



# TABLE TALK

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## TOP TABLE TALK – BUDGETS

### Federal Budget: Big railway projects

The Federal Budget presented on 9 May contained large expenditure for railway and public transport projects.

- \$8.4 billion in new equity funding to the Australian Rail Track Corporation for the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail project.
- \$500 million for Regional Rail in Victoria. The aim is to improve travel times, reliability and frequency of services to increase the patronage of regional public transport services. This will include:
  - Improvements to the North East line. On 11 May the Prime Minister said that this will be for re-sleeping and drainage work,
  - Improvements to the Gippsland line, in particular the Avon River bridge near Stratford,
  - Improved services on the Geelong line including \$100 million for duplication from Geelong to Waurn Ponds and second platforms at Marshall, South Geelong and Waurn Ponds, and
  - A study into improving the Shepparton line.
- A \$10 billion National Rail Program to deliver rail projects that provide better connections for cities and regions and create new opportunities to grow our economy. Projects such as Adelink tram system, Brisbane Metro, Tullamarine Railway, Cross River Rail in Brisbane, and the Western Sydney Airport Railway, might be supported through this program, subject to proven business cases.
- \$20 million in 2017–18 to support business case development for improving the use of rail transport to ease pressures within Australia's largest cities, and provide important links to regional centres.

- \$30 million to develop a business case for a rail link to Tullamarine Airport.
- \$20.2m for Murray Basin Rail in Victoria.

Already announced was \$700 million towards the Perth Metronet project, subject to another \$500 million from the WA government, and positive business cases, for railway extensions to Yanchep and beyond Thornlie, and \$86 million for other Metronet related projects. This money is mainly re-allocated from the cancelled Perth Freight Link road project.

### Victorian Budget: Big railway projects

The Victorian Budget presented on 2 May contained a provisional allocation of \$1.45 billion for upgrades to regional railways comprising:

- \$435 million for the Gippsland line, with an upgrade to the Avon River bridge;
- \$100 million to allow the Warrnambool line to run more services, with a crossing loop in the Camperdown area (the press release is a bit unclear, but implies duplication all the way from Weerite to Boorcan, either side of Camperdown, about 20 km!), and signalling upgrades between Waurn Ponds and Warrnambool, a second platform and pedestrian crossing at Waurn Ponds;
- \$110 million for the first stage of a new Surf Coast Rail Project, including duplication between South Geelong and Waurn Ponds, land corridor reservation between Torquay and Armstrong Creek for a future railway, and development funding for future stages;
- \$91 million for the Bendigo / Echuca line, with signalling upgrades from Bendigo to Epsom and Eaglehawk and track speed upgrades between Bendigo and Echuca;
- \$39 million for stage 2 of the Ballarat line upgrade, with Ararat stabling and signalling upgrades and track works around Ballarat. There will be an additional daily train to/from Ararat;
- signalling and station improvements on the North-east line, with design work and enabling

- infrastructure for standard gauge VLocity DMUs, and station improvements at Donnybrook and Wallan;
- \$43.5 million for new train stabling facilities at Shepparton, and a new crossing loop near Murchison East which will — from 2020 onwards — enable the provision of more services.

However, the Victorian government says that this country rail upgrading package was contingent on the Federal government handing over all the money Victoria is entitled to under what is called an “asset recycling fund”. This was set up to give states money if they privatised assets, such as the Port of Melbourne, and spent the proceeds on productivity-boosting infrastructure. The Federal Budget (see above) contained big funding for these projects.

Other new transport projects are:

- \$846 million to remove eight more level crossings in Melbourne,
- \$10 million to develop a CBD to Airport rail plan in partnership with the private sector,
- \$201.9 million to upgrade the busiest stations, and to continue to provide 24-hour public transport on weekends
- \$187.4 million for train stabling at Kananook,
- \$84.9 million to plan for more high capacity trains and infrastructure projects,
- \$311 million for thirty-nine new V/Line rail carriages (13 sets),
- \$12.5 million to refurbish V/Line’s “classic” train fleet,
- \$67 million for additional metropolitan public transport services including eight more trains on the Werribee line, more than 50 additional tram services on the north-west corridors and a St Kilda Road peak period shuttle, and additional tram services on routes 57, 58 and 59,
- Route extensions, upgrades and new services to the bus network in Bentleigh, Frankston, Mordialloc, Narre Warren, Craigieburn, Sunbury and Broadmeadows,
- additional bus services, including in growth suburbs,
- additional Parkville bus services to minimise transport disruptions from the construction of the Metro Tunnel,
- \$67 million to improve safety on public transport, expanding the protection warning system on trains, and making station platforms safer,
- \$8.7 million to upgrade train station access and facilities,
- \$5 million to plan a long-term second phase

- upgrade to the Hurstbridge line,
- \$218.1 million for ten more E-Class trams and new tramway infrastructure.

Then, on 15 May additional funding was announced:

- A \$4 million upgrade of Donnybrook station
- Almost \$7 million for a future railway at Toolern station on the Seymour line,
- A \$9 million upgrade of car parking at Merinda Park station on the Cranbourne line
- \$2 million for new bus bays and shelters at Cranbourne station,
- \$7 million towards the new Hawkstowe station on the Mernda rail extension.

## **Australian Capital Territory**

The ACT Budget presented on 6 June contains funding for:

- A new rapid bus from Belconnen to Gungahlin every 15 minutes 0700-1900 Mon-Fri (“Black rapid”),
- A new rapid bus from Woden to the City, via Manuka and Barton every 15 minutes 0700-1900 Mon-Fri (“Green rapid”). The two new rapids will cost about \$3.6 million in 2017-18 with an extra five routes to be introduced over the next four years.
- The existing Blue Rapid from Tuggeranong to Belconnen to be extended to/from Lanyon Marketplace.
- New bus stops at Nullarbor Avenue and Well Station Drive to link in with future light rail stops.
- New ticket machines and a new ticketing system for bus and light rail.

## **Tasmanian Budget**

The Tasmanian Budget presented on 25 May, included funding of \$29.9 for railway infrastructure, and \$100 million for the TT-Line Ship Replacement Fund.

## **Northern Territory**

The NT Budget presented on 2 May provided \$37.2 million for public and school bus transport, and \$760,000 to improve the regional bus program and trial new passenger services in regional and remote areas.

## **New Zealand**

The NZ Budget presented on 25 May provided:

- \$NZ 450 million for KiwiRail over two years for infrastructure and systems including restoration of the South Island Main Trunk line;
- \$NZ 436 for Auckland’s City Rail Link; and
- \$NZ 98.4 million for Wellington’s metro rail network to replace 1274 remaining timber poles and overhead wires on the Hutt Valley, Melling and Johnsonville lines.

# RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

## Inland Freight Railway

Detailed information about the Brisbane-Melbourne Inland Freight Railway is contained in statements placed on the Queensland Coordinators General's website seeking public comment on draft environmental statements. The section from Calvert to Helidon, including a new 1.1.km tunnel under the Little Liverpool Range, is at <http://statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/assessments-and-approvals/inland-rail-helidon-to-calvert.html> The section from Helidon to Gowrie (west of Toowoomba), including a major 6.3 km tunnel under the Great Dividing Range, is at <http://statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/assessments-and-approvals/inland-rail-gowrie-to-helidon.html>

These statements confirm these sections of the railway will be dual-gauged. They state that the railway will be suitable for double-stacked containers. They state the line will be single-track – unlike the present railway, which is double track on the sections from Calvert to Grandchester and Yarongmulu to Helidon. The documents refer to the new railway being within “the existing Gowrie to Grandchester future public transport corridor”, which implies a future passenger train service - the design makes accommodation for a future double track for passenger service. See also major advertisements placed in the *Weekend Australian* (page 45) and the *Courier-Mail* (pages 76-77) on 6 May 2017.

The Queensland government is believed to be considering signing over the existing Goondiwindi to Toowoomba rail corridor to the Commonwealth for use by the Brisbane to Melbourne Inland Freight Railway, in exchange for rail and road infrastructure funding. Such a move could save the Federal government from a fight with farmers who do not want land resumptions.

Federal Budget papers state that the Kagaroo to Gowrie section, the most expensive and engineering-challenged section, will be built as a Public-Private consortium. Following the Federal Budget, the main freight operators Aurizon and Pacific National, the Australasian Railway Association, the Australian Logistics Council and the National Farmers Federation issued statements welcoming the announcement. PN described the project as “transformative for Australia.

The Secretary of the Federal Infrastructure Department, Mike Mrdak, advised a Senate Estimates Committee on 22 May that “the ARTC will now complete all of the environmental and planning assessment work, and then we will start to go out into the market for design-and-construct contracts. For a certain section of the work there will be a public-private partnership availability payment project, which will also be sourced from the private sector.” The General Manager, Inland Rail, in the Department, Richard Wood, said the precise timing will be subject to the detailed design process and the completion of all of the decisions on the alignment of inland rail and on the precise engineering construction”. He continued,

“Major construction works will commence through this financial year on the Parkes-to-Narromine section. The greenfield section—that is, where it is completely new track; for example, 300 kms between Narromine and Narrabri in NSW—is a couple of years away from construction, because of the need for environmental impact assessment and detailed planning.” Mr Mrdak said, “the business plan, which is publicly available, makes it clear that the rates of return available on a stand-alone project like Inland Rail would not meet the private sector commercial rates of return required....[of] well above 11 to 13%. The business case is premised on an ARTC rate of return of around five to 5.5%”.

Mr Fullerton, CEO, ARTC, said they were confident that on a conservative estimate they would gain 60-65% of Melbourne-Brisbane freight compared to 25% on the present route. The new route would offer transit time of 24 hours, competitive with road. 60% of the cost will be of the difficult section through the Great Dividing Range near Toowoomba. [This section will also carry Queensland intra-state coal traffic.] In regard to the railway from Acacia Ridge to the port of Brisbane, Mr Wood said, “At some stage there would need to be either enhancements to the existing line to the port to enable longer trains or more trains or both or potentially a new dedicated link.“ In response to questions about possible high-speed rail, “Mr Fullerton said, “the corridor will be future-proofed for passenger trains from Toowoomba to Brisbane. That future-proof could be simply providing enough width in the corridor to install passenger lines in the future.” The project is expected to be completed in 2024-25.

Updated maps of most of the proposed route are available at <https://inlandrail.artc.com.au/maps>

## ARTC Working Timetable 7 May 2017

As well as the **tabular version** of the ARTC WTT of 7 May which was already available on their website at <https://www.artc.com.au/customers/operations/mtp/> the **graphical version** is now also available at <https://www.artc.com.au/customers/access/access-interstate/committed-capacity/>

From 9 May the ARTC Working Timetable was amended on the east-west line in SA:

- 2PS7 on Mondays runs as tabled to arrive Spencer Junction 0710, depart 0900, pass Crystal Brook 1030, Peterborough 1144, Mannahill 1304, arrive Mingary 1352, depart 1417, thence as tabled.
- 3PS7 on Tuesdays runs as tabled to arrive Kingoonya 2045, depart 2105, arrive Wirraminna 2203, depart 2240, pass Pimba 2336, arrive Wirrappa 0002, depart 0025, arrive Spencer Junction 0215, depart 0405, thence as tabled.

## Freight Inquiry

A panel of transport industry experts has been appointed to help the Federal government develop a blueprint for Infrastructure investment in the 21st

century. On 9 March, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Darren Chester released the terms of reference for the *Inquiry into Freight and Supply Chain Productivity*. He said the Inquiry would support the delivery of the National Freight and Supply Chain strategy by outlining how existing infrastructure can be best utilised and guide future investment. The senior industry panel experts are Maurice James—Managing Director of Qube, Nicole Lockwood—Principal of Lockwood Advisory, and Board of Infrastructure Australia and Marika Calfas—CEO of NSW Ports.

The draft inquiry will be shared with industry and government for comment in late 2017, with the final report due by early 2018. For more information see <https://infrastructure.gov.au/transport/freight/national-strategy.aspx>

### Aurizon: Cyclone Debbie

Aurizon re-opened its Goonyella system on 26 April, and announced a 5% decline in Queensland volumes as a result of Cyclone Debbie. The re-opening ended a four-week outage while Aurizon's maintenance, engineering and civil teams worked to repair the damaged infrastructure. This included major landslips which damaged track on Black Mountain, west of Mackay.

Meanwhile, Aurizon announced an 8% growth in NSW coal volumes in the March quarter, to 11.5 million tonnes. Together with the lower Queensland volumes, Aurizon achieved a total above rail coal volume of 48.4 million tonnes, down 2% year-on-year. Aurizon's freight volumes were down 3% to 9.0 million tonnes in the third quarter. The company's less-significant iron ore volumes were down 7% to 5.6 million tonnes.

### Brisbane Cross-River Rail stalled

There are doubts about the Brisbane Cross-River Rail project, only a few weeks before the state Budget as the Commonwealth demands residents pay higher taxes to build it. The Prime Minister and Premier discussed the project on 18 May. Mr Turnbull apparently has the view that businesses and homeowners won't pay enough towards the \$5.2 billion project. It's understood the Commonwealth wants details of how much the state can raise in new taxes from homes and businesses in the rail corridor that benefit from the project under value capture. They also want patronage numbers and more detail on how it will connect with current public transport and the planned Brisbane Metro.

Ms Palaszczuk later released a statement insisting the "completed", 2000-page document had been with Infrastructure Australia (IA) since June last year. Mr Turnbull said discussions would continue as he again referred to the business case as a "proposal" that was "inadequate in a number of respects. This is Infrastructure Australia's view, and they want to know more about its integration with other transport systems and networks in southeast Queensland, about land use opportunities and generally the development aspects of it," he said. "It needs more work. I am not making a criticism of it, I am just stating a fact."

A leaked copy of the business case last year revealed up to \$7 billion would be raised from "value capture" proposals. They included \$1.2 billion for a car park levy and \$1 billion in increased land tax on property owners near Cross River Rail's proposed stations. There is also a proposal to collect up to \$2.6 billion through a public transport infrastructure levy on property owners and a \$1 billion surcharge on ticket prices.

A report by Infrastructure Australia, released on 26 May, has suggested that Queensland Rail should be privatised to pay for building the Cross River Rail project. It claims up to \$6.3 billion could be saved over 24 years if the government outsourced the running of train services to private enterprise. Brisbane City Council could save up to \$1.9 billion over the same period of time if it outsourced bus operations. The report stated the outsourcing, or "franchising", was not an asset sale and should be sold to the public as a way of paying for new infrastructure and services. For Queensland Rail, savings ranged \$1.8 billion to \$6.3 billion over 24 years depending on the model, while Brisbane Transport's bus savings were between \$1.3 billion and \$577 million. It is based on if the outsource was introduced this year and ran until at least 2040. Savings would come from improving inefficiencies in labour productivity and maintenance and use of rolling stock through a competitive tender process. But it warns if more people start using the trains costs would rise, reducing or eliminating any savings. It also pointed out the in previous cases around the world there were examples of private operators experiencing financial problems, due to contract issues and other factors, which led to a disruption in services. Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said she didn't believe Infrastructure Australia was genuinely interested in building Cross River Rail.

### Queensland Rail Citytrain stations

On 25 May Queensland Transport Minister Jackie Trad announced a \$6 million for "minor upgrades", including platform improvements, new paint, and renewed signage at Park Road, Bowen Hills, Wacol, Goodna, Manly, Murrarie, Windsor, Wilston and Beenleigh.

### Badgerys Creek Airport

The ALP has promised to build several rail links to Sydney's new second major airport at Badgerys Creek at a cost of \$400 million. On 26 April, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten said the infrastructure was critical to encouraging jobs and growth in Sydney's west. He said he wants the new rail line to be ready on the same day the airport opens in 2026. "A rail connection from day one is critical." In the first phase, Labor plans to extend Sydney's South-West railway from Leppington via Bringelly to the new airport and will build a new outer orbital train line connecting the airport to Macarthur in the south and St Marys in the north. It then would look at building an outer orbital rail link connecting St Marys to the Sydney Metro Northwest.

## **NSW passenger data available**

Transport for NSW has made Opal data available for the public on its Open Data website, providing a detailed look into the ways passengers use the state's rail and public transport network. "Opal data has long been one of our most requested and most useful datasets," Tony Braxton-Smith from Transport for NSW said. "Now it's available, it means researchers and developers can access and use the data like never before to innovate and gain insights for a huge variety of benefits for customers and organisations."

Braxton-Smith said that one of the major benefits of the data release is that businesses and governments can now plan and organise on the basis of the empirical statistical evidence that provides, for instance, at what times and how often stations and trains are being used by the public. "Let's say someone plans to open a business near a train station and wants to establish the best times to be ready to serve customers from this source. What was once an anecdotal, trial-and-error process can now be backed up by hard data, which could help them succeed in their business," he said.

The Opal dataset was developed in partnership with the research network Data61, which is part of the CSIRO, and with the University of Technology Sydney and the Data Analytics Centre.

Braxton-Smith made clear that while the open data provides detailed statistics of public transport use, it will not make public any personal data. "[The data] has been de-identified and processed in a way that protects the privacy of individual customers and has multiple levels of security to prevent misuse," he said.

The datasets can be viewed at

<http://opendata.transport.nsw.gov.au/forum/t/insight-from-our-data-simple-analysis-using-the-open-opal-data/709>

## **Sydney Trains: Airport trains**

On 14 May the NSW government has announced 200 extra train services each week during non-peak times on the Sydney Airport line as demand continues to grow. Transport Minister Andrew Constance and Sydney Trains chief executive Howard Collins say services will double on weekends, to a train roughly every seven-and-a-half minutes. Services will also be boosted late on weeknights, when trains will run every 15 minutes. The extra services, funded as part of a \$1.5 billion government investment program, are expected to be introduced towards the end of the year. Patronage of Sydney's airport stations has increased by 32% in recent years.

## **Sydney Metro draft timetable**

A proposed weekday timetable for the Sydney Northwest Metro has been prepared. It would use 21 out of the 22 train sets in the fleet. One set would be unavailable each day for a general inspection. The first service from Cudgegong Road would depart at 0404 and from Chatswood at 0449. The last service from Cudgegong Road is proposed to depart at 2330 (Mon-Thu), and 0100 (Sat), and from Chatswood at 0015

(Tue-Fri), and 0145 (Sat). There is proposed to be six off-peak services per hour in each direction, with the exception of late night services Friday night. These would be 15 peak services per hour in each direction. The morning peak period from Cudgegong Road would be from 0510 until 0900 (approx.) and the afternoon peak period from Chatswood from 1550 until 1900 (approx.). Running time is 37 minutes.

## **JHR NSW CRN planning document – NSW Western line**

A new version of the John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network document entitled *Possessions List – Major* mentioned in last month's *Table Talk* is now dated May 2017 to September 2018 and is available on the JHR NSW CRN website at

<http://www.jhrcrn.com.au/what-we-do/network-operations-access/network-access-planning-performance/>

It seems that access to this document periodically disappears when an updated version is being prepared, but it is still available by typing "Possessions" into the website's search facility.

The new edition indicates that around October new crossing loops are to be constructed on the NSW main Western line at Rydal and Georges Plains.

## **Fletcher freight**

Fletcher International freight trains tri-weekly (Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays) from Dubbo to Botany, established to convey their chilled meat for export, and subsequently expanded to also convey containerized wheat, will soon again expand to carry cotton.

## **Canberra passenger trains**

The ACT Chief Minister, Andrew Barr, has called on the NSW government to prepare a joint submission to the Federal government seeking money to upgrade the Canberra line for faster speeds. Rather than pushing for an elusive high-speed rail project, Mr Barr said he hoped the existing tracks could be used, with modest upgrades, to host faster passenger trains. He said it was an affordable option to improve the service. On 16 May, when the Chief Minister caught a train from Canberra to Sydney to meet the NSW Transport Minister it was about an hour late because of an earlier freight train failure, resulting in inevitable bad media comment. The two governments agreed to make a joint review of the railway with a view to modest upgrading.

## **Riverina passenger trains**

Councillor Vanessa Keenan of Wagga Wagga has advocated a daily passenger train from Wagga to Albury and return. She said a reliable rail link could help the cities share infrastructure, creating new opportunities for business and draw people away from metropolitan areas.

Former Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Tim Fischer AC, expanded this with a call for a daily service between Griffith and Albury, saying it would boost Riverina tourism while helping students and pensioners. Mr Fischer suggested the train could include high quality food boxes showcasing the MIA's

fresh produce, and be marketed as the "Griffith Gourmet Express" as a means of attracting tourists. "A service departing Griffith at 7am and returning from Albury at 4pm would be ideal for students, and those travelling for medical appointments. It would benefit everyone, we've got the stations and rail lines there, it wouldn't take a lot for this to go ahead. The existing weekly service between Griffith and Sydney could be scrapped, as this new daily service would allow commuters to link up with express services to major cities when in Wagga", he said.

However, Peter Knox, president of Combined Pensioners Support Group, thinks the main priority should be a second weekly train service to Sydney, rather than a daily train to Albury.

### **Canberra Light Rail**

On 27 April the ACT government announced the names of stops along the Canberra tramway. From north to south they will be Gungahlin Place, Manning Clark North, Mapleton Avenue, Nullarbor Avenue, Well Station Drive, EPIC and Racecourse, Phillip Avenue, Swinden St (stop for *Table Talk* editorial address), Dickson Interchange, Macarthur Avenue, Ipima St, Elouera St and Alinga St.

The project is on schedule, with the first track to be laid mid-year. The first stage will open in late 2018.

On 27 April the ACT government appointed consultants to plan the second stage from Civic (as the city is usually called in Canberra) to Woden (ten kms), with a possible extension to Canberra Hospital (two more kms). This will be about the same length as stage one, but more complicated, as it will include the bridge over Lake Burley Griffin and traverse areas of national significance. These sections will be catenary free - a Federal government requirement.

### **Sydney Light Rail**

Potential names for stops on the Sydney tram lines, currently under construction, have been announced. The line from Circular Quay to Kingsford will have stops named Circular Quay, Metropolitan, Wynyard, Queen Victoria Building, Town Hall, Chinatown, Haymarket, Central Grand Concourse, Central Chalmers St, Surry Hills, Moore Park, E S Marks, Kensington, UniNSW Anzac Parade, Kingsford and Nine Ways. The line to Randwick from the junction (after Moore Park) will have stops at Centennial Park, Wansey Cottage, UniNSW High St, and Randwick.

### **Metro Trains Melbourne: 27 August timetable**

From 27 August an additional morning and evening peak service will be timetabled on each of the Craigieburn, Sunbury and Werribee lines, adding capacity for 27,000 extra passengers during peak hours. In addition, the 37 daily Newport-Altona-Laverton shuttles will be extended into direct services between Laverton and Flinders St. All Craigieburn line AM peak services will operate via the City Loop while some AM peak services on the Sunbury line will run direct to Flinders St via Southern Cross. Two peak services along the Hurstbridge line are also getting

extensions – a Greensborough service will now start at Eltham and a Heidelberg train from Greensborough.

An extra two minutes has been added to services on the Frankston line in preparation for the opening of Southland station later this year.

Figures released by Public Transport Victoria from a May survey last year revealed that 20% of morning peak hour trains were overcrowded. Craigieburn and Sunbury lines had overcrowding levels of 50% and 40% respectively.

The new train timetables will be available in July from [www.ptv.vic.gov.au](http://www.ptv.vic.gov.au).

### **Victorian North East line**

Mr Fullerton, CEO, ARTC, advised a Senate Estimates Committee on 22 May that "the north-east line is operating at the same standard as the rest of the ARTC." The XPT can travel at 130 kms an hour and the V/Line train at 115, because it is limited by the capacity of the locomotive.

V/Line has claimed on-time running and reliability of Albury services improved sharply in April, following major maintenance works. It delivered 85.7% of services on time, up by 25% compared with March, largely due to the lifting of several temporary speed restrictions after ARTC completed upgrade works. The north-east line met its reliability target in April for the first time since December 2016, with 96.7% of services delivered, following the delivery of a refurbished additional carriage set. A 12-month program is continuing to refurbish the three other standard gauge trains.

A V/Line possession of the North Melbourne Flyover from 0030 Saturday 10 June until 0345 Monday 12 June will result in:

- NSW TrainLink substituting buses between Southern Cross station and Albury.
- V/Line terminating services at Broadmeadows and providing buses from Broadmeadows to Southern Cross. V/Line services will run empty cars from Broadmeadows to South Dynon Loco and return.

### **V/Line: 27 August timetable**

On 9 May Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Public Transport Jacinta Allan announced the 27 August V/Line timetable will provide 142 extra services every week:

- Geelong line will get 69 additional services, including 30 new services at weekends – meaning trains at least every 40 minutes between 0700 and 1900 every day. Warrnambool trains will now have more express running between Geelong and Melbourne.
- Bendigo, Ballarat and Gippsland will each get 18 extra weekly services.
- Ararat line will get an extra up morning train and down afternoon train on weekdays, and
- Shepparton will receive an extra train on Saturdays and Sundays.

The new timetables will be available in July from [www.ptv.vic.gov.au](http://www.ptv.vic.gov.au).

## V/Line: Seymour train

From an unknown date, the 2150 weekday train from Southern Cross to Seymour has departed at 2215, stopping at North Melbourne 2219u, Broadmeadows 2234u, Craigieburn 2241u, Donnybrook 2247, Wallan 2258, Heathcote Junction 2305, Wandong 2308, Kilmore East 2314, Broadford 2323, Tallarook 2332 and arrive at Seymour 2344.

## V/Line: Echuca line

Trains returned to the Echuca line commencing with the 1514 from Southern Cross Station on Friday 19 May after the completion of a \$4.9 million program to improve detection at all active level crossings between Echuca and Bendigo.

## Metro Trains Melbourne: Mernda line

On 27 April construction commenced on the extension of the South Morang line to Mernda. This will serve one of Victoria's fastest growing areas. The project is for eight km of double track with three stations at a cost of \$600 million. The Mernda extension is being delivered by the Level Crossing Removal Authority.

## Melbourne Metro tunnel

The Melbourne's Metro rail tunnel project has been enhanced by the addition of high-capacity signalling from Sunbury to Pakenham, which will run through the tunnel - allowing faster trains on the network. However, this also increases the cost by \$131 million to a total of \$11.03 billion. Public transport Minister, Jacinta Allan said, "We're designing, developing and implementing a trial of high-capacity signalling as part of the Metro Tunnel project. This massive project and next-generation high-capacity signalling will mean we can run more trains more often and get people home safer and sooner."

The proposal for a station at South Yarra as part of the Melbourne Metro tunnel doesn't stack up economically and offers no service benefit, according to a business case by the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority.

Stonnington council, the Opposition and the Greens have all been pushing the State government to include the station, and the Coalition has pledged to build it if it wins next year's state election. However, the project's business case, Infrastructure Victoria and the environment effects statement have all recommended that South Yarra station should not be included in the initial build. Melbourne Metro Rail Authority chief executive officer Evan Tattersall says a station at South Yarra would cost close to \$1 billion and offers little service benefit.

"With these five new stations, we're building platforms to allow for expansion of the new high-capacity Metro trains that are coming," Mr Tattersall said. "So with these really long platforms that you need for these future 10-car sets, at South Yarra you would need a really long straight platform. To do that given it's such a constrained environment, you could either have it as a complete underground station which would cost an enormous amount of money or you could have the

open-cut solution where you take out Chapel St and half the Jam Factory. "Fine if you were getting a huge train service benefit out of it — but you don't. South Yarra residents would still receive a train service every two minutes once Melbourne Metro was complete, by freeing up capacity on the Frankston and Sandringham lines. When we finish, we take the Cranbourne/Pakenham line through the tunnel leaving us more space to run more trains on the Frankston and Sandringham lines. This means they still get a two-minute service, which any station in Melbourne would love to have," he said.

## Melbourne flooding

From Tuesday 25 April, Melbourne experienced very heavy rain for a number of days, culminating in extreme rainfall on 26 April, particularly in the eastern suburbs. There do not appear to have been any cancellations of public transport services, but both Burnley and Blackburn stations were closed for most of the day on account of flooding in both underpasses. Blackburn was served by shuttle buses between Blackburn and Nunawading; Burnley passengers were advised to travel to Richmond station and change to/from the route 70 tram.

*Albert Isaacs comments:* Interestingly, on-train recorded announcements were changed to advise that the two stations were closed. When I travelled on the Up from Box Hill on a train that was usually tabled not to stop at East Richmond, the announcement had been modified to say: "stopping all stations to Hawthorn; express Hawthorn to Richmond; stopping all stations to Flinders Street". Unfortunately, as the train approached Burnley there was the normal announcement: "The next stop is Burnley", but the train did not stop.

Intriguingly, the fact that announcements on regular PTV services can be modified to reflect changed conditions, is somewhat amusing when compared with what happens on some of the additional trains operated by Metro Trains. Metro Trains runs a number of extra trains (that is, trains that PTV does not require them to run). In the morning counter-peak (Down) there are a number of extras with a most unusual stopping pattern: stopping all stations except East Richmond, Flinders Street to Camberwell; express Camberwell to Box Hill; express Box Hill to Ringwood. These are operated so as to form extra peak services to the CBD. I usually travel on one of these services, twice a week. Strangely, the abnormal running pattern is not reflected by the on-train VDUs, which actually say: "Ringwood – stopping all stations except East Richmond". Nevertheless, both on-train announcements and station VDUs contain the correct information!

I suspect that this unusual situation comes about because these services are extra to the trains that Metro Trains are required by the PTV to operate, and that for some reason only PTV has control over on-train VDUs, but that Metro Trains can modify station VDUs and on-train announcements. (Keep in mind, that there are no PTV services that operate to the strange stopping pattern of these Metro Trains' extras.)

Any further information on these strange inconsistencies would be welcomed.

## Slow Melbourne trams

Melbourne trams are among the slowest in the world, with an average speed across the network of 16kmh. They spend more time stopped at traffic lights than trams anywhere else. With three-quarters of the city's tram network operating on shared roads, 17% of journeys are spent at red lights compared with the international standard of 2-5%. Melbourne has about 170 kms of mixed traffic lanes where trams share the road with motor vehicles. The closest to that is Toronto with 70 kms. A VicRoads trial of part-time tram lane markings on Smith St in Fitzroy improved the average journey time during morning peak by up to 54 seconds. Giving trams priority at traffic lights would make journey times faster and more reliable, Yarra Trams says. In the CBD the average speed drops to around 11kmh.

A trial with VicRoads this year will involve installing devices inside trams and traffic signal boxes, to allow approaching trams to maintain a green light.

Yarra Trams spokesman Simon Murphy said trams played a critical role in keeping Melbourne moving and supporting major events. More than 1000 days of events per year require tram service changes. "Trams share the city's roads and traffic congestion is the leading factor affecting tram performance," he said. "Which is why we continue to work closely with our on-road partners including VicRoads to find ways to make journey times more reliable."

Melbourne's trams carried 204 million passengers in the 12 months to June 2016.

## Portland and Hopetoun lines freight disappears

In October Iluka Resources will close its mineral processing plant at Iluka Siding, seven kms south of Hamilton Victoria. This is because the supply of mineral sands from the Victorian Murray Basin (between Sea Lake and Kulwin) is exhausted. These sands – about 500,000 tonnes pa - have been trucked to Hopetoun, then railed on V/Line tracks to Murtoa, then on ARTC tracks to Iluka Siding on trains operated by Pacific National thrice weekly (Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays). The plant also processed mineral sands from near Ceduna, SA – about 100,000 tonnes pa. These were trucked to Thevenard SA, shipped to Portland Victoria, then railed to Iluka Siding. These trains too, were operated by Pacific National thrice weekly (Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays). The SA mineral sands will now be shipped to another Iluka plant at Narngulu near Geraldton, WA.

The Portland and Hopetoun lines will, therefore, lose their regular operation of freight trains, leaving only irregular grain traffic. However, Iluka hopes to re-open the plant near Hamilton in 2019 when mineral sands near Balranald NSW are exploited. It is expected that these will be trucked to Hopetoun, then railed to Iluka Siding.

## Pacific National dispute

An industrial dispute between freight operator Pacific National and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union delayed grain shipments in Victoria in April and May. The Union advised of a three day strike over an unresolved enterprise agreement, and, in return, the company locked train drivers out for five days in early May.

## Melbourne second port

Infrastructure Victoria has assessed that Victoria doesn't need a new container port for another 38 years but, when it does, it should be built near Geelong. Before then, the Port of Melbourne use will have more than tripled, adding more trucks to the inner west and more night-time freight traffic. It concludes that Bay West, between Geelong and Werribee, would be the best location for any future port — rather than the long-planned Hastings site. Chief executive Michel Masson said Melbourne's current container port, which was recently leased for 50 years for \$9.7 billion, won't reach capacity until 2055. Port Phillip Bay will need to be dredged to allow for larger vessels into Webb and Swanson docks. The report said the Bolte Bridge and Melbourne's road network of bridges will need to be strengthened, so it can handle bigger trucks, and the Port of Melbourne will also need to be reconfigured so its capacity could be boosted.

The report has also called for an increase in freight trucks overnight, which will raise the ire of inner-west residents. The issue of trucks travelling through residential areas will need to be addressed before any substantial increase of freight traffic, the report warned. "We heard during consultation that some local residents feel the Port of Melbourne's operation is not complementary with surrounding land uses, and has a social impact on nearby residents," it says. The Port of Melbourne now handles 2.6 million containers a year and has a capacity of about 4.4 million.

Detailed planning for a new container port will not be required until 2040, but the report estimates Bay West would require about a \$6 billion investment to become a large second container port — while Hastings would cost more than double. Infrastructure Victoria said Bay West has strong transport, land use, environmental and amenity advantages, when compared with Hastings. The report says the Port of Hastings would be more suited to handling car freight and not container ships.

Minister for Ports Luke Donnellan said the Infrastructure Victoria advice would be part of the government's freight strategy to be released later this year.

## Adelaide Metro: Gawler electrification

On 10 May the SA government called tenders for stage one of electrification of the Gawler line as far as Salisbury at a cost of \$152 million. Major construction works will start in early 2018 and will include installation of:

- Overhead wiring system including masts and gantry supports,
- A new signalling system,
- An Automatic Train Protection system,

- A new fibre optic communications system cable, and
- Protective works and modifications to existing infrastructure.

## **Adelaide Metro & ARTC: Torrens Junction**

Trains on the Outer Harbor and Grange lines were suspended from 29 April until 7 May for the first stage of work to provide grade separation between Adelaide Metro passenger and ARTC freight lines at Torrens Junction. Currently, traffic is delayed for more than two hours every day at the junction, as passing freight trains close crossings for up to six minutes each time. When completed, freight trains will no longer need to give way to the passenger trains, reducing delays to the freight service and to the road network.

During the closure, temporary rail lines were constructed for Gawler, Outer Harbor and Grange passenger services, while construction began on a new bridge at Park Terrace and Gibson St. Piling works were also carried out from the River Torrens to Torrens Rail Junction, and at Bowden. The project is costed at \$238 million.

As part of the Torrens Rail Junction Project, the city bound platform at Bowden station was closed from 12 April until the end of October, in preparation for the future lowering of the Outer Harbor line.

## **Iron Road project**

On 3 May the SA government approved the \$4.5 billion Iron Road project on the Eyre Peninsula, subject to environmental conditions. If the company meets the conditions, the project will be Australia's largest magnetite mine, estimated to produce 21.5 million tonnes each year. The project will include the construction of a new 148 km heavy-haul railway and deep-water port at Cape Hardy, near Tumby Bay. The port could also be used to export other goods from the region, such as grain.

## **Transperth Timetable Guide**

**David Whiteford** writes: I've frequently reviewed this guide, the last appearing in November 2016 *Table Talk*. The latest issue is effective 23 April 2017 to coincide with the Aubin Grove (Mandurah line) station opening and some bus route reorganisation. I sent a copy of my last review to the Public Transport

Authority as there were recurring errors and omissions and I'm pleased to report that some of my points have been addressed in the new issue. Butler is now shown as served by the Joondalup railway timetable; Muchea has been deleted; Cardup now shows the correct TT21; and the WA Museum, Perth, is shown as closed until 2020.

The Butler railway extension opened 21 September 2014 and it took until 23 April 2017 before the railway timetable was shown against it. Why then, when this new guide shares its date with the opening of Aubin Grove, is the Mandurah Line TT not listed against Aubin Grove? The Aubin Grove station is actually just over the boundary of its namesake suburb and is in Atwell (eastern entry) and Success (the main western entry) and so they, too, could have Mandurah line listed against them. The other major change made was the inclusion of Cockburn Central in the suburb list – an omission I'd not picked up previously. Cockburn Central is a dedicated suburb in its own right as well as a railway station.

## **Whim Creek iron ore project**

Balla Balla Infrastructure Group is exploring exploitation of iron ore deposits at Whim Creek in WA's Pilbara region. The project is dependent on iron ore prices. If it proceeds, there will be a 162 km railway to a new port at Balla Balla. The project is costed at \$5.6 billion.

## **Somewhere you will never travel**

Albanian Railways, HSH, have restored passenger services, albeit only with three trains a day. Samuel Rachdi has produced a timetable of these new Albanian trains, along similar lines to his other timetables of East European railways, see <http://www.fahrplancenter.com/HSH%202017%2031032017.pdf> Copies are available from the June ATA Distribution List.

**Thanks** to Tony Bailey, Paul Brown, David Cranney, Scott Ferris, Geoff Hassall, Albert Isaacs, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Samuel Rachdi, Len Regan, David Whiteford, [www.railexpress.com.au](http://www.railexpress.com.au), [www.railpage.com.au](http://www.railpage.com.au), *Railway Digest*, *Transit Australia*, ABC news, *Age*, *Australian*, *Canberra Times*, *Courier-Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Herald Sun* and the *Weekly Times* for Rail news.

## **ODD SPOT**

The shortest international passenger train service in the world is from Woodlands, Singapore to Johore Bahru, Malaysia. It is only four kilometres long and takes just five minutes (plus all the time for international formalities). Trains operate 12 times a day. The advantage of the service is that it avoids the notorious traffic congestion on the road crossing between the two countries. The disadvantage is that Woodlands station is not near a Singapore Mass Rapid Transit station, and requires a bus connection. For details, see table 6001 of the *European Rail Timetable*.

# BUS NEWS

## Australian Capital Territory

**ACTION:** The Westfield Belconnen Bus Station was closed from 4 until 10 May to allow pavement upgrades. There were no changes to services.

## New South Wales

The **NSW Transport Info** has introduced a totally new website with new format timetables where each route has a PDF - it still has a lot of bugs.

**Sydney Buses:** On 15 May Andrew Constance, NSW Minister for Transport, announced that State Transit bus services operated by Burwood, Leichhardt, Kingsgrove and Tempe Depots would be put out to private tender. The tender process will commence in July this year and the successful tenderer will run services from July 2018. Buses and depots will remain owned by government who will continue to set timetables and fares. The government said a high level of complaints because of an unreliable service as the reason. Many commuters see traffic congestion as the reason for a poor service and this will not change with private operators. Drivers at the affected depots said they were not consulted about privatisation and already had assurances from the Minister that State Transit's contract would be renewed for Inner West services. The drivers held a strike on 18 May. Limited services were provided on 438 from Railway Square to Five Dock and 461 Railway Square to Burwood Depot using private buses. In the same week the government announced that the new City-Mona Vale Limited Stops B-Line due to commence at the end of 2017 would be operated by State Transit, rather than a private operator as indicated in preliminary plans.

Busabout buses and drivers were borrowed by Transport for NSW to provide emergency assistance in the strike. However, this resulted in the cancellation of many Busabout services. Hillsbus, Interline, Busways and Transdev are also reported to have assisted but information is not known.

From 24 April, route **294** has two trips each weekday between Lane Cove and Wynyard during the morning peak using larger 'bendy' buses.

State Transit Lane Cove area changes effective 4 June

- New route 530 between Chatswood and Burwood via Lane Cove and Five Dock. This service will run from early morning to late evening, seven days a week with buses every 20 mins during peak periods and every 30 minutes at other times. With M40 Chatswood-Bondi Junction via Town Hall or 200 Chatswood-Bondi Junction via Macquarie St, Sydney (peak hour) and 400 Bondi Junction-Burwood via Airport or 418 Bondi Junction-Burwood via Sydenham a complete circle service now exists.
- Route 536 Chatswood-Gladesville will be reduced to a peak service being replaced at other times by 530 between Chatswood and Lane Cove West and 252 City-Lane Cove West now extended to Gladesville.

- In addition to the two extra trips each weekday on route 294, further additional trips are: 285 City-Mars Road (ten extra services a week), 252 Lane Cove West-City (60 extra services), 292 City-Marsfield (ten extra services), 518 City-Macquarie Uni (50 extra services) and 506 City-East Ryde (30 extra services extended from East Ryde to Macquarie Uni).
- 265 Lane Cove to McMahons Point via Greenwich now terminates at North Sydney.
- Routes 430 and 495 no longer operate due to low patronage.
- There are new timetables for routes 252/254/269/291, 251/252/253/254, 291, 265, 265/269, 285/292, 285, 292, 295, 458/459, 500/504/506/507/515/518, 500/X00/508/510/520, 507/518/X18, 502/504/X04, 506/X06, 515/X15, new route 530, and 536.

**Forest Coach Lines** took over Ryans Coffs Harbour to Grafton route 372 in November 2016 and **Sawtell Coaches** routes 362, 362W, 362C, 363 and 364 on 1 April 2017. Since then some of Ryans buses have been repainted into Forest livery, but it is uncertain whether they still operate as Ryans or Forest. The new format timetables on Transport.info still show Ryan and Sawtell Coaches respectively.

(Forest Coach Lines have run buses since 1930 in the northern Sydney region, and in 2014 completed the sale of a majority share of the operations to Next Capital, a long time investor in international bus operations. It is managed by CEO and third generation family member David Royle.)

**Busabout** Route **841** Narellan to Leppington has additional and altered routes in Gledswood Hills from Sunday 30 April. This includes new weekend and weekday services and night journeys until 2300. Hourly weekend services have been introduced to 2000 Saturdays and 1800 Sundays. The 841 route has also been altered in Gledswood Hills to operate along the newly opened The Hermitage Way. Both inbound and outbound services now operate a clockwise loop via The Hermitage Way, right Fairbank Drive, right Lillydale Avenue, continuing via the former route.

**Blue Mountains Transit** introduced a new timetable for route 690K on 24 April. The 1500 from Springwood station now departs at 1515. The 1628 from Katoomba Parke St now departs at 1617. Westbound services from Springwood now divert into Queens Road from 0900. Westbound services to Katoomba CBD now divert to Katoomba Hospital from 0900. Eastbound services from Katoomba divert through Genivieve Bay from 0900. 690K no longer serves the bus stop at Great Western Highway opposite Woodlands Road, Katoomba. There are some minor adjustments to other routes.

**Hillsbus alterations** from Monday 8 May: Route **635**: An additional morning service leaves High Road at 0810 to Beecroft station. Route **641**: An additional morning

service leaves Dural Round Corner at 0704 to Rouse Hill Town Centre.

**Route 637:** Service leaving Glenorie Shops at Old Northern Road at 0736 now departs at 0735, heading to Pennant Hills station. **Lourie Smit** comments: Only one minute difference, but the new timetable has a footnote: Bus commences from Old Northern Road after Timaru St at 0731, whereas the old one had commenced from Les Shore Oval three minutes earlier.

New timetables have been issued.

#### **Busways** Changes effective 28 May

- **751** Blacktown to Marsden Park via Colebee: Most services extended along Alderton Drive to service the new Greenway Living Estate, including three new bus stops on Alderton Drive. Most route 751 services now run to/from Marsden Park.
- **783** Penrith to Jordan Springs is extended along Sinclair Parade, Flagship Ridge and Greenwood Parkway, including 13 new bus stops. Three existing stops will be removed from the route, which will no longer run via Cullen Avenue and Alinta Promenade.
- **T72** Blacktown to Rouse Hill via Quakers Hill will be extended along Alex Avenue and Schofields Road to Rouse Hill Interchange, including six new bus stops. Additional new stops will be also be added in the future when the Schofields Road upgrade is completed.
- **T74** Blacktown to Riverstone via The Ponds and Schofields will change to run via Hambledon Road and Riverbank Drive instead of Ridgeline Drive. Services will no longer stop at six stops on Ridgeline Drive; instead four new stops will be added along Riverbank Drive. Additional new stops will be added once the Hambledon Road redevelopment is completed.
- Minor amendments to routes 661, 680, 682, 740, 749, 750, 752, 754, 756, 778, 780, 784, 786, T70, T71 and T75.

**Wingham Buslines** has issued a new timetable dated 1 April for routes 301, 302 and 318.

The **Buslink** Group has taken over the **Murtions** operation in **Broken Hill** from 31 January 2017 with the fleet and employees transferred. The new operation is called Buslink Broken Hill (Pty Ltd). This ends 81 years of trading by Murtions, established in 1935. The company was named after Murton St in Broken Hill and probably traded originally as the Murton Street Bus Company.

**Buslink Sunraysia** took over **Coomealla Bus Lines** operation based on Dareton and Wentworth which covers a mix of school and route service giving them another NSW operation. Buslink Sunraysia also now operates the Sunraysia routes in Mildura on the Victorian side of the border.

**Hawkesbury Valley Buses**, a bus charter company in Western Sydney, ceased operation from 24 April.

**Murrays ACT/NSW:** From unknown dates, the daily South Coast service has departed Narooma 30 minutes later than formerly at 1330, running 30 minutes later

throughout, to arrive in Canberra at 1800. The opposite service, 0730 Canberra-Narooma, has not changed. Murrays has introduced an additional service from Sydney to Canberra departing at 2200 and arriving at 0130.

## **Queensland**

### **Gold Coast Light Rail Extension Proposed Bus Service Changes**

In conjunction with the opening of the light rail extension from Gold Coast University Hospital to Helensvale station due in January 2018, the following bus service changes are proposed:

- **700** Tweed Heads to Broadbeach: Weekend frequency, previously 7/8 minutes will change to every 10 minutes to align with the weekend tram timetable. Weekday frequency will remain at every 7/8 minutes.
- **705** Broadbeach to Sea World: Route permanently changed to run along Old Burleigh Road instead of Surf Parade at Broadbeach to minimise disruptions caused by road closures on Surf Parade for special events.
- **709** Griffith University to Helensvale will be replaced by light rail.
- **713** Southport to Paradise Point via Harbour Town and **719** Southport to Paradise Point via Gold Coast University Hospital will become a high frequency turn up and go services. Increased weekday frequency from every 30 minutes to 15 minutes between 0700 and 1900. Increased weekend frequency from every 30 minutes to 20 minutes between 0700 and 1900 and extended operating hours on weekdays and weekends.
- **720** Helensvale to Coomera via Theme Parks: High frequency services will run during the theme park high demand periods to meet opening and closing times: northbound (Helensvale station to Theme Parks/Coomera station) between 0900-1200 and southbound (Theme Parks/Coomera station) to Helensvale station between 1500-1800. Increased frequency from 30 minutes to every 10 minutes from Helensvale to Coomera from 0900-1200, seven days. Increased frequency from 30 minutes to every 10 minutes from Coomera to Helensvale from 1500-1800, seven days. Increased frequency from 60 minutes to every 30 minutes at all other times. Renamed to route TX7 to make it clear it is a theme park service.
- **765** The Pines, Elanora to Robina Town Centre via Christine Avenue service will become a high frequency turn up and go service. Weekday and weekend frequency will increase from every 30 minutes to every 15 minutes between 0700-1900. Operating hours are extended on weekdays and weekends.
- **TX1** Tweed Heads/Burleigh Heads to Theme Parks: **TX2** Broadbeach/Surfers Paradise to Wet n Wild/Dreamworld and **TX3** Broadbeach/Surfers Paradise to Dreamworld. These routes will be replaced by the extended light rail, new TX7 and

feeder bus services to the light rail at Broadbeach South.

## Western Australia

Public Transport Authority of WA called tenders closing 15 June for the provision of the Esperance town bus service. From the patronage statistics provided with the tender documents this service is largely provided for students. The July 2013 to March 2017 statistics total over 33,000 students. There are

eight Mercedes low floor buses, dating from 1999 to 2011, currently in Esperance. There are seven school routes with one return service per route. The contractor can also conduct charter and other work.

**Thanks** to Hilaire Fraser, Lourie Smit, Victor Isaacs and the *Daily Telegraph* for Bus news.

## AIR NEWS

### Qantas PDF timetable to end

At the end of 2017, Qantas will cease to provide PDF timetables on its website. The current PDF timetables for Qantas and QantasLink are in point-to-point (ABC) format and are updated every Monday. They can be accessed at <http://www.qantas.com/travel/airlines/pdf-timetable/global/en>

### International

**Singapore Airlines** will reduce its Singapore-Canberra-Wellington flights from four a week to three from the beginning of August till the end of October.

**Tigerair** will introduce four weekly return services between Melbourne and Townsville (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday), commencing 22 June, to depart at 0815 and arrive at 1115, with return Townsville-Melbourne flights to depart at 1145 and arrive at 1450. Tigerair will introduce thrice weekly

**Virgin Samoa**, a Virgin Australia/Samoan government joint venture, will end in November, placing in doubt Australia-Samoa direct flights.

### Domestic

**Virgin** will introduce direct flights from Canberra to Perth twice weekly, but only during Parliamentary sitting weeks. Perth departure will be 1235 Sun and Thur, arriving Canberra at 1825. Canberra departure will be at 1900, arriving Perth at 2140. Qantas flies direct Canberra-Perth and v.v. daily.

Canberra to Brisbane flights in September. It will also add an additional Friday service to its existing daily Canberra-Melbourne service.

**Thanks** to Paul Brown, Victor Isaacs and the *Canberra Times* for Air news.

## About *Table Talk*

**Table Talk** is published monthly by the Australian Timetable Association Inc. (Registration No. A0043673H) as a journal of record covering recent timetable news items. The ATA also publishes the **Times** covering timetable history and analysis. Contributions are invited and are very welcome. Please send these to the appropriate Editor. ABN 74248483468.

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

**Editor, Rail and Tram, Air, Ferry:** Victor Isaacs, [tabletalk@austta.org.au](mailto:tabletalk@austta.org.au) 11 Blacket St Downer ACT 2602.

**Editor, Bus:** As an interim arrangement, please send your Bus news to [tabletalk@austta.org.au](mailto:tabletalk@austta.org.au)

**Production and Mailout:** Geoff and Judy Lambert.

**Proofreaders:** Agnes Boskovitz, David Cranney and Geoff Hassall.

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