

TABLE TALK

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TOP TABLE TALK – IS THE SYDNEY TRAINS 26 NOVEMBER TIMETABLE UNWORKABLE?

Recent incidents and commentary has directed intense attention on the recently introduced Sydney Trains timetable of 26 November 2017. This timetable introduced a major increase in train services, especially in off-peak times. The conclusion appears to be that the timetable works well normally, but when something goes wrong, there is no redundancy available to recover.

11 and 12 December chaos

A fatality on tracks at Wentworthville in Sydney's west caused massive delays on Monday 11 December. These lasted all day, across the network except for the Eastern Suburbs/Illawarra lines. Sydney Trains chief executive Howard Collins blamed a perfect storm made up of a "mega-incident", soaring demand, strict staffing rules and Christmas shopping for Sydney's horror day-long rail meltdown on Tuesday 12 December. Police cordoned off tracks at Wentworthville for almost four hours following the death – the third on the rail network in a week – which meant train drivers were nearing their allowable hours and trains had to be cancelled. He said the nightmare day, which culminated in people being turned away from city stations and walking to Central, would have happened under the old timetable. He apologised, saying lessons would be learned but "we didn't have a choice — no one in their right mind would say put the old timetable back and cut 40,000 seats".

Drivers are not allowed to work more than an 8 hour 33 minute shift, which meant services had to be cancelled after the fatality closed the T1 Western line for three hours and 45 minutes.

He said one of the factors behind the day long delays was the fact Sydney's train lines are connected like "a spaghetti junction" — apart from the stand-alone T4 Illawarra line - which some of the changes to the timetable had partly addressed. "Monday was one of the busiest. Opal data showed everyone trying to get everything done before the holiday break. Everyone was going into work early and lots of people travelling for social reasons and shopping, as well as school students. It's a simple mathematical science - if you run a lot more of something, 13 per cent more production, when things go wrong it impacts more

people and it's more difficult to recover. But doing nothing and not increasing services would give us a similar problem further down the line in terms of crowding." Mr Collins said the timing of the fatality in the morning peak and on two major rail corridors – the T1 Western and Blue Mountains lines – would have caused disruptions to services throughout the day even under the old timetable. "It was a difficult situation to recover from. It was wrong place, wrong time," he said. He said he would not hide from the fact that the increase in train services meant it took longer for the network to recover from major incidents. "The consequences of running more services mean that you have to be even better in the recovery – that is the lesson for us," he said. Nevertheless, he said the extra services put on as part of the new timetable were "desperately needed" to cater for skyrocketing demand. "The timetable is getting a lot of stick and I can understand people would leap to that [to blame for the peak-hour disruption on Monday]," he said.

But the veteran of London's railway system said reverting to the old timetable, and fewer trains, would leave people standing outside the main stations by early next year because the rail network would be unable to meet the demand. "If you do nothing and just stick to the old timetable, you will not be providing enough trains for customers," he said.

The train drivers' union and the State Opposition claim revamped timetables have cut the ability of the system to cope with delays. The Rail Tram and Bus Union said an increase in train services during the middle of the day, together with longer dwell times at station platforms, had reduced the ability of the network to recover from incidents in time for peak periods. "Unfortunately it was only a matter of time until the cracks in this new timetable started to appear," union spokesman Alex Claassens said.

Transport Minister Andrew Constance said the original fatality was a “devastating personal tragedy that had significant flow-on effects for the entire network” but it had nothing to do with the timetable.

University of Sydney’s Institute of Transport and Logistical Studies’ Dr Geoffrey Clifton said the new timetable fuelled the problem but the meltdown may still have happened under the previous timetable.

Sydney Trains said it was reviewing the incident on Monday, and would be looking at aspects such as crewing and putting resources into the right locations on the network. Tweaks such as changes to stopping patterns on the Airport line will be made to the timetable over the coming weeks.

9 January chaos

A major thunderstorm caused havoc across Sydney on the morning of Tuesday 9 January. On the railway system lightning strikes damaged signal equipment at Gordon. There were also incidents at Sefton, Penrith and Yagoona. This coincided with a day of very high staff shortages due to illness. 73 drivers called in sick. Buses replaced most trains between Blacktown and Richmond and between Penrith and Emu Plains. Buses also supplemented most trains from Penrith

stopping all stations to Blacktown. Olympic Park trains were cancelled. In the evening peak at Central and Wynyard stations, travellers were stopped from accessing platforms due to significant overcrowding.

The Opposition Leader, Luke Foley, blamed the new timetable of 26 November, calling for it be scrapped until more crews and trains were available. He said the timetable was not worth the paper it was written on. NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance apologised to commuters. He called the chaotic outcome “enormously disappointing” but refused to offer ticket refunds to those affected. Sydney Trains CEO Howard Collins said he could not guarantee the same problems would not re-occur as workers return from their Christmas break. The Rail, Tram and Bus Union blamed management for known shortages of drivers, and claimed that they had been told in advance that train cancellations were planned in advance.

In another development, drivers in the Rail, Tram and Bus Union have voted to authorise industrial action, in pursuit of a pay claim.

7 mins ago
Central Platform 23
11:13 am
■ 10:00 running 73 mins

7 mins ago
Central Platform 23
11:13 am
■ 10:45 last reported 28

5 mins ago
Central Platform 23
11:15 am
Real-time data unavailable

Chaos predicted

Sydney Morning Herald, 4 December 2017, by Matt O'Sullivan

Delays to Sydney's trains are likely to be "cumulative and irrecoverable" during peak hours following incidents, as the biggest overhaul of the rail timetable in years places greater strain on Sydney's rail network, an internal document reveals. Sydney Trains warns in the leaked document that operating the network at "track capacity" for longer periods leaves "no opportunity for diversions or recovery from incidents". Delays early in the peak periods will also have a "larger impact on later peak services". Marked "commercial in confidence", the briefing document says cancellations and skipped stops "could result in crowding and other problems" on the network. And it warns that during the evening peak, the "North Shore experience" – a reference to part of the network highly sensitive to slight delays – will "become more widespread where delays are cumulative".

Sydney Trains lists among the challenges of the timetable changes a reduction in the "reliability buffer" from extended dwell times of trains at stations and more complex operations at Parramatta. Among the "customer risks" Sydney Trains identified were complaints from passengers travelling to Westmead Hospital, following a halving of services to Westmead station, from 12 to six, during the morning peak.

The 52-page document, obtained by Labor, was prepared before the timetable of 26 November, which resulted in an extra 771 weekday services and another 800 services at weekends.

While tens of thousands of commuters stand to benefit from more frequent services, it highlights the growing pressure on an already stretched rail network and its limited ability to recover from delays caused by major incidents such as breakdowns.

A Sydney Trains spokesman said it had delivered the largest increase in services ever experienced in NSW, and an on-time running figure of more than 97%. "This success is a result of extensive planning in the run-up to the launch of the timetable. While unforeseen incidents can sometimes cause delays, we are confident we have everything in place to help minimise any potential impact on our customers," he said.

To cope with surging demand, the Berejiklian government is spending about \$20 billion on a new metro train line from Sydney's north-west to the CBD and Bankstown, and has committed to building another line between the CBD and Parramatta.

A key aim of the timetable overhaul has been to "release capacity for growth on the Western Line". Services have been increased on the South and Bankstown lines to cater for patronage growth and the passengers transferred from the Western Line. The government has repeatedly warned that a forecast

surge in demand means that the Western Line will be unable to carry more passengers by 2031.

The leaked document outlines potential risks to the reliability of services on the Western Line during the morning peak from "more complexity" at Parramatta, trains operating at "track capacity" and a greater workload for signallers making it "harder to recover" from delays. Separating services on the Western Line from those on the South Line between Granville and Homebush "simplifies operations on good days" but reduces the "flexibility to recover from delays with diversions", it says. And in a sign of the potential ripple effects, it reveals operating 20 trains per hour through Sydney's CBD and the north shore "will depend on [the] merge [of trains] at Westmead and management of dwell [times] at Parramatta and Strathfield".

Wynyard and Strathfield are the only stations where the length of period trains are at a stop at platforms has increased due to the timetable changes. However, the Sydney Trains document shows that limiting dwell times to 30 seconds at medium-sized stations "will be challenging". Trains spending longer periods at platforms adversely impacts the reliability of services and the network's capacity, as well as coping with routine delays. The standard dwell period for trains at the city's stations is 30 seconds, about two-thirds of which is needed to open and close train doors. The reliability of services improves by about 5% during the school holidays due to fewer people getting on and off trains, resulting in shorter dwell times.

On 9 January the Sydney Morning Herald added:

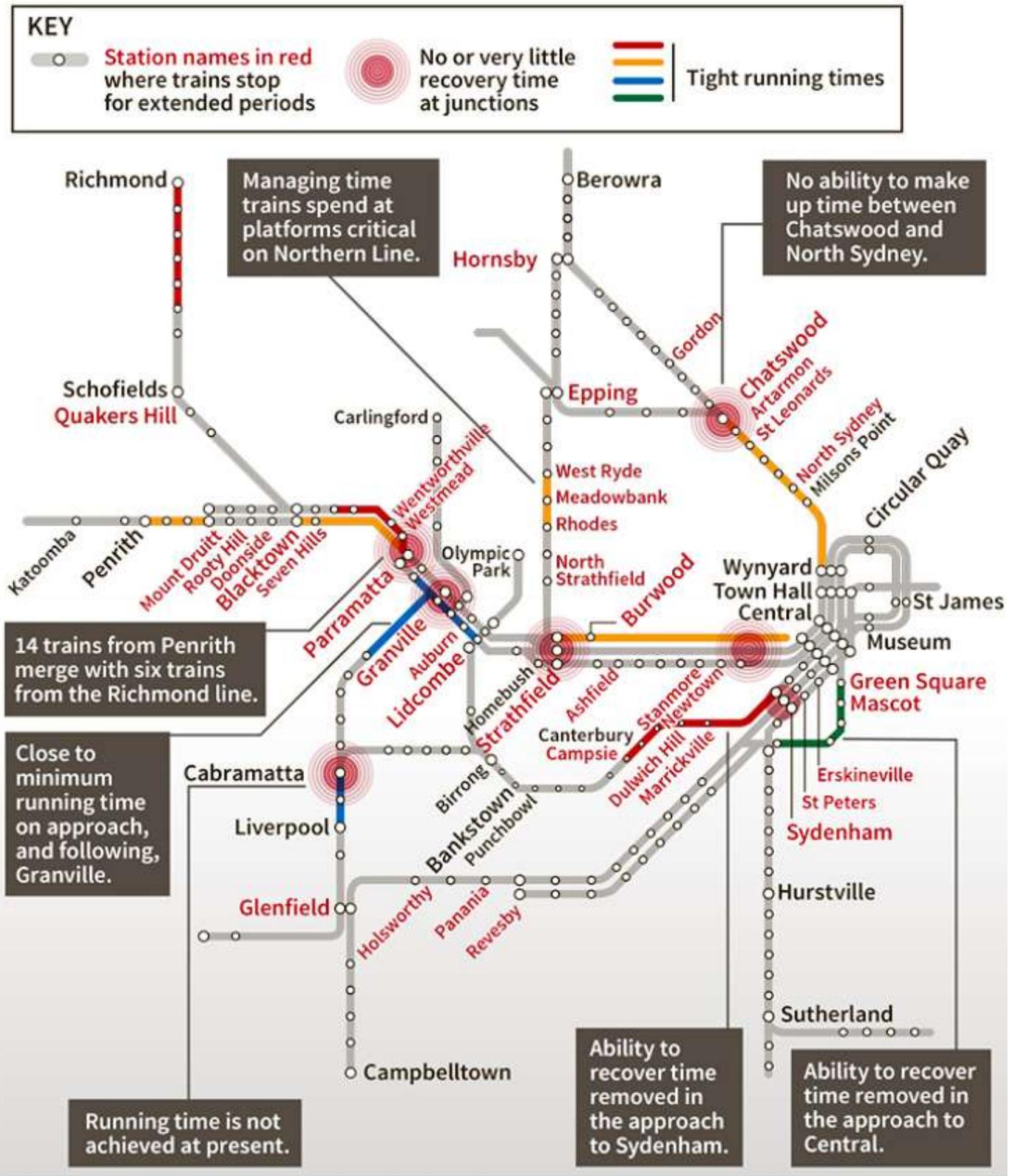
Efforts to squeeze more out of Sydney's rail fleet as a part of an overhaul of timetables has resulted in "smaller windows" of time available to maintain trains and tracks, putting more pressure on staff to carry out night-time work. While extra weekly services will help the network cope with surging demand, a Sydney Trains document obtained by the *Herald* lists, among the challenges for carrying out train repairs, "reduced fleet maintenance windows" and an "increased demand on maintenance as [a result of the] fleet doing more kilometres". Sydney Rail has blamed massive delays on too many drivers taking sickies or still on leave.

Decades-old S-set trains are also being pressed into service more often in order for Sydney Trains to put on the 1500 extra weekly services rolled out as part of the timetable changes. It leaves passengers to face uncomfortable rides this summer because the S-sets are not airconditioned.

The leaked document, written before the timetable overhaul on November 26, also warned of "shorter maintenance windows" for the repair of rail tracks. Trains are running more regularly during off-peak periods of the day, and later at night, thereby reducing the "midnight to dawn windows" when work can be carried out.

Train troubles

Tight running times in morning peak



SOURCE: SYDNEY TRAINS

RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Gold Coast Tram opening

Stage 2 of the Gold Coast tramway from the University Hospital north to Helensvale railway station, 7.3 km, opened on Sunday 17 December, although some minor works remained to be completed. Going north, the new stations are Parkwood East, Parkwood and Helensvale, where interchange with train services is possible. The opening is earlier than the expected date in January. The timetable is:

Weekdays: 0500-0700 every 15 minutes, 0700-1900 every 7.5 minutes, 1900-2400 every 15 minutes.

Weekends: 0500-0700 every 15 minutes, 0700-1900 every 10 minutes, 1900-2400 every 15 minutes, 2400-0500 University Hospital to Broadbeach South only, every 30 minutes.

The interchange at Helensvale did not work on the first weekend as the Gold Coast railway was partially closed for engineering work.

Support for the stage 3 extension has been expressed by local representatives from all three levels of government. A Gold Coast City Council and Queensland government study will determine details. Stage 3A will run from Broadbeach South along the Gold Coast Highway to Burleigh Heads, with seven stations.

Queensland Rail Citytrain: Reduced services

From Monday 18 December 2017 until Sunday 21 January 2018 there were service reductions across the Citytrain network. QR says these were “to allow for reliable service delivery.” QR CEO Nick Easy said, “Throughout the summer period, when we usually experience a 25% drop in patronage, trains will run every 15 minutes or better on most lines during peak times, with trains every 30 minutes in off peak and weekends. This summer timetable reflects the changed customer needs during this period, with patronage declining by as much as a quarter during the festive season compared to the non-holiday period. Throughout the Christmas and New Year period, hourly services will operate on most lines from Saturday 23 to Tuesday 26 December and on Saturday 30 December and Monday 1 January. On New Year’s Eve, hourly services will run on most lines up until 1700, when services increased to half hourly, with additional services to manage crowds departing South Brisbane and Southbank stations following the 2000 and midnight fireworks. The only exceptions are Sunshine Coast, Doomben and Rosewood lines which had slightly less frequent services based on customer demand.

“As we continue to work hard to recruit and train more drivers and guards, our timetable sustainability assessments have previously identified the summer holiday period as a stress point that required proactive management. That’s why we’ve proactively planned for these service changes, to ensure we’re providing a

reliable service for our customers during the summer holidays, and effectively deploying our resources to meet reduced demand.

“We’ve introduced an additional 90 services, compared with the summer school holiday timetable in 2016, including an extra 15 daily morning peak services targeted to meet demand. This will mean morning peak services will run every 15 minutes or better on most lines. We’re also introducing consistent services Monday to Friday, so our customers won’t have to experience separate arrangements when travelling on a Friday. The summer service changes also utilise less three-carriage services, maintain bus connectivity, and introduce consistent clock-face departure times, to make our services easier for customers to catch”.

The temporary timetables are at

<https://translink.com.au/service-updates/159071>

Queensland Rail Citytrain: New Generation Rollingstock

The first three New Generation Rollingstock trains entered service on 11 December, subject to a temporary exemption for certain non-compliances which will be addressed in the long-term. Initially ordered by the former government in 2014, the NGR’s delivery was halted in March this year by the present state government, blaming operational and design issues — in the braking system, air-conditioning, ventilation and driver visibility — which had been apparent since on-track testing began last year, for the delay. Manufacturer Bombardier claimed the trains are of the highest calibre, and issues found in testing were not abnormal for a project of this scale. QR CEO Nick Easy said the NGR trains were essential to meeting demand during the April 2018 Commonwealth Games, which will take place on the Gold Coast.

Disability access on the new trains is still an issue. QR and the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) have made a joint application to the Australian Human Rights Commission, to grant a temporary exemption to the Disability Discrimination Act and Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport.

Queensland Rail: North Coast line

The railway from Caboolture to Nambour was closed on 10 and 11 December because of a severe storm.

Aurizon network

On 15 December the Queensland Competition Authority released a draft decision stipulating that Aurizon could earn maximum revenue of \$3.893 billion from operating its monopoly rail network over the next four years. That was almost \$1 billion less than what Aurizon had asked for. Aurizon warned that the efficiency of the rail network, maintenance, safety and jobs were under threat, particularly across its Central Queensland Coal Network. The draft decision is at <http://www.qca.org.au/Rail/Aurizon/Intro-to-Aurizon/UT5/In-Progress/2016-DAU>

Aurizon freight in Queensland

On 15 November 2017 Aurizon commenced carriage of zinc and lead concentrate 780 km from Cloncurry to Townsville, from Minerals and Metals Group's mine at Dugald River, 65 km north of Cloncurry. Aurizon has a contract to transport 430,000 tonnes a year for seven years.

Byron Bay train

The train service at the Byron Bay resort, in far North Coast NSW, commenced operation on 16 December on a 3 km section of the former Murwillumbah line. The train is an ex-NSW Railways 620/720 class Diesel Multiple Unit, but now powered by roof-mounted solar panels – the first such innovation in the world. The journey time is ten minutes. The timetable from 18 December was for departures from North Beach at 1000, then every hour to 1700, and departures from Byron Beach at 1015 and every hour until 1715.

ARTC: Hunter Valley closedowns 2018

Planned closedowns of the Hunter Valley coal network for civil engineering work in 2018 are:

- 0630 20 Feb to 0630 23 Feb – Major shutdown, ie, Kooragang to Narrabri and Ulan (Port Waratah terminal open),
- 0300 17 March to 0100 19 March – Mains shutdown, ie Islington to Maitland mainline, Sandgate to Port Waratah coal lines (Kooragang terminals open),
- 0630 10 April to 2030 12 April – Major shutdown,
- 1900 8 June to 0300 12 June – Major shutdown and Mains shutdown simultaneously,
- 0630 31 July to 2030 2 August – Major shutdown,
- 0300 18 August to 0100 20 August – Mains shutdown,
- 0630 18 Sept to 2030 20 Sept – Major shutdown,
- 0300 13 Oct to 0100 15 Oct – Mains shutdown, and
- 0630 19 Nov to 0630 23 Nov – Major shutdown.

ARTC: Hunter Valley network control

The Australian Rail Track Corporation has selected GE Transportation's Movement Planner for the Hunter Valley-focused network control optimisation program. This will provide real-time rail traffic planning and optimisation. The Movement Planner considers multiple factors including train schedules, traffic-control systems and train movements relative to each other and then develops an optimised traffic plan for the trains throughout the network. The 'Network Viewer' and 'Network Optimiser' modules of Movement Planner are to be implemented progressively for the Hunter Valley network throughout 2018 and 2019.

National Rail Program

The Federal government has published a pamphlet setting out criteria for the National Rail Program, \$10 billion over a 10 year period to improve rail connections in cities and between cities and their surrounding regional centres, announced in the last Federal Budget. Projects must:

- address an identified deficiency;
- deliver economic benefits for Australians;
- form part of a network strategy; and
- have fully explored, and where appropriate, pursued opportunities for innovative funding and financing solutions.

The Minister will consider:

- the extent to which the project is likely to improve the ability of industries and communities to compete in international, interstate or inter regional trade and commerce;
- the extent to which the project will improve the efficiency, integration, security or safety of transport operations;
- the results of any assessment of the economic, environmental or social costs or benefits of the project;
- the extent to which the project is likely to improve access for communities to services and employment;
- any transport or land use plans that might be relevant to the project; and
- the extent to which persons other than the Commonwealth propose to contribute funding to the project.

ARTC: Inland Rail project

Survey work and inspections are now underway for the 169 km Stockinbingal to Parkes section of the proposed Inland Freight Railway, including environmental, technical and engineering studies. This section will involve enhancements of the existing railway to enable it to accommodate 1.8 km, double-stacked trains. Construction is expected to commence in the second quarter of 2018.

Progress is also being made on the Parkes to Narromine section, with the ARTC seeking tenders for the supply of rail culverts for the upgrade. Works on this section will also involve upgrades of the existing railway, plus a new 5 km connection at Parkes. A joint venture of Mott MacDonald and WSP will provide detailed design work for the Inland Rail project from Parkes to Narromine, and from Narrabri to North Star.

The Federal government has announced the preferred study corridor for the 307 km Narromine to Narrabri section. Still about two kms wide, the corridor will now proceed to the planning and approvals phase and the then Transport Minister Darren Chester said, "community input will be essential". The corridor begins south of Narromine and circles the town before heading north to Curban and north-east through the Pilliga East State Forest to finish west of Narrabri. This is the longest section of new track on the route. The

preferred study corridor would now be taken forward through the NSW government's planning and approvals process, which will culminate in ARTC preparing an Environmental Impact Statement.

Media speculation is that the appointment of the Deputy Prime Minister, Barnaby Joyce, as Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, will provide additional stimulus for this project.

Aurizon: Exit from interstate intermodal traffic

The last Aurizon interstate intermodal freight trains were:

3MB7 12/12/17 (Melbourne) 14/12/17 (Brisbane)
3MP1 12/12/17 (Melbourne) 15/12/17 (Perth)
5MB7 14/12/17 (Melbourne) 16/12/17 (Brisbane)
6MP1 15/12/17 (Melbourne) 18/12/17 (Perth)
7MB7 16/12/17 (Melbourne) 18/12/17 (Brisbane)
7MP1 16/12/17 (Melbourne) 19/12/17 (Perth)
2MB7 18/12/17 (Melbourne) 20/12/17 (Brisbane)
7BM7 16/12/17 (Brisbane) 18/12/17 (Melbourne)
7PM1 16/12/17 (Perth) 19/12/17 (Melbourne)
1BM7 17/12/17 (Brisbane) 19/12/17 (Melbourne)
2PM1 18/12/17 (Perth) 21/12/17 (Melbourne)
3BM7 19/12/17 (Brisbane) 21/12/17 (Melbourne)
3PM1 19/12/17 (Perth) 22/12/17 (Melbourne)
5BM7 21/12/17 (Brisbane) 23/12/17 (Melbourne).

The Carrington-Botany service may continue until March pending another operator being found.

NSW TrainLink: New bus routes

NSW TrainLink proposes to introduce on trial three additional bus services, from Tamworth in NW NSW. They are currently seeking public reaction.

One proposal is to provide day returns **Tamworth to Newcastle** and **Newcastle to Tamworth**. These would supplement the existing meagre one passenger train a day to/from Tamworth. TrainLink is seeking views on various options:

One proposed bus service would either leave Tamworth at 0400 to connect with the 0607 Scone-Newcastle train, or leave Tamworth at 0730 to connect with the 1009 Muswellbrook-Scone train. Evening departures from Tamworth would be either at 1645 to connect with the 1842 Scone-Newcastle train, or at 1805 to connect with the 2002 Scone-Newcastle train.

In the opposite directions, options in the morning are either a connection from the 0320 Newcastle-Scone train (to arrive at Tamworth at 0810), or from the 0817 Newcastle-Muswellbrook train (arrive Tamworth 1240). Evening options are either a connection from the 1629 Newcastle-Scone train (arrive Tamworth 2100) or the 1753 Newcastle-Scone train (Tamworth arrive 2210).

Tamworth to Port Macquarie: This would fill a gap in the existing network. There are two options being considered. The first option would provide a **Weekend** service. This envisages a bus departing from Tamworth on Fridays at 1420 via Kootingal, Moonbi,

Bendemeer, Woolbrook, Walcha, Long Flat and Wauchope, arriving Port Macquarie at 1820. The return would depart Port Macquarie on Sundays at 1500, arriving Tamworth at 1910. The alternative proposal is for a **Weekday** service. This would depart Tamworth at 0920, arriving Port Macquarie at 1320. Return would be departure from Port Macquarie at 1420, arriving Tamworth at 1830.

Tamworth to Dubbo: This idea also fills a gap in the present network. The proposal envisages a departure from Tamworth at 0920, running via Carroll, Gunnedah, Mullaley, Coonabarabran and Gilgandra arriving Dubbo at 1335. The return envisages a Dubbo departure at 1415, arriving Tamworth at 1820. This new service would connect existing TrainLink routes in western and northern NSW without going via the Greater Sydney area. This would therefore provide opportunities for travellers using NSW's unbelievably good-value \$2.50 Country Pensioner Excursion (CPE) tickets.

Sydney Trains: Hornsby closedown

Hornsby was shut down for major civil engineering work reconfiguring the Hornsby train depot, from Friday 29 December until Sunday 14 January, except that train services resumed from 1200 on 31 December until 1200 on 1 January. Trains were replaced by buses between Berowra-Hornsby-Gordon and Epping. On weekdays from Tuesday 2 January until Friday 12 January trains operated to or from Newcastle in the peak direction only.

Sydney Trains and NSW TrainLink's Christmas

Sunday 24

Dec to Thursday 28 Dec
Saturday timetable. Extra capacity on intercity services.

Friday-Saturday 29-30 Dec

Sunday 31 Dec

- Saturday timetable with extra peak services. Extra capacity on intercity services
- Hornsby Junction trackwork affected T1 Northern, North Shore and Central Coast and Newcastle intercity services.
- Saturday timetable with extra services. From 1200 on New Year's Eve to 1200 on New Year's Day there were normal services on the T1 North Shore and Northern line and the Central Coast and Newcastle line.
- From 1700 to 0005, trains travelling from St James did not stop at Circular Quay.
- From 1700 to 0010, trains travelling from Wynyard did not set down at Circular Quay.

- From 1800 to 0010, trains from the North Shore did not set down at Milsons Point.
- From 0030 to 0400 trains did not stop at Domestic Airport and International Airport.

Monday 1 January	Sunday timetable. Hornsby junction trackwork affected T1 Northern, North Shore and Central Coast and Newcastle intercity services.
Tuesday 2 January	Weekday timetable. Hornsby junction trackwork affected T1 Northern, North Shore and Central Coast and Newcastle intercity services.
Wednesday 3 to Sunday 14 January	Most services returned to normal. Hornsby junction trackwork continued to affect T1 Northern, North Shore, Central Coast and Newcastle services.
Friday 26 January	Saturday timetable.

Sydney: Tram works

During January construction crews undertook utility works across the new network. The recent completion of track installation at many zones is enabling the erection of poles and wires. Finishing works will continue on the two zones on George St between King St and Park St including paving, systems works, smart pole installation and the construction of the QVB stop. Utility works were carried out at the intersection of George St with Bridge and Grosvenor Streets, and works at the intersection of George and Hay Streets will last until 29 January. On Devonshire St, between Chalmers and Elizabeth St most construction work has been completed, however telecommunications work, smart pole installation and landscaping works will continue through January. Under Devonshire St, utility works are being carried out to prepare for the undergrounding of power connections to properties, enabling the removal of power poles and the installation of the light rail poles and wires along the street.

With track installed on Anzac Parade between Todman Avenue and High St, this section will likewise see electrical and communications undergrounded, with other works to include construction of stormwater drainage and kerb widening along the road. In Randwick, track, poles and wires are in place on Alison Road between Darley Road and Wansey Road, with the energisation of the substations and overhead wiring soon to be carried out, along with the testing of the two new light rail vehicles currently being housed at the stabling yard. Track installation work is still underway on Wansey Road between Alison Road and High St, while at the substation at High Cross Park, electrical equipment, lighting and air conditioning is currently being installed. Following these works, the substation's geothermal cooling system will be constructed.

NSW regional freight hubs

A longer siding at the Ettamogah Rail Hub is on the shortlist for NSW government funding. It will allow trains to be fully off the Sydney to Melbourne line instead of partially as they are currently. More than five kms of siding would be built to service trains 2½ to 3 km long which are expected on the planned inland rail route. Hub chief operating officer Cameron Jackson says business had grown from 2000 containers in 2007 to 20,000 in 2018.

Funding will be provided to repair and re-instate the Barraba branch line from West Tamworth to Westdale. Once this is complete, Tamworth Regional Council will call tenders for an intermodal hub.

John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network WTT 2 January 2018

From 2 January 2018:

- Pacific National grain train no. 9337 at 1015 Saturdays ex Junee to Narrandera (ex Port Kembla on Fridays) and PN grain train 3938 at 2005 from Narrandera on Saturday do not run.
- Pacific National western area freight no. 8824 on Tuesdays and Fridays does not run (but the editor has been unable to identify this train).

Specials to Parkes January 2018

NSW Trainlink's special XPT to Parkes for the annual Elvis Festival was timetabled to arrive Parkes on Thursday 11 January at 1622 and Lachlan Valley Railway's special at 1709. On Monday 15 January, LVR's special was due to depart Parkes at 0830 and Trainlink's at 0916.

ARTC: Main NSW South line

The ARTC is re-railing the NSW South line at a cost of \$40 million. The line between Macarthur and Goulburn was closed from 2200 Friday 1 December to 0200 Monday 4 December for the first stage (in conjunction with a Transport for NSW closedown of the suburban line north of Macarthur) – but see the next report. The project is planned through to 2020.

Southern Australia: Deluge 1-2 December

The closure for civil engineering works of the Metro Trains Melbourne's line between the City Loop and Camberwell – one of Australia's busiest passenger railways – from 1 to 5 December (see December *Table Talk* page 5) got off to a bad start. On Friday 1 December in the morning peak the substitute bus arrangements worked ineffectively. There were huge queues of frustrated commuters in the rain at Camberwell station waiting for buses. The extremely heavy rains crossing southern Australia also impacted on the effectiveness of the works. On Monday 4 December there were again lengthy queues for buses at Camberwell station. On Friday 1 December, the line from Clifton Hill to Hurstbridge was closed during the day by flooding.

This was also the weekend that the Sydney-Goulburn line was closed for works (see preceding report). NSW

TrainLink's trains were replaced by buses over this section. On Saturday 2 December and Sunday morning 3 Dec the extreme weather also caused these trains to be replaced by buses between Melbourne and Albury on a roundabout route via Shepperton. V/Line Albury trains were also replaced. One source states that it was ARTC that decided to close the Albury line as a precaution.

Melbourne Metro: station names

The new station near the corner of Arden and Laurens Streets will be named North Melbourne, while the existing North Melbourne station (dating from 1859) will be renamed West Melbourne to better reflect its location.

The new station near Melbourne University and hospital and research precinct will be known as Parkville and will be built below Grattan St, between Royal Parade and Leicester St, and have four entrances.

A new State Library station will be located under Swanston St, between La Trobe St and Franklin St, and provide an underground passenger connection to Melbourne Central station. Two other access points will be located near the corner of Swanston and La Trobe Streets and on Franklin St near the corner of Swanston St, between RMIT and the Melbourne City Baths.

The new station under City Square on Swanston St is to be named Town Hall, and will be situated between Flinders and Collins Streets. There will be seven points of entry at City Square, Federation Square, the Degraes St subway, Flinders St, Swanston St, Cocker Alley and Scott Alley. Underground passenger connection to the platforms at Flinders St station will be provided, facilitating passenger interchange between Metro Tunnel and City Loop train services.

The new underground station next to the Shrine of Remembrance will be called Anzac, and has been situated to ease pressure on the St Kilda Road/Swanston St tram corridor. Four entry points will provide access to the station: one the outer edge of the Shrine of Remembrance Reserve, one at the Albert Road Reserve, and two at the new Domain train/tram interchange above St Kilda Road.

Major construction works on the tunnel and five new stations will get underway in 2018, with the project expected to be completed by 2026.

Level Crossing Removal Authority

The Level Crossing Removal Authority has its own website at <http://levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/> which provides details of projects and disruptions in Melbourne. This website will be worth keeping an eye on for the next couple of years.

Also see the next three items.

Metro Trains Melbourne & V/Line: Don't travel in January

Two of Melbourne's busiest railway lines were shut for seven days in January due to network upgrades. From 2 to 9 January, buses replaced trains between Flinders St and Westall on the Cranbourne-Pakenham line, and Flinders St and Moorabbin on the Frankston line. Buses replaced trains between Caulfield and Dandenong from 10 to 17 January, and between Westall and Dandenong for two weeks in February. The Cranbourne-Pakenham line is said to be Melbourne's busiest with more than 90,000 passengers every weekday. The closures are expected to add between 40 to 75 minutes of travel time for some commuters. They will allow upgrades to signalling, power and communications to prepare for High Capacity Metro Trains. All nine level crossings between Caulfield and Dandenong will be removed by the end of 2018.

Buses replaced trains between Clifton Hill and Greensborough between Thursday 18 and Tuesday 23 January.

Buses replaced trains between Epping and South Morang between Friday 12 and Sunday 14 January.

V/Line - Ararat line: Buses replaced trains between Wednesday 27 and Friday 29 December.

Bairnsdale and Traralgon lines: Buses replaced trains on sections of the line between Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 17 January.

Maryborough line: Buses replaced trains between Wednesday 27 and Saturday 30 December.

Seymour and Shepparton lines: Buses replaced trains on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 January.

But wait, there's more! There were also alterations to **Yarra Trams** routes 1 and 6 on Lygon St between Wednesday 3 and Tuesday 16 January. (There were also major road closures including one of inner Melbourne's busiest roads, Hoddle St.)

Metro Trains Melbourne: Frankston line

Work to remove four additional level crossings on the Frankston line was announced on 19 December. Crossings at Mascot Avenue, Station St, Eel Race Road and Seaford Road on the Frankston line will begin in January. It will be carried out by a consortium of Lendlease, Acciona Coleman and WSP, in a \$588 million contract. The project — part of a plan to remove nine level crossings — also includes a 24-train storage facility and a new road bridge over Patterson River.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Hurstbridge line

A 44 day construction program is to be used to accelerate the Hurstbridge line upgrade, building new track, a new Rosanna station and two level crossing removals, six months earlier than planned. Two rail closures previously scheduled for January and May are being combined into a single period from mid-March until the end of April. At the end of the

shutdown, Rosanna station will be open, and the Lower Plenty Road in Rosanna and Grange Road in Alphington crossings removed and the new tunnel under Darebin St in Heidelberg completed. Buses will replace trains on sections of the Hurstbridge line during the work.

Metro Trains Melbourne: To Wollert?

A railway from Lalor to Epping North and Wollert has taken a “major step forward” with the Victorian government to spend \$3.8 million buying land earmarked for a major northern suburbs transport corridor. The corridor could be used for a range of options, including an arterial road and a busway, but a railway is considered more likely. The cost would be about \$600m.

Melbourne plans

Two new suburbs have been announced for Melbourne’s north at **Donnybrook** and Woodstock. These will be developed over 30 years, eventually having 17,000 dwellings and 2,100 jobs. There are plans for five town centres, five convenience centres, six government schools, four non-government schools and 46 ha of parkland. The Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution paid by developers will partly be used for a new station at Lockerbie. The Victorian Government has partnered with the Commonwealth on a \$20 m upgrade of Donnybrook and Wallan stations, as part of the Regional Rail Revival package.

In the south east, a railway extension to **Clyde** is in prospect after the Victorian government announced it had set aside \$3 million to buy land for a rail station in fast-growing Cranbourne East. More than 240,000 people are expected to live in the Cranbourne East/Clyde area by 2025 and Casey’s population will be almost 500,000 by 2041.

Metro Trains Melbourne: 19 December disruption

During the morning peak on Wednesday 19 December train services were severely disrupted between Caulfield and Richmond after a man was hit by a train.

Yarra Trams: 21 December disruption

A motorist drove into pedestrians at the corner of Flinders and Elizabeth Streets, just outside one of the main entrances to Flinders St station, and one of Melbourne’s busiest intersections, just as peak period was starting, about 1640 on Thursday 21 December. The effect that evening on Yarra Trams services was:

Flinders St

- **Route 70** operated between Wattle Park and stop 7B Rod Laver Arena.
- **Route 75** in both directions was diverted via Spring St and La Trobe St.
- **City Circle** trams operated a shuttle service between Waterfront City Docklands and stop 2 King St.

Elizabeth St

- **Route 19** operated between North Coburg / Airport West and stop 9 Haymarket.
- **Route 57** operated between West Maribyrnong and stop 8 Peel St.
- **Route 59** operated between Airport West and Stop 14 Royal Melbourne Hospital, then diverted via Peel St and William St to stop 2 Market St.

Swanston St

- Services operated in sections with no trams between stop 11 Collins St and stop 14 Arts Precinct.
- **Route 1** in both directions was diverted via La Trobe St, William St and Kings Way. A limited shuttle service operated between stop 14 Arts Precinct and South Melbourne Beach.

Metro Trains Melbourne’s Christmas

Monday 25 Dec: Sunday service (free travel)

Tuesday 26 Dec: Saturday service

Wednesday 27 to Friday 29 Dec: Weekday service

Sunday 31 December: Free travel after 1800.

Additional all-night services

Monday 1 January: Saturday service.

V/Line: Altered WTT 10 December

The latest 3-car VLocity DMUs, numbers 70 and 71, entered service on 10 December, inaugurating Fleet Plan FP47B. To accommodate the new fleet plan, there were also many alterations to the Working Timetable. However, these were all minor, comprising alterations to platforms at Southern Cross station, altered track routing on the approaches to Southern Cross, and composition of some trains.

V/Line’s Christmas

Friday 22 Dec: Weekday service with alterations and cancellations

Saturday 23 Dec: Saturday service with alterations and cancellations

Sunday 24 Dec: Sunday service with alterations and cancellations

Monday 25 Dec: Sunday service with alterations and cancellations (free travel)

Tuesday 26 Dec: Saturday service with alterations and cancellations

Wednesday 27 to Friday 29 Dec: Weekday service with carriage alterations

Sunday 31 Dec: Free travel after 1800. Additional Geelong line evening services

Monday 1 January: Saturday service with alterations and cancellations.

V/Line’s Summer

From 15 December, and again from 3 January, V/Line issued contingency Wolo timetables for Saturdays and Sundays and from 22 December for Weekdays. Wolo is Australian railway abbreviation for speed restrictions because of very high temperatures. As concrete sleepers, which provide greater stability, have become more common, Wolo conditions have been imposed

less often in recent years in Australia. However, V/Line still has many lines with timber sleepers. Hence, Wolo is imposed between 1200 and 2000 when temperature is forecast to be 36°C or higher, in case there are any track buckles. If Wolo is imposed, speed from Warrnambool to Geelong, from Ararat and Maryborough to Deer Park West Junction, from Bendigo to Anderson Road, from Seymour to Donnybrook and Bairnsdale to Pakenham is 90 km/h. From Shepparton to Seymour speed is 80 km/h. The circular does not state the Wolo speed from Swan Hill to Bendigo, but this is the line which is usually most affected.

V/Line: Bendigo

Requests for tender have been released for upgrades to Bendigo and Eaglehawk stations. Upgrades at Bendigo will include the construction of a new pedestrian overpass, with new lifts, ramp and stair access and upgrades to the waiting area, toilets and customer service areas. At Eaglehawk there will be a 100 metre extension to the platform to accommodate longer trains, rehabilitation of the existing heritage listed canopy, and the construction of a new 60-space car park with taxi and drop off areas. Work is expected to be completed in 2019.

V/Line: Ballarat line upgrade

Additional works have been added to the \$552 million upgrade of the Ballarat line:

- A new station will be constructed at Toolern, between Rockbank and Melton.
- There will be an extra three kms of track between Bacchus Marsh station and Rowsley Station Road in Maddingley, to facilitate faster transfers of trains to nearby facilities.
- Wendouree station will receive a second platform and new tracks, enabling trains to pass each other, an accessible pedestrian link between the platforms, and upgrades to security, lighting and signage.

However, duplication of track near Warrenheip has been deleted from the project.

Early works for the project began in October 2017 at Hopkins Road in Rockbank in preparation for duplication of 18 kms between Deer Park West and Melton. The completed project will reportedly enable extra morning and afternoon services, plus a train every 40 minutes in the off-peak period. It is also expected to prepare for the future electrification to Melton. The project is expected to be complete by late 2019.

V/Line: Warrnambool line speed-up

Following progress with level crossing works, from 30 January, all trains are speeded-up between Waurn Ponds and Warrnambool. All trains arrive Warrnambool five or six minutes earlier, and depart six minutes later.

V/Line: Great Ocean Road buses

As is customary, the V/Line bus service along the Great Ocean Road was augmented during summer from 18 December until 29 January. **Additional** services were:

Weekdays: 0947 and 1627 Apollo Bay-Geelong, 0640 and 1120 Geelong-Apollo Bay, also 1200 Geelong-Lorne extended to Apollo Bay.

Weekends: 0640 Geelong-Lorne (no connection from Melbourne), 1105 Geelong-Lorne, 1225 and 1505 Geelong-Apollo Bay, 0845 and 1329 Lorne-Geelong, 0947 Apollo Bay-Geelong, 1627 Apollo Bay-Geelong on Saturdays, 1520 Apollo Bay-Geelong on Sundays.

Hobart plans

Plans for a light rail service for Hobart's northern suburbs have been listed by the Tasmanian government as a priority project. But there is no timeframe for providing a business case to Infrastructure Australia. Meanwhile a rail heritage group has won the right to run a tourist rail service on the former TGR main line earmarked for the LRT.

Adelaide Metro: Tram works

Stage 4 of construction of the tram line extension has closed the intersection of King William St and North Terrace. The tram line is currently closed between the Entertainment Centre and Victoria Square and is operating to a substitute timetable.

Adelaide promises

The SA Labor Party has promised the electrification of the Gawler line, and extension of Adelaide's tram, in its campaign for the 17 March State election.

ARTC: Advanced Train Management System

The Advanced Train Management System (ATMS) will be tested on the Trans-Australian Railway along 1,280 km between Tarcoola, SA and West Kalgoorlie, WA. ATMS is designed to replace the need for on-track signals, using GPS and wireless technology to locate trains and provide real-time information. ATMS has been undergoing development and testing on the ARTC rail network in SA for eight years.

The ARTC and technology partner, Lockheed Martin, expect to have ATMS in live operations as the accredited safeworking system between Port Augusta and Whyalla by late 2018.

Great Southern Rail: Timetable alterations

Possibly from ARTC's WTT of 26 November 2017, the schedules of the Overland were altered slightly. The westbound train now arrives Adelaide 13 minutes earlier at 1740.

On Wednesday 3 January there was a trial of an extended consist for the Indian Pacific in and out of Sydney.

TransPerth: Perth Stadium station

Construction of Perth Stadium station is now complete, with testing underway to prepare for its opening in January 2018 for a Community Open Day. Located at 4.1 km between Claisebrook and Burswood on the Armadale line, Perth Stadium is the second largest station on the network, with six platforms, 11 lifts, and nearby sidings for 117 carriages. 28,000 people will be able to be moved from the stadium within an hour of the end of an event, while direct special event services to the stadium will be available on the Fremantle, Joondalup and Armadale train lines. WA Premier Mark McGowan said he saw the opening of the station as the opportunity for Perth residents to partake in a "cultural shift" towards public transport usage.

WA freight

The WA government introduced financial incentives to reduce truck congestion and get more freight on rail to Fremantle Port from 1 January. The container rail subsidy increased from \$30 to \$50 per Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit. A target to boost rail mode share to 20% has been set - an increase of about 5%. The subsidy will be paid for all loaded containers that move between North Quay Rail Terminal (NQRT), Forrestfield and Kwinana, as well as for containers filled with hay that are received by rail at NQRT for export. The subsidy per container will continue to be passed on in full to rail customers.

WA wheat lines

An independent arbitrator will judge the two-year deadlock between Arc Infrastructure and CBH by the middle of next year. CBH triggered an arbitration process with Arc last February after formal negotiations to gain long-term access to Arc's freight rail network failed. The company has been carting grain on Arc's country rail lines under an interim agreement while the arbitrator nits out a 10-year access deal. Leaders of both parties have declared the arbitrator's decision as final and agreed to set up an interim agreement when the existing one expired in December.

Grain freight movements have resumed along the Lake Grace-Newdegate branch, after Arc Infrastructure completed repairs. The line had been closed since the track was inundated with floodwaters in early February. In some sections, stretches of track, rail structures and culverts were completely washed away, while other parts were submerged by floodwaters for months. Repairs involved lifting the track by up to one metre, to reduce the impact of flooding in the long term.

New Zealand by luxury train?

A luxury train to tour NZ is planned by Antipodean Explorer Ltd, a joint venture between local interests and Chinese company Fuh Wah. Plans are for 31 carriages, 16 refurbished within two years when the service might start. Nine of these will be sleeper carriages, two dining cars, two lounge cars, a kitchen car, an observation car, and a service car.

Refurbishment might take place at the former Hillside workshops in Dunedin, which could be re-opened for the job. The plan is for a six-night journey from Auckland through most of the regions to Otago, linking to Queenstown by luxury coach. The train would stop for two to five hours every morning and every afternoon at more than 75 locations. Guests would have to pack up and shift room only once, when it crosses Cook Strait.

Public timetable books around the world

The following information is mainly from the Fahrplancenter website, www.fahrplancenter.com

- **Newman's Indian Bradshaw** has ceased publication.
- **China Railway Publishing House** is no longer producing their Chinese-language timetable. (A new edition of Duncan Peattie's English language timetable is expected in 2018.)
- Despite **Croatian Railways, HZ**, announcing that the hard copy timetable for the 2017 timetable year would be the last, this publication will, in fact, be published for the 2018 timetable year. This follows earlier information that publication of timetable books for **Switzerland** and **Austria** has resumed.
- The 2018, privately-published, **Swiss** timetable book is almost identical to Volume 1 (the rail volume) of the former official book, except that it has a reduced page size.
- Although a hard copy version of **Amtrak's** system timetable book is not available, an online version can be accessed at <https://www.amtrak.com/timetables.html>

Network system paper timetable books (as distinct from individual line timetables) are expected in the following European countries for the 2018 timetable year (those marked* are private ventures):

Austria, Britain*, Bulgaria, Czechia, Croatia, Denmark, some states of Germany, Italy*, Netherlands*, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Switzerland*.

In addition, the **Fahrplancenter** produces timetables for Bosnia, Estonia, Kaliningrad, Kosovo, Lithuania, Macedonia and Montenegro.

In addition, of course, the **European Rail Timetable** covers everywhere in the world.

European Rail Timetable expands Australasian coverage

The New Zealand part of the "Beyond Europe" section of the *European Rail Timetable* will be expanded from the next (northern) Summer edition in June 2018 to include the very popular Taieri Gorge trains operated by Dunedin Railways. Currently, Taiwan is the only

country in the world that operates passenger trains but not included in the *European Rail Timetable*. The ERT compliers are now working on remedying this.

US passenger service

Brightline in Florida commenced operation on Saturday 13 January between Miami and West Palm Beach. This is the first time a privately owned company in the US has operated an express passenger rail service since 1983, when the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad discontinued their Rio Grande Zephyr. The service will start with ten round trips a day at weekends and 11 on weekdays. There will be two classes of accommodation, Select

and Smart. Select having larger seats, complimentary snacks and access to a lounge. The company will expand west to reach Orlando in central Florida over a new line now under construction.

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

RECOMMENDED READING

Two very different, but worthwhile articles from the January 2018 edition of US *Trains* magazine:

Tickets, please! by Brian Solomon, page 17. Argues that modern technology is changing the way we buy tickets, but not always to the benefit of passengers.

Trains Without Crews: Fantasy or the future? by Justin Franz, pages 26-33. Drawing on examples of urban and freight operation from Canada, Australia and the US, he discusses the possibilities of driverless trains.

Trainline 5 has been published by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics as a

compendium of information about Australia's railways. The publication presents an overview and data on railway transport tasks; characteristics of the railways and train operators' rolling stock; and aspects of railway performance, including safety, environment and reliability. There is much valuable data. Unfortunately, there are gaps, due to the unavailability of data in this partially-privatised age. Nevertheless, this publication is both the best and most up-to-date source for both an overview and some detailed information about the Australian railway industry. It can be accessed at https://bitre.gov.au/publications/2017/train_005.aspx or at <https://ara.net.au/publications-list>

ODD SPOT

President Trump has appointed Leon Westmoreland to the Board of Amtrak, the US long-distance passenger operator. Westmoreland was formerly a member of the US House of Representatives. Twice, in 2009 and again in 2015, he voted to end all funding for Amtrak.

Thanks to *Passenger Train Journal* (US) for Odd Spot.

EDITORIAL

A further slight development is offered to members commencing with this edition. Members who choose electronic copies of the ATA magazines, in addition to, or as well as, hard copies, will now be sent their magazines at the same time that they are sent to the printer, rather than timed to arrive at the time that hard copies are sent through the post. This will mean arrival about two weeks earlier. If you do not receive electronic copies, but now wish to do so, contact our hard-working Production Manager, Geoff Lambert at G.Lambert@iinet.net.au

We will also continue to provide *Table Talk Newswire*. This is an email service providing advance Rail news. *Table Talk Newswire* is sent to participating members about midway between regular issues of the magazine. To receive this, simply contact the Editor at tabletalk@austta.org.au

BUS NEWS

Australian Capital Territory

Network 18 will be introduced on Monday 23 July, the start of school term 3. Among probable features will be:

- Introduction of the five new Rapid routes, detailed on the map in the December *Table Talk*, page 5;
- A full 7-day network, with identical routes and numbers on weekdays and weekends; and
- Re-opening of Woden depot.

Network 18 will be designed to take account of the opening of the Tram from Gungahlin to Civic, probably in late 2018.

ACTION will acquire 80 additional buses in 2018, ten of which will be articulated, and 80 buses in 2019.

New South Wales

News about **NSW TrainLink** buses is in the Rail News section above.

New Newcastle Network Effective 14 January 2018

by Hilaire Fraser (timetables dated 15 January):

Frequent routes (15 minute service):

- 11 Queens Wharf- Maitland Road-University-Jesmond- John Hunter Hospital-Charlestown (previously 100, 30 minute service beyond University)
- 12 Merewether-Union St-Newcastle Interchange- Hamilton North-Jesmond-Wallsend-Maryland (previously 225 along Union St and 235 now omitting North Lambton and Douglas Road) – 30 minutes beyond Wallsend
- 13 Queens Wharf-New Lambton Heights-John Hunter Hospital-Cardiff-Glendale (previously 363)
- 14 Queens Wharf-Darby St-Adamstown Heights-Charlestown-Jewells-Belmont (previously 320 along Darby St and through Adamstown Heights and 350 through Jewells)

Standard routes (60 minute service):

- 21 Newcastle East-Bar Beach-Merewether-Hamilton (previously 201 now serves Newcastle East instead of Marketown)
- 22 Newcastle Interchange-Stewart Avenue-Merewether Heights-Kahibah-Charlestown (previously 224 along Stewart Avenue, 310 through Merewether Heights and 322 through Kahibah)
- 23 Newcastle Interchange-Lambton-North Lambton-Jesmond-Silver Ridge-Wallsend (previously 230 through Lambton, 235 through North Lambton, 231 through Silver Ridge)
- 24 Marketown-Newcastle Interchange-Carrington-Mayfield East-Waratah-Waratah West-University-Jesmond-Wallsend (previously 104 now extended to Wallsend via Douglas Road)
- 25 Broadmeadow-New Lambton-Kotara South-Hillsborough-Charlestown (previously 317 through New Lambton and Kotara South and 339 through Hillsborough)

26 Newcastle Interchange-New Lambton-Kotara-John Hunter Hospital-Elernmore Vale North-Wallsend (previously 322 through New Lambton and 224)

27 Broadmeadow-Sports Centre-Waratah-University-Jesmond-Birmingham Gardens-Wallsend (previously 231 via Sports Centre, 226 via Waratah and University, 230 via Birmingham Gardens)

28 Newcastle Interchange-Adamstown Height-Charlestown-Mt Hutton (previously 334 through Adamstown Heights, 310 and 320 through Mt Hutton)

29 Glendale-Warners Bay-Eleebana West-Belmont-Swansea Heads (previously 313 via Eleebana West, 350 to Swansea Heads).

Tailored routes (60 minute service outer areas):

- 41 Mt Hutton-Belmont via Eleebana East (previously 310)
- 42 John Hunter Hospital-Elernmore Vale South-Wallsend (previously 222)
- 43 Mt Hutton-Belmont via Floraville (previously 317)
- 44 Charlestown-Cardiff South via Garden Suburb and Cardiff (previously 334)
- 45 Belmont-Marks Point-Pelican-Swansea North (previously 349)
- 46 Wallsend-Elernmore Vale West-Glendale-Speers Point-Warners Bay (previously 226 via Elernmore Vale West, 363 via Speers Point)
- 47 Marketown-Newcastle Interchange-Maryville-Mayfield West-Warabrook-Shortland-Wallsend (previously 111 through Maryville and Mayfield West, 106 and 107 through Warabrook and Shortland)
- 48 Warners Bay-Bayview St-Charlestown-Redhead-Belmont (previously 313 via Bayview St, 322 via Redhead).

On Demand Trial Service:

59D Charlestown-Mt Hutton-Eleebana-Whitebridge-Dudley.

Many passengers will need to change buses to continue to Newcastle CBD. For example, Swansea Head travellers will change from 29 to 14 at Belmont, Swansea North travellers will change from 45 to 14 at Belmont, Speers Point passengers will change from 46 to 13 at Glendale and Birmingham Gardens passengers will change from 27 to 13, 21, 23, 26 and 28 at Broadmeadow.

Of note are the number of routes servicing Broadmeadow station (east side). Routes 21, 23, 25, 26 and 27 now service the station directly (as opposed to simply crossing the line by overbridge). 21, 25 and 27 terminate there.

The route numbers are now all two digit numbers. Route 352, Belmont to Morisset peak service, has been withdrawn. Services to and from Swansea no longer operate into Newcastle. Route 318 (Belmont Loop) has been withdrawn and replaced in part by

route 41. Late night ferry replacement bus route 118 may have been withdrawn, but this is unconfirmed.

Timetable publications in order are for routes:

- 1) 11 (NightOwl 11 to Jesmond)
- 2) 12 (NightOwl 12 Merewether Beach to Maryland);
- 3) 13 (NightOwl 13 via Beaumont St);
- 4) 14 (NightOwl 14 extends to Swansea Heads);
- 5) 21, 22, 25, 28;
- 6) 23, 24, 26, 27, 47;
- 7) 29, 45;
- 8) 41, 43, 48;
- 9) 42, 44, 46;
- 10) FERRY, NightOwl 55N.

Route 110 still exists but new timetable is only available on Transport Info.

Route 55N replaces the old route 118 on Friday and Saturday nights.

On 6 November 2017 Newcastle City Council and the NSW government introduced a park and ride service between McDonald Jones Stadium at Broadmeadow and the City, with the intention of removing up to 350 cars a day from the city centre. The service is free until 29 January, when a \$2 a day parking fee will be charged through a phone app. From 2007 until 2015 a park and ride service ran between the stadium and John Hunter Hospital. The University of Newcastle runs a shuttle between its main Callaghan campus at Warabrook and the NeW Space building, in Hunter St.

Rover Coaches: There are additional services from Sunday 14 January on routes 164 and 166: There are an extra 21 trips per week between Cessnock/Kurri Kurri and Maitland to connect with the newly extended Stockland Green Hills shopping centre.

Port Stephens Coaches: There are additional services from Tuesday 30 January on route 130 - 20 extra weekly trips between Fingal Bay and Newcastle.

Hunter Valley Buses: There are additional services from Tuesday 30 January on route 179 - 34 extra trips per week between Northbury and Rutherford on weekdays and Saturdays. Route 262, 269, 270 and 275: 50 additional trips per week and extended services across Lake Macquarie region have been introduced.

The bus interchange above **Bondi Junction** station is reported to have reached its bus capacity, not passenger capacity, and no more peak services can be timetabled, according to Sydney Buses. State Transit has contacted Waverley Council to ask for extra bus zones outside the interchange on Grafton St as a way of increasing services. The 26 November 2017 timetable resulted in more services terminating or commencing in Grafton St.

A major new interchange is to be built at **Macquarie Park** adjacent to the existing Macquarie University/Macquarie Shopping Centre bus interchange. Construction is to begin in 2020, after the

completion of the Metro. The Federal government has agreed to provide most of the \$100m funding, but the NSW government, which has been developing a strategic business case for Macquarie Park, will also contribute. A business case is yet to determine the final design.

Sydney Buses

Route 170 from **Manly** to Wynyard has been introduced on weekends only – but no timetables of it seem to have been published.

In the **Northern Suburbs** and **Northern Beaches** from Monday 15 January 2018, in response to growth in demand, an additional 100 trips per week are being added.

Route 195 Gordon to St Ives Chase: Additional night time services on weekdays until 2215 and on weekends until 2045 (with one combined 195/6 service leaving Gordon at 2215).

Route 196 Mona Vale to Gordon via St Ives: Additional night time services on weekdays until 2300 and on weekends until 2115 (with one combined 196/196 service leaving Gordon at 2215).

Route 197 Mona Vale to Macquarie University via St Ives and Gordon: Additional weekend services until approximately 2000 from Macquarie Park.

Route 270 Terry Hills to City via Frenchs Forest: Additional early morning and peak services on weekdays

Route 280 Warringah Mall to Chatswood via Frenchs Forest: Additional early morning and peak services on weekdays and on weekends from Warringah Mall

The **Wollongong** free shuttle bus, one of the busiest route bus services in Australia, is to start charging standard Opal fares from the end of January.

Hilaire Fraser writes: On Tuesday November 28, I caught the 0920 **B Line service** from Wynyard to Mona Vale. It left four minutes late and got to Mona Vale four minutes late at 1028, thereby maintaining the 64 minute journey time. I was able to sit at the front upstairs above the driver, thereby clearly seeing oncoming buses. The bus rode smoothly although the concrete roads leading to the northern beaches did not help. I thought the bus was quiet upstairs and the stairs steep. The stairs are behind the driver. I liked the clear destinations, namely "Mona Vale B1" and "City Wynyard B1". Flipping or scrolling displays are pointless unless one is standing in front of the bus for a while. This is another discussion! I was talking to a seniors' walking group before they alighted at Narrabeen. They were enjoying their ride in the double-decker. They appreciated my knowledge of the new network, which would help them plan other walks. I was also speaking to some English tourists on their way to "Summer Bay" as featured on "Home & Away", actually Palm Beach. With new buses, brightly painted bus stops, next bus displays at stops, next stop

displays inside the bus like the Gold Coast light rail and Canberra bus, and buses appearing every few minutes, the B Line made a positive impact.

I then caught the 1038 route 199 service from Mona Vale to Avalon. This service was provided by an articulated bus. We reached Avalon at 1054, two minutes early. I then caught the 1119 route 199 service starting at Avalon all stops to Manly. It reached Manly at 1227, two minutes late.

Unlike most other operators, there were no **Forest Coach Lines** school holiday timetables put up on the Transport Info website at the beginning of the current school holidays. However the terminating date for the current school term timetable was added as 14/1/2018. This morning new timetables were put up dated 15/1/2018 - they appear to be school holiday timetables.

Narrabri has a new November 2017 timetable on the Forest website for the routes they took over in the Narrabri Gunnedah area in 2017.

Busways Grafton has new timetables on all routes except 793 from 31 December 2017 – no apparent timing changes but more wheelchair services on all routes.

New Zealand

Early this year Auckland Transport will extend the Dominion Road bus lanes to make them continuous between Horopito St and Mt Albert Road. The city-bound lane will be open from 0700-1000 and outbound from 1600-1900. Some stops will be moved to comply better with a standard 400 m between stops.

South Australia

From Sunday 17 December, all city-bound O-Bahn buses have travelled via the new 670 metre O-bahn tunnel, designed to provide quicker and more reliable access into the city through reduced traffic congestion and delays. As part of the tunnel project, there were changes to bus stop locations and design along the Currie-Grenfell St corridor to improve how the street is used. Over 2,400 buses travel along Currie-Grenfell Streets each day and this is expected to increase. Some services were stopping up to eight times along this section with some stops only 120 m apart. This project evenly spaces stops to improve travel time; groups stops to create new interchange zones and categorises routes by their direction of travel; improves wayfinding and signage; and installs digital real time bus stops at major destinations. All existing bus stops were replaced. 27 new real time digital bus stops were installed and the number of stops reduced by three.

New Adelaide Metro Timetables 17 December 2017 by Hilaire Fraser:

O Bahn Related Routes and new Gawler 495 on demand service:

206, 208, 528 City-Northgate/Paradise
491, 492, 493, 494 495 Gawler local services

500, 501, 502, N502 City-Elizabeth/Mawson Lakes
503, 507 Paradise-Tea Tree Plaza via Holden Hill
506, 546 Paradise-Tea Tree Plaza via Para Hills
541, N541 City-Fairview Park/Golden Grove
542, N542 City-Fairview Park
543 City-Surrey Downs
544 M44 Marion-Golden Grove
545 City-Golden Grove via McIntyre Road
548 591A, 591C Golden Grove-Greenwith
556, 557, 559 City-Tea Tree Plaza via St Agnes
C1, C2, N1 City-Elizabeth and Greenwith
G40 Golden Grove-Flinders Uni. Total=14

100 Series:

98 99 City Connector
100, 101 Arndale-Glen Osmond and Flinders Uni
115, 117, 118 City-West Lakes/Port Adelaide via Crittenden Road
140, 144, 147 City-Glen Osmond/Beaumont
141, 142 City-Stonyfell/Burnside
150, 350 City-Port Adelaide/Osborne via Port Road
155/7, 376 City-West Lakes/Pt Adelaide/Largs Bay and West Lakes-Delfin Is
167, 168 City-Glenelg via Richmond Road
170, 172 City-Urrbrae/Kingswood via Duthy St
171, 173 City-Mitcham Square and Blackwood via Fullarton Road
174, N178 City-Paradise via Payneham Road
176, 178, 579, N178 City-Athelstone/Paradise via Payneham Road
190 City-Glenelg via Raglan Avenue
195, 196, 197X City-Blackwood via Unley Road.
Total=14

200 Series:

200, 200B City-Marion via Clapham
202, 203, 209F, N202 City-Tea Tree Plaza via Hampstead Road
222 City- Mawson Interchange
224, N224 City-Elizabeth via Salisbury Highway
225 Gepps Cross or Mawson Lakes-Salisbury via Northbri Avenue
228 City-Smithfield via Main North Road
229 City-Para Hills via Pooraka
230, 232 City-Port Adelaide via Harrison Road
235, 237, 238 City-Kilburn/Mawson Lakes/Arndale
251, 252 City-Mansfield Park/Port Adelaide via Liberty Grove
253, 254, N254 City-Mansfield Park/Port Adelaide via Hanson Rd
271, 273 City-Tea Tree Plaza via North East Road
281 City-Paradise
286 287, 288 City-Henley Beach/West Lakes via Ashley St. Total=14

300 and 400 Series:

333 Outer Harbor-Port Adelaide
361 Tea Tree Plaza-Port Adelaide. Total=2

600 and 700 Series:

600, 601, 605 G30F Old Reynella-Marion and Darlington-Blackwood
640, 719, 720, City-Flinders Uni/Old Reynella Interchange

645, 646 Marion-Seaview Downs/Seacombe Heights
737 Chandlers Hill-Old Reynella
743, 744 Hackham West Circuit
745, 747, T748 Seaford Circuit. Total=6

800 Series:

820, 821, 822 City-Carey Gully/Stirling
823, 840X, 860F, 863, 864, N864, T843 City-Aldgate
and Mt Barker
830F, 834, 835 Lobethal-City/Verdun/Mt Barker
837/841F, 842F, T842 City-Nairne
838, 839 Mt Barker East and West
861, N864 City-Glen Osmond
865, 866 City-Aldgate and Crafers-Stirling. Total=7

Alpha-Numero:

B10, B12 Magill-West Lakes, Tennyson via Grange
Road
G10, N10, N21, Blair Athol-Marion
G20, G21, G22x, 320, N10, N21 City-Aberfoyle Hub
H20, H21, 580 Paradise-Glenelg via Marion Road
H22, H23, H24, H32, N22 Wattle Park-Henley Beach
South
H30, N30, X30 Paradise-West Lakes via Henley
Beach Road
H33 Rostrevor-Henley Beach via Cheadle St
J1, J3, 163 Jetbus
J7, J8, 371, 372 West Lakes-Marion
W90, W91, Marion/St Marys-Marden. Total=10

There are reports that Adelaide Metro has been removing or reducing the number of self-serve timetable racks and will be printing timetables in reduced numbers.

Adelaide Metro bus timetables between Christmas and New Year were on Sunday/Public Holiday schedules. Route 820 etc. worked as normal - it only runs Mon-Fri. Routes 140, 144, 147 are now permanently on

Grenfell and Currie Streets with details appearing on the new electronic stop signs. The O-bahn tunnel is now in full use. There is a temporary new City Connector (97A) linking the old and new Royal Adelaide Hospitals sites giving drivers plenty of practice in left hand turns.

Victoria

V/Line: For news of V/Line Great Ocean Road buses see Rail news above.

On 5 November 2017 **SkyBus** introduced the Southbank Docklands Airport Express, from the Docklands and Southbank to Melbourne Airport, with buses every 30 minutes on weekdays and hourly on weekends. It has stops at Harbour Esplanade, City Road (two stops) and one on Whiteman St. The service is SkyBus' sixth airport-dedicated express and the third in launched in 2017. Other SkyBus airport express services run from Southern Cross station, St Kilda and Frankston, as well as Avalon-Geelong and Avalon-City.

Melbourne's first dedicated busway, the **Doncaster Busway**, will be a fully separated, high speed route from Doncaster to Victoria Park in the median in the Eastern Freeway. Buses will be able to travel at up to 100 km/h, hopefully cutting travel times by up to 30%. The project will also provide more parking for passengers, with the opportunity to build a future Park and Ride in Bulleen. No time scale has been indicated for the project.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Hilaire Fraser, Craig Halsall, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Lourie Smit, Roger Wheaton, *Transit Australia* and *Herald Sun* for Bus news.

FERRY NEWS

Sealink Captain Cook Cruises timetables from Friday 15 December:

Manly service Friday 15-24 Dec 2017 and 6 Jan onwards

- Mon-Fri Peak hour services operate direct between Manly and Barangaroo
- Note Mon-Fri peak hour services were reduced 27 Dec – 5 Jan
- Mon-Fri Non-Peak hour services operate between Manly and Barangaroo via Watsons Bay
- Sat-Sun services operate between Manly and Circular Quay via Watsons Bay.

Watsons Bay service

Friday 15-24 Dec 2017 and 6 Jan onwards

- Mon-Fri services operate between Watsons Bay and Circular Quay
- 1700 service from Watsons Bay changed to 1650
- Mon-Fri peak hour services were slightly reduced 27 Dec – 5 Jan
- Mon-Fri Non-Peak hour – new services between Watsons Bay and Circular Quay or Barangaroo
- Sat-Sun services operate between Watsons Bay and Circular Quay.

All routes: 25 and 26 Dec: No services except Circular Quay-Darling Harbour.
31 Dec: Sunday services until 1500.
1 Jan: Sunday services from 1000.

Thanks to Tony Bailey and John Clifton for Ferry News.

AIR NEWS

International

From late 2018, **Qantas** will introduce four direct flights a week from Melbourne to San Francisco.

Malaysia Airlines will re-introduce services Brisbane-Kuala Lumpur in April. There will be four flights weekly. Malaysia last served Brisbane four years ago.

British Airways is introducing non-reclining seats on more than 100 Airbus planes operating short-haul flights. This follows a decision to fit an extra 12 seats into each of its A320 and A321 aircraft. Thirty-five new A320s will have the non-reclining seats, which are also being retrofitted to 76 planes. BA says the new seats have a fixed "gentle recline" rather than a button that allows travellers to move them. The seats are no smaller and the recline makes them more comfortable than standard upright seats.

The **busiest air routes** in the World in 2017 were:

Seoul-Jeju Island	64,991 flights a year
Sydney-Melbourne	54,519
Mumbai-Delhi	47,462
Fukuoka-Tokyo Haneda	42,835
Rio de Janeiro-Sao Paulo Congonhas	39,325
Sapporo-Tokyo	38,389
Los Angeles-San Francisco	34,897

Brisbane-Sydney	33,765
Cape Town-Johannesburg	31,914
Beijing-Shanghai	30,029

The busiest **international** air routes were:

Hong Kong-Taipei	29,494
Kuala Lumpur-Singapore	29,383
Jakarta-Singapore	26,872
Jakarta-Kuala Lumpur	20,890
Hong Kong-Shanghai	20,818
New York La Guardia-Toronto	17,116
Hong Kong-Seoul Incheon	16,366
Beijing-Hong Kong	14,592
Dublin-London Heathrow	14,556
Bangkok-Singapore	14,455

Domestic

An agreement has been signed between QantasLink and Transport for NSW for services to **Lord Howe Island** for four years, commencing after the existing agreement expires in March 2018. QantasLink will continue to provide up to 19 return flights from Sydney each week with Q200 aircraft. The NSW government is committing \$450,000 to investigate a runway extension on the Island,

Thanks to Tony Bailey, *Age* and *Courier-Mail* for Air news.

About Table Talk

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

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

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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.