

TABLE TALK

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RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Aurizon: End of intermodal business

In what might be a setback to the future of rail freight in Australia, on 14 August Aurizon announced it will exit its Intermodal business through a combination of closure and sale. MD & CEO Andrew Harding said the comprehensive review examined future commercial opportunities, including divestment, joint venture, retention of the business, or closure of parts that did not offer a sustainable commercial future. "In making the decision to exit, we considered the significant financial losses that have been sustained year on year by Aurizon Intermodal," he said. "The business has not been able to establish significant scale and a customer base to support a profitable business in such a highly competitive market. While a difficult decision for affected employees, exiting the business will allow the Company to focus on core, profitable parts of the Aurizon portfolio including the ability to recycle capital into other growing parts of our business."

Mr Harding said to facilitate the exit Aurizon intended to sell two components of the Intermodal business and close the third. Aurizon will sell its Queensland Intermodal business to a consortium of Linfox and Pacific National. The transaction includes the transfer of approximately 350 employee positions as well as assets, commercial and operational arrangements to the Linfox and Pacific National consortium. Aurizon is aiming to finalise the transactions by the end of FY2018, subject to approval by the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission and the Foreign Investment Review Board.

Separately, Aurizon has signed a binding agreement with Pacific National to sell its Acacia Ridge Intermodal Terminal. That transaction includes the transfer of approximately 30 employees, as well as assets, commercial and operational arrangements. It is also subject to approval by the ACCC and FIRB.

Total consideration for the two transactions is \$220 million. If the Acacia Ridge transaction is not complete within six months, then Pacific National will pay Aurizon an additional \$5 million.

The remainder of Aurizon's Intermodal business (outside of Queensland) will be closed. This is

expected to take effect by December 2017, contingent on finalising transitional and commercial arrangements with customers. Approximately 250 employees will be affected by this closure. Aurizon will work with customers on transition arrangements.

Aurizon will cascade standard-gauge rollingstock to other parts of its business as well as commence a disposal process for surplus rollingstock and other surplus owned/leased assets.

Queensland Intermodal has hitherto provided services from Brisbane north, and includes freight depots, locomotives, wagons and road vehicles, and Interstate Intermodal services outside of Queensland, including Brisbane to Melbourne and Sydney-Perth, which includes freight terminals at Forrestfield, Perth (freehold) and Enfield, Sydney (lease), locomotives, wagons and road vehicles. It includes the IMEX (import-export) service between Enfield and Port Botany. The Acacia Ridge Interstate Terminal is a freight hub for freight train services to and from Queensland. The 66 hectare site includes narrow-gauge and standard-gauge freight terminals, marshalling yards and warehousing. A wagon maintenance facility on site, will continue to be operated by Aurizon under lease arrangements.

The exit was announced with a \$188m full-year loss, due to \$927m of impairments, largely related to intermodal and Aurizon's non-coal bulk commodities business. It was the first loss reported by the former QR National since it was spun out of Queensland Rail in 2010. The loss compared to a profit of \$72m in 2015-16.

ARTC WTT 24 September 2017

The tabular version of ARTC's Working Timetable (aka Master Train Plan) of 24 September is now available on their website at

<https://www.artc.com.au/customers/operations/mtp/2017-09-24/>

Inland Freight Railway

The environmental impact statement for the Calvert to Kagaru section of the Inland Freight Railway is now on the Queensland Coordinator-General's website – see

<http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/assessments-and-approvals/inland-rail-calvert-to-kagaru.html>

This section is 53 km of single-track, dual-gauge railway able to accommodate double stack freight trains up to 1800 metres with 1.1 km of tunnels through the Teviot Range.

Queensland Rail Citytrain: Train shortages

New trains planned to be running to help move thousands of people around at the Commonwealth Games in April 2018 will not be ready in time, Government consultants found. A lack of train drivers is also putting transport plans for the event at risk. The bleak appraisal of the \$4.4 billion New Generation Rollingstock program is contained in a July report by German rail operator Deutsche Bahn for the Citytrain Response Unit.

18 New Generation Rollingstock trains would be needed for the Games. The State government had previously insisted the NGR trains would be rolled out this year, but the report states that "due to the current blockages and high risk of 'juvenile failures' a conservative view would be that 18 NGR trains will not be ready by April 2018". It also identified a lack of drivers as an issue.

The DB whole-of-business review into Queensland Rail operations was recommended by the Strachan Inquiry into the Citytrain meltdown caused by a critical shortage of drivers. It interviewed 78 QR managers and reviewed 250 internal documents.

15 NGR trains have arrived so far, but none have yet cleared on-track testing. The program to deliver 75 new trains is now more than a year behind schedule and beset with design problems.

Brisbane Cross-River Rail business case

An extra 116 train services during morning peak periods will be needed within a decade to meet booming demand, according to the latest Cross River Rail business case. Building Queensland has predicted 83% of southeast Queensland's population growth will occur outside of Brisbane over the next 20 years but 45% of the jobs will be in Brisbane. The imbalance will create a mass convergence into inner city areas that cannot be met by the current railway network and spawn crippling congestion, according to the State Government's infrastructure experts. The business case estimates that an additional 52,500 passengers will seek rail services by 2026 during the two-hour morning peak, enough to fill 116 six-car trains. "This demand, if not carried by rail, will be forced to other parts of the transport network, primarily the already constrained road networks with associated congestion and lost economic opportunities," it states. The new public business case was ordered after the Palaszczuk Government was criticised for not releasing a previous version last year.

High Speed Rail

NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian said on 22 August she wants to see bullet trains in NSW. "Of course we would love to see high speed rail servicing our State

but for this to be viable it would need to travel beyond NSW and it would require federal involvement. I think it is getting closer and closer to the time we can start thinking about having fast rail services in NSW," Ms Berejiklian told a business audience in Tokyo. "It would have to be beyond the boundaries of one state to make it viable, I think. It would have to be potentially a Sydney-Melbourne service to make it viable." Ms Berejiklian said high speed rail was expensive and "all relevant options" would need to be considered to improve transport to regional areas and between major cities. "This includes improving the performance of existing networks, rather than solely focusing on new alternative infrastructure." She said Australia's small population was challenging and this meant to get faster trains, they "can't stop everywhere". She said the punctuality of services and "selflessness" of staff working in Japan's transport system had inspired her as minister to try to change the culture of the Sydney transport system. "These were notions that had been lost on NSW for some time. I am very proud of the fact we have changed that culture in NSW. We have a much more customer centric organisation."

Federal Transport Minister Darren Chester travelled on a high-speed train in China in July and said the experience was "quite staggering", and Australia was "envious" of the way China's high-speed trains had not only shortened the travel time between Chinese cities but sped up the entire rail network. A fortnight before his high-speed rail trip, Mr Chester had said high-speed rail was "a long way off in the future".

An Infrastructure Australia report in July concluded population growth would make a Sydney-to-Melbourne high-speed rail link viable by 2032. It warned state governments needed to act in the next three to five years to secure a land corridor for a high-speed rail route, at an estimated cost of \$720 million, before rising property prices made it unaffordable. Infrastructure Australia chairman Mark Burrell complained high-speed rail was continually pushed to the bottom of government priority lists. The Turnbull government is expected to call for proposals next month to develop business cases for faster intercity rail connections, although not necessarily bullet trains.

NSW TrainLink: Sydney-Broken Hill special

Long-distance non-heritage special passenger trains are now so rare that they are newsworthy.

NSW TrainLink is operating a special Explorer DMU to Broken Hill for the Broken Hill Festival on Thursday 7 September. The 'Silver City Stiletto' will depart from Sydney Central before 0700, stopping to pick up at Strathfield, Parramatta, Katoomba, Lithgow (around 0840), Bathurst (0946-0951), Orange East Fork Jot (1056-1106) and Parkes (1239-1249) and also stopping at Trida (1536-1616) and Menindee (1830-1920), arriving Broken Hill at 2032.

The train will return empty on Friday 8 September departing Broken Hill at 0805, Menindee (0914-0953), Gunningbland (1415-1455), Parkes (1512-1520),

Orange East Fork Jct (1657-1702), Bathurst (1807-1810), Lithgow (about 1920) and then to Sydney. (ARTC Train Alteration Advice 0998-2017 and John Holland Rail Country Train Notice 0250-2017 refer.) Passengers will return on the regular Broken Hill to Sydney train on Tuesday 12 September. In early August this service was already booked out for ordinary passengers.

The Broken Hill Festival celebrates the film 'Priscilla Queen of the Desert' and is expected to attract approximately 3,000 visitors to Broken Hill.

NSW TrainLink: New trains

The NSW government will seek private sector involvement to finance replacements for the regional XPT, Xplorer and Endeavour train fleets. On 14 August Deputy Premier John Barilaro said an expression of interest would soon be issued for the design, construction and maintenance of the new trains. The bulk of the trains will be built overseas. Mr Barilaro said a private company would assemble and maintain the trains, with a new rail service facility built in Dubbo.

Transport for NSW: WTT 23 September

A new Working Timetable for Sydney Trains and NSW TrainLink (collectively aka Transport for NSW) will be introduced from 23 September – Weekends (Book 2) and 25 September – Weekdays (Book 1), version 6.1. On the Northern line, trains will be extended from Hamilton (164.6 km from Sydney) to Newcastle Interchange (165.8 km), but will run empty on this section. This WTT now includes schedules of Mechanised Track Patrols.

Sydney Trains: November timetable

More than 300 train services a week will be added to the two main rail lines between western parts of Sydney and the CBD from November when a new timetable is introduced. With the T1 Western Line under the greatest strain from overcrowding, the state government unveiled plans for about 250 express trains each week between Parramatta and the CBD including 20 in peak hours. Sydney Trains will also start a new direct link between the inner west and Parramatta on the T2 Line on weekdays. Inner-west services to Sydney's CBD will run as frequently as every six minutes during peaks. The other major changes to the Western and Inner West lines include a doubling of late-night services between the CBD and Penrith on the T1 Line. Some passengers, however, will have to change at Parramatta. Burwood will gain more services via the T2 Inner West Line, while stations at Harris Park, Granville, Clyde, Auburn and Lidcombe will have to rely on T2 services during parts of the day instead of the T1 Line.

Transport Minister Andrew Constance said it was the single biggest boost to train services to the city's west, and would result in faster travel times for some of those from greater western Sydney and more reliable services for those in the inner west. "In essence what we're doing is separating the T2 and T1 lines in a way that reduces the crossover of trains at those merge points. We're also converting all the inner west stations

to the T2 Line. What that does is take the frequency of the service from a train every 15 minutes to basically a train every six minutes."

Asked whether the changes would come at the expense of services on other lines, Sydney Trains chief executive Howard Collins said: "Overall we're lifting services up across the board [but] yes there are some adjustments in one or two areas.

The network map for Sydney's rail network has been refreshed to try to make it easier for commuters and tourists to understand, which includes rebranding the T2 Airport Line as the T8 and extending the T5 Line to Leppington and Richmond, and the T2 to Parramatta and Leppington in the southwest.

Sydney Trains: Soaring demand

Passenger demand on Sydney Trains has risen by almost 20% on some lines in just a year, new figures show. Across the rail network, trips increased by more than 11%, or 3.1 million, to 30.7 million in July, compared with the prior period. Patronage on the city's busiest line, the T1, which includes western, north shore and northern services, rose by 10% over the year, government figures based on Opal card usage shows. The surge in demand places greater urgency on plans for public transport such as a new metro line between Sydney's CBD and Parramatta. Olympic Park and the Bays Precinct around Rozelle will be among up to 12 stations on the proposed line, which leaked government documents have estimated will cost up to \$20 billion. The T2, the second-busiest line, which comprises airport, inner west and services to the south, rose by almost 14% year-on-year. The T4 (Eastern Suburbs and Illawarra) and the T3 (Bankstown) both recorded increases of about 10%. The number of trips taken on the T7 Olympic Park Line surged by 19.6% to almost 180,000 in July, compared with the same month a year earlier, reflecting the pace of growth in residential development in and around the former Olympic precinct.

Geoffrey Clifton, a senior lecturer in transport management at Sydney University and ATA Sydney branch convener, said the figures showed that Sydney risked reaching a "gap in capacity" on its rail network sooner than forecast. "There is absolutely the risk of overcrowding. We have already seen an increase in capacity and that is translating into more people using the service," he said. The state's Auditor-General recently warned that Sydney's trains will increasingly struggle to run on time unless "sustained and substantial investment" is made in the existing heavy rail network. Rail patronage growth has been outstripping both the government's forecasts and the rail system's capacity to cope. Last week the government announced plans to add 300 train services a week on the two main rail lines between western parts of Sydney and the CBD – the T1 and the T2 – from November, when a new timetable for the network is rolled out. "It is going to alleviate some of the overcrowding, but it will encourage even more people to use public transport – we certainly seem to be in a growth cycle," Dr Clifton said. "A lot of that extra

capacity will be soaked up more quickly than expected." The statistics show that the public transport system was improving and giving people greater confidence to travel on it. The places people are moving into are well served by public transport such as Olympic Park, Strathfield and Burwood," he said.

NSW TrainLink: Blue Mountains line

Some track in the Blue Mountains will have to be shifted slightly or replaced, and stations and overhead wires altered, to make about 75 kms of line between Springwood and Lithgow suitable for TrainLink's \$2.3 billion fleet of new intercity trains. There will be extended periods of track closures between Newnes Junction and Lithgow, according to a government report into the work needed to bring the line up to the standard of the rest of the state's electrified rail network. The work proposed involves replacing or repositioning tracks along parts of the 75 km rail corridor, extending platforms at Katoomba and Lithgow because services terminate at those stations, and adjusting the overhead wiring and signalling systems.

At present, the line between Springwood and Katoomba and Lithgow can handle only the V-Set trains, which are narrower than three metres. That is too narrow for the Korean-built trains the government ordered last year, which will be about 3.1 metres wide.

While much of the minor work can be done during ordinary hours, a large portion of the project will have to take place during 10 scheduled track possession periods over two years. They typically involve shutdown periods of 48 hours over a weekend. However, five possession for the line between Newnes Junction and Lithgow will have to each last for as long as 12 days. Transport for NSW will seek separate approval for improvements to the line through the "10 tunnels deviation" between Zig Zag and Lithgow.

The first of the new intercity trains are due to begin operating services from Sydney's Central Station to Newcastle and the Illawarra in 2019.



Sydney Trains: Failure 1 August

A signal failure at Ashfield train station in Sydney's inner west on the morning of 1 August caused havoc for commuters well into afternoon peak hour, with most lines experiencing major delays and mass cancellations of services. Sydney Trains issued the first of 16 apology tweets at 1051, saying delays on the northern and western lines were to be expected after urgent infrastructure repairs at Ashfield. Seven hours later, significant flow-on delays were experienced across most major lines.

NSW wheat traffic

GrainCorp will close grain receival sites in southern NSW at Aria Park, Boorowa and Matong. The company wants growers to deliver to major grain hubs that are larger and faster. In the 2016-17 harvest, Aria Park received 14,000 tonnes of grain and

Boorowa (where the railway is closed) and Matong 5,000 tonne each.

John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network: July amendments to WTT

At the request of **QUBE Logistics**, the following **deletions** have applied since 21 July:

- 9865** for S---T---ex Hermitage (near Lithgow) 0403 to Sealink Siding 0718
- 9865** for --T---- ex Hermitage 0403 to Sealink Siding 0754
- 8964** for -M-W-F- ex Sealink Siding 1322 to Hermitage 1632
- 4565** for --T-T-- ex Narrabri Junction 0715 to Narrabri Junction 0931
- 4565** for -----S ex Narrabri Junction 0710 to Narrabri Junction 0933

5466 for -M-W-F- ex Narrabri Junction 1520 to Narrabri Junction 1703.

At the request of **Southern Shorthaul Railroad**, the following **additional trains** have operated since 23 July:

8146 for S----- depart Kelso 1730, arrive Bathurst 1740, depart 1850, pass Raglan 1911, Tarana 1950, Wallerawang 2028, Coxs River 2030, Hermitage 2045

1845 for -M----- depart Hermitage 1606, pass Coxs River 1619, Wallerawang 1621, Tarana 1650, Raglan 1725, arrive Kelso 1730

8146 for -M----- depart Kelso 2235, arrive Bathurst 2245, depart 2350, pass Raglan 0011, Tarana 0050, Wallerawang 0128, Coxs River 0130, Hermitage 0145

1845 for --T---- depart Hermitage 0142 (next day), pass Coxs River 0155, arrive Wallerawang 0158, depart 0213, pass Tarana 0244, Raglan 0319, arrive Kelso 0324

8146 for ---W--- depart Kelso 1840, arrive Bathurst 1850, depart 2010, pass Raglan 2031, Tarana 2110, Wallerawang 2148, Coxs River 2150, Hermitage 2205

1845 for ----T-- depart Hermitage 1301, pass Coxs River 1314, Wallerawang 1316, Tarana 1345, Raglan 1420, arrive Kelso 1425

8146 for ----T-- depart Kelso 1900, arrive Bathurst 1910, depart 2010, pass Raglan 2031, Tarana 2110, Wallerawang 2148, Coxs River 2150, Hermitage 2205

1845 for -----F- depart Hermitage 2225, pass Coxs River 2238, arrive Wallerawang 2241, depart 2246, pass Tarana 2317, Raglan 2352, arrive Kelso 2357

8146 for -----S depart Kelso 1240, arrive Bathurst 1250, depart 1400, pass Raglan 1421, Tarana 1500, Wallerawang 1538, Coxs River 1540, Hermitage 1555

1845 for S----- depart Hermitage 1301, pass Coxs River 1314, Wallerawang 1316, Tarana 1345, Raglan 1420, arrive Kelso 1425,

Sydney Light Rail: 28 August timetable

Tracklaying is well underway on the south-east line to Randwick and Kingsford.

On the inner west line an extra 95 weekly services have run since 28 August. In early 2016 an extra 90

services were put on during peak periods, and afternoon peak was extended by an hour to 1900. The latest increase mean that trams will run every eight minutes on weekdays between 0700 and 0800 instead of every 10 minutes. They are already operating every eight minutes at the "core peak time" of 0800-0900. Inter-peak services between 1000 and 1400 will be every 13 minutes, instead of every 15 minutes, and between 1400 and 1500 every 12 minutes (changed from 15 minutes).

An extra 30 services will be put on the line on Saturdays, resulting in trams running every 10 minutes between 1100 and 1700 (previously 15 minutes) and every 12 minutes between 1700 and 1900 (up from 15 minutes).

The latest government data shows almost 10 million trips have been made on the inner west light rail line in the past 12 months. In contrast, the line carried about 4 million passengers a year before it was extended in early 2014. Patronage has soared since a 5.6-km extension of the line to Dulwich Hill in the inner west was opened three years ago, resulting in some overcrowding. Transport Minister Andrew Constance said demand had exceeded "all expectations", citing a near 60% increase in journeys between 2013 and 2015.

The NSW government is considering buying more trams. ALTRAC, a consortium building a \$2.1 billion light rail line from Circular Quay to Randwick and Kingsford in the city's south east, operates the 12.8 km inner west light.

Parramatta Light Rail

Details of the proposed Parramatta Light Rail are at <http://www.parramattalightrail.nsw.gov.au/> The proposed route goes from Westmead generally east through the centre of Parramatta along Macquarie and George Streets to Camelia then north along the converted Carlingford railway alignment. The Carlingford line is proposed to be duplicated as a tramway.

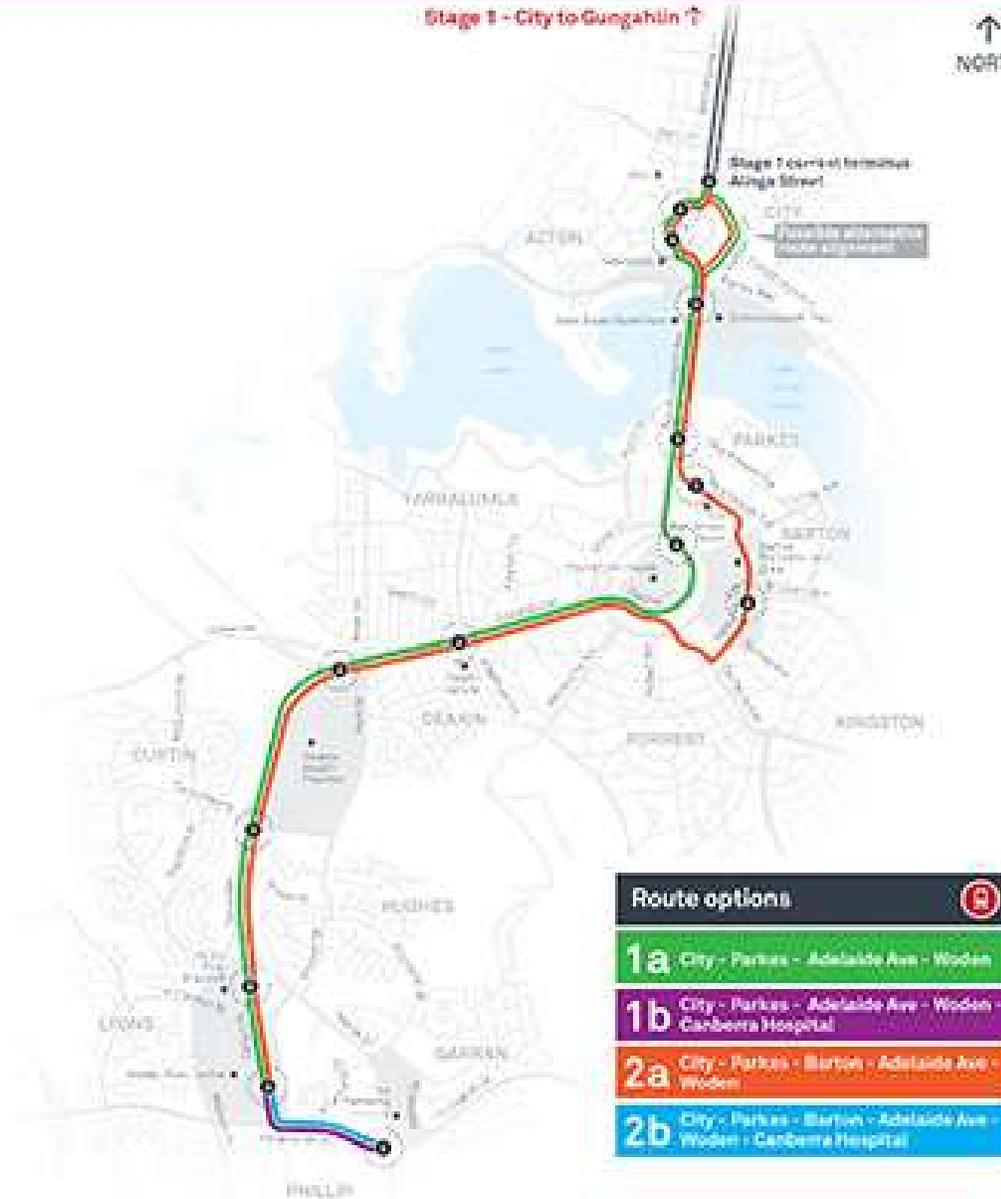
Canberra Light Rail

150 metres of rail for the Canberra tramway was laid in late August to test for electrolysis. The main tracklaying will commence in mid-September.

Stage 2 Route Map: City - Woden



Stage 1 - City to Gungahlin ↑



— Light Rail Line ● Light Rail Stop (indicative only)



Of the 4000 respondents to the ACT government's online survey on stage 2 of the Canberra Light Rail project, 56% backed Option 2b, which would run through Parkes and Barton and all the way to Canberra Hospital. However, it is now unlikely to extend to the Canberra Hospital because of a range of "technical constraints". If the route does travel through Parkes and Barton, it could potentially add five or six

minutes to the travel time from Woden to Civic, although detailed technical studies are underway to confirm that difference. The report also shows that recent investigations since the four options were announced revealed a range of technical constraints to the entire southern expansion and "potential operational and hospital access issues". Across the entire project, constraints found so far included

heritage buildings, sensitive landscapes, the gradient of the bridge over Lake Burley-Griffin, radii of bends and traffic volumes that could impact the final route.

Victorian public transport patronage

An extra 42 million journeys were made on the Victorian public transport system compared with five years ago. Use has increased 7.6% from 550 million trips in 2011-12 to 592 million trips in 2015-16. Trips on Melbourne trains have passed 233 million, up from 222 million five years ago. That figure is forecast to top 241 million passengers in 2016-17. More than 550,000 train trips are made to and from the CBD each day. Tram use has risen from nearly 192 million boardings in 2011-12 to almost 204 million in 2015-16. Almost 123 million trips were made on Melbourne's buses last year while more than 32 million were on regional trains and buses.

V/Line Working Timetables 27 August

V/Line's new passenger and freight WTTs of 27 August are on their website at <https://corporate.vline.com.au/Network-Access/Network-service-plan> Unlike the previous version, they are now dated. The Central pages now only include trains running exclusively within this area.

Despite earlier advice that the Hopetoun-Iluka Siding mineral trains would cease temporarily because the current mineral sand supply was exhausted, these are still scheduled.

New schedules appear for Pacific National freights from Appleton Dock to Manangatang in the Mallee. However, these are curious. The northbound trains are scheduled to depart on Mondays (1800), Wednesdays (2000) and Fridays (2000) via North Geelong to arrive at what is described as Manangatang North at 0625 or 1000. But the southbound trains are scheduled to depart from what is described as Manangatang Load Point, only on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and with two schedules, either departing at 2155 via North Geelong or at 1555 via Bacchus Marsh.

On 9 August the Victorian Auditor-General released a report on V/Line's performance. In 2015-16, V/Line carried 17.7 million passengers—16.3 million on trains and 1.4 million on coaches—an increase of 88.3% since 2006-07 and well beyond V/Line's expectations. Several factors have contributed to the rapid growth in patronage, including the implementation of the Regional Fast Rail project in 2006, the completion of the Regional Rail Link (RRL) in 2015 and population growth in outer Melbourne and regional areas. These factors have put pressure on V/Line's services to incorporate features of an urban commuter network alongside its regional transport services. A major challenge for V/Line is to cost-effectively manage the expected growth in patronage while improving performance.

The Auditor-General found that V/Line has not successfully dealt with the challenges it has faced over the past decade. However, it has recently started to turn this situation around and is now better informed about the risks and challenges facing its operations. It

The Passenger WTT still has occasional V/Line trains to/from Geelong via Werribee. Empty trains, run if required, from Southern Cross on M-F at 0952, returning from Geelong at 1142. These might either be for carriage transfer and/or for V/Line crews to maintain route knowledge. There are also empty trains via this route from Geelong on Friday at 1945 and from SX on Sundays at 2130, as well as a light locomotive from Geelong Loco on Fridays at 2114.

Copies of the WTTs are available from the ATA September Distribution List.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Failure 3 August

At about 0725 on the morning of Thursday 3 August an up Sandringham train was about 100 metres from Flinders St when it slowed and there was an explosion. Passengers had to be evacuated from the train. Subsequently, train services could not operate further north than Elsternwick as the overhead power supply was repaired. Buses ran between Elsternwick and Caulfield. Passengers between Ripponlea and Prahran were advised to catch local tram or bus services. Train services were restored about 1500.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Frankston line level crossing removal

The planned removal of level crossings at Edithvale and Bonbeach involves lowering the railway into a trench and building new stations. A scoping study can be found on the website of the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning at www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/projects

Melbourne port railways

Expressions of interest will be sought by the Federal and Victorian governments for new railways connecting the Port of Melbourne to major freight hubs under a \$58 million plan aiming to take trucks off local roads.

V/Line performance audit

now has a strong evidence base to support its asset management, and a new management approach to monitoring and dealing with operational and performance issues.

V/Line was not prepared for the strong growth in patronage and the resulting increase in service demand following the opening of the RRL, which fundamentally changed the nature of its operations. V/Line did not foresee this growth or fully understand the causes of its poor performance because it lacked the necessary capability. It also lacked focus, until recently, on managing its assets. Consequently, V/Line's performance over the past 10 years has mostly fallen short of its targets and community expectations, despite infrastructure improvements and timetable changes.

The most significant impacts on V/Line's performance have been:

- ongoing financial pressure to deliver cost savings,

- excessive wheel wear in VLocity trains and the failure of VLocity trains to activate boom gates on time,
- network limitations,
- an inability to consistently get V/Line trains to arrive at the metropolitan boundary in time to use their scheduled path, and
- congestion on the shared metropolitan networks.

V/Line's focus on achieving cost savings has improved its efficiency, although it cannot demonstrate it is making the best use of its funding. It has not actively measured and benchmarked the efficiency of its passenger services since 2013.

Deficiencies in the basis of the thresholds and targets used to measure performance, and in institutional arrangements, have not supported effective planning, monitoring and governance of regional passenger services. The lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities of public transport portfolio agencies has hampered V/Line's ability to address performance gaps and deal with emerging issues.

The establishment of Transport for Victoria (TFV), with its explicit focus on planning, is a key development with potential to strengthen governance in the transport portfolio.

Findings: V/Line's operational performance

V/Line has failed to meet key service criteria for the operational performance of its passenger services, as specified in its services agreement and in State Budget papers, particularly during the period July 2015 to March 2017.

In early 2016, V/Line's train services were reduced, and in some cases replaced by road coaches. This was due to the concurrent issues of excessive wheel wear on VLocity trains and restrictions on the metropolitan network caused by the failure of boom gates to activate on time at the level crossing in Dandenong on the Pakenham line.

During the current services agreement, V/Line has not been able to consistently meet punctuality targets for its train services.

V/Line measures and reports train punctuality and reliability against the timetable communicated to passengers in PTV's journey planner, rather than the master timetable. This approach means that V/Line's reported performance does not represent its actual performance, or necessarily reflect passengers' experience, especially when there are significant service changes. This was highlighted during early 2016 when, despite the wheel wear and boom gate problems—and the replacement of 350 trains with coaches every week—V/Line's publicly reported performance suggested that little had changed.

When trains do not run on time, some passengers may miss connections with other public transport services. PTV, which is responsible for coordinating public transport, does not monitor V/Line train connections

with regional town buses and is not aware of the extent of this problem.

Congestion on the shared metropolitan and regional network is one of several challenges V/Line faces in meeting punctuality targets. V/Line operates more than 32 500 services a year across the metropolitan network, and its trains fail to consistently arrive at the metropolitan boundary in time to use their scheduled path. This highlights critical dependencies for V/Line, particularly at interface locations on the regional–metropolitan boundary.

Completion of the RRL project in June 2015 was expected to alleviate conflicts between metropolitan and V/Line services on the western and south-western lines, and improve punctuality across both networks. However, the full benefits of segregating the track from the metropolitan network were not achieved. Punctuality on the western corridor has been significantly lower than it was before the RRL was implemented, mainly due to the wheel wear issue and the significant growth in patronage on those services.

V/Line imposes speed restrictions on the rail network to ensure the safe running of trains, but the restrictions result in longer journey times for passengers and reduce the punctuality of trains.

Customer satisfaction

The methods that V/Line, PTV and the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources use to record and report customer satisfaction internally and publicly are inconsistent.

PTV conducts a quarterly customer satisfaction monitor (CSM) survey on both V/Line trains and coach services. PTV uses a subset of the results of the quarterly CSM to assess V/Line's performance under the services agreement. These results vary significantly from those publicly reported, due to the different assessment criteria used.

The scale that V/Line uses internally to track customer satisfaction differs from the scale that PTV and DEDJTR use to publicly report customer satisfaction, and the two approaches produce different results for the same periods.

Train loadings

Growth in patronage if not well managed, results in passengers being unable to board a crowded train or experiencing an uncomfortable train journey.

The increase in passenger numbers following the opening of the RRL and new stations in metropolitan areas—Wyndham Vale and Tarneit—have resulted in almost a third of V/Line's peak services consistently exceeding the maximum capacity of seats available at the busiest point.

Although V/Line internally tracks train loadings, it is not required to meet any specific standards. The absence of a load standard in the current services agreement means the reviewers were unable to assess the extent of any load breaches or whether overcrowding is occurring.

To cater for increased service demand and to transition to more commuter-style services, V/Line is modifying new trains, including increasing seating, and is also preparing for more services with customers standing for part or all of the journey.

This will require a significant shift in V/Line passengers' expectations, especially for those who have historically experienced adequate seating availability. V/Line will need to develop a clear communication strategy to address its passengers' perspectives and needs.

Performance measurement frameworks

PTV has not adequately documented the basis for contractual thresholds and targets, or the State Budget output targets that it uses to assess V/Line's performance. As a result, it is difficult to determine whether the thresholds and targets represent a reasonable measure for assessing performance.

Data used to measure performance varies in its reliability due to critical shortcomings in V/Line's and PTV's verification of reported performance.

For V/Line coach services, performance information relating to reliability and punctuality is self-reported by the operators contracted to provide the services. This approach has obvious and inherent risks—such as operator error and bias—which can affect the reliability of the data. To mitigate this risk, the coach contracts allow V/Line to conduct audits, which V/Line conducted for the first time in May 2017 for a limited number of services.

These issues raise concerns about the accuracy of the data submitted by operators and undermine the effectiveness and integrity of the performance regime.

V/Line's financial performance

PTV reviewed V/Line's financial performance in 2013 against international regional rail operators. It found that V/Line performed below average on most key efficiency indicators measured.

V/Line does not routinely monitor and report on the efficiency of its services. A significant amount of V/Line's managerial and board focus has been directed towards delivering the cost savings target set by PTV of \$60 million over three years—\$20 million per year from 2013–14 to 2015–16. Although some progress was made in delivering savings, this target has not been achieved.

The benchmarking comparisons in the 2013 review considered V/Line passenger services as a single operation. To better understand its efficiency, V/Line needs to collect data according to the four different types of services it delivers—commuter rail, frequent peri-urban all-day services, country long-distance trains and coach services. Each group's performance could then be compared with similar operations in other jurisdictions. V/Line currently does not have the systems in place to accurately produce separate data for the four types of V/Line passenger services.

To assess the efficiency of V/Line passenger train services, the reviewers established a set of agreed measures in consultation with V/Line and PTV. These showed that during the period 2012–13 to 2016–17, V/Line's efficiency improved for most indicators.

V/Line is also required to meet community needs in the way it operates its business, which affects its ability to be commercially viable. The community requirements that affect V/Line's business performance should be identified and measured to enable a comprehensive assessment of the efficiency of V/Line services.

Asset management

In the past, major periodic maintenance funding has not kept pace with the levels of funding required to maintain a fully operational and reliable passenger network. This has resulted in a deterioration of the network.

Until recently V/Line did not have a comprehensive understanding of the condition of its assets. It was therefore unable to develop sound long-term asset management strategies or to make evidence-based decisions on how it funded and prioritised maintenance and renewal work.

In 2015, V/Line changed its asset management approach from 'fix on fail' to 'predict and prevent', based on known asset condition. V/Line has now identified its maintenance backlog and has prioritised investments according to criticality and risk. The scale of funding required to address the maintenance backlog is significant—approximately \$534.8 million across the entire V/Line network.

Asset failures limit V/Line's ability to deliver agreed service levels, resulting in customer delays and service cancellations. Many of the vehicles in V/Line's rolling stock fleet have been in service beyond their expected life, which is typically 30 years. Consequently they have a high failure rate and require significant investment in replacement and refurbishment. To begin addressing the backlog, V/Line received a significant boost in maintenance funding for infrastructure assets in 2016–17.

Governance

DEDJTR, PTV, V/Line and VicTrack—which all have specific responsibilities for Victoria's transport-related land, assets and infrastructure—are jointly responsible for planning and operating regional passenger services in Victoria. There is a lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities and overlapping functions between these agencies.

Recent reviews by V/Line and DEDJTR have found that inadequate governance procedures directly contributed to V/Line's funding shortfall of \$50.5 million for the 2015–16 financial year. The complexity of governance arrangements—with overlapping functions between the agencies and multiple communication, reporting and oversight channels—has contributed to uncertainty in funding and budget planning.

Poor timetable development processes and inadequate collaboration between agencies on a new

train timetable introduced in 2015 resulted in significant crowding on some lines and an initial drop in punctuality. The timetable was not tested and did not reflect operational constraints such as the availability and capabilities of V/Line's rolling stock.

Following greater collaboration between V/Line and PTV using a more robust timetable development process, the January 2017 timetable changes were successfully implemented.

Due to recent operational and asset management reviews, V/Line is now better informed about the likely risks and future challenges, although the current transport portfolio governance arrangements limit its ability to address performance gaps and deal with emerging issues.

In April 2017, TFV became operational. Its role is to plan and coordinate Victoria's transport system and associated agencies. TFV could have a significant positive impact on the governance arrangements in the transport portfolio, although how it will address these issues is uncertain at this early stage.

Recommendations

The Auditor-General recommends that V/Line:

1. strengthen its monitoring processes for measuring on-time running of trains and coaches.
2. improve its systems to collect and separately analyse and report operational and financial performance information between service groups—commuter rail, peri-urban, country long-distance, and coach—and businesses, passengers and freight, to better understand performance in separate parts of the business.
3. undertake peer operational and financial performance benchmarking by service group with similar railways in other jurisdictions and devise a long-term plan to improve efficiency.
4. use community service obligations to model and understand how they influence performance.

That Public Transport Victoria:

5. improve how it monitors and manages V/Line performance by:

- documenting the basis and methodology of targets and thresholds in the services agreement and State Budget papers.
- assessing the adequacy of existing performance measures and standards to achieve improvements in performance.
- preparing performance benchmarks for future services agreements that drive improvement and are periodically reviewed and reset where necessary.
- periodically auditing V/Line's performance data and related systems.

6. work collaboratively with V/Line to:

- more accurately reflect actual performance and passenger experience by measuring and publicly reporting reliability and punctuality against the master timetable.
- develop a more effective way to monitor customer experience performance, using lessons from the current services agreements.

That the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources:

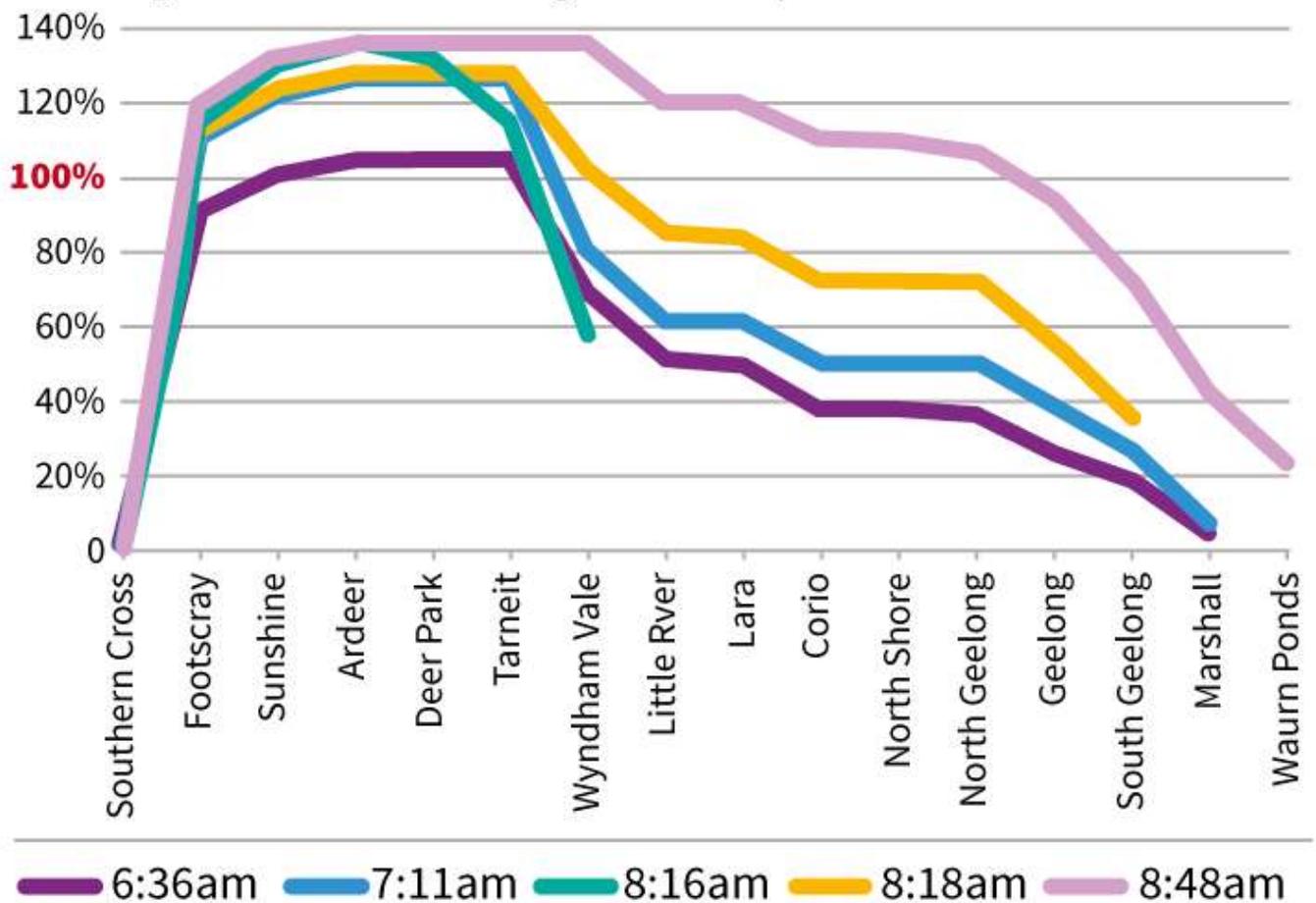
7. work collaboratively with PTV and V/Line to:

- better understand the impact of the shared metropolitan and regional network on V/Line's punctuality.
- develop evidence-based train-loading standards to determine the level of overcrowding on passenger trains.
- develop a more robust indicator of service demand by measuring the average passenger travel distances.

8. review the transport portfolio governance framework with a particular focus on clarifying the roles of key agencies and reporting and information flow.

Average number of train seats occupied by station on the Geelong line (south-western corridor), during March 2017

Morning inbound and evening outbound peak services



Source: VAGO, based on V/Line data.

Another chart from this report is on page 16.

Southern Shorthaul Railroad

Southern Shorthaul Railroad is now hauling grain for Emerald Grain Pty Ltd for export through Appleton Dock, Melbourne. The first train of 58 hoppers was loaded at the Coolamon, NSW silo on 1 August for unloading in Melbourne next day. The grain hoppers are the converted former Leigh Creek coal hoppers which SSR purchased late last year. Over 100 are already in use and all 180 will be in service by 1 November. Various locations will be visited by the train in the coming months including Henty West, Boree Creek, Oaklands and Dimboola.

SA: Wheat traffic

Glencore grain business Viterra will continue to move grain by rail in SA after extending its agreement with Genesee & Wyoming Australia on the Eyre Peninsula to March 2019 – a 12 month extension. The two lines service 15 storage and handling sites to transfer grain

to Port Lincoln for shipping. More than 725,000 tonnes of grain have been moved on the Eyre Peninsula rail lines since 1 October, 2016.

Perth Metronet

The WA government has submitted business cases for two new train lines to Infrastructure Australia, as part of its Metronet program. Premier Mark McGowan announced on 21 August that the Metronet team was considering a 13.8 km extension of the Joondalup line to Yanchep, and a 17.5 km connection between Thornlie and Cockburn, with the new business cases. The Yanchep extension would have new stations at Alkimos, Eglinton and Yanchep. The Thornlie extension proposes new stations at Nicholson Road, and Ranford Road, in Canning Vale.

TransPerth: Delays 23 August

Travellers on the Mandurah and Joondalup lines had more than six hours of delays after Elizabeth Quay station was evacuated on the afternoon of Wednesday 23 August. Two males were seen entering the tunnel after 1400 carrying a suitcase and a backpack, but returned without the items. "Elizabeth Quay station was evacuated as a matter of course after a suspicious package was found early this afternoon," a Transperth spokesperson said. Officers attended the station and found the bags with rubbish and clothes. The station was re-opened around 1510 but the closure affected trains on both the Mandurah and Joondalup lines. The train service resumed normal timetables after 2100.

WA Wheat lines

CBH and Arc Infrastructure (formerly Brookfield Rail) are believed to be close to reaching a deal on reopening most of the Wheatbelt's Tier 3 railway lines. Since the closure of 509 km of track in the Tier 3 region more than four years ago, farmers have raised concerns about the impact of an estimated 30,000 extra truck movements on roads. CBH is also negotiating with Arc for an interim rail access

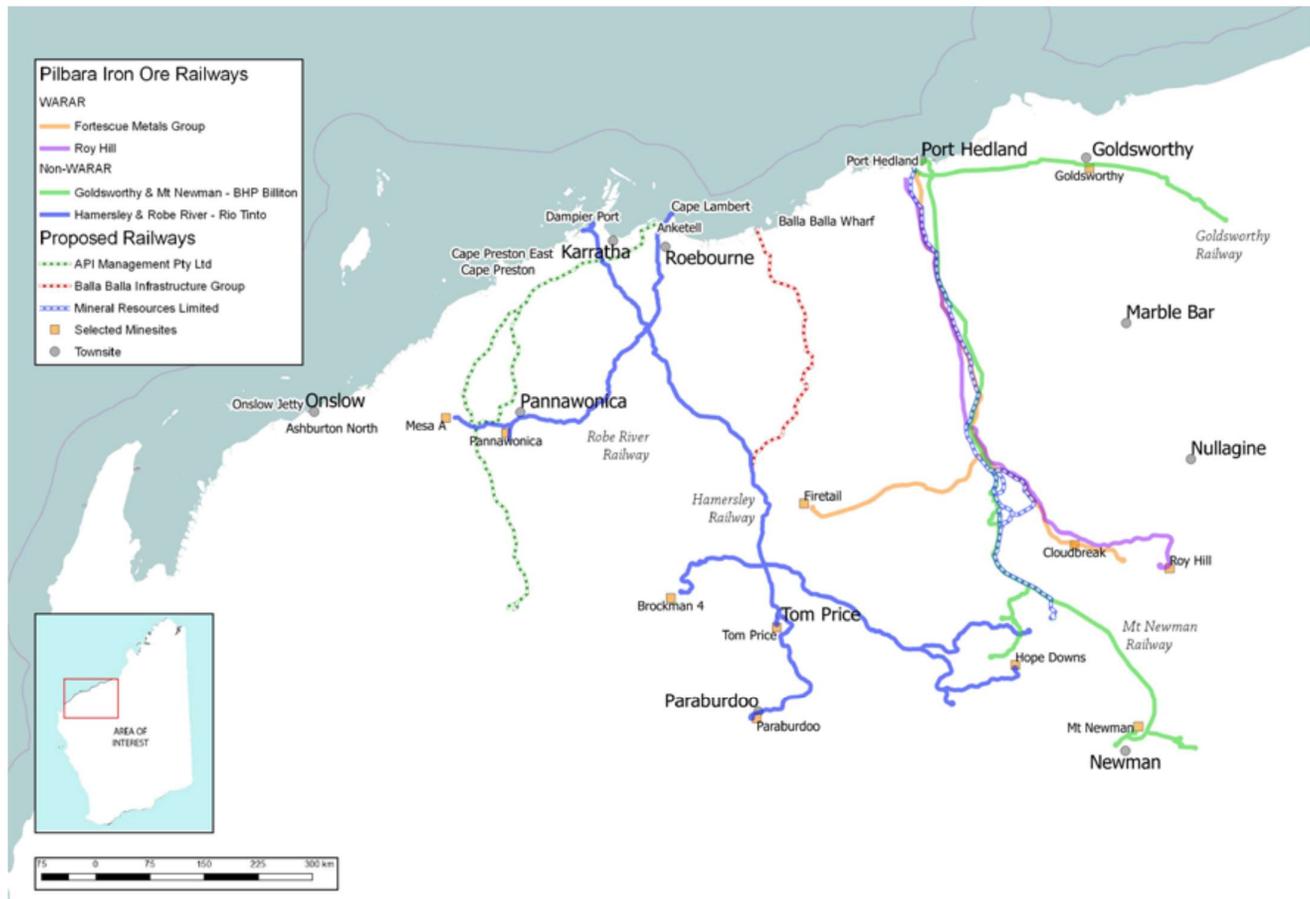
agreement while arbitration continues to settle long-term access arrangements.

The former Liberal-National government made a decision in 2010 to close Tier 3 rail lines in WA. A scathing parliamentary report into the management of WA's grain freight was highly critical of the former government, calling for steps to be taken towards improving and eventually resolving the situation when it comes to Tier 3 and the entire grain freight network. Since that time the WA Government has been under pressure to recover closed Tier 3 lines and take a more proactive approach to the network's management. WA Labor has so far maintained its election commitment to put more grain on the rail tracks.

Arc Infrastructure plans to spend around \$1.5 million to reopen the Lake Grace-Newdegate line before the next wheat harvest. To prevent a return of flood damage, the track will be lifted by one metre. The 50 km line has been closed since February after the surrounding Lake Bidy flooded and damaged the line. Newdegate is CBH's sixth-biggest storage facility in WA. More than 230,000 tonnes were delivered to the bin last year.

WA railways

Two informative maps from WA Rail Access Review Issues Paper (see August *Table Talk*, page 13) of the present and proposed railways in the Pilbara and of the WA wheat line network.





KiwiRail: South Island Main Trunk

KiwiRail says it expects to re-open the Christchurch - Picton section of the South Island Main Trunk by September, ten months after an earthquake caused significant damage to the route. The earthquake on 14 November 2016 triggered more than 100 landslides, which severed the line north and south of Kaikoura. Around 60 bridges were damaged and repairs are being carried out at more than 750 locations.

Initially freight trains will be low-speed and low-frequency and will operate only at night to enable repair work to continue during daylight. KiwiRail's Coastal Pacific passenger service will not resume until next year. KiwiRail expects the resumption of freight services to take more than 2000 lorry movements off State Highway 1 which is subject to a huge increase in traffic volumes since the coastal state highway, which runs parallel to the railway, was also closed by the earthquake. The line carried around 1 million tonnes of freight per year before the earthquake.

Commemorative Public Timetables

The Public Timetables of **DB, German Railways**, used to be huge productions in four large volumes – Long-distance, North, Middle and South. (This huge size was probably one factor in its discontinuance. Once such a central and important railway as DB discontinued its hard copy timetable, this probably influenced other railways European railways to follow.)

The final DB hard-copy Public Timetable was for the Dec. 2009 – Dec. 2010 timetable year. (It has only now been sighted.) Some copies were specially produced in a lavish fashion, with full hardcover bindings for all four volumes, gilt edges on the pages and as a boxed set.

The final **MAV, Hungarian Railways**, hard copy Public Timetable for the Dec. 2016 - Dec. 2017 timetable year starts with an attractive cover with pictures of the front covers of Public Timetables over the years, fading to a final picture of an iPad.

Some readers may recall the **QR, Queensland Railways** Public Timetable of 31 July 1990, produced to commemorate the 125th anniversary of Queensland Railways. This was on gloss paper, well laid out and included a brief history and historical photos. There were reproductions of pages from an old Public Timetable, unfortunately unreadable as the photos were overlaid on them.

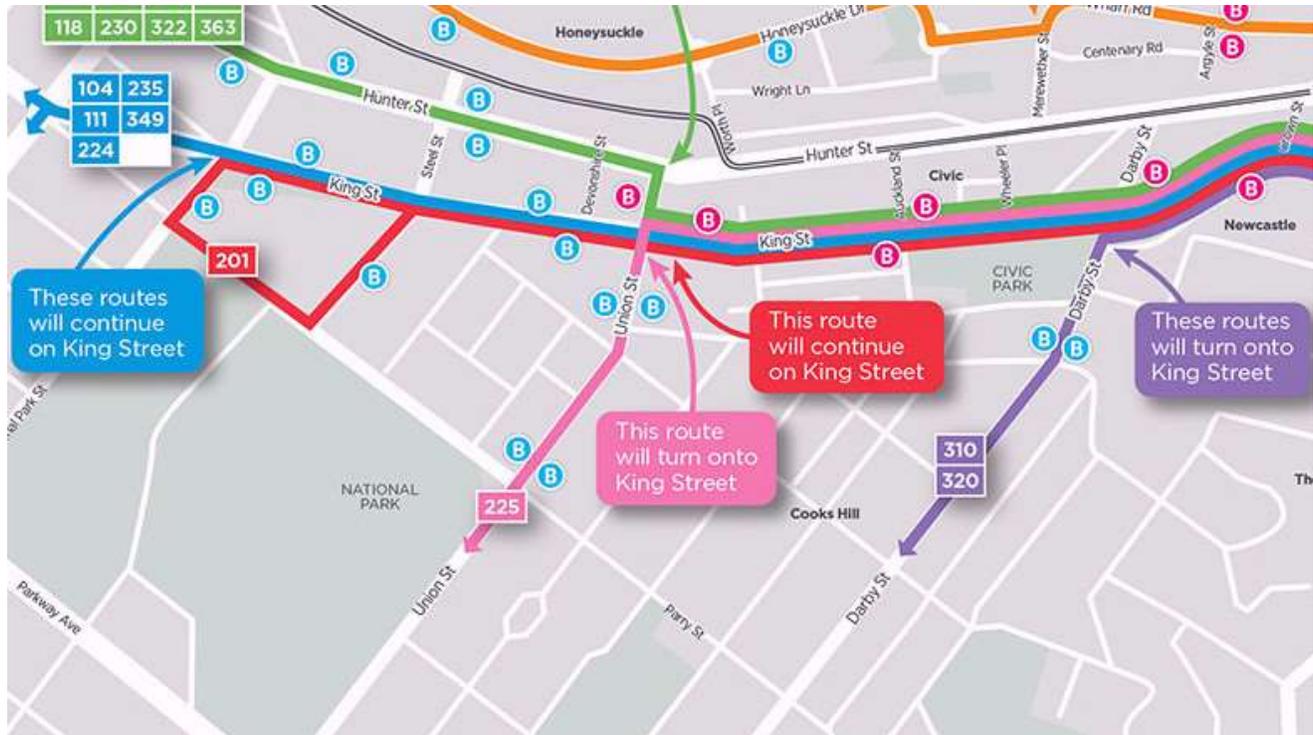
Thanks to Tony Bailey, Paul Brown, Scott Ferris, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Len Regan, www.railexpress.com.au, www.railpage.com.au, *Railway Digest*, *Transit Australia*, *Age*, *Australian*, *Courier-Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Herald Sun*, *Sydney Morning Herald* for Rail news.

BUS NEWS

New South Wales

Australian Capital Territory

Current indications are that ACTION Network 17 will commence in the 2nd week of October (ie the beginning of the final school term).



Bus services through the **Newcastle** city centre will change on Sunday 27 August, ahead of the start of major construction for Newcastle Light Rail.

Hunter Valley Buses routes 138, 140 and 267 are which are effected. New timetables dated 10 September have been sighted. There are no timing changes, only changes to the maps. Also affected are Port Stephens routes 130 and 131 and Rover Coaches route 160 and a number of Newcastle Transport school routes.

From 28 August a new express bus route, 180X, will operate on a trial basis between Singleton and Maitland stations, via Branxton, Greta and Lochinvar. Departing Singleton weekdays at 0737 and 1307, weekends at 0947 and 1446, arriving Maitland 53 minutes later. Departing Maitland weekdays at 0855 and 1410, weekends at 1036 and 1537, arriving Singleton 48-52 minutes later.

A door to station on-demand shuttle service will be trialled at sites across **Sydney** and the **Central Coast**. NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance announced on 17 August the trial of minibus services in the Northern Beaches, Sutherland Shire, Manly, Eastern Suburbs, Wetherill Park, Greystanes, the Central Coast and Edmondson Park, near Glenfield A separate 18-hour-a-day hospital to transport hub service will be trialled at Bankstown but the remainder will be from people's doorsteps to public transport, with

patrons able to order the minibus service via a smartphone app, online or phone call from October, with prices ranging from \$2.60-\$5. "We have on demand movies, on demand food, and finally — NSW will have on demand transport," Mr Constance said.

He said the trial sites had been selected based on demand, and regional locations were being considered for a second pilot, while another service would begin in early 2018 to take commuters living within 15km of the Macquarie Park employment precinct to work. In Edmondson Park, a service will pick customers up from home and drop them at the train station for \$3.10 from early 2018. On the Northern Beaches, a service to begin late this year will connect customers from Palm Beach to North Narrabeen to bus stops on the Northern Beaches B-Line at a cost of \$3.10. In the Sutherland Shire, a service starting in November to pick customers up from home or a nearby location in Jannali West, Sylvania, Caringbah and Gymea will go to transport hubs and local shops at a cost of \$2.60, while in the eastern suburbs (already one of the best bus served areas in Australia), it is claimed that a bus service will pick customers up at home and take them to Edgecliff and Bondi Junction stations or ferry wharves at Double Bay and Rose Bay for \$3.10. At Wetherill Park and Greystone, a service will connect employment precincts to T-way interchanges for \$3.10, and on the Central Coast, a service to take customers

to Woy Woy station from locations along the Woy Woy peninsula will start in early 2018.

The services will be provided by private sector contractors, with some offered during the morning and evening peaks, and others available continually from

0600 to 2200. Existing bus services will not be affected.

Transdev: Two double deckers went into service on Monday 7 August on lengthy route M92 from Sutherland to Parramatta.

Thanks to Hilaire Fraser, Lourie Smit, Victor Isaacs, *Sydney Morning Herald* for Bus news.

ODD SPOT

The V/Line website on 16 August suggested that Albury trains run on the broad gauge suburban line:

Delay update

12:05 Southern Cross - Albury is delayed 24 minutes due to speed restrictions on tracks shared with Metro Trains.[14:26 16/08]

Thanks to Geoff Mann for Odd Spot.

RECOMMENDED READING

Dispelling Myths and Legends: A postscript on Sydney-Newcastle train speeds, by Alex Wardrop, in *Australian Railway History*, August 2017, vol. 68, no. 958, pages 23-26. Analyses train performance on the Sydney-Newcastle line of various trains.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

<http://ghaploop.railpage.org.au/index.html> is based on a webcam located at Gheringhap, north of Geelong. It provides an analysis of all trains passing through – that is, on ARTC's East-West mainline, and on V/Line's Geelong-Ballarat line. The reports are available back to 2004.

<http://www.projectmapping.co.uk/> shows lots of railway publicity maps, mainly British.

<http://www.rne.eu/organisation/network-statements/> provides links to network access conditions and infrastructure information for most European railways.

RECOMMENDED DVD

Railroad Australia, Prospero Productions and ScreenWest, 2016, 352 minutes in eight episodes. The commentary is continuous, unrelenting hyperbole. There is a great deal of repetition. On the other hand, this DVD provides a look at a large number of behind-the-scenes events in a wide variety of train operations and procedures throughout Australia.

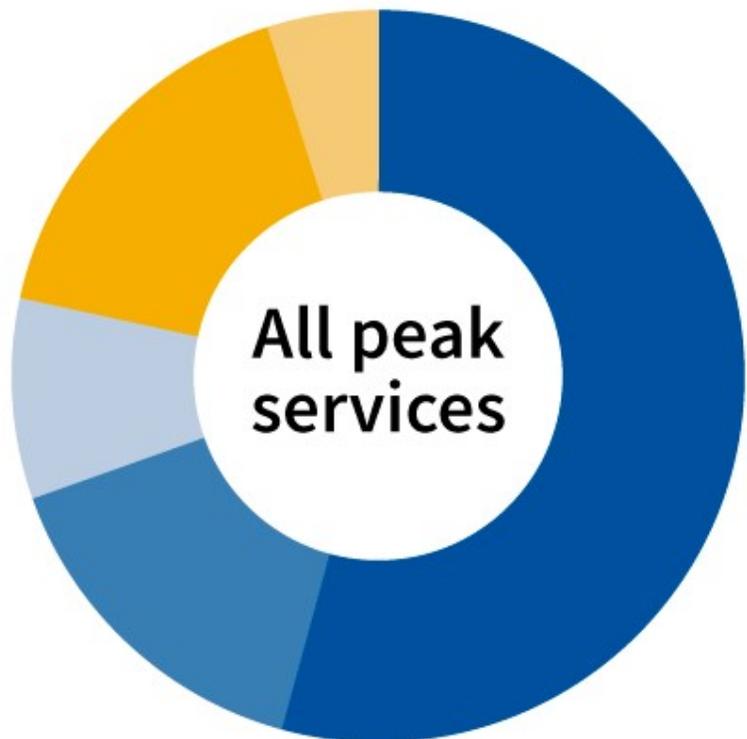
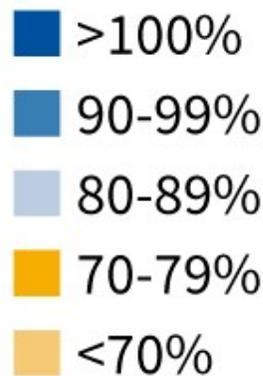
FERRY NEWS

Interisland Ferries, the operator of the Stony Point – Tankerton (French Island) – Cowes (Phillip Island) service, lost the contract to operate the service and Queenscliff Ferries (Searoad) operator of the Sorrento – Queenscliff service were awarded the contract from Transport for Victoria (TFV) effective 1 July 2017. A new catamaran is being constructed in WA which will offer passengers a higher standard of amenity and a faster service across Westernport Bay. The current

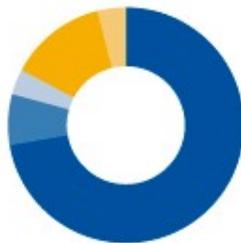
timetable is being adhered to but it is likely that an increase in frequency could be offered. For many years French Island locals and those wishing to visit the Island had to put up with a very poor service with frequent cancellations and poor condition of the vessels.

Thanks to Steven Haby for Ferry News.

Maximum seat capacity of peak train services, March 2017



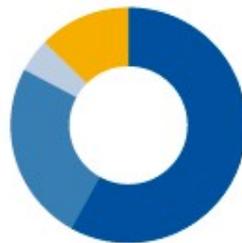
Geelong



Traralgon



Ballarat



Seymour



Bendigo



Source: VAGO, based on V/Line data.

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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