residents continue to be served by local feeder Route 898, which now travels via Cameron St (past the TAFE) and Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre enroute to the station, avoiding duplication with 798 on Camms Road. Weekday peak services now operate every 20 mins (formerly 25 – 30 mins), matching the interpeak upgrade in July 2014. Saturday services have been increased from hourly to 40 mins.

Route 897 has been extended east to Clyde via Berwick-Cranbourne Road and Pattersons Road. The route serves new estates beyond the reach of the former 896, passing Casey Complex (896) and Blue Hills Retirement Village (797) enroute, along with Casey Fields sporting precinct, the sister Blue Hills Rise Retirement Village and 'Shopping on Clyde', facilities only served by 796 trips before. The Ramleigh Springs estate provided indented bus stops and a turning circle on Pattersons Road encouraging the early extension of the route when few homes have been built to date.

As per 798, buses on 897 operate 20 minutes, seven days however there is no late evening Saturday service.

Although Cranbourne East and Clyde is largely well served for now, a further route along Lyneham Drive for residents moving into the Parks Edge estate will surely be needed within the next couple of years to cater for the current rate of growth.

Lyndhurst and Central Park

At the other end, 897 has been extended north from Central Parkway to Lynbrook via the Marriot Waters estate and Shopping Centre in Lyndhurst, another area crying out for a bus route for several years. The current loop north of Central Parkway is removed but most residents remain within walking distance to alternative stops.

The 20 minute seven day headway is a significant increase for passengers along the existing parts of

897, which previously ran every 25 to 30 mins in peak periods and just once an hour on weekends.

Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre

Passengers on the restructured 897 and 898 should notice buses now operate to/from Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre in both directions.

Stretched resources in the December 2010 network had created a bizarre operating pattern, with offpeak trips on Route 898 departing Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre for Archers Field Dr but on return terminating at the station, with passengers required to seek a connecting bus. The vehicle would then continue west to Central Park as 897. Upon return to the station, the bus would continue back to the shopping centre – thus 897 buses failed to provide a direct bus home from the shops. On weekdays, a footnote advised 897 customers at Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre to catch an 898 bus 7 minutes earlier to connect with their bus.

This model continued in July 2014 with the upgrade of interpeak services from 30 mins to 20 mins, although a connection from 898 to 897 was no longer timetabled.

With the introduction of 798 at the same time, the timetable was thoughtfully designed to provide a consistent rail connection from Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre, meeting trains in both directions, which also assisted passengers trying to navigate Routes 897 and 898.

While this is no longer the case with the new 798 timetable, buses on 791, 897 and 898 have been relocated to a common stop on High St outside the centre, with all three routes generally timed to meet trains towards Melbourne.

The only Cranbourne route not to serve Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre is 792 however there are ample connecting options under the new network.

Dandenong South

The original 2014 state election promise to operate 897 to Dandenong via Dandenong South has been delivered by introducing a separate 890 route between Dandenong and Lynbrook, providing bus services to light and heavy industry businesses along Greens Rd, Kitchen Road and Abbots Road. Buses operate every 40 mins during the day and hourly in the early evening – a 30 min weekday peak and peak-shoulder service would have been more attractive for workers, with hourly clockface services acceptable at other times. A 0425 departure from Lynbrook on weekdays will struggle to find passengers.

Cranbourne North

Cranbourne North has also grown in recent years, now expanding on the eastern side of Narre Warren-Cranbourne Rd. The Avenue Village Shopping Centre will become a focal point for three initial routes for local residents

A new 899 service operates directly from Berwick and Eden Rise Shopping Centre via Clyde Road, Arbourlea Boulevard, Wheelers Park Drive, Alisma

Boulevard and Mountainview Boulevard. This was a late addition, not mentioned during the consultation phase, which could explain the lesser 40 min frequency that operates, even at peak times.

A southward extension of 847 from Casey Central to The Avenue Village is more direct than planned as a result of the 899, now travelling the length of William Thwaites Boulevard. Duplication with 834/835 on Heritage Drive has been removed. Existing headways are maintained - 30 min peak, 40 min interpeak and hourly weekends.

Initial plans for 799 have also been revised, with the service extended to The Avenue Village Shopping Centre rather than Casey Central Shopping Centre, providing an east-west connection to Merinda Park Station on the Cranbourne line.

799 has finally received a minimum standards boost, with later services Monday to Saturday along with new Sunday services. Weekend services operate every 40 mins (versus the former hourly Saturday timetable) however peak services have been cutback to 40 mins, reflecting poor patronage. Buses no longer run express in the counter-peak direction, assisting those wanting to transfer to 847 or 899 to reach Berwick.

799's interpeak and Saturday extension from Merinda Park to Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre has been deleted, passengers must now interchange to 841 or 893 (arguably many residents will find it acceptable just to walk to either route instead). Buses continue to travel along Waverley Park Drive, maintaining coverage in the Lawless Drive area and allowing same-stop transfers to/from 893 – it was proposed buses continue along Huon Park Drive into Wentworth Avenue.

Ventura's 841 Cranbourne – Fountain Gate – Narre Warren North route retains its existing timetable, which considering other upgrades in the region, is now deserving of a more frequent timetable.

Hampton Park

Services in Hampton Park, which have developed haphazardly over several decades with limited budgets, have also been revamped to provide a more logical and direct offering, with reduced route duplication.

A number of the existing kinks in the 893 Dandenong – Eumemmering – Hallam – Hampton Park – Lynbrook – Cranbourne service have been removed, strengthening its role as the main north-south link along Hallam Road and avoiding existing duplication with Routes 891 and 894 which were added in later years. Following feedback during the public consultation, services continue to travel via Lynbrook Shopping Centre however no longer enter Lynbrook estate. The opening of the nearby station in April 2012 has reduced the need for 893 to travel through here, as did the introduction of 891 in December 2010.

Weekend services on 893 have been tripled from hourly to 20 mins, matching a previous upgrade of interpeak services in July 2014. This is quite a contrast to the service levels just over 10 years ago, when buses only ran every 40 to 45 mins interpeak and every 90 mins on Saturdays!

Route 891 (Lynbrook – Hallam – Fountain Gate) is now the only option for passengers along McDowall Rd and Cairns Rd, with passengers travelling to/from Cranbourne now required to change to 893 at Lynbrook Shopping Centre.

891 has been amended to operate via Oaktree Drive and Willow Drive to cover off a removed section of 893. A planned change for buses to travel along Jeffery St, Regans Road and Somerville Road did not proceed, nor did a possible extension onto Narre Warren station.

Weekend services on 891 have been boosted from 60 to 40 mins but peak services have decreased from 30 to 40 mins. All morning peak services now travel to/from Fountain Gate, removing the Tinks Road shortworkings.

892 services between Dandenong and Casey Central now travel along Pound Road rather than Somerville Road in Hampton Park. The existing 30 min weekday frequency and hourly weekend frequency is maintained, when arguably this route is more deserving of a 40 min weekend headway than 890 given it serves a mix of industrial and residential areas. Morning peak runtimes have been reduced by around five minutes, but trips from the outer end of Narre Warren South will still take about 40 to 45 mins to reach Dandenong.

894 (Hallam – Amberly Park) and 895 (Fountain Gate – Narre Warren South) uphold their existing timetables, which include peak services operating express in the counterpeak direction to minimise bus requirements. 895 also continues to ignore Fountain Gate Shopping Centre during peak times. Both issues require attention in a future revision.

Residents in south-west Hampton Park lose out with cuts of around 70% to peak hour headways due to the routing changes for 892 and 893 - McDowall Road and Cairns Road receive 1.5 buses an hour in peak periods on 891, compared to five buses previously. Services per hour on Somerville Road drop from seven to two, now only served by 894, with no services operating in the counter-peak direction.

Endeavour Hills

A new 863 links Hampton Park and Endeavour Hills via Heatherton Road and Hallam Road. This provides residents in eastern Endeavour Hills with a Hallam rail connection for the first time, saving up to 15 mins versus travelling into Dandenong. Extending 894 north to Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre or 861 south would have been a more efficient way to deliver this

link, as the route has an unacceptably high 44% layover ratio in its current form (or 35 mins layover for every 45 min round trip). 863 operates every 40 minutes, seven days a week, with trips until 2100.

Three decades after Endeavour Hills and Mossigal Park were developed neighbourhoods adjoining Kennington Park Drive and Shetland St finally now have a direct option to reach Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre, with 843 now travelling a spur along Mossigal Park Drive. This adds five minutes to a trip to the terminus though.

The combined 843/861 trip late on Sunday afternoons continues to operate, bypassing Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre.

Bus services in Endeavour Hills unfortunately continue to operate below minimum standards level, particularly on Sundays when buses operate every two hours, starting as late as 1100 (861) and finishing between 1630 and 1800. This was despite information during consultation that the 843 would be upgraded to operate every 40 mins on Saturdays and every 60 mins on Sundays.

An upgrade to 842 between Endeavour Hills and Fountain Gate Shopping Centre is also solely needed – this was promised by the Liberals prior to the 2014 state election.

Overall, despite a few remaining quirks, the new network is a significant boost for residents in Melbourne's outer south-east. Although some areas were well overdue to receive bus services, in other cases buses are being delivered as residents move in, which coupled with semi-frequent and direct seven-day routes should tame the car culture often synonymous with outer suburban living. Captive passengers who've tolerated the existing network will now enjoy fewer long waits and will no longer have to understand complex service patterns.

Caroline Springs upgrades

From 31 October CDC Melbourne introduced an enhanced timetable for Route 418 between Caroline Springs & St Albans. Two extra morning peak trips have been added from Caroline Springs boosting frequency from 20 mins to 15 mins, while weekend headways have gone from 60 mins to 40 mins.

During October PTV also sought public input regarding proposed changes to bus changes in the Caroline Springs area in outer north-west Melbourne. Following the success of networks in Brimbank, Wyndham and Plenty Valley, PTV will again develop another frequent combined corridor and apply their two-tier model of semi-frequent connector routes supported by local routes operating less often.

The changes would be delivered in two stages, with changes to 461 and 462 scheduled for early next year when the new station opens at Caroline Springs, further expanding Kastoria's footprint within Caroline

Springs. Other changes are earmarked for later on. There are two variations on the plan for routes 456 and 462.

Proposals include:

- 215 (Caroline Springs Town Centre - Highpont) Hourly Weekend frequency (currently 60 - 80 mins)
- 216 (Caroline Springs (Rockbank Middle Road) - City - Brighton Beach) Split at Sunshine, western end to Caroline Springs forms part of new 426
- 426 (Caroline Springs Town Centre - Sunshine) New route incorporating Transdev's 216 trips on the Ballarat Road corridor, finally extended north to Caroline Springs Town Centre. Route will altered to serve Burnside Heights in 2018 once Westwood Drive bridge opens.
- 456 (Melton - Sunshine) The Sunday route along Neale Drive and Rockbank Middle Road (past Sri Dunga Manor Temple) would now operate seven days a week. Option A sees buses operate direct along Rockbank Middle Road, while option B sees the route travel along The Parkway and Bridgewater Terrace should 462 not be extended to Deer Park (see below). Interpeak headway will be reduced from 30 to 40 mins to offset with new 426.
- 426 and 456 (Burnside - Sunshine combined corridor) Splitting the 216 at Sunshine will allow headways west of Sunshine to be harmonised with 456, improving train-bus coordination at Albion and Sunshine. Buses will also be more reliable as they will no longer be travelling 40km from Brighton Beach in unpredictable inner City traffic conditions. Services will be offset to provide flat 10 min headways at peak periods with 20 min interpeak and weekend daytime headways, mirroring new corridors in Plenty Valley. The weekday interpeak headway would drop from four to three trips per hour to harmonise with trains, but the current combined timetable is often lumpy. 215 also travels this corridor, but it will continue to bypass Albion station.
- 460 (Watergardens - Caroline Springs Town Centre - Caroline Springs station) 460 will be further strengthened as a trunk north-south route by being extended south down Caroline Springs Boulevard to the new station south of the Western Highway. Peak service upgraded from 25 mins to 20 mins, interpeak service upgraded from 40 mins to 20 mins. Weekend service possibly a 20-40-20-40 min headway to meet the Ballarat line timetable, this is a bit unclear.
- 461 (Watergardens - Caroline Springs Town Centre) Revised to operate along City Vista Ct in the new parts of Plumpton. Peak service upgraded from 40 to 30 mins.

- 462 (Watergardens - Caroline Springs Town Centre - Deer Park station) and 464 Caroline Springs Town Centre - Deer Park station) There are two options for 462, the first sees the route extended to serve The Parkway and Bridgewater Terrace before counting to Deer Park station via Caroline Springs Boulevard, Ballarat Road, Westwood Drive, Robinsons Road and Foleys Road, serving industrial areas in Ravenhall and poorly served housing in south-west Deer Park. Option B would leave 462 at the current terminus, with 456 taking in The Parkway and Bridgewater Terrace. A separate 464 would cover the above mentioned unserved areas south of Ballarat Road. Option A would see 462 operate every 45 mins along the entire route at peak times, while option B would see 462 run a 33 - 66 min peak headway and 464 run just hourly. Outside peak times, a tokenistic hourly headway remains in either option.

Ginifer alteration

As of 31 October, buses on CDC Melbourne's 423 (St Albans – Brimbank Central) were adjusted to omit Clare St when travelling west, now stopping outside the relocated and grade separated station now adjacent to Furlong Road. Trips to St Albans continue to follow the existing route.

Another depot move for Transdev

For a third consecutive month, Transdev has relocated buses following a depot closure, with last shifts at the temporary North Melbourne depot in Laurens St on Friday 28 October, just shy of 5 months. This interim depot commenced operation in conjunction with timetable changes on Sunday 5 June. The depot was created to allow upgrade works to take place at the Doncaster and North Fitzroy depots, with a moderate number of buses, shifts and drivers moved due to reduced space while works took place. The depot largely operated Monday to Friday only, with only a handful of weekend shifts.

Among the associated shift and roster changes with the closure of North Melbourne depot, Sunshine West depot lost its limited shifts on Routes 234, 235, 236 and 237 in the Port Melbourne area.

Ventura updates

Revised timetables will be introduced on the following routes at the Ventura's Dandenong, Moorabbin and Oakleigh depots on 4 December:

- 703 SmartBus (Blackburn – Middle Brighton)
- 708 (Hampton – Carrum)
- 800 (Dandenong – Chadstone)
- 811 (Dandenong – Brighton)
- 812 (Dandenong – Brighton)
- 813 (Dandenong – Waverley Gardens)
- 822 (Chadstone – Sandringham)
- 857 (Dandenong – Chelsea)
- 885 (Glen Waverley – Springvale)

Runtimes are being updated, including additional peak hour travel time and better portioning at other times to avoid mid-trip dwells.

Additionally, 703 will regain Sunday service between Middle Brighton and Bentleigh for the first time in almost 20 years, but continues to fail to meet the SmartBus frequency standard, running at 45 minute intervals. Before the Sunday service became Bentleigh to Blackburn in early 1997, Sunday buses ran from Middle Brighton Beach to Monash University, a legacy of the old Quince's 634 cross-suburban Metlink route of the late 80s.

Run Melbourne detours

Morning road closures for Run Melbourne marathons on Sunday 16 October saw various detours and stop closures affecting Routes 216, 219, 220, 246, 600, 605, 606 and 922 across the inner south. CDC Melbourne's 606 services from Port Melbourne were truncated at Park Street, St Kilda with no service in Elwood or Elsternwick before 1230 – passengers were advised to use Transdev's 246, which in turn was operating in three connecting segments to minimise delays – Elsternwick to Woonsocket Ct/Barkly Street St Kilda; Woonsocket Ct/Barkly St to High St/Punt Road and High St/Punt Road to Clifton Hill.

Elsternwick tram works

The unofficial Melbourne Cup Long Weekend from 29 October to 1 November saw tram track renewal works take place at the intersection of Nepean Highway and Glen Huntly Road in Elsternwick. Routes 216, 219, 246 and 606 were affected by stop closures. In particular, passengers travelling to Elwood and St Kilda on 246 were required to walk 500m from Elsternwick station and shopping precinct to a temporary terminus on Rusden St near New St.

Frankston Station Precinct redevelopment

As part of a \$13 million package of works to redevelop Young St and the Frankston station bus interchange, bus stops will be relocated to alternative locations from Sunday 6 November until May 2017. Some routes depart a five minute walk away in Beach St, while others will stop at a temporary location on Young St south of Wells St, although full details were not available at the time of writing. Routes 789, 790 and 791 to Langwarrin and Cranbourne will be relocated to Fletcher Road on the eastern side of the station.

New interactive bus network map

In mid-October PTV launched a new interactive bus network map on a dedicated website – www.melbournebybus.com.au The map allows passengers to trace individual metropolitan bus routes on a Google Map background as well as preform journey plans but does not include train, tram or regional routes at this time. A quirk is the map shows the full 684 service to the rural hamlet of Eildon, 140km from the Melbourne CBD.

An associated advertising campaign is running alongside the map, which includes promotional hangers on buses and a fold up map showing bus routes in the Maribyrnong municipal area around Footscray and Highpoint.

Meanwhile, PTV have issued new Hume and Bendigo

local area map PDF files online illustrating the new 543 Roxburgh Park - Greenvale Gardens service and changes to Bendigo's Route 60 to East Bendigo (refer to October *Table Talk*).

SkyBus fare discounts

To attract passengers to Skybus' new St Kilda Express route, they will be discounting the return fare by \$1 to \$18 over summer. Seniors can now enjoy a \$3 fare reduction on the \$19 single fare, a 16% saving. A new 5-trip online ticket has been introduced for \$85, saving \$10, a \$2 discount per ride. A separate 10-trip ticket can be purchased at ticket booths for \$160, with a greater \$30 saving, a \$3 discount per ride. The family fare was heavily discounted earlier in the year - up to 4 children travel free with a paying adult.

Further Bendigo changes

A revised Christians route 54 timetable was introduced on 15 March. The timetable now better indicates the bus travels through the Beckhams Road terminus twice, before and after doing the eight minute loop of Maiden Gully. A new timepoint has been added at Rathbones Lane and Monsants Road. The departure times back towards Bendigo have been moved four mins later to better reflect runtimes around this loop. Additionally, four morning peak buses now travel via the loop at Maiden Gully before heading into Bendigo, as does the first bus on a Saturday.

Further to the routing changes to route 60 on 4 October (as reported last month), Christians have adjusted the 0806 route 52 service to depart Eaglehawk four minutes earlier, improving service reliability and ensuring the onward connection for students connecting with a school bus to Victory Christian College.

Geelong Show extras

To cater for crowds attending the Geelong Show, McHarrys operated an enhanced Route 31 timetable from 14 to 16 October. The usual hourly weekend headway was increased to approximately half hourly, while on Friday over a dozen extra trips ran in either direction, including special late nights back into Geelong between 2100 and 2215.

Western Australia

Transperth service changes

It is proposed to supplement route 41 Perth-Bayswater services with additional 41 Maylands Station-Bayswater short trips. This will provide a frequency of ten minutes in the peak and 30 minutes during the day between Maylands Station and Bayswater. It is also proposed to extend route 406 Glendalough Station to Edith Cowan University, and Mt Lawley to Maylands Station. The 15 minute peak and 30 minute off-peak frequencies will be maintained.

From Sunday **30 October**, route 370 will undergo time changes. This is to better reflect the running time of the route and allow for a quicker journey. The departure times from Mirrabooka Bus Station in the morning and Perth Busport in the afternoon will remain unchanged.

From Sunday **13 November**, routes 111, 114, 115, 148, 150, 158, 160, 501, 502, 503, 504, 511, 512, 513, 910, 15, 402, 403, 404, 407, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447 and 990 will undergo time changes. There will be no changes to the number of journeys or the route taken.

Transperth Timetable Guide by David Whiteford

In July 2016 *Table Talk* I reviewed Transperth's *Timetable guide* of 31 January 2016 (re-issue). There have been two further editions already this year: 'Effective opening of Perth Busport' (17 July) and 9 October. Both are due to major bus service alterations. I will only compare specific issues raised in my earlier piece with the latest issue.

The diagrammatic map now has an inset of central Perth. In the suburb index Butler is still not shown as being served by Joondalup line trains despite the railway opening to Butler on 21 September 2014. I repeat my moan about railway station names without suburbs (eg Challis) not appearing in this list while suburbs without a railway station (eg Heathridge) are recorded as served by a rail timetable. Muchea – which lost its bus service a while ago – still is listed for TT91. Suburbs or towns serviced by buses are still not listed (e.g Serpentine), and you'll still find it hard to get to Cardup using TT3.

One thing I missed in the 31 January issue is that the Elizabeth Quay Bus Station – the opening of which the issue was for – did not appear in the Bus Station timetable list. It wasn't in the 'Busport' opening issue either, but does appear in the 9 October edition.

Maybe someone should tell Transperth that the WA Museum (Perth) is closed for a few years of rebuilding and either delete it from 'popular destinations' or add a note about the closure.

New Bunbury Network.

The new Bunbury network detailed in the September *Table Talk* will be implemented on 16 October 2016 with the addition of two return trips on new 842 Park Centre Shops to Dalyellup.

Thanks to Jason Blackman, Barry Blair, Ian Cooper, Hilaire Fraser, Craig Halsall, Bradley Matthews, Peter Parker, Len Regan, Lourie Smit, David Whiteford, various contributors on *Australian Transport Discussion Board* and the Hobart *Mercury* for Bus news.

FERRY NEWS

From Monday 17 October, there are minor changes to the **Brisbane CityCat** timetable due to construction along the Brisbane River and the implementation of 'go slow' zones. The Bulimba-Teneriffe CityFerry timetable will also change to align with the updated CityCat timetable.

Sydney shopping centres, **Birkenhead Point** Outlet Centre and Harbourside, have launched a new ferry service, the Hello Sydney! Shopper Hopper, as part of the Hello Sydney! tourist program. It will provide a regular water service to the two Centres, with a sightseeing tour of attractions, including the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Opera House, Luna Park, Cockatoo Island and the City skyline. The service will also provide transport for the local commuters of Drummoyne. Since the previous ferry to Birkenhead Point was decommissioned in 2010 due to the no wash zone at Iron Cove, commuters have been unable to travel by ferry into the city. The new route, direct to Circular Quay, will cut the journey time down from approximately 45 minutes by road to just 22 minutes across the harbour. Fantasea Cruises will provide and operate the ferry.

Captain Cook Cruises will operate its White Bay ferry for Sydney cruise passengers from 4 November from King St Wharf No.1 (Barangaroo), instead of from Circular Quay, decreasing travel time by up to 15 minutes. The new departure point is made possible by the opening of Wynyard Walk, a new path from

Wynyard station to King St Wharf and Barangaroo. The six-minute Wynyard Walk provides access to the waterfront, avoiding steep inclines and road crossings for people with a disability, the elderly and people with luggage or prams. The King St Wharf departure also enables Captain Cook to operate the ferry more frequently -- every 15 to 20 minutes -- and with ferry travelling time reduced to just 10 minutes, compared to 25 minutes from Circular Quay. The White Bay ferry started in November 2015 as the first direct ferry service to and from the city for cruise ship passengers and crew. With a lack of other public transport options, it has been successful.

Trials of the **Wyndham-Melbourne** ferry finished on 14 October, but Port Phillip Ferries has indicated a permanent service may be introduced later. Owned by prominent businessman Paul Little, the company had poor patronage for the original daily commute service and changed it to weekend services only. However, it reported more success with week day and weekend services between Portarlington and Docklands. Mr Little said a key issue was the low speed limit in the Yarra River, but he had been hoping to resolve it in talks with authorities. He also indicated then the possibility of potential services to much closer bay suburbs such as Frankston, Brighton and St Kilda.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Paul Brown, Hilaire Fraser and the *Herald Sun* for Ferry news.

AIR NEWS

International

Hong Kong Airlines will fly two additional weekly services to the Gold Coast and Cairns from 9 December to provide five flights a week (daily during Chinese New Year).

Qantas will launch daily flights between Sydney and Beijing from 25 January 2017 to tap into the exceptional growth of the Australia-China travel market. This marks Qantas' return to the route for the first time since 2009 and makes Beijing the national carrier's third destination in Greater China, including its existing daily return services to Shanghai and 28 return services a week to Hong Kong. The new service is part of the expansion of Qantas' joint venture partnership with China Eastern which will also see three international codeshare routes between Australia and China being added under their strengthened agreement: Sydney-Hangzhou, Sydney-Kunming and

Brisbane-Shanghai. China Eastern will codeshare on Qantas' new Beijing service.

The new Sydney-Beijing route represents an 18% increase in Qantas' total capacity into China and a 7% increase in its total capacity into Asia. 50% of Qantas' and Jetstar's international capacity is now dedicated to the region, compared with 30% ten years ago. Including codeshare services with China Eastern and China Southern, Qantas offers more than 130 return services a week between Australia and China.

Cathay Pacific Airways will start commence an international weekly scheduled air cargo service from Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport from 22 November. The flight will start from Sydney, then land in Melbourne, then Toowoomba before the nine-hour direct flight to Hong Kong.

Thanks to Tony Bailey for Air news.

RECOMMENDED READING

Freightline 4—Australian coal freight transport, Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics at https://bitre.gov.au/publications/2016/Freightline_04.aspx

This publication summarises coal production, export and use in Australia. It includes maps of the Queensland and New South Welsh railway coal networks, and of the traffic task conveyed.

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 second 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 two months.

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