



TABLE TALK

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RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

ARTC: Inland Freight Railway

On 15 November the NSW Department of Planning and Environment made available the proposal to upgrade the existing railway from Narrabri to North Star, NSW. This involves upgrading 188 kms of existing track, formation, bridges and culverts; realignment of sections of track within the existing corridor; 1.6 km of new line at Camurra; and, five new crossing loops at Bobbiwaa, Waterloo Creek, Tycannah Creek, Coolleearlee and Murgo.

More details are at

http://www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=7474

The other section of Inland Freight Railway in NSW which is basically an upgrading of an existing line has also been declared as Critical State Significant Infrastructure by the NSW Department of Planning. This is the Parkes to Narromine line, 101 km of existing line and six km of new line.

Infrastructure and Transport Minister Darren Chester announced on 16 November that WSP Australia and Mott MacDonald had won feasibility design contracts for the Parkes to Narromine section and the Narrabri to North Star section, worth \$10 million and \$13 million respectively. Kellogg Brown & Root had won the \$6 million feasibility design contract for the Tottenham to Illabo section. The \$500,000 Stockinbingal to Parkes feasibility design contract was awarded, to Lycopodium Infrastructure.

Adani coal railway

Adani coal company quietly started work on its \$2 billion railway to Abbot Point in Central Queensland in late October. It commenced land clearing and fencing and started some works on the coal mine site a few weeks ago, mostly relating to cultural heritage with the four indigenous groups. The next stage will be to open quarries from which rock will be used for the rail line and air strip. Contracts have been signed for the supply of steel for the rail line and AECOM is contracted to do the rail design.

Aurizon: Cattle trains

Cattle in Queensland are currently being moved by road, according to an Aurizon spokesman. This is following receipt from China of an order for new crates for cattle trains which were found to have safety issues.

Aurizon: Wiggins Island

Aurizon is in talks to buy the embattled Wiggins Island Coal Export Terminal as part of a consortium, in a bid that could be worth as much as \$4 billion. The massive coal export terminal at Gladstone was built during the peak of the mining boom but has seen several of its key proponents collapse before they were able to export any coal. Aurizon did not say who it was in consortium with, but several reports name ASX giant Macquarie Group, and Canadian infrastructure firm Brookfield, as partners.

Queensland Rail Citytrain: Beaudesert line

Queensland Transport Director Rail and Planning Matthias Schlotterbach has told a Logan City Council committee that land needed to be bought for a line to Beaudesert as soon as possible, but the line is unlikely to be completed before 2041. There will be 11 stations on the line which will be built alongside the interstate main line from Salisbury.

Queensland election: Cityrail

Three new rail stations would be built on the Gold Coast line under Labor's Cross River Rail plan, Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk promised. She said \$3 million had been set aside to plan and design the new stations at Pimpama, Helensvale North and Worongarry/Merrimac from next year. But construction won't begin until 2021, ahead of first services on Cross River Rail from 2023. Each station would cost up to \$40 million and funding would be set aside in future Budgets.

Liberal National Party Leader Tim Nicholls said his party would delay construction of Cross River Rail if it was elected.

Sydney Trains: Christmas-New Year 2017-18

Sydney Trains will operate a Saturday base timetable every day from Sunday 24 December 2017 until Sunday 31 Dec, then a Sunday timetable on Monday 1 January.

Transport for NSW: Parramatta Road

Transport for NSW will not proceed with an agreement with the Inner West Council to fund a feasibility study into running track-free electric trams along Sydney's Parramatta Road. Despite signing a memorandum of understanding in August, Transport for NSW said it had decided soon afterwards that committing to a detailed study of only one option for Parramatta Road would "pre-empt the outcome of our strategic planning process".

Inner West Council put forward the transport plan in March, supported by the three other councils along the route, calling for the government to run the vehicles from Strathfield to Broadway up to every two minutes with stops every 600m to 800m.

In September TfNSW said it was still investigating public transport options for Parramatta Road that would be implemented after WestConnex opens. But it is understood that a memorandum of understanding between Council and TfNSW was signed in August to undertake the feasibility study and that each party would contribute \$80,000 toward preparing the report.

The Council's goal was for track-free trams to start operating in time for the completion of the \$16.8 billion WestConnex tollroad, which is meant to help reduce traffic on Parramatta Road. The final stage of WestConnex – a link between the M4 and M5 motorways – is scheduled to be opened to motorists in 2023.

In September a TfNSW spokesman said: "All options are being considered as part of developing the Future Transport Strategy, including how best to integrate our network and complement major projects such as the Sydney Metro West. "Committing to a detailed study of only one option for the Parramatta Road corridor at this time would pre-empt the outcome of our strategic planning process in the context of our Future Transport Strategy."

It was also revealed in July that plans drawn up by the government for a tram line along Parramatta Road, starting at Burwood railway station and terminating in the city, had been shelved. Plans for a Sydney Metro West rail line from the CBD to Parramatta, via the inner west, are favoured.

NSW TrainLink 16 October Timetable: Corrections

There were two items in the print edition of November *Table Talk* which referred to the 26 November TrainLink timetable, but which should have referred to the 16 October timetable. These were the item on page 3, with the heading "NSW TrainLink 26 November Public Timetable," and the final paragraph

of the item headed "Transport for NSW WTT 26 Nov 2017" referring to eighteen trains left out of the Working Timetable.

Sydney trains and NSW TrainLink 26 November Timetable

Sydney Trains and NSW TrainLink intercity and long-distance Public timetables of 26 November are available at <https://transportnsw.info/moving-forward/new-timetables#home-toolkit>

Hard copies are available at the information centre on the Sydney Central station concourse, however (there is always a "however"), the timetables are behind the counter so you need to ask.

Paul Brown comments: My glance of the timetables is that TfNSW has just formatted what is online (<https://transportnsw.info/documents/timetables/93-CCN-Central-Coast-Newcastle-Line-20171126.pdf>).

There are no page numbers in the books which will make it hard for the really thick T1 Western and T2 Inner West and Leppington books. There is less information compared to the former timetables. One good thing is that, eg, the Central Coast / Newcastle weekend table doesn't include stations that the trains don't stop at, such as Eastwood and North Shore line, ie the timetable is changed per the time of day.

NSW TrainLink: Canberra line upgrading

A faster train between Canberra and Sydney will be the major focus for a collaboration between the ACT and NSW governments. ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr and NSW Deputy Premier and Member for Queanbeyan, John Barilaro announced a new cross-border memorandum of understanding between NSW and the ACT at Queanbeyan station on 3 November. Mr Barr described the fast train project as one of the more significant projects for the ACT government to pursue. While he would not lock in a definitive timeline he said the Federal government expected a joint submission as quickly as possible and it would be "a matter of years not decades." Mr Barilaro sees personal benefit in the project saying: "If we can get a train under two hours I'll never fly to Sydney again." He added he understood the NSW government would have to supply "the lion's share" of project funding.

(In October the Federal government did indeed ask the States and Territories to submit proposals for Federal funding to upgrade intercity railways – see October *Table Talk*, page 1.)

NSW TrainLink: Let's visit Millthorpe

After years of requests by local organisations, Millthorpe (303 km between Blayney and Orange) is likely to become a request stop for NSW TrainLink XPT services in March 2019. Extension of the platform to the existing track alignment will cost \$1 million. Millthorpe is becoming a popular tourist destination.

Elvis by train

For many years NSW TrainLink has been a sponsor of the annual Elvis Festival each January at Parkes, and has run a special XPT from Sydney to Parkes and return (2018 times not yet known). In 2018 in addition, Lachlan Valley Railway will run a special train – the Blue Suede Express. As of early November, both trains were booked out. Also in 2018, TrainLink is running special buses from both Canberra and Tamworth on 11 January, returning from Parkes on 15 January.

JHR NSW CRN WTT amendment

From 26 November no. 8148 on Sundays will run as tabled by ARTC to pass CRN/ARTC Boundary Main Line at Dubbo 1615, pass Wongarbron 1639, Geurie 1648, Combo 1656, Wellington 1718, Stuart Town 1805, Kerrs Creek 1850, Orange 1925, Orange East Fork Jct 1929, Spring Hill 1946, Polona 1956, Blayney 2005, Murrobo 2009, Newbridge 2028, Bathurst 2103, Kelso 2110, Raglan 2121, Tarana 2200, Wallerawang 2238, Coxs River 2240, pass Hermitage 2255 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains.

Sydney-Parramatta Metro

NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance said on 22 November that building a new multi-billion-dollar metro train line from central Sydney to Parramatta is the "highest priority for the city. His remarks raise the likelihood that a so-called "north-south" rail line from Rouse Hill in Sydney's north to Campbelltown via Western Sydney Airport will not be built until sometime after the metro line is opened late next decade. The Federal government favours a north-south rail line because of its "city-shaping impact", rather than a line from the \$5 billion-plus airport eastwards to Parramatta.

Mr Constance said the proposed metro rail line from the CBD to Parramatta had to be a priority because patronage forecasts showed that by 2031 "we physically cannot get people onto trains from western Sydney into the city" on the T1 Western Line. It's important we get rail connectivity right to Western Sydney Airport ... but from my perspective this [metro line] is the No.1 project for the city over the next ten years," he said at a conference on Wednesday.

The NSW government has committed to start building Sydney Metro West within the next four years, and for it to be operating in the second half of the next decade. However, it is yet to reveal the exact route of the line and the number of stations, other than say it will have stops at the Bays Precinct at Rozelle in the inner west and Olympic Park at Homebush.

Federal Urban Infrastructure Minister Paul Fletcher would not be drawn on whether a rail link to the airport would be built after Sydney West Metro. But he said the outcome of a joint state and federal study into rail in western Sydney, "which goes to what the right route [to the airport] should be" and the sequencing of rail projects, would be released in the coming months. Mr Fletcher said the argument in favour of a north-south rail link via the airport, instead of an east-west route,

was stronger because of the greater "city-shaping impact". The airport's focus in the first 15 years after its opening was also likely to be on the two million people living in the western Sydney catchment area, rather than those further afield, he said.

NSW wish list

The NSW Department of Transport "Services and Infrastructure Plan", on the web includes the following proposals in the Sydney area in the next 10 years:

- Train improvements on T1, T2, T4 and T5 lines, including implementation of Advanced Train Control System for which planning is in progress;
- Parramatta Road public transport improvements for which planning is in progress;
- Northern Sydney Freight Corridor stage 2;
- Victoria Road public transport improvements for which planning is in progress;
- WSA-Badgerys Creek Aerotropolis–Parramatta rail link for priority planning in collaboration with the Commonwealth;
- North-south rail link in the Western Parkland City for priority planning in collaboration with the Commonwealth, including St Marys to WSA-Badgerys Creek Aerotropolis, WSA-Badgerys Creek Aerotropolis to Campbelltown-Macarthur;
- St Marys-Cudgegong Road;
- Leppington to WSA-Badgerys Creek Aerotropolis train link for priority planning in collaboration with the Commonwealth;
- Infrastructure to support rapid bus connections between WSA-Badgerys Creek Aerotropolis and Penrith, Liverpool, Blacktown and Campbelltown-Macarthur, for priority planning;
- Suburban rail services extended south of Macarthur to support urban growth; and
- Protection of corridors for future rail and road links

In 10-20 years:

- Mass transit or rail link to South East;
- Light rail extension to Maroubra Junction;
- Light rail to the Bays Precinct;
- Parramatta to Epping mass transit or rail link;
- Parramatta to Kogarah mass transit or rail link; and
- Parramatta Light Rail extensions.

In 20+ years:

- Extension of potential South East mass transit or rail link to Miranda;
- Parramatta-Norwest mass transit or rail link; and
- Sydney Metro City and Southwest extension to Liverpool.

Regional proposals at

<https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/plans/Regional-NSW-Services-Infrastructure-Plan.pdf> include the following over the next **10 years** (among many road proposals):

- New Intercity Fleet
- Replacement of regional rail fleet and establishment of regional maintenance facilities
- Upgrades to Main West Line to Parkes to support freight (Inland Rail) and passenger growth
- Extensions to Newcastle Light Rail
- Extension of interstate Light Rail systems to support population growth from Canberra to Queanbeyan

- Reduced rail journey times through rail timetable improvements with new Intercity fleet, and implementation of rail network optimisation strategies (i.e. re-orient rail services to provide express services between regional centres and connector services between connector stations/stops and hubs).

And over the next **20 years**:

- Corridor protection for Higher Speed Connections along the east coast
- Investment in Lower Hunter Freight Line
- Electrification of the intercity network to Bomaderry/Nowra, Goulburn and Bathurst
- Bridge upgrades to allow double stacking on Inland Rail
- Modal interchanges on Inland Rail
- More efficient Illawarra escarpment crossing for freight
- Investment in Maldon to Dombarton Freight rail line
- Main South Line amplification / duplication from Junee to Albury
- Main Northern Line improvements to address pinch points and improve passenger timetables
- Investment in a Higher Speed connection along East Coast
- Faster Rail / Higher Speed connections between Sydney and Newcastle (e.g. track straightening) - reduced journey times, improved customer comfort
- Electrification of the intercity network to Telarah
- Faster Rail / Higher Speed connections between Sydney and Global Gateway Cities and interstate capitals
- Track straightening for Intercity services to improve journey times Sydney to Gosford
- New rail alignment of North Coast line between Newcastle and Stroud Road – Investigation corridor
- Main Northern Line improvements to address freight pinch points
- Investigate potential for daily return rail service to Newcastle from Tamworth
- Expand intercity rail services to Bathurst
- Investigate to extend Bathurst commuter rail service to Orange
- Electrification of the South Coast line from Kiama to Bomaderry, and duplication
- Main South freight capacity enhancement in collaboration with ARTC
- Moss Vale to Unanderra and Coniston Junction rail improvements in collaboration with ARTC
- Track straightening for Intercity services to improve journey times Sydney to Canberra

Sydney Metro

Tracklaying and overhead wiring at Sydney Metro's Rouse Hill depot was completed in August.

V/Line: Toolern station

A new station will be built at Toolern, between Rockbank and Melton on the Ballarat line, to service Melbourne's booming outer-western suburbs. It will be funded by the State government's Growth Area Infrastructure Contribution (GAIC) and open in late 2019. Toolern has a current population of around 1,000, which is expected to grow to 55,000 in coming decades. Around 2,000 passengers are expected to use the station from 2021. The new station will be located near Ferris Road in Melton South, and include car parking, a bus interchange and bike storage.

Rockbank station will be rebuilt with new facilities and more than 300 new car parks. Additional platforms and pedestrian links will also be built at Bacchus Marsh and Ballan, giving both stations second platforms.

V/Line: Radio communications

On 31 August roll-out of the ICE communications network was completed throughout the V/Line network.

V/Line: Mildura line gauge conversion

Gauge conversion from Dunolly to Yelta and from Ouyen to Murrayville, plus re-building and reopening of the Maryborough-Ararat line is Stage 2 of the Murray Basin Rail Project. This work commenced in earnest at the start of August. Stage 3 in early 2018 will convert Dunolly to Sea Lake and Manangatang and Gheringhap to Warrenheip while Stage 4, which is due to start in mid-2018, does the more complex part from Maryborough to Warrenheip (through Ballarat). An inspection in early November showed that the basic track gauge conversion process is around 75% complete across the 384 km between Maryborough and Mildura. The work is spread across the entire length of the corridor with numerous separate gangs undertaking sleeper replacement, gauge conversion, level crossing renewals, yard rationalisation, rail welding, sleeper replacement (mostly timber replacing timber), etc.

V/Line: Freight network

Parts of the Murray basin and Tocumwal rail freight network are in poor condition and should be subject to major speed restrictions and even stoppages during hot weather, two independent reviews have found. In early November V/Line bowed to industry pressure and promised not to halt trains when temperatures exceed 33°C this summer.

A V/Line commissioned review of the Korong Vale to Manangatang line, by Queensland's Centre for

Railway Engineering, has recommended that all trains on the section “would be stopped at 35.9°C, until a corrective action can be undertaken to improve the track condition”. The review found many parts of the track were still in poor condition, with:

- A lack of ballast and ineffective sleepers,
- New culverts not consistently built with wing walls or a head wall to retain ballast,
- Sand covering the sleepers and anchors, making it impossible to assess the underlying track condition, and
- Rail anchors had moved sleepers causing them to be bunched together and skewed.

A separate review by Monash University’s Institute of Railway Technology found the dominant problem was faults in the track gauge.

Pacific National: Victorian cancellations

Commencing Sunday 12 November 2017, the following cancellations took effect due to the cessation of PN railhaulage of domestic grain to Kensington Goodman Fielder Siding:

1345 (No.9543) Grain Train; Kensington Goodman Fielder to Tottenham Yard, Monday to Friday,
2025 (No.9141) Grain Train; Tottenham Yard to Maryborough, Monday, Wednesday and Friday,
0440 (No.9544) Grain Train; Tottenham Yard to Kensington Goodman Fielder, Monday to Friday,
2130 (No.9142) Grain Train; Maryborough to Tottenham Yard, Sunday, and
2215 (No.9142) Grain Train; Maryborough to Tottenham Yard, Tuesday and Thursday.

Also commencing Sunday 12 November, the following cancellations took effect due to the cessation of PN rail haulage of mineral sands from Hopetoun (as this mineral sands deposit has been exhausted):

0245 (No.9741) Murtoa to Hopetoun (2246 from Iluka Siding near Hamilton via ARTC), Daily (as required Saturday and Sunday), and
1020 (No.9742) Hopetoun to Murtoa (and continuing to Iluka Siding via ARTC), Daily (as required Saturday and Sunday).

Metro Trains Melbourne: Southland station

Southland station on the Frankston line, at about 20 km from Flinders St between Highett and Cheltenham, opened on 26 November.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Cup Day

On Melbourne Cup Day, Tuesday 7 November, a car was parked on the Racecourse line at the Ascot Vale Road level crossing at about 1345, stopping trains and causing massive delays. The car had been driven down the line and abandoned. This was apparently a protest about the treatment of refugees on Manus Island. Passengers onboard trains between Southern Cross and Flemington Racecourse were delayed for over 90 minutes. Services on the Craigieburn line were also affected as trains blocked the main line north from Melbourne. Trains resumed around 1530.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Major closures

From Sunday 26 to Wednesday 29 November from 2015 each night the lines between Burnley and Box Hill and Alamein, and between Darling and Glen Waverley were closed for maintenance and trains replaced by buses. From Thursday 30 November from 2030 and all day from Friday 1 until Tuesday 5 December this applied to the lines between Parliament and Camberwell (one of the busiest and most heavily patronised railways in Australia) and between Richmond and Darling.

From 17 November until 17 December trains are replaced by buses between Coburg and Upfield for removal of the Camp Road level crossing.

Melbourne Airport railway

Melbourne airport’s railway will be designed to enable high-speed regional train services running to Geelong and Ballarat, Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews said on 23 November. In an indication the State government is now locked into developing the long-awaited connection, he said construction could be “well under way” before the \$11 billion Melbourne Metro Rail tunnel opens in 2026. Building an airport link could modernise other parts of the network. For example, Geelong and Ballarat high-speed connections would be enabled by “unlocking” better line capacity in the west and north of Victoria. “It can create the extra capacity we need in the congested Melbourne to Sunshine corridor — which means we can untangle the regional and metropolitan network on the Geelong and Ballarat lines.”

State and Federal government transport ministers met on 22 November to begin planning for the link. The two governments have committed \$30 million towards a planning study on the best way to build the airport rail connection. The study will look at combining an airport rail link with the electrification of rail lines to Melbourne’s western suburbs that are currently part of the V/Line diesel network. New tracks between Southern Cross Station and Sunshine station, potentially involving tunnelling, will also be considered.

TasRail timetabling

Biarri Rail has been awarded a contract to deliver new planning and scheduling software for TasRail, to improve train design planning, locomotive selection, rollingstock utilisation, rostering and train pathing. Freight data provided by a customer (such as freight tonnage) will be able to be entered into the system, which will then determine various efficiency measures that can be taken by TasRail, providing the operator with an estimation of the number of days the trains needed to be run, the number of wagons, the time of day, and the preferable organisation of the driver and crew roster. According to Bob Parton, TasRail’s freight services general manager, this would mean a marked improvement on the existing system, where “planning is currently undertaken utilising Excel spreadsheets and across a number of departments”. He said that the new system would enable better use of TasRail’s railway assets and its organisation of planning

activities. The software will be introduced to TasRail's operations in three separate stages, which is expected to be finalised in early 2019.

Adelaide Metro: Major closures

The Torrens Rail Junction Project will cause a major closedown on Adelaide Metro lines. The Gawler line will be closed between Adelaide and Mawson Lakes from 2100 on Saturday 18 November until 5 December, with substitute buses. Trains between Mawson Lakes and Gawler Central will operate as normal. The temporary closure of the Outer Harbor and Grange lines has been extended by six weeks until Monday, 15 January 2018. SA Transport Minister Stephen Mullighan blamed the Australian Rail Track Corporation for the delay. He said the government had been unable to complete the work within its original time-frame because it had been unable to meet freight operator demands.

Adelaide Metro: Train control

The Adelaide Metro Control Centre located off North Terrace will be relocated to the Railcar Depot at Dry Creek. This is expected next year.

SA wish list

The SA government has made a submission to Infrastructure Australia seeking Federal funding for the following public transport projects:

- Extending the Seaford railway to Aldinga — a \$462 million project involving funding from all sources;
- More Park'n'Rides;
- Interchange upgrades;
- Increased public transport frequency;
- Level crossing removals at Park Terrace, Salisbury; Commercial Road, Salisbury; Womma Road, Elizabeth and Brighton Road, Hove;
- Tram level crossing removal at Goodwood Road, Goodwood; Marion Road, Plympton Park and Cross Road, Plympton Park. This is a \$500 million project with funding from multiple sources;
- Key freight route upgrades;
- Improved access to Adelaide Airport including upgrades to public transport options such as a new tram link. This is a \$475 million project, with a number of funding sources; and
- Updates for the North-South Corridor and AdeLINK Tram Network initiatives.

Perth Metronet

The WA government has released a tender for planning and engineering services for the 21 km Bayswater-Morley-Ellenbrook railway. This includes route option analysis, preliminary land use investigations, planning and concept designs, including any grade separations, stations and surrounding precincts. Construction work is expected to begin on the line in 2019 and be completed in 2022.

New Zealand plans

The new NZ Labour / NZ First / Greens coalition government has announced \$NZ 600m funding to upgrade the line between Auckland and Whangarei in Northland for timber and dairy products, and \$NZ 200m to build a 20 km branch from that line to Marsden Point, about 10km south of Whangarei for export pine log traffic. The expenditure is the largest national rail network upgrade outside of Auckland in more than 30 years.

The incoming NZ Transport Minister, Phil Twyford, says that the new government will plan for trams from Auckland CBD to the Airport and to Auckland West along the Great North Road.

While not committing to a time-frame, Mr Twyford also said the government would likely aim to have commuter rail between Auckland and Hamilton running in the next year as a pilot. If the pilot was successful and there was demand, the service would also be expanded to include passenger and freight services at 160 km/h throughout the regions and south to Rotorua.

Wellington Metlink: Wairarapa line

Metlink Wellington's Wairarapa Line train which runs between Wellington and Masterton, has a new timetable from Sunday 19 November to fix delays due to track issues and speed restrictions. The three early morning services from Masterton to Wellington have minor timing changes of around three minutes. The 0821 weekday train from Wellington to Masterton departs at the same time but arrives Masterton five minutes later. The return service now departs Masterton at 1044 instead of 1025. The 1255, and the three late afternoon/evening trains Wellington to Masterton and the Friday Only trains have minor timing changes of around five minutes. The weekend services have minor timing changes of around five minutes.

British Rail timetable books

Middleton Press will discontinue their *Abbreviated Rail Times for Great Britain*, £9.95 plus postage, after the December 2017 edition. This is an extract of the British pages of the *European Rail Timetable*. Middleton Press will continue to publish their *Comprehensive Rail Times for Great Britain*, £26 plus postage. This is a printed version of National Rail's PDF timetables. More details at <https://www.middletonpress.co.uk/news/rail-times-update.html>

British train control

Network Rail and Resonate, a signalling and train control specialist, have signed a contract to test new traffic management technology on the Great Western mainline between Paddington and Bristol. This is expected to reduce delays, increase reliability and capacity. It uses a computer algorithm to actively manage and monitor the flow of trains, identifying conflicts, allowing paths to be changed and reduce delays with real-time replanning.

Swiss timetable plans

Swiss Federal Railways, SBB, is drawing up long-term proposals to run its long-distance services at 15 minute intervals. Describing this as ‘the next quantum leap in Swiss public transport’, SBB was responding on 9 November to a government consultation document on long-term investment in the national rail network. The government’s strategic rail infrastructure program foresees a spend of SFr11.5bn by 2035 on about 200 large and small projects to increase line and station capacity. The objective is to run more frequent passenger services and to accommodate more freight in the national regular-interval timetable. SBB is already planning to operate 30 minute interval services on nearly all its long-distance routes by 2035, retaining a pattern of connecting regular-interval regional and local trains. It proposes 15 minute interval services

initially on the Luzern – Zug – Zürich and Aarau – Zürich corridors.

The program includes proposals for ‘express paths’ for freight trains, for example between Biel and Lausanne and from Zürich to destinations in eastern Switzerland. Additional freight paths would be established between the yards at Lausanne Triage and Limmattal, between Basel, Olten and Bern and between Bern and Lausanne Triage.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Paul Brown, Scott Ferris, John Hearsch, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Len Regan, Jim Wells, www.railexpress.com.au, www.railpage.com.au, *Catchpoint*, *Railway Digest*, *Railway Magazine* (Britain), *Somersault* (Signalling Record Society Victoria), *Transit Australia*, *Age*, *Australian*, *Courier-Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Herald Sun*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *West Australian* for Rail news.

ODD SPOT

1. An article in the Sydney *Sun-Herald* on 12 November about a possible redevelopment of **Sydney Central** station referred to it as “Australia’s busiest train station.” Is this true? In terms of patronage, it is not true even of Sydney, where Town Hall and Wynyard have more passengers. But what about in terms of train movements? Is it busier than, for example, Melbourne’s Southern Cross? Your contributions and thoughts please.

2. Media outside Japan have noted with amazement a written apology regarding a **Tokyo** commuter train that departed from a station 20 seconds early. A translation of the apology reads “On November 14, at approximately 9:44 a.m., a northbound Metropolitan Intercity Railway Company (main office in Tokyo, Chiyoda Ward, President & CEO Koichi Yugi) train left Minami Nagareyama station roughly 20 seconds earlier than the time indicated on the timetable. We deeply apologise for the severe inconvenience imposed upon our customers.” To people outside Japan this may seem an odd thing to do, however it

reflects the extremely accurate timekeeping expected in Japan by operators and passengers alike.

3. **Trans Link** in British Columbia currently operates a bus from West Vancouver to the Cemetery at 1500 on the second Sunday of the month. Is this the most infrequent, scheduled, urban transport service in the World? Worryingly, the timetable does not state whether it is possible to return from the Cemetery.

On Vancouver Island, **BC Transit**’s current timetable tells us “Pets on Board – Only small fur-bearing and feathered pets.....are permitted on the bus” Sorry, snake-owning transit travellers.

Moreover, in Victoria, Vancouver Island, the timetable tells you that “if coming from the beach or pool, please make sure your clothes are dry before boarding,” And, if on a double-deck bus, and “you are over 5’8” please remember to duck slightly.”

Thanks to Agnes Boskovitz, David Cranney, Victor Isaacs, the *Sun-Herald*, and japantoday.com for Odd Spot.

RECOMMENDED READING

1. “Mind the Gap: It took a ‘rail fail’ to realise the network needed more train drivers. So what does it take to be one?” by Andrew McMillen, *Weekend Australian* (Magazine section), 11-12 November 2017, pages 24-28. An excellent, personalised account of what is involved with driver training on Queensland Rail Citytrain.

2. “The Townsville to Mt Isa Railway” by John Hoyle, *Railway Digest*, November 2017, pages 32-43. An excellent review of this QR line, covering history, current train operations, and prospects. Especially valuable for a line in a part of the world that few of us get to.

BUS NEWS

Australian Capital Territory

As mentioned in last month's *Table Talk*, the ACT Minister for Transport and City Services, Meegan

Fitzharris, announced that in 2018 five new Rapid routes will be introduced on a seven day basis, This map shows the new Tram and possible Rapid Bus network from 2018:



There are a number of bus alterations as tram works proceed in northern Canberra— some temporary and some longer: On the weekends of 17-19 and 24-26 November the important Northbourne Avenue / Mouat St / Antill St intersection was closed. In Gungahlin there are diversions in the Town Centre and closures on Hibberston St. Services that travel through the Gungahlin Bus Station changed on Saturday 7 October, coinciding with the new timetable. Diversions are in place on Flemington Road. From Monday 9 October route 58 has a small diversion due to the closure of Flemington Road and Well Station Drive.

Some school services are affected. From Friday 13 October Bus stop 4604 has been temporarily relocated 200m south along Northbourne Avenue.

New South Wales

SYDNEY NORTHERN BEACHES A detailed summary of this area was included in the July and August editions of *Table Talk*. Following is additional information re the 26 November changes:

The B Line commences from Mona Vale and not Newport as planned.

Routes 151/188 have minor alterations to the early morning services.

LOWER NORTH SHORE Metrobus M30 is extended from Spit Junction to Taronga Zoo.

Route 247 has been cut back to Mosman Junction except for early morning and late evening when the M30 is not operating.

Route 227 on Sundays has been extended to Mosman Wharf as route 230 increasing route 230 from 30 to 60 minutes.

The 236 Spit Junction terminus has been altered from Clifford St to Punch St because Clifford St has been closed at Military Road for a new longer bus zone.

Route 244 to Chowder Bay has more evening trips.

Route 248 has four additional early morning trips starting at Seaforth Shops from 9 October. It has been extended to the Spit Bridge and now travels around Battle Boulevard. Other minor timetable adjustments have been made to Military Road.

EASTERN SUBURBS Some additional information to October *Table Talk*:

Routes X09, X10 and X93 have an additional stop on Botany Road at Green Square.

GENERAL TfNSW now has combined corridor Stick Style maps.

PRIVATE OPERATORS

FOREST COACHLINES The Forest Coach Lines website continues to show the old booklets of January 2017 as being current, but the Transport for NSW website shows all timetables with a valid date of 9 October 2017 in the new format.

BUSWAYS [REGION 1] All timetables have a valid date of 26 November 2017 with no changes to services. New timetables have been updated in the usual Busways style on their website.

PUNCHBOWL BUS [REGION 5] All timetables have a valid date of 26 November 2017. Changes include route 450 additional services at night Monday to Saturday and no longer operates Between Strathfield and Burwood.

Route 944 has additional services on weekdays. It no longer operates between Mortdale and Hurstville.

Route 946 has additional services on weekdays. No longer operates between Roselands and Hurstville.

Routes 446, 941 and S14 have minor route alterations.

A new network map appears on their website and all timetables appear in Transport for NSW printed booklet format.

CDC HILLSBUS [REGION 6] All timetables have a valid date of 26 November 2017 Changes include:

Route M60 has additional trips timetabled weekdays and weekends.

Route M61 has additional trips timetabled on Saturday nights.

Route 630 no longer operates between Epping and Macquarie Centre.

Route 637 has additional trips weekdays and Saturdays.

Route 711 has additional short trips between Parramatta and Westmead Children's Hospital. The daytime service is five minutes to the Hospital and 30 minutes to Blacktown. New night time service and weekends are 30/60 minutes

Routes 607X, 611, 615X, 619, 620N and 621 all have additional trips in peak hours.

INTERLINE BUS COMPANY [REGION 2]

All timetables have a valid date of 26 November. There are no changes to services. Their website shows the latest printed booklets of 13 December 2015 in their timetable section.

BUSABOUT [REGION 15]

Route 887 has additional services on weekdays and weekends. Previously there was a three hour gap on weekday afternoons. There is now an hourly service to and from Wollongong. All other timetables are valid from 26 November 2017. Their website contains updated area booklets in TfNSW style.

TRANSDEV [REGIONS 10, 12 and 13]

Route 914 has additional AM and PM peak trips

Route 915 Lidcombe station to University Lidcombe Campus has a timetable date of 28 February until 31 December 2017

TRANSIT SYSTEMS [REGION 3]

Route 817 has additional trips in the AM and PM peaks plus later trips Monday to Saturday evenings. There are ten later trips on weekend nights.

Route 827 has been extended from Cecil Hills to Carnes Hill Marketplace and will now service the Green Valley T Way station.

Route T80 has 33 additional or extended evening trips.

Combined timetables in TfNSW style can be downloaded from their website.

REGIONAL

BLUE MOUNTAINS CDC TfNSW style timetables are valid from 26 November 2017. There are no known changes. Their website shows links to 26 November 2017 area booklets.

ILLAWARRA

DIONS TfNSW style timetables valid from 9 October. There are no known changes. Their website still links to the printed book of 19 February 2017.

PREMIER ILLAWARRA TfNSW style timetables are valid from 30 October. Again their website still links to older dated books.

A new route 59 with limited stops commenced on 30 October between Novotel North Beach and Illawarra Regional Airport. Departures ex Novotel are at 0530

MWF, and 0930 and 1410 Daily, returning from the Airport at 1050 MWF and 1530 and 1920 Daily. Interestingly their website displays a Transport for NSW style print format timetable.

A new route 75 will operate between Calderwood and Shellharbour City Centre basically hourly 0523 until 1923 weekdays.

NEWCASTLE AND HUNTER VALLEY

NEWCASTLE BUSES All timetables are dated 16 October. Combined area booklets appear on their website.

CDC HUNTER TfNSW style timetables are dated 26 November Their website links to older and current dated timetables of different dates through 2015-2017. The Singleton area booklet has been updated to 28 August 2017 to include the trial route 180X. Their website shows updated regional guides dated 10 September 2017 for the Maitland and Wallsend areas.

ROVER COACHES TfNSW style timetables are dated 26 November 2017.

PORT STEPHENS TfNSW style timetables are dated 9 October 2017.

Both company websites link to older dated timetables.

CENTRAL COAST

BUSWAYS TfNSW style timetables are dated 26 November 2017. Their website has been updated to timetables of 26 November 2017.

COASTAL LINER TfNSW style timetables are dated 9 October 2017 Their website still links to a timetable of 1 August 2015.

REDBUS TfNSW style timetables are dated 26 November 2017. Changes Include:

Route 15 now operates from Tuggerah to The Entrance (previously terminating at Bateau Bay Square).

Route 27 no longer operates. It is included in new route 47 Chittaway Point weekdays and route 25 weekends.

Route 30 now runs through Mardi replacing the old route 47. The old combined route 47/30 trip is now route 30.

Route 47 in its present form has been changed to be Tuggerah and Ourimbah via Fountaindale, Berkley Vale and occasionally Chittaway Point. It is a weekday service basically hourly 0700 to 1700.

Other minor adjustments occurred to the remaining timetables.

Red Bus have a page outlining these changes on their website.

Red Bus have their usual combined printed Transport for NSW Booklets on their website dated 26 November 2017.

NARRABRI Forest Coach lines have a timetable dated November 2017 on their website for routes 457A B C D E

COFFS HARBOUR Forest Coach Lines now have timetables in the Forest format for Sawtell dated 11 August 2014 and Woolgoolga 1 January 2015 along with a regional map.

Sydney Buses: More than 40 bus stops in the Inner West could be pulled up by transport authorities to improve bus journey times. This is in advance of the privatisation of State Transit bus services in a large part of the region. A Submission Report released by Roads and Maritime Services last week indicates stops outside Marrickville Town Hall will be retained, but 35 stops in Marrickville, Camperdown, Petersham, Stanmore and Dulwich Hill could go. In a separate RMS proposal, stops in Rozelle, Leichhardt, Lilyfield and Camperdown are being removed. RMS also wants to remove dozens of on-street parking spots as part of the proposed changes to five busy bus routes — 412, 422, 423, 426 and 428. The stops will disappear, or be combined, as part of the State Government's 10-year Bus Priority program to improve reliability. Stops will also go on Darling St, Balmain Road, Norton St and Parramatta Road. A RMS spokesman said bus stops near schools, aged care facilities and shopping centres have been carefully examined to ensure access to bus services is maintained. RMS and Transport for NSW is now examining submissions before making a final decision.

"New route" 388 commenced operation from 26 November. The inverted commas are deliberate, because this "route" consists of just one trip in one direction only, taking 14 minutes. The bus departs Lawson St at Vialoux Avenue, Paddington at 0920 and arrives at Bondi Junction station at 0934. It is really just a short trip of part of route 389. A three page timetable has been created to show this "new route".

New Zealand

AUCKLAND A new network in the Eastern Region is to be implemented on 10 December. Details are on the MAXX Website.

KAPITI COAST: A new network was introduced on 20 November. Information is on the Metlink NZ website.

WELLINGTON: The last Trolley Buses in **Wellington** (and last right hand drive TBs in the world) ran on Tuesday 31 October. The final run was no. 3 from Karori to Kilbirnie at 2350, concluding its journey at 0018. As the hybrid buses to replace the trolleys were not ready, the trolleys were temporarily replaced by surplus diesel buses from Auckland. 82 km of overhead wiring is now being removed.

QUEENSTOWN A revised network was introduced on 20 November operated by Ritchies with a flat fare of \$2. There are four routes: Fernhill to the Remarkables. Arrowtown to Arthurs Point, Kelvin Heights to Frankston Flats and Lake Hayes to Jacks Point. A bus

guide is available on the Otago Regional Council's website.

Victoria

From Sunday 26 November, there have been new timetables for routes 901, 902 and 903 in the Frankston-Mordialloc area.

From Sunday 26 November 2017, upgraded local buses have operated between Sunshine, Deer Park, Watergardens and Caroline Springs. New route 426 connects Sunshine and the Caroline Springs Town Centre. There are minor changes to routes 456 and 461 to increase network coverage. There will also be new timetables for six routes, to give you more travel options and better connections with trains.

- Route 215 will run more often on weekend afternoons between Caroline Springs and Highpoint.
- Route 216 will be shortened to travel between Sunshine Station and Brighton Beach only.
- Route 420 will run every 20 minutes during the day on Sundays.
- New route 426 will travel between the Caroline Springs Town Centre and Sunshine via Ballarat Road, replacing route 216 in this corridor.
- Route 456 will travel along Neale and Hopkins Roads for all trips and no longer operate along Caroline Springs Boulevard. There will also be earlier buses on weekdays and Saturdays.
- Route 461 will travel along Holland Way to make it easier for people west of Caroline Springs Boulevard to catch the bus.
- Route 462 will run more often during peak times.

Routes 426 and 456 will together provide a frequent service with long operating hours between Rockbank, Middle Road Burnside and Sunshine station via Ballarat Road and Albion Station. The combined service will operate every ten minutes in peak periods, and every 20 minutes during the day, seven days a week. A 20 minute service will continue until around 2030 weeknights. Later evening services will operate every 30 minutes. Buses in this corridor will operate approximately 0500 to 0030 weekdays and Saturdays, and 0700 to 2400 Sundays.

From Sunday 26 November, Route 385 was realigned due to work upgrades on Yan Yean Road between Diamond Creek Road and Plenty River Drive. It is unable to turn right from Yan Yean Road into Mackleroy Road, so now runs via Yan Yean Road, Diamond Creek Road and Plenty River Drive.

From Monday 20 November, Gisborne town buses (GisBus) have had an extra three services per day on route 473, and provides better coverage in south eastern Gisborne and makes all Bullengarook diversions part of the route 474 on-demand service.

From 5 November, timetables were adjusted in Melbourne's south eastern suburbs on 13 routes operated by Ventura. The changes will also make connections to trains more consistent.

- Route 677 Lilydale station to Chirnside Park shopping centre via The Gateway and Switchback Road
- Route 663 Belgrave to Lilydale via Kallista, The Patch, Monbulk and Mt Evelyn
- Route 664 Chirnside Park shopping centre to Knox City shopping centre via Croydon and Bayswater
- Route 671 Croydon to Chirnside Park shopping centre via Warriem Road and Patrick Avenue
- Route 672 Croydon to Chirnside Park shopping centre via Croydon Hills and Wonga Park
- Route 679 Ringwood to Chirnside Park Shopping Centre via Montrose, Mt Evelyn and Lilydale
- Route 705 Mordialloc to Springvale via Braeside and Clayton South (from 29 October)
- Route 802 Dandenong station to Chadstone Shopping Centre via Mulgrave and Oakleigh
- Route 804 Dandenong station to Chadstone shopping centre via Wheelers Hill and Oakleigh
- Route 815 Dandenong to Noble Park
- Route 848 Dandenong station to Brandon Park Shopping Centre via Waverley Gardens shopping centre
- Route 850 Dandenong station to Glen Waverley station via Mulgrave and Brandon Park
- Route 862 Dandenong station to Chadstone shopping centre via Dandenong North and Oakleigh.

This will make it easier for Classic Residences Retirement Village residents to catch the bus by extending the route to Thomas St, with route 823 travelling from Dendy St to Marriage Road.

Weekend services on route 246 Elsternwick to Clifton Hill, and route 606 Elsternwick to Fisherman's Bend were improved from Sunday 29 October with an increased span of hours and more frequent Sunday services on route 246.

Northern Deer Park has a new service, route 422, which provides an hourly connection between Sunshine station and Brimbank shopping centre. It runs via Station Road, Tilburn Road and Forest St, 0700 to 2030 on weekdays, 0800 to 1930 on Saturdays and 0900 to 1830 on Sundays.

Thanks to Agnes Boskovitz, Alan Gray, Victor Isaacs, Lourie Smit, *Herald Sun* and *Inner West Courier* for Bus news.

AIR NEWS

International

On 30 October **Beijing Capital Airlines** commenced flights between Qingdao and Sydney. It is the ninth Chinese airline to fly into Australia. Chinese are now the biggest inbound tourist segment to Australia.

Qatar Airways increased from five a week to daily its services to/from Adelaide from 1 December. Qatar Airways has released its schedule for Canberra flights from 13 February. Departure from Canberra will be at 1345, with returns departing Doha at 0810, arriving Canberra at 0825.

Domestic

Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development statistics from September showed flight cancellations were highest on Canberra to Sydney and Sydney to Canberra flights at 8.1%, ahead of Sydney to Melbourne at 7.5% and Melbourne to Sydney at 7.4%. There were 59 cancelled flights on both the Canberra to Sydney route and Sydney to Canberra, far higher than the 30 cancellations between Canberra and Melbourne in the period.

In September, Qantas cancelled 32 flights from Sydney to Canberra, 6.8% of its schedule, while Virgin cancelled 27 flights, or 10.5%. Qantas cancelled 31 flights in the other direction, or 6.6%, while Virgin cancelled 28 flights, or 10.9% of its schedule.

Nationally, cancellations represented 2.7% of all scheduled flights, up from 1.7% a month earlier.

The national rate of cancellations was higher than the long term average of 1.4%, the figures showed. Nationally, airlines Jetstar, Qantas, QantasLink, Regional Express, Tiger, Virgin and Virgin Australia Regional averaged 79.3% for on time arrivals in the month and 80.6% for on time departures.

In the 2016-17 financial year, the routes with the highest cancellation rates included leisure flights between Sydney and Hamilton Island at 5.0%, followed by the Canberra and Sydney and Moranbah and Brisbane routes at 4.6%. The Sydney to Canberra route had 4.2% cancellations, matched by Sydney to Melbourne, Melbourne to Sydney, Brisbane to Moranbah and Rockhampton to Brisbane routes.

Subsequently, **Qantas** announced it will address flight cancellation rates on the Sydney to Canberra route by "adjusting" (ie, reducing) its schedule from mid-November and adding larger aircraft.

The NT government has extended for another 12-months **Airnorth's** Centre Run air service trial, which runs three return services per week from Darwin to Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

Thanks to Victor Isaacs, Tris Tottenham, *Australian, Canberra Times* and *Herald Sun* for Air news.

FERRY NEWS

A new **Manly** to Circular Quay fast ferry timetable started on 27 November. Services increased from two to three per hour in the off-peak, including weekends, and to every ten minutes in peak hours.

From Friday 27 October there are 12 additional return ferry services between Stony Point, French Island and **Phillip Island**.

A third operator, **SeaLink**, now provides ferry services to **Rottneest Island**. The Quokka 1 Ferry made its maiden voyage with 300 passengers on 4 November. SeaLink will provide six services per day, complementing the established operators Rottneest Express and Rottneest Fast Ferries.

The Public Transport Authority (W.A.) has called tenders closing 11 January for a new ferry for the service between Mend St Jetty and Elizabeth Quay Jetty. Transperth currently has two low-wash 22 metre ferries to provide the service, the MV Phillip Pandal constructed in 2009 and the MV Shelley Taylor-Smith constructed in 1997 which is approaching the end of its useful life of 20 years. The new ferry will enable the semi-retirement of the MV Shelley Taylor-Smith to become a back-up vessel. The preferred delivery date of the passenger ferry is no later than 27 March 2019.

Thanks to Tony Bailey and David Whiteford 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 second last weekend of the month, but contributions are welcome at all times.

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