



# TABLE TALK

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## RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

### **Aurizon: End of intermodal business**

The final interstate Aurizon intermodal trains operated around the middle of October. This is a bit earlier than was expected when Aurizon announced it was exiting the intermodal business (see September *Table Talk*, page 1).

### **SCT services**

SCT has added an additional freight service between Brisbane and Melbourne, bringing its weekly services to five. Presumably, this is in response to the preceding item.

### **Public Transport patronage**

The latest release of data from the 2016 census shows that Sydney tops the nation for the proportion of people using public transport to travel to work with 20.9%, followed by Melbourne 13.4%, Brisbane 10.5%, Adelaide 8.3% and Perth 8.1%. The 20.9% of Sydney people using public transport for work journeys in 2016 compares with 18.3% in 2011. Trips across the rail network rose by more than 11%, or 3.1 million, to 30.7 million in July, compared with the same month a year earlier, the latest figures from Transport for NSW based on Opal card usage shows.

In Melbourne there was a rise of 51,000 people using trains to get to work since 2011, an increase of 27%. This is the equivalent of 57 trains full of people. As a proportion of the population, 13% of Melbourne commuters rely on public transport as their sole form of transport to work, up from 12% in 2011.

Sydney had the lowest proportion of people driving to work among capital cities at 65.5% in 2016, which was a decrease on the 66.9% recorded during the 2011 census. Those figures do not include people travelling in cars as passengers. Adelaide scored the highest proportion of people driving to work by car at 79.9%, followed by Perth 79.3%, Hobart 76% and Brisbane 75.3%. and Melbourne 74%. (1.3 million people daily). Nationally, 73.8% of the working population commuted to work by car – either as a driver or passenger – in 2016, a slight reduction on the 74.3% in the 2011 census.

### **Queensland Rail Citytrain: Station skipping**

Queensland Rail is reported to have suburban trains skipping station stops to improve on-time running. One month, 65 train services skipped stops, but were still classified as “on-time”. Documents obtained by the Brisbane *Sunday Mail* show QR regularly lists its “on-time running” performance as 100%, even when it orders trains to be switched from all-station to express to make up for lost time. Trains are classified as “on time” if they arrive at the platform within four minutes of their schedule. QR has repeatedly spruiked its on-time running record, saying it exceeded its target of 95% of trains running on time for three consecutive years to last financial year. “We should be proud that we have posted our best on-time running 24/7 customer impact results in at least a decade with 96.24% of all services we operate arriving on time,” QR’s annual report boasted last year.

QR CEO Nick Easy said services were altered in some cases to run express through stations to prevent delays to other services on the network. But he said skipped stations data was published on the rail body’s website, which shows up to 65 services skipped stops in one month in the past year. “It is not about meeting on-time running targets, it is about achieving the best possible outcome for our customers and the network overall,” Mr Easy said.

QR boasted in its 2012-13 annual report of decade-high punctuality results, with 96.3% of services on schedule – exceeding its then-target of 94.53%. It had that year launched a special taskforce to clean up its problems relating to the timetable. In 2015-16, QR declared another decade-high, with 96.25% of services arriving on time.

### **Queensland Rail Citytrain: Gold Coast duplication**

Duplication of the final section of single track on the Gold Coast line between Coomera and Helensvale (8.6 km) was completed in early October, at a cost of \$163 million. The project included an 860 metre bridge across the Coomera River, Hope Island Road and

Saltwater Creek, 180 new overhead masts, 50,000 metres of cabling, and the laying of 18,000 metres of rail, 13,000 sleepers and 30,000 tonnes of ballast.

Queensland Rail has placed an updated edition of their Track Diagrams on their website at <http://www.queenslandrail.com.au/forbusiness/access/access-undertaking> This has the Coomera duplication plus a number of minor changes.

A further \$10 million in upgrade works for Gold Coast line stations are underway at Ormeau, Coomera, Helensvale, Nerang and Robina, in time for the April 2018 Commonwealth Games.

## Queensland Rail Citytrain: Commonwealth Games

The number of new new trains that will be ready for the Commonwealth Games will not be known until just weeks before the event on the Gold Coast. Transport Minister Jackie Trad said on 20 October that she expected as many of the 15 New Generation Rollingstock trains as possible to be in operation, but an exact figure would not be known until March. The Games begin on 4 April 2018. "We want as many trains as possible to be in passenger service by the Commonwealth Games and, as I said, we've got a number of months to finalise testing and assessment and outstanding documentation around that," she said. She added that planning for the timetable could take place as the government knew from testing under way how many trains should be in service.

## Brisbane Metro

Queensland Liberal National Party leader Tim Nicholls has pledged \$30 million for the Brisbane Metro project if he wins government at the forthcoming State election. He said an LNP government would transfer two parcels of crown land, worth \$20 million, to Brisbane City Council for its Metro project if the LNP is elected, plus \$10 million to investigate the project. However, he has not supported the Cross River Rail project in its current form. He acknowledged there needs to be another river crossing, but he raised concerns about costs and timing of the government's Cross River Rail. The Metro is proposed to start operating by 2022-23, with one route running north to south from Herston to Eight Mile Plains, and another west to north from Saint Lucia to Herston.

## Gold Coast Light Rail

NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance said on 26 October that his government would seriously examine the possibility of the Gold Coast tram line extending all the way to the Tweed. But Queensland Deputy Premier and Transport Minister Jackie Trad warned NSW must be able to show Queensland the money.

## Aurizon bulk haulage

Aurizon's coal haulage volumes jumped 7% year-on-year in the September quarter, thanks in part to the commencement of its 8.7 million tonnes per annum AGL Macquarie deal in NSW. It won the AGL contract, which used to belong to competitor Pacific National, late last year, and commenced services in July 2017.

The contract is to haul coal from the Wilpinjong mine and Mangoola mine to AGL's Bayswater and Liddell power stations, in the NSW Hunter Valley. The additional volume helped Aurizon deliver 13.3 million tonnes of coal haulage in NSW in the September quarter, up 15% year-on-year. Queensland volumes were up 5% to 41.6 million tonnes. Combined, the operator hauled 54.9 million tonnes of coal in Queensland and NSW, up 7%. "September Quarter 2017 volumes of 54.9mt were the highest quarter coal railings since December 2013 (56.2mt) largely resulting from strong customer demand following Tropical Cyclone Debbie in Goonyella, and commencement of the AGL Macquarie contract in NSW," the company told the ASX. Coal accounts for 65% of Aurizon's revenue. Aurizon's annual guidance remains at 215-225 million tonnes for the 2017/18 financial year.

Elsewhere, there is a 6% year-on-year increase in intermodal container volumes, to 105,900 TEUs. Aurizon outlined a 4% drop in other bulk volumes, to 14.2 million tonnes. This decline was due to the closure of the Mt Isa Freighter service at the end of January, and temporary production issues for one of Aurizon's iron ore customers during the quarter.

## Transport for NSW WTT 26 Nov 2017

The Transport for NSW working Timetable of 26 November is designated version 2.07. A number of changes to the content and format have been made:

- A revised run number convention,
- Updated standby services,
- Revised route codes for greater train visibility.

Although key changes have already been summarised in *Table Talk*, here we provide the official summary:

### Sector 2

- Sector 2 will be the primary service provider in the Granville-Homebush corridor for most of the day, Monday to Friday and most Inner West services will extend to Parramatta.
- Increased capacity and reduced journey times will be provided on T3 to encourage Liverpool-Cabramatta customers to travel this way. T2 services will make more stops between Granville and the City.
- New limited stops T3 services will operate to and from Liverpool all day Monday to Friday.
- All T2 and T5 services will operate to and from Leppington (no services to Campbelltown)
- The Macarthur-Macquarie Fields corridor will only be served by T8. Cross platform timed interchange is generally provided at Glenfield between T8 and T2/T5.
- Macarthur services will generally operate via the East Hills Main between Revesby and Wolli Creek.
- T5 will operate all day, Monday to Sunday. All services will operate between Leppington and Blacktown, Schofields or Richmond.
- Weekend service structure along the entire T2 corridor will be similar to today, with increased service frequency in some time periods. Weekend frequency will also increase on T8.

### Sector 3

- In Peak periods, Penrith and Richmond branch services will be separated west of Westmead, then operate via the Main to the City.
- Increased frequencies will be provided in many time periods, including weekend and late night.
- Interchange to T2 stations will be available at Parramatta.
- Parramatta platform 3 will be bi-directional on weekdays (up and down T5 services).
- All Intercity services will stop at Blacktown, with the exception of the Bathurst service and the new weekday Lithgow express.
- T5 services will extend to Richmond in late-night time periods. Richmond branch customers travelling to and from the City will interchange at Parramatta.
- Four trains per hour will operate on both T1 Northern Lines all day, Monday to Sunday.

### Intercity and Regional services

- New trial faster Newcastle – Central – Newcastle services, departing Newcastle in the morning and Central in the afternoon.
- New weekend 8-carriage express services on the Blue Mountains Line to support the Blue Mountains tourist market.
- Minor timing changes to Regional services.

Eighteen trains departing Newcastle Interchange travelling empty to either Hamilton Yard or Sidings have been left out of the Working Timetable. It would appear that when that section was processed for a PDF document, Newcastle Interchange was not selected for the purpose of capturing all Up trips departing from that timing point.

### ARTC WTT 26 Nov 2017

The new ARTC Working Timetable (tabular version) of 26 November 2017 is now on their website at <https://www.artc.com.au/customers/operations/mtp/2017-07-09/>

The evening Albury-Melbourne V/Line train used to have a very bad schedule between Seymour and Melbourne, with three crosses of 9 minutes each – a total of 27 minutes. Now it is even worse, with scheduled crosses at Tallarook of 16 minutes, Wallan 7 minutes and Donnybrook 8 minutes – a total of 31 minutes.

Some anachronisms appear in the ARTC WTT: Those noticed are:

- The mineral sands trains to Iluka Siding, near Hamilton, Victoria line are still included, although they are not operating at present.
- The terms CTY (CountryLink) and CTYR (CityRail) are still used to describe passenger trains in NSW, despite the re-organisation of about four years ago.
- The term Inter Rail is still used for some Sydney-Brisbane freight trains despite this disappearing about six years ago.

### JHR NSW CRN WTT 26 Nov 2017

The John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network Working Timetable of 26 November 2017 is now on their website at <http://www.jhrcrn.com.au/what-we-do/network-operations-access/standard-working-timetable-swtt/>

The annoying practice (also used by ARTC) of showing schedules separately for every day even when they were identical has been discontinued, in favour of just showing one schedule for identical trains on Mon-Fri and one for Sat/Sun. The schedule for the up Western XPT is missing.

The schedules for JHR Work Trains have been removed from the main part of the WTT and placed in a new section entitled "Track Patrols & Possessions". These are now described as "Approved Track Patrol Paths". They are usually shown in one direction only, mostly the down direction. Some of these paths are the only scheduled movements on some lines, ie, between Wee Waa-Walgett, Burren Junction-Merrywinebone, Stockinbingal-Temora-Lake Cargelligo, Ungarie-Naradhan, Temora-Griffith-Hillston, The Rock-Boree Creek, Troy Junction-Coonamble, Nevertire-Warren and Bogan Gate-Tottenham. This section also states that there will be Approved Track Possession Boundaries on every Monday to Friday from 1030 to 1730 from Wallerawang to Tarana and from 1145 to 1615 from Bathurst to Newbridge for Rydal and Georges Plains Crossing Loops construction. However, this was subsequently cancelled until 12 January by issuance of a Country Train Notice (no. 335).

### ARTC and NSW WTT updates in 2018

Working Timetable updates for ARTC and John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network (and probably Sydney Trains) are provisionally set for 2 January and 30 September 2018.

### NSW TrainLink & ARTC: NSW NW line

From about 20 October, NSW TrainLink suspended train services between Moree and Werris Creek while it worked with the ARTC to resolve an issue with the train monitoring system in the area. Trains were replaced by buses. NSW TrainLink Chief Operating Officer Pete Allaway said, "The safety of our customers and staff is our highest priority and we are working closely with ARTC to identify the cause and then rectify it to allow normal services to resume. At this time we do not know when train services will start again, but we will continue to work over the weekend to find a solution."

### NSW TrainLink: Newcastle interchange

Newcastle Interchange opened on Sunday 15 October. The first train to carry passengers was the 0114 to Fassifern. Trains had been operating since September, but empty to/from Hamilton.

### NSW TrainLink 16 October and 26 November Public Timetables

The NSW TrainLink Public Timetables dated 16 October have been printed showing details of the

former bus shuttle connection from Newcastle to Hamilton, ignoring the fact that the opening of the Newcastle Interchange to Hamilton line is a key change. There is speculation as to whether these Public Timetables will be withdrawn and pulped, and replaced by a corrected version.

As mentioned in October *Table Talk* (page 5), there will be no substantive changes to NSW TrainLink long-distance services with the timetable of 26 November 2017. However, there will be innumerable minor changes to times, especially on the Southern line, to accommodate altered Sydney suburban services. Hitherto, a user-friendly aspect of long-distance TrainLink timetables has been that weekday and weekend times have been the same – except for the Canberra line, where most trains have varied by a few minutes. However, in the present draft timetable, many weekend times vary from weekday times by a few minutes. In a few cases, Sunday is slightly different to Saturday.

There are two additional Campbelltown-Moss Vale trains on weekdays – three on Mon, Tue, Wed because the late night trains run on these nights now as well as on Thur, Fri.

### **Sydney transport planning**

On 22 October, the NSW government launched its Sydney Transport Futures strategy – see <https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/>

The strategy envisages Sydney as a tripartite metropolis with eastern, central, and western cities by 2056. They are a western parkland city, west of the M7, a central river city around greater Parramatta, and an eastern harbour city. It foresees Sydney expanded from its current population of 4.6 million to 6 million in 20 years, to 8 million in 2056 with most of the growth taking place in the west.

Two-thirds of Sydneysiders are predicted to be able to commute between their jobs, homes and key services within 30 minutes, but they may have to wait 40 years to do so, under new long-term strategies that will divide Sydney into three interconnected cities. Currently, only 39% of Sydney's population can access jobs and services from their homes within 30 minutes. The government said the twin strategies would enable 70% of people to access a "30-minute city" by 2056.

The strategy consolidates existing transport projects, such as the government's signature Sydney Metro West project, which will put a Metro train line between Sydney's CBD and Parramatta via the Bays Precinct at Rozelle, to be completed by the second half of next decade. It also identifies, although without detail, potential future mass-transit projects, including a railway between Parramatta and Kogarah, which would eliminate the need to travel via the Sydney CBD. A plan to link Norwest and Parramatta by train was also foreshadowed.

### **Pacific National Parkes freight hub**

Major rail freight operator Pacific National proposes to build a \$50 million intermodal terminal just outside

Parkes, central west NSW, at the junction of the east-west Sydney-Perth and proposed north-south Brisbane-Melbourne lines.

Parkes Shire Council has reserved the land. PN has lodged a preliminary environmental assessment on the planned terminal and said it would be developed in stages. It will be built alongside a new proposed six km section of rail connecting the Inland Rail route with the Broken Hill line, heading west.

Despite being about 400 kms inland, more than 80% of Australia's population can be reached by road in less than 12 hours from Parkes. The national intermodal manager Graham Moore said having a major base in the district would boost freight efficiency and export opportunities for regional Australia. Pacific National said it was also looking at other regional locations for another freight terminal, most likely along the Inland Rail route.

### **PN strike**

Coal rail services to the Port of Newcastle were disrupted from 25 to 30 October with a 48-hour strike by hundreds of Pacific National train crew. (The impact extending more than 48 hours). Rail, Tram and Bus Union organiser Steve Wright said the stoppage affected about 600 coal train crew and another 300 from PN's bulk cargo trains. Another 48-hour stoppage was planned for the following weekend. He said the union had been negotiating with PN over a new enterprise agreement but after 30 meetings the two sides had been unable to come to agreement. PN said the stoppage would halt 90 coal trains to Newcastle and Port Kembla. PN was "not wanting to reduce the terms of employment" of its crews, although it did want to "better utilise the hours they are being paid to better help the company remain efficient in a competitive sector". The company said that under existing conditions, drivers worked four days a week for an average \$110,000 a year with 12 per cent super. About 20 per cent of drivers earned more than \$150,000 a year. PN is the largest coal haulier to the Port of Newcastle, and hauls more than 60% of the market.

## Parramatta Light rail stage 2



On 18 October the NSW government announced plans for Parramatta Light Rail stage 2. Premier Gladys Berejiklian said planning was underway and is expected to be completed throughout 2018. She said, "Our preferred nine km route will connect with Stage 1 of the project north of the Parramatta River through the suburbs of Ermington, Melrose Park, Westworth Point and on to Sydney Olympic Park."

A business case for stage 2 is expected to be completed in 2018, with an investment decision and details on the timing of construction to follow. Construction on Stage 1 will start in 2018, pending planning approval, and will begin operating in 2023. Information about Parramatta Light Rail is at [www.parramattalightrail.nsw.gov.au](http://www.parramattalightrail.nsw.gov.au)

### ARTC: Melbourne-Adelaide upgrade

A \$15 million upgrade of the Adelaide to Melbourne railway was completed in late September. Six crossing loops were extended at Pyrenees, Murtoa, Pimpinio, Diapur, Dimboola, and Mile End, providing for 1,800-metre trains, an increase of 300 metres per loop.

### V/Line: Enhanced late night services

See the Bus News below. New timetables dated 25 November have been issued – see <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/network-changes/night-coach-service-change/>

### V/Line: Seniors' Week

For Seniors' Week, 9-13 October, the usual free travel for seniors was available in Victoria. The 0914 and 1020 Southern Cross-Bendigo, and 1136 and 1230

Bendigo-SX were doubled to operate as 2 x 3-car VLocity DMUs.

### Metro Trains Melbourne: Mornington Peninsula

Federal Urban Infrastructure Minister Paul Fletcher has announced a \$4 million study into possible electrification and duplication of the railway between Frankston and Baxter, including park and ride options and new stabling yards at or near Baxter.

### Metro Trains Melbourne: Station closures

Last month's *Table Talk* (page 7), recorded the re-opening of **Murrembeena** station from 2 October, and the closure of **Rosanna** from 6 October until March 2018, as part of the Melbourne level crossing removal program. Rosanna will be demolished in October, followed by the laying of foundations for the new building. November and December will see the beginning of more extensive construction works for the station building, including retaining walls for the lift shafts and areas for the station's services. Replacement bus services will run to Heidelberg or Macleod.

The following additional station closures are now also underway:

- **Carnegie** from 14 October until 19 November. Buses will run between Caulfield and Murrumbeena.
- **Hughesdale** from 14 October until mid-2018. Buses will run between Murrumbeena and Oakleigh. The station will have a new location west of Poath Road, with entry close to the shopping precinct.

## **Metro Trains Melbourne: Failure 7 October**

Melbourne's train network partially ceased operation on Saturday 7 October as racegoers were on their way to a major meeting at Flemington Racecourse. Extra trains had been put on from Southern Cross station for the Turnbull Stakes at Flemington. But just minutes before the additional services were scheduled to start operating, the train network crashed between Flinders St and Richmond. A Metro Trains spokesman said the failure was the result of a "signalling issue". In fact, a train nearly collided with an errant maintenance vehicle. Services were suspended on the busy Burnley group of lines. Metro Trains' website crashed, further adding to the chaos.

## **Metro Trains Melbourne: Aspirations**

The Public Transport Users Association has called on the Victorian government to run trains every ten minutes. PTV's plan, written in 2012, proposed that by 2016 there would be six trains an hour off-peak and on weekends to Sunshine, Craigieburn, South Morang, Macleod, Ringwood, Glen Waverley, Sandringham and Newport, in addition to existing services to Frankston and Dandenong. Three trains would also run every hour off-peak and on weekends to outer suburban stations at Sunbury, Belgrave, and Lilydale.

PTUA spokesman Daniel Bowen said on 17 October that the upgrade would revolutionise train travel around Melbourne by cutting waiting times and crowding outside peak hours, and making more trips viable by public transport, including those requiring a change of service. "Studies show that waiting time for public transport is often perceived negatively, with passengers believing waiting time is longer than it actually is. This actively discourages people from using infrequent public transport, especially for journeys requiring connections between services. Running trains every ten minutes every day, just as we see already on a few lines, and just as we see in other cities of Melbourne's size around the world, will get people off the roads." Mr Bowen said commuters still waited up to 40 minutes between trains on Sunday mornings.

A Government spokeswoman said it would deliver more train services with each timetable change, with one to metropolitan services already delivered this year. Ten-minute services operate during the weekday inter-peaks to Dandenong, Frankston, Clifton Hill and Newport, and to Ringwood on weekends.

## **Melbourne planning**

On 20 October the Victorian government released a draft strategy for the urban renewal area of Fishermans Bend. It includes a possible tramway extension from Docklands via a tram-only bridge over the Yarra into Fishermans Bend. It also moots a possible railway from Doncaster via Clifton Hill and through Fishermans Bend to Newport.

Thousands of new homes will be built in the inner suburb of Macaulay, close to the new Arden station to be built as part of the Metro Rail Tunnel.

## **V/Line: Geelong line**

The CEO of V/Line, James Pinder, has stated that nine-carriage trains on the Geelong line are a possibility, but not a current priority. Potential for trains carrying more than 660 passengers comes after calls from commuters and rail experts to reduce peak-time overcrowding on the line. Mr Pinder said V/Line's priority was bolstering its fleet from three to six-carriage trains. "The (V)Locity train is capable of running in a nine-car configuration. (To run nine-carriage trains) it becomes an issue around infrastructure and number of vehicles (available). We don't currently have any plans to run nine-car services. To run large numbers of nine-car services we would have to have a look at (increasing) platform lengths," he said.

Platforms at other smaller stations on the line would need to be extended for a stopping-all-stations Waurn Ponds to Southern Cross trains. Trips on the Geelong line account for about 44% of those taken across the regional network and patronage on the line has risen 95.7% between 2012 and June 30 this year. Mr Pinder said more than 680,000 passenger trips were recorded on the Geelong line last month.

To address demand, the Government is delivering one three-carriage train per month and lodged an order for 48 carriages in June. In mid October space for 220 extra commuters was added to the Melbourne-bound 0835 weekday train leaving Geelong, taking its capacity to more than 440.

V/Line has failed to meet its punctuality target of 92% in 34 of the past 37 months on the Geelong line. "Performance historically by our standards has not been good enough, which is why we have a plan to get it to where we want to be," Mr Pinder said. "You don't change the operational performance of a railway of this size overnight. You do it incrementally." He said V/Line was not considering removing seats from carriages to address swelling demand on the Geelong line.

## **Adelaide Metro: Closures**

The Gawler line was closed between Adelaide and Mawson Interchange from first service Sunday 1 October until last service Sunday 15 October for works on the Torrens Rail Junction Project. Substitute buses and trains were free during this period. The Outer Harbor and Grange lines will remain closed until early December 2017 for works on the project, also with free substitute buses.

## **Transperth *Timetable guide***

*David Whiteford writes:* Since my last notes in the June issue of *Table Talk* (page 9), the Transperth *Timetable guide* was reissued effective 27 August 2017. This now places Aubin Grove on the Mandurah railway. Perth Stadium station has been included in the diagrammatic system map but it won't open until the first quarter of 2018. It isn't mentioned anywhere else in the guide. A very pleasing change, and a need I've commented on previously, is that all railway stations

(exc. Perth Stadium) are now listed in the 'Train station' section - a long overdue improvement.

Copies are available from the ATA Distribution List.

## **WA grain**

The CBH Group has exceeded WA shipping and rail records for the biggest amount of grain moved over a 12-month period. 15.01 million tonnes were shipped by the co-operative between 1 October 2016 and 30 September 2017 through the group's four port terminals in Geraldton, Kwinana, Albany and Esperance. The previous shipping record of 13.88mt was in 2013-14. There were record rail movements, with 8.65mt moved in the same period, beating the previous high of 8.53mt recorded in the 2013-14 harvest. A new monthly record of 964,832t was set in March 2017. CBH general manager operations David Capper said the records were driven by the bumper 2016-17 harvest and the ability of the co-operative's supply chain to meet the high volumes.

## **Rio Tinto driverless trains**

On 1 October Rio Tinto said it had completed a pilot run spanning nearly 100 kms with trains operated by individuals in an air-conditioned control room in Perth, hundreds of kms away. This puts it on track for a late-2018 commissioning of the AutoHaul project, which has been dogged by software problems and repeated delays. Until now, Rio Tinto's trains have run about half of the miles across its Pilbara network in autonomous mode, albeit with drivers still on board to oversee operations.

Driverless mining vehicles promise greater efficiency for an industry that continues to target costs in the wake of a slump in commodities prices. Rio Tinto and others have bet hundreds of millions of dollars on being able to control trains, drill rigs and massive trucks from remote offices. Rio Tinto said it has already seen the benefits from AutoHaul in increased train speeds and fewer stops that have cut more than an hour from average journey times.

In early 2012, the company said it would spend US\$518m converting trains to be operated by driverless locomotives that would be rolled out after two years. But testing since 2014 has been a drawn-out affair, and software problems early last year set the schedule back and led to a pared target for annual iron-ore production. It opened a Perth operations centre that has become a control hub for a network of mines, and employees sit behind screens and buttons, able to monitor trains remotely via satellite links. A fully autonomous rail network still needs to meet safety criteria and receive regulatory approval. It says the focus on automation technology was delivering a longer-term competitive advantage for Rio Tinto, and new roles at the company were being created to manage future operations. Some jobs are expected to be lost when drivers are eventually pulled from the trains, although the company has said it is retraining workers to ensure they remain part of the industry.

Trains with AutoHaul technology will be able to operate continuously without shift changes and the company said they would improve safety, with trains responding automatically to speed limits and alarms. Across the Pilbara, several areas are already controlled remotely, with about 20% of the 370 haul trucks run autonomously.

In the first half of 2017, Rio Tinto's Pilbara mines shipped 154.3 million metric tons of iron ore.

## **Swiss and Austrian timetable books**

The new privately-published Swiss railway timetable book for the 2018 timetable year, commencing 10 December 2017, mentioned in October *Table Talk* (page 9), will be available from the November 2017 ATA Distribution List. The cost, including postage in Australia, will be about \$62, depending on currency conversion rates. Alternatively, it can be ordered direct from the Fahrplancenter timetable shop, [www.fahrplancenter.com](http://www.fahrplancenter.com) for CHF19 plus postage of CHF19.90 (50% more for air-mail).

A new timetable book for Austrian Railways was compiled for 2017, and is also available from the ATA Distribution List.

## **Copenhagen: Look Ma, no timetable!**

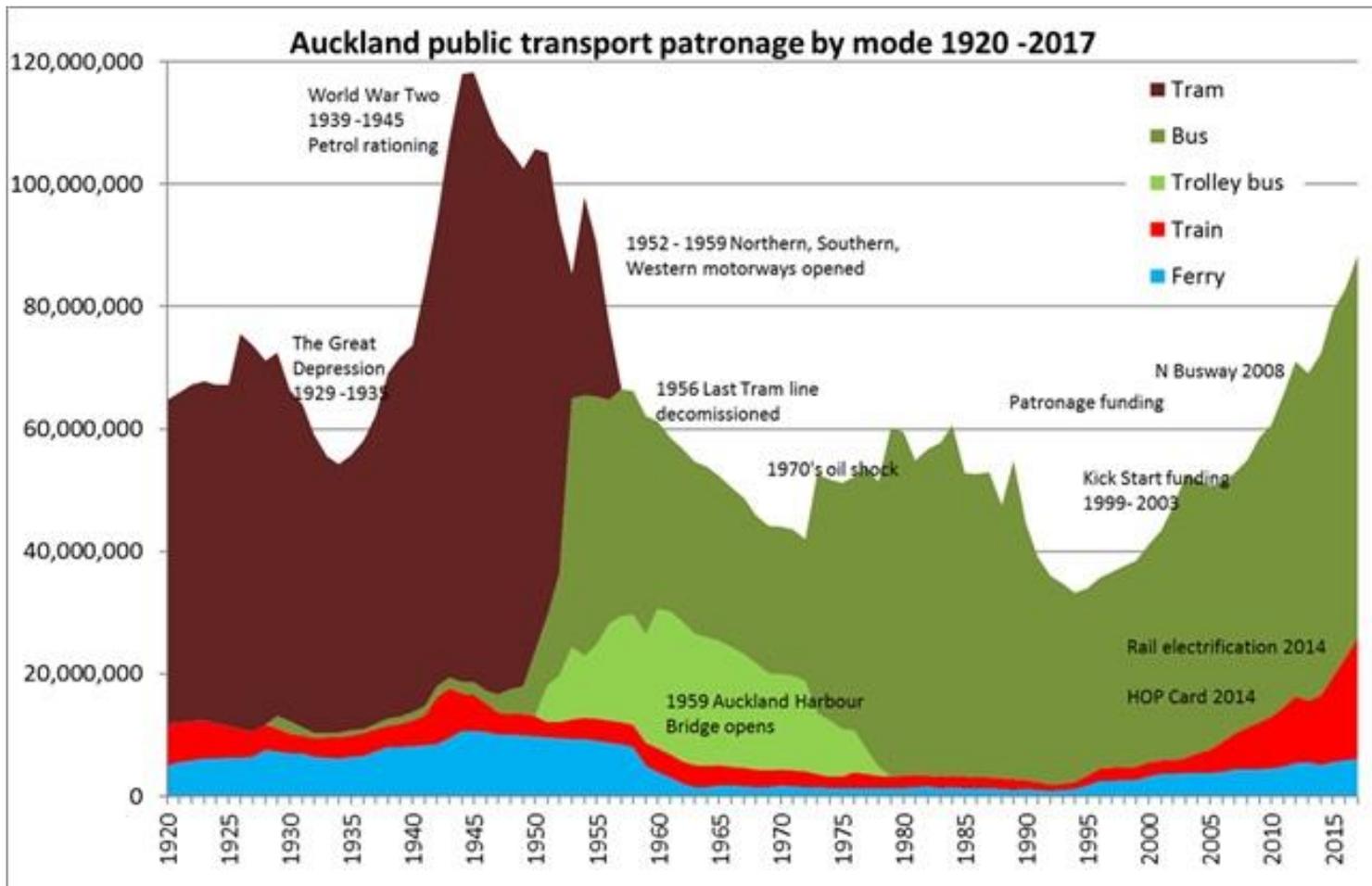
The Copenhagen, Denmark metro authority Metroselskabet has signed a contract with Ansaldo STS for development of dynamic headway technology. Sensors at stations would detect passenger numbers and use this to adjust the frequency of trains in real time.

*Irrelevant footnote:* The Copenhagen Metro has the shortest internet address in the world. It is [www.m.dk](http://www.m.dk)

## **Auckland patronage**

Ninety million trips were made on Auckland public transport in 2016, the most since 1956. That year was the last during which Auckland's tram service was running. The same period also saw the trolleybus service enjoy a wave of popularity, while ferry numbers were still high because the harbour bridge had not yet been built. While public transport figures are only just beginning to reach these levels again, Auckland was a much smaller city 60 years ago, with a population of approximately 400,000. The mid-1950s was the dawn of the automobile age, and over the following decades, cars would come to dominate.

The Northwestern and Southern Motorways had just partially opened, so people were buying cars and public transport usage was dropping by around 8 million trips a year. The low point was in the mid-1990s, when usage dipped to around 28 million trips per year. However, since 2002, the number has risen by 3 million each year, while this year's 90 million figure is a 6 million increase on 2016 – a growth of 6.7%. Train patronage alone has risen in this period from 3 million to 20 million trips a year.



Thanks to Tony Bailey, Paul Brown, Scott Ferris, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Dennis McLean, Samuel Rachdi, Len Regan, Jim Wells, David Whiteford, [www.railexpress.com.au](http://www.railexpress.com.au), [www.railpage.com.au](http://www.railpage.com.au), *Metro report International*, *Railway Digest*, *Transit Australia*,

*Age*, *Australian*, *Courier-Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Geelong Advertiser*, *Herald Sun*, *Herald (Newcastle)*, *Northern Daily Leader (Tamworth)*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *West Australian* for Rail news.

## RECOMMENDED WEBSITE

Jim Fergusson's *Railway and Tramway Station Lists* at <http://www.railwaystationlists.co.uk/> now has an updated section for NSW, and will soon include updated listings for WA and Tasmania.

## ODD SPOT

1. Heyington on the Glen Waverley line is one of the quietest stations in the Melbourne network. Yet, instead of the usual 30 second stop, the 1518 Flinders St to Glen Waverley has a scheduled four minute stop. Presumably this is to allow students from nearby schools to board.

2. Swedish train operating company MTR Express has given in to a public campaign by officially naming a new train Trainy McTrainface. The company had

asked readers of the *Metro* newspaper to vote on a name, and the top choice with 49% was "Trainy McTrainface." Two other trains will be called Estelle — named after the 5-year-old princess of Sweden, and Glenn — a popular name in Gothenburg. The fourth will be named by a staff member, the company said.

Thanks to Geoff Mann, Jim Wells and the *Herald Sun* for Odd Spot.

## BUS NEWS

### Australian Capital Territory

**ACTION** timetable of 7 October 2017: The good news: Canberra bus timetables for Network 17 commencing on 7 October 2017 are in the same attractive and useful format as last year's timetables (of 28 August 2016), produced by Transit Graphics. There are five

books for Weekdays covering Central Canberra (100 pages), Gungahlin (68 pages), Belconnen (108 pages), Woden Valley and Weston Creek (92 pages), and Tuggeranong (84 pages). There is one book covering the whole network for Weekends (152 pages.). The bad news: The timetables were initially not placed on racks, but hidden away and available

only on request at the bus information centres. A new map has also been published but it is not being publicised and is hard to obtain.

From 9 October route 101, the free City Loop bus, was diverted to operate along Torrens and Mort (southbound) Streets, instead of Mort St (northbound) and Northbourne Avenue, because of traffic congestion, partially caused by tram construction works.

On 20 October the ACT Minister for Transport and City Services, Meegan Fitzharris MLA, announced that in 2018 five new Rapid routes will be introduced on a seven day basis – providing nine Rapid routes in total. They will be integrated with the Light Rail routes under construction and in planning. Tuggeranong and Belconnen will receive Rapid services two years ahead of what had formerly been planned. In Tuggeranong, in addition to the recent extension of the blue Rapid to Lanyon, a new Rapid will operate from Lanyon to the City via Erindale and the inner south of Canberra. In Belconnen, in addition to the new black Rapid, there will now be a Rapid to Watson via the new Dickson Interchange. The existing Airport service, route 11/11A, will become a Rapid route.

## New South Wales

From Monday 9 October new double deck buses commenced operation on route T80 Parramatta-Liverpool via the T-way, Prairiewood, Bonnyrigg and Miller. The buses, designed and built in Australia by Bustech, provide low-floor access and a seating capacity for 97. Coinciding with the double deck launch, additional weekday trips will be introduced operating to Parramatta from Bonnyrigg at 0617, 0809 and 0819; from Parramatta at 1723, 1753 and 1808.

**Sydney Buses:** From 9 October 270 additional weekday trips were added to the network on the Northern Beaches:

Route 136 Manly-Chatswood – three additional trips in the morning and four in the afternoon. One previous trip that had started at Dee Why has been extended back to Manly, and one trip that had started at Dee Why has extended back to begin at Chatswood.

Route 144 Manly-Spit Junction – Royal North Shore Hospital - two additional morning trips with seven additional return trips in the afternoon.

Route E66 Skyline Shops-City – One additional morning trip.

Route E68 Brookvale-City – Three additional morning trips.

Route E69 Narrabeena-City -One additional morning trip and two additional afternoons trips.

Route E71 Manly-City – One additional morning trip and two additional afternoon trips.

Route E76 Dee Why-City – One additional morning trip.

Route E78 Cromer Heights-City – One additional morning trip.

Route 180 Dee Why-City – Two additional morning trips and two additional afternoon trips.

Route E83 North Narrabeen-City – Two additional morning trips and two additional afternoon trips.

Route E88 North Avalon-City – Two additional morning trips and two additional afternoon trips.

Route 188 Mona Vale-City – Two additional morning trips.

Route 230 Spit Junction-Milsons Point – One additional morning trip.

Route 241 Taronga Zoo/Mosman Junction-City – Two additional morning trips and seven return afternoon trips.

Route 248 Seaforth-City – Four additional morning trips.

### From 26 November:

#### Sydney North

- Route 251 Lane Cove West to City – extra services during morning and afternoon peaks.
- Route 267 Crows Nest to Chatswood – later services on weekdays and an hourly service on Saturdays. There will also be new services on Sundays.
- Route 292 Marsfield to City via Macquarie Park and Lane Cove – extra services across the week, including increased frequency at nights and weekends. The route now runs along Mowbray Road in Lane Cove North, providing an all-day service to and from Lane Cove Interchange, the City and Macquarie Park seven days a week.
- Route 297 Denistone East to City – extra services during the morning and afternoon peaks.
- Route 533 and 534 Sydney Olympic Park and Ryde to Chatswood – more services during the week between Sydney Olympic Park, Ryde and Chatswood. More weekday off peak and weekend services, and later evening services between Ryde and Chatswood. Route 534 no longer runs between West Ryde and Ryde Shops during peak periods.
- Route 544 Auburn to Macquarie Centre – services now run via Epping and Herring Roads at Macquarie Park, not University Avenue.
- Routes 285 and 294 have minor timetable changes. Route 285 now runs in both directions during peak periods between Mars Road, Lane Cove and the City via Epping Road.
- Route 289 no longer runs. Instead, Route 292 is changed to run along Mowbray Road.
- Some morning peak route services on route 294 now start from Epping and Mowbray Roads instead of Macquarie Park.
- There are minor timetable adjustments on routes 252, 253, 254, 286, 287, 288, 290, 291, 293, 294, 297.

#### Sydney North West

- Routes 607X, 611, 615X, 619, 620N and 621 – extra services during weekday peaks, catering for increased demand to the Sydney CBD and Macquarie Park.
- Route M60 Hornsby to Parramatta via Castle Hill – extra services across the week. Most services on route 600 are renumbered to route M60.
- Route M61 Castle Hill to City via M2 – extra services on Saturday evenings.
- Route 630 Blacktown to Macquarie Centre ceases to run between Epping and Macquarie Park.

- Route 637 Glenorie to Castle Hill – extra services on weekdays and Saturdays.
- Route 711 Blacktown to Parramatta via Westmead – extra services across the week between Westmead Children’s Hospital and Parramatta, with services every 15 minutes on weekdays and every 30 minutes at night and on weekends.

### Sydney West

- Route 817 Cabramatta to Fairfield – extra shoulder peak and evening services between Cabramatta and Fairfield, and later evening services on weekends.
- Route T80 Liverpool to Parramatta – extra shoulder peak and evening services on weekdays between Liverpool, Bonnyrigg and Parramatta.
- Route 827 Liverpool to Cecil Hills is extended to Carnes Hill Marketplace.

### Sydney South West

- Route 887 Campbelltown to Wollongong - extra services across the week.
- Route 914 Greenacre to Strathfield – extra morning and afternoon peak services.

### Sydney East

- Route 324 Edgecliff to Watsons Bay – extra early morning and evening services on weekdays, and extra daytime services on weekends.
- Route 325 Edgecliff to Watsons Bay – extra daytime services on weekends.
- Route 352 Marrickville Metro to Bondi Junction – extra weekday and weekend services, including peak and later evening services, and later on weekends.
- Route 353 Eastgardens to Bondi Junction – extra weekday and weekend services, including peak hour and later evening services, and later on weekends.
- Route 360 North Clovelly to Bondi Junction – later evening services seven days a week.
- Route 370 Coogee to Leichhardt – extra morning peak hour services and extra daytime services on weekends
- Routes 374 and X74 Coogee to City – extra morning peak hour services on route X74 and early evening services on route 374.
- Routes 392 and X92 Little Bay to City – extra morning and afternoon peak services on weekdays, and earlier services on Sundays.
- Route 418 Burwood to Bondi Junction – later and more frequent evening services seven days a week.
- Routes 333, 380, 381 and 382 – extra services during morning and afternoon peaks between Bondi Beach and Bondi Junction. There will be some adjustments to direct City services from Bondi Beach during the morning peak.
- Route 389 will run between Bondi Junction and Pyrmont only, rather than between Bondi Junction and North Bondi. New route 379 will provide services between North Bondi and Bondi Junction.
- Route 440 will now run between Bondi Junction and Rozelle only, and no longer run between Bondi Junction and Bronte. New route 379 will provide services between Bronte and Bondi Junction.
- New route 379 will run between North Bondi and Bronte via Bondi Junction.

### Sydney South

- Route 450 Strathfield to Hurstville – extra services on weeknights and Saturdays. However, it will no longer run between Strathfield and Burwood.
- Route 944 Bankstown to Mortdale – extra services on weekdays. However, services will no longer run between Mortdale and Hurstville.
- Route 946 Bankstown to Roselands – extra services on weekdays. However, services will no longer run between Roselands and Hurstville.

### Illawarra

- New route 75 will run between Tullimbar and Shellharbour, via Calderwood approximately every hour on weekdays from early morning until evening. It links growing residential areas at Tullimbar and Calderwood with Shellharbour Town Centre.

### Central Coast

- Route 47 has additional services on weekdays, and will now run between Ourimbah and Tuggerah. This will provide an hourly service on weekdays.

The new Sydney region bus timetables in PDF, printable format are available at

[https://transportnsw.info/moving-forward/changes-by-mode#/,](https://transportnsw.info/moving-forward/changes-by-mode#/) especially <https://transportnsw.info/moving-forward/bus#/> - enter a route number.

**Craig Halsall comments:** The Transport for NSW website has adopted the same method for generating "live" printable timetables as the Metlink/PTV websites have been using for around a decade now. There have been twice-weekly timetable files for the Melbourne train network for the last few years. Both websites use software from German software developer Mentz, which is also used by Transport for London among many others. <https://www.mentz.net/en/about-us/our-clients/australia/>  
<https://www.mentz.net/en/about-us/our-clients/>

My method for downloading online timetables from the PTV website is to focus on dates where there are publicised timetable changes, rather than trying to download a PDF for every possible effective date. In Melbourne there have been cases where all routes across an entire depot get new timetable data due to a backend upload of new crew / vehicle roster data, when only a couple of routes had actual timetable changes. You can also end up with endless PDFs for routes which serve university campuses due to no service operating in semester breaks, special public holiday timetables etc.

This method is not without faults - on several cases I have had to report broken timetable data, where data for entire routes incorrectly went missing until the next weekly data push, footnotes fell off or trips were assigned to the wrong path. In most cases this also had implications for the GTFS data on third-party apps and the PTV journey planner.

Thankfully in NSW the private bus operators (eg CDC, Busways, Forest) generally still have the TransitGraphics-style PDFs for download off their sites so collectors aren't forced to rely solely on the live

timetables and the public has a back-up should things go wrong with the data on the central TfNSW website. In Victoria all bus operators' websites direct people to use the PTV website data.

**Forest Coachlines** route 280 has been altered because of Frenchs Forest Road becoming one way westwards near the new Northern Beaches Hospital. Eastbound buses now use Warringah Road.

**Greyhound Australia** ceased operation between Goulburn and Canberra from 18 September.

**Q City Transit**, Queanbeyan has new timetables from 1 October, but with only minor changes. They are available at <https://qcitytransit.com.au/timetables>

**Priors Bus Service** on the NSW South Coast has updated their timetable with minor changes. The revised services will become effective next month and the updated timetable, prepared by Transit Graphics, is available online and in print – see <http://www.priorsbus.com.au/timetables.html>

## New Zealand

**Auckland:** New timetables were implemented on certain routes on 14-15 October. Changes include:

- Waiheke Island – day departures are altered to be five minutes later from Onetangi Wharf towards Maitatia and evening returns are also five minutes later.
- Hibiscus Coast – route 984 departures from Orewa are 5-10 minutes later.
- Beach Road/ East Coast Bays- route 988 has two additional midday trips connecting The Plaza and Gulf Harbour ferry terminal and return. There are minor changes to routes 78x, 85x, 86x, 822, 839, 863s, 866x, 873x, 875, 991x and 992x.
- Devonport – route 813 departure times are varied by 2-3 minutes.
- South Auckland – route 365 has some minor departure changes from Papakura towards Manakau.

**Hamilton:** Two timetable books were issued on 30 September, but the Western area book contained no changes. The Eastern area book contained the following changes: City buses are to be green and silver and Orbiter buses to be purple and orange; the Orbiter to have increased frequency; three additional routes; route 15 discontinued.

**Dunedin:** Otago Regional Council introduced their annual bus service revisions on 17 September. Highlights this year include a new route 15 called Ridge Runner from South Dunedin to the University. The separate night/weekend network is discontinued, so buses now have the same routes at all times. The outer suburbs of Brighton, Portobello, Port Chalmers and Mosgiel now have an hourly service from 0700 to 1900 seven days a week. Previously, the weekend services were very random and sparse.

## South Australia

**Link SA:** On 15 October a new timetable commenced on the Goolwa-Adelaide service. Previously three trips operated on weekdays. This has been increased to four trips. However, now only one trip continues to Adelaide, with the remainder operating either to Marion Centre or Noarlunga Centre to connect with trains. Previously there were two trips on Saturdays and one on Sundays through to Adelaide. Now there is a similar Sat/Sun timetable, with three trips to Noarlunga Centre and a short midday trip to Encounter Bay.

Also from 15 October all school trips in the Mid Murray and Murraylands areas of eastern SA were allocated route numbers, having previously been unnumbered.

On 19 October – the day before GMH ceased local production - the SA government sought tenders for a \$300 million contract for 400 new buses for Adelaide.

## Tasmania

**Merseylink:** From 16 October a new route 95 was introduced from Devonport via Latrobe and Railton to Sheffield, a distance of 27 km, with three return trips on Mon-Fri and two on Saturdays. The timetable is at <http://www.merseylink.com.au/timetables-maps/public-bus-service/route-95-sheffield-railton/> Merseylink also operates six Devonport town routes and routes to Quoiba, Port Sorell and Ulverstone.

## Victoria

Enhanced late night services will be provided by **V/Line** from the night of 24/25 November. Key changes are:

- New limited-stops inbound trips from Seymour, Bendigo and Traralgon. each arriving Southern Cross at 0040.
- Additional 0105/0110 trips to Ballarat and Bendigo.
- Waurm Ponds coach now express to Corio with a Lara night coach serving Tarneit and Wyndham Vale for the first time.
- Semi-express outbound services dropped with a single 2am-ish departure per line serving all stations. although some towns have now become drop-off only. Getting home to Bendigo and Traralgon now timetabled at about 3 hours!
- Extra stops in residential areas of some towns including Bacchus Marsh, Kyneton, Gisborne, Newborough, Morwell East and Ballan, adding to existing town stops in Wallan, Kilmore and Puckapunyal.

The timetables are dated 25 Nov 2017 despite the new inbound Night coaches running for the first time in the late hours of 24 Nov 2017. See <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/network-changes/night-coach-service-change/>

The inner **Melbourne tourist shuttle bus** ceased operation from 5 October. It was sponsored by the City of Melbourne and operated by Driver Bus Lines.

## Western Australia

The Public Transport Authority of WA website shows recent timetables for:

**Albany**, now operated by Swan Transit has two timetables dated 1 July. Timetable 1 has routes 801, 802 and 804. Timetable 2 has routes 803 and 805.

The timetables appear identical to the edition of October 2014.

**Busselton** timetable dated 23 April listing routes 815, 816 and 817.

**Bunbury** has new timetables dated 8 October. The three books remain the same with the only alterations being departures differing by one to five minutes. The 12 routes are numbered between 825 and 845. Book 1 (East and North East) has 825-827, 841, 844, 845; Book 2 (South) 828-830, 832 and Book 3 (South) 842, 843.

**Kalgoorlie**: The previous trial routes 865 to Coolgardie and 866 to Kambalda have been made permanent.

**Thanks** to Alan Gray, Craig Halsall, Geoff Lambert, Lourie Smit and the *Herald Sun* for Bus news

## AIR NEWS

### International

**Air Canada** will fly Melbourne-Vancouver from 3 December to 4 February on Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun to handle ski traffic in the northern winter.

**Latam Airlines** commenced direct flights from Melbourne to Santiago de Chile on Thur/Fri/Sat from October. Daily service on Latam from Sydney is via Auckland.

From March 2018 **Emirates Airways** flights Melbourne-Auckland and Brisbane-Auckland will be replaced by additional flights of its partner, **Qantas**.

**China Southern** is expected to commence flights thrice weekly from Cairns to Guangzhou in December. **Ziamen Airlines** will fly twice weekly from Melbourne to Hangzhou from December. **Air China** is planning flights from Brisbane to Beijing.

### Domestic

**JetGo** has served Wollongong (Illawarra Regional Airport) from 30 October from both Brisbane and Melbourne.

**Thanks** to Tris Tottenham, *Australian* and *Herald Sun* for Air news.

## FERRY NEWS

**Sydney Ferries**: From 26 November changes are a new route (F4) from Watson's Bay / Rose Bay to Pyrmont via Circular Quay and Barangaroo. Double Bay and Cockatoo Island Service separated (F7)(F8)

**Captain Cook Cruises**: On 15 September a public timetable was issued for Barangaroo to Circular Quay <https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/captain-cook-cms-assets/assets/timetables/4229/170830a.pdf> and Barangaroo to Darling Harbour at <https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/captain-cook-cms-assets/assets/timetables/4233/170830e.pdf>

On 13 September from Barangaroo to Manly <http://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/captain-cook-cms-assets/assets/timetables/4224/170829a.pdf> and

<http://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/captain-cook-cms-assets/assets/timetables/4270/170929a.pdf>

**Kangaroo Island Connect** (to be known as 'kic') will commence operation before December of a high-speed ferry from Penneshaw to Cape Jervis. It will be a 25 metre, wave piercing catamaran, for 95 passengers and take 30 minutes from Penneshaw to Cape Jervis. The vessel is named for James Cowell, who died in 2003, farmed on KI for over 40 years, and was an advocate for competition on the route for nearly 20 years.

**Thanks** to Tony Bailey and Lourie Smit for Ferry 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 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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Back issues of **Table Talk** are available on the Australian Timetable Association's website, [Austta.org.au](http:// Austta.org.au), after two months.

**Table Talk Newswire** is an advance monthly email of Rail news. To obtain this, contact the Rail Editor.