



# TABLE TALK

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## TOP TABLE TALK - SYDNEY DEVELOPMENTS

### Sydney rail map



Graphic: NSW government

The Sydney rail map has been redesigned. Since a "T system" was introduced as part of an overhaul of the rail timetable in 2013, much of the misunderstanding when reading the map has been about the T1 line because it encompasses the Western, Northern and North Shore lines. In an attempt to make it easier for users, the T1 Northern Line is renamed the T9 Northern Line from 28 April. As well, it will drop yellow for a distinct red, and extend from Hornsby to Gordon via Epping, and Sydney's central business district. The Metro North West line will also make its first appearance on Sydney's rail map in its trademark aqua – the same colour in which its driverless, single-deck trains are painted. Transport for NSW said the map redesign was aimed at making it easier for customers by reducing the complex information about existing services such as the T1 trains.

### Sydney Metro to the west

By Matt O'Sullivan, Sydney Morning Herald, 22 February

Sydney developers, councils and residents have been in the dark for months about where stations will be built for a new \$18 billion-plus metro rail line between Parramatta and central Sydney. But mapping of geotechnical investigations over the past year for the project gives some insight into where the state's transport bureaucrats are looking to build stations and the alignment of the line along which driverless, single-deck trains will run.

The amount of drilling at Zetland in the south east suggests the government is serious about extending the line there from the CBD, boosting transport links to the fast-growing Green Square precinct. But some industry insiders say Zetland could be used as an entry point for tunnelling for the mostly underground

line, and provisions made for a station to be built there in the longer term.

In the city's inner west, the high number of geotechnical investigations at North Strathfield indicates it will be favoured over Concord West as a station site. Those named on a list of potential sites for "intermediate stations" announced in March last year, were Pyrmont; Kings Bay; North Burwood or Five Dock; and Camellia or Rydalmere. Using the amount of geotech work as a measure, Five Dock is likely to beat North Burwood. Six investigations have been carried out at Five Dock while there have been three north of Parramatta Road in what is regarded as Concord, rather than Burwood proper.

Further west, a spot near the existing Camellia station has twice undergone investigations, while drilling has been carried out once at a car park near Victoria Road at Rydalmere. If a station was built at either, insiders say Camellia is considered more likely, partly because Rydalmere's location north of the Parramatta River would mean either a tunnel or a bridge would have to be built to cross the waterway. The government has also given its clearest indication that it favours Camellia, a suburb once dominated by heavy industry, as the site of a large stabling yard for the metro trains.

Beyond doubt are those locations that the government has committed to building stations at: Westmead, Parramatta, Olympic Park, the Bays Precinct at Rozelle and the Sydney CBD. In the CBD, a station under Hunter St, linking Wynyard and Martin Place is considered most likely. Geotech investigations have twice been conducted at Hunter St, most recently this month. Another station in the southern part of the CBD is also considered likely. While geotech work has not been conducted recently elsewhere in the central city, government documents show several sites at Central Station have been on the drawing board for Metro West.

Transport for NSW said in a statement that the drilling work was taking place to "better understand geological conditions" but no decision had been made on station locations. "Such data is required for both potential station locations and possible tunnel alignment," it said. "Sydney Metro has been able to utilise a great deal of existing geological information and the current program of drilling will simply fill in the gaps." Transport

insiders say that a significant amount of drilling for soil samples in a suburb does not guarantee it will become the site of a station. The investigations are conducted to prove, or disprove, a suburb's geological suitability for construction of a station.

The Berejiklian government will release more details about Sydney Metro West ahead of the election on March 23, including the likely timing of construction, and the final number of stations and their locations if it wins. Labor has said it would consider a station near Sydney University if it wins.

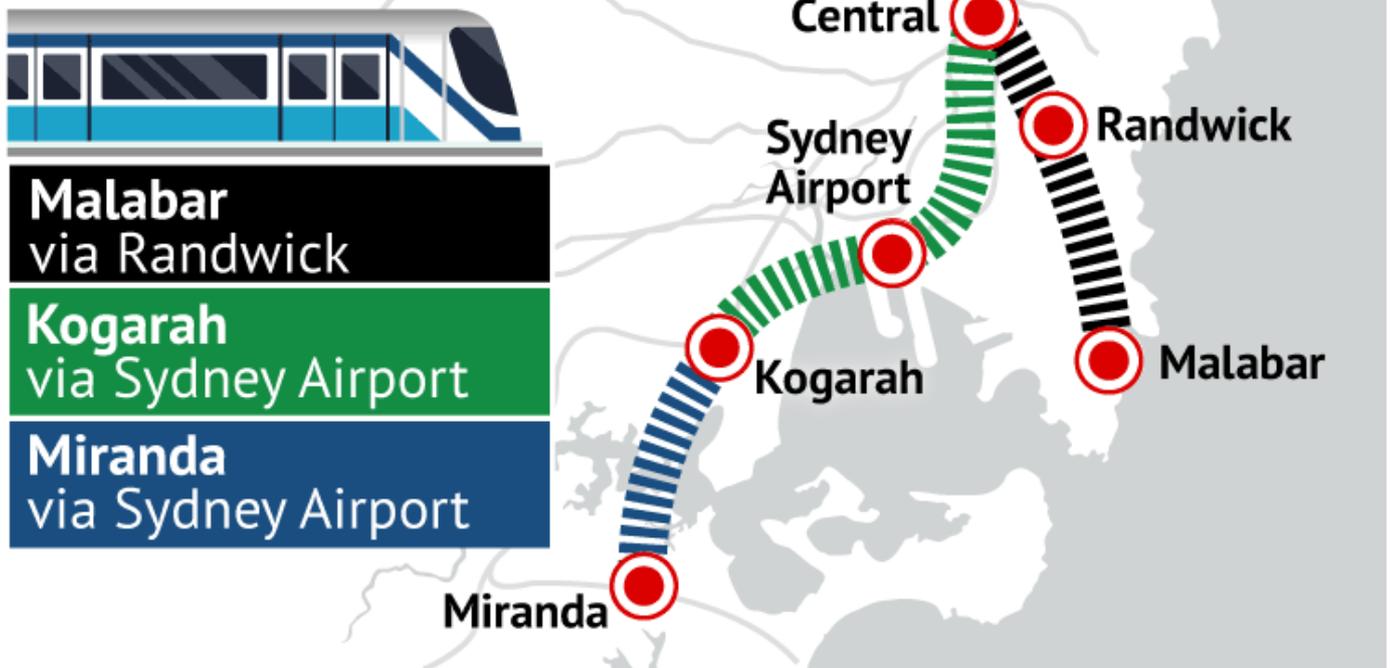
### **Sydney Metro to the east?**

The proposed Sydney Metro, from Parramatta to the CBD, could be extended eastwards to Malabar via Randwick or to Miranda in the Sutherland Shire via Sydney Airport. Aside from high-frequency train services, internal Transport for NSW documents say that some of the key objectives underpinning decisions on an eastern extension of the line are "unlocking urban renewal opportunities" and "enhancing housing supply". They show the four "strategic options" developed for an eastern extension of the line that focus "on the south-east and Illawarra" are from the CBD to Kogarah via Sydney Airport; Miranda via the airport; Malabar via Randwick; and a line branching off to both Malabar and Kogarah.

Transport sources say a conversion of the existing Airport line to carry single-deck metro trains is considered the cheapest and least disruptive option for extending the metro line. Single-deck metro trains are considered more suited to travellers lugging baggage to and from the airport. "[A metro line from] Kogarah via Sydney Airport makes the most sense because it's the cheapest option. They could roll it out in a single term of government because they could convert the existing heavy rail," a transport source said.

But Transport Minister Andrew Constance said any prospect of extending Sydney Metro West to the city's east was well over a decade away. "Our focus is only to the west right now given the state of the T1 Western Line," he said. "Our priority is to get [Sydney Metro] City and South West built, get Metro West and Western Sydney Airport Metro underway."

## Sydney metro possible extension



Graphic: Sydney Morning Herald

## RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

### Rail projects

Infrastructure Australia's Infrastructure Priority List, released on 14 February, includes six new or updated rail initiatives. There are now 54 rail-related projects and initiatives among the 124 on the list. The new rail-related initiatives are:

1. A Priority Initiative for the duplication of eight kms between Dandenong and Cranbourne, to which the Victorian government has already committed \$750 million to deliver by 2023.
2. A Priority Initiative for a new station at Greensborough, and duplicate sections of track along the Hurstbridge line at a cost of \$530 million.
3. An initiative concerning container terminal capacity at Melbourne was updated to include the near-time landside transport initiatives needed to support capacity growth, "including road and rail access from metropolitan, regional and national networks".
4. Stage 3A of the Gold Coast's G:link light rail line between Broadbeach and Burleigh Heads. The Federal government in November 2018 committed \$112 million to the project, and the

Queensland government is progressing with the plan.

5. Transport connectivity between Morley and Ellenbrook, the third of Perth's Metronet urban rail projects added, joining the Yanchep rail extension, as High Priority Projects, and the Thornlie-Cockburn Link, a Priority Project.
6. Also in Perth, a new Priority Initiative is to improve the Canning Bridge public transport interchange, to improve public transport patronage and reduce impact on the adjacent road network. Canning Bridge station is on the Mandurah Line.

### Aurizon: Intermodal sale to Linfox

Aurizon has completed the sale of its Queensland Intermodal business to Linfox, nearly four months after the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission said it wouldn't block the move. The Queensland Intermodal business has roughly 300 customers across the state, including supermarkets and retailers. The sale price was reported in October as \$7.3 million. As part of the sale, Linfox acquires leases and access to freight terminals in Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Emerald and Longreach. The company has also taken ownership of a fleet of trucks,

trailers and rail wagons for intermodal containers, along with heavy lift equipment like forklifts and gantry cranes. Aurizon's bulk business will provide Linfox with rail linehaul services between Brisbane and Cairns under a separate 10-year hook and pull contract, and Aurizon transferred roughly 120 employees from Queensland Intermodal into its Bulk business to deliver this.

### **Queensland Rail: Floods**

Record heavy rain in early February caused cancellation of Cairns-Kuranda tourist trains and the Spirit of Queensland coastal train Cairns-Brisbane and v.v. Alternative road arrangements were not possible. Queensland Rail reopened the North Coast line south of Townsville on 9 February, after crews repaired 16 kms of track and repacked 1,500 tonnes of ballast in just three days. Further recovery work north of Townsville allowed for the full reopening of the North Coast Line on 14 February.

By 2 February, the Townsville-Mt Isa line was inundated near Nelia, 599.5 km from Townsville, near Julia Creek. A Pacific National mineral train was tipped over by the floodwaters. QR is unable to determine a timeline for a return to services for the Mt Isa line. QR chief executive Nick Easy said reopening the line for those who rely on the supply chain was a top priority. There is damage across 307 kms of track, with extreme erosion at 204 sites, including roughly 40 kms of major track washouts and 20 kms of track scouring.

Easy said debris removal had begun on track at Richmond, and ballast trains and crews were positioned at Cloncurry and Hughenden, with 5,000 sleepers delivered to both sites for repair works to begin as soon as possible. The PN train which was caught up in the flooding will also be addressed by QR crews when possible.

### **Queensland Rail: Citytrain**

All 75 trains in the QR NGR (New Generation Rollingstock) fleet have new faults and are being towed to Walker's in Maryborough to be fixed at a total cost of \$5m. It is not yet clear if this will have an impact on QR's existing timetables. QR's website states "From January 2019, any NGR technical faults which impact Queensland Rail's on-time running or reliability will not be considered force majeure in the below data." Presumably this means that data from this PPP (Private Public Partnership) project will be separated from reliability data of the rest of the QR fleet and the partners will be held accountable. Train reliability data

relating to QR Citytrain operations is at <https://www.queenslandrail.com.au/forcustomers/otr/dailyotr> and at <https://www.queenslandrail.com.au/aboutus/ourperformance/service-punctuality-and-reliability>

### **Coal exports**

On 20 February, Swiss mining giant Glencore, the biggest coal miner in Australia, announced that it will freeze production at current levels to address climate change concerns. In the long term, this may reduce the number of coal trains in the Hunter Valley coal network.

In late February, China seemed to be rejecting Australian coal imports. At the time of writing, the reason and duration were unclear. However if this remains, it will have a short and long-term effect on coal trains on both major coal networks, Hunter Valley and Central Queensland.

### **Aurizon dispute**

Workers at Aurizon struck on 5 February in the first of a series of 24-hour stoppages this week aimed at disrupting coal transport services. The Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU), which represents the striking workers, is protesting against a lack of progress in negotiations for a new wages agreement with the company.

### **Newcastle Tram**

The Newcastle Tram from the new Newcastle Interchange station to Newcastle Beach, 2.7 km, commenced regular operation on Monday 18 February. The preceding day, 17 February was a celebratory Community Day. Regular operation on weekdays is from 0505, weekends 0515, until 0057. Running time is 12 minutes. Frequency is every ten to 15 minutes, except on Sunday evenings when the frequency is every 30 minutes. Effectively one will have to be at the Newcastle Beach stop 30 minutes before the departure of a Sydney or Maitland train from Wickham. A through journey of 5 to 6 minutes will become one of 30 minutes allowing for waiting and a longer journey time. The timetable is available at <https://transportnsw.info/routes/lightrail> and from the ATA March Distribution List. (portion illustrated next page).

On 17 February additional trains ran from Telarah to Newcastle at 0931, 1031, 1131 and 1525, with return workings at about 1029, 1424, 1528 and 1620 for the Community Day.



consortium comprising CAF, UGL Rail Services, Pacific Partnerships, CAF Investment Projects and DIF Infrastructure V Coöperatief. The contract includes project financing, designing, building and maintaining the new regional rail fleet as well as designing, building, maintaining and operating the new purpose-built fleet maintenance facility in Dubbo.

There will be economy class with two by two seating and premium class with a two by one layout. Trains for longer regional journeys will include buffet cars and will be more comfortable for those who require wheelchair access. There is no mention of sleeping cars. The trains will be:

- Ten three-car "regional intercity" trains for shorter trips. These will replace the 14 two-car Endeavour DMUs currently used for routes in the Hunter Valley, Southern Highlands, the Illawarra and from Sydney to Bathurst.
- Nine three-car "regional" trains which will replace the 23 Xplorer DMUs currently running medium to long distances from Sydney to Armidale, Moree, Canberra, Griffith and Broken Hill in sets of between two and four cars.
- Ten six-car "regional" trains which will replace the XPT fleet of 19 power cars and 60 passenger carriages used for longer trips to Dubbo, Grafton, Casino and the interstate runs to Melbourne and Brisbane.

They will be powered by engines producing fewer emissions than the current fleet. The first new trains will enter service in 2023, eight years after the NSW government first announced its intention to acquire the trains.

### **NSW TrainLink: South Coast line improvements**

NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance on 20 February announced a number of improvements to South Coast line services. Wollongong will get a train every 15 minutes during peak hour, and all trains will be ten carriages - but not for two years. Off-peak services will run every 30 minutes. Weekend services to Kiama will double to 22 trains from 1 January 2020. There will be more express trains from Wollongong. "We're now going to have an express train every 15 minutes out of Wollongong in the morning and afternoon peaks," Mr Constance said. The two-year wait for this upgrade was because it would be delivered via the New Intercity Fleet, which is now being built.

### **NSW TrainLink: Additional Bathurst train**

A second local train every day will operate from Bathurst to Sydney and return from next year, according to an announcement by the local state MP in mid-February. The additional train will depart Bathurst on weekdays at about 0730, and the return will depart Sydney at about 1500. Weekend times are not yet determined. (Times of the existing Bathurst train are: Weekdays: Bathurst depart weekdays 0546, Sydney arrive 0925, Sydney 1747, Bathurst 2132; Weekends

Bathurst 0740, Sydney 1118, Sydney1751, Bathurst 2134).

### **NSW TrainLink: Southern Highlands**

A new paper timetable for the Southern Highlands line has been issued dated September 2018, but it is not clear what the changes are. Those services operated by bus are not designated as such.

### **NSW TrainLink promises**

The National Party has promised, as part of its campaign for the NSW election on 23 March, that rural pensioners will receive an annual \$250 card for petrol, taxis or travel on NSW TrainLink.

They have promised new bus services between Goombooga and Lightning Ridge via Dubbo; Trunkey Creek to Bathurst; Goondiwindi to Inverell via Boggabilla, Toomelah, North Star, Yetman and Ashford; Conargo to Echuca via Deniliquin; Cabramurra to Cooma; Cowra, Murrumbidgee, Boorowa to Canberra.

### **Transport for NSW: Wollongong line promise**

The NSW Opposition has made one of its biggest promises of the State election campaign with a \$2.4 billion plan to upgrade the railway from Sydney to the Illawarra. Labor will shelve plans for the F6 toll road and divert money to improve the T4, or Illawarra, line, including preparation for a tunnel between Thirroul and Waterfall. A standard trip between the coast and Sydney takes an hour and a half, and the improvements would remove at least 15–20 minutes from that journey. The tunnel could cost an additional \$3 billion.

### **John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network: WTT 28 April**

The JHR NSW CRN WTT of 28 April is available at <http://www.jhrcrn.com.au/what-we-do/network-operations-access/standard-working-timetable-swtt/> All changes relate to the NSW Western line:

#### **Amendments**

**4835** (PNRB 900m) for -M---- will run as tabled by ARTC to pass CRN/ARTC Boundary Main Line - Narromine 0307 Tue, pass Trangie 0349, arrive Nevertire 0429, depart 0439, arrive Nyngan 0547, depart 0632, arrive Hermitage 0740 – forms 8436

**8436** (PNRB 900m) for --T---- will depart Hermitage 1400, arrive Nyngan 1510, depart 0059, arrive Nevertire 0207, depart 0217, pass Trangie 0256, CRN/ARTC Boundary Main Line - Narromine 0334 thence as tabled by ARTC

**9837** (PNRB 850m) for -M-W--- will run as previously tabled to pass Hermitage 2225, pass Wallerawang 2242, arrive Rydal 2253, depart 2308, pass Tarana 2329, Raglan 0004, arrive Bathurst 0015, depart 0020, Newbridge 0111, Murrobo 0130, Blayney 0133, Polona 0146, Spring Hill 0154, Orange East Fork Jct 0204, Molong 0237, arrive Manildra 0302 – forms 8938

**8938** (PNRB 850m) for ---T-- will depart Manildra 1217, pass Molong 1253, Borenore 1321, arrive Orange East Fork Jct 1359, depart 1404, pass Spring Hill 1422, Polona 1432, Blayney 1441, Murrobo 1445,

Newbridge 1504, Wimbeldon 1515, arrive Bathurst 1540, depart 1545, pass Kelso 1555, Raglan 1606, Tarana 1645, Wallerawang 1723, Coxs River 1725, Hermitage 1740 thence as previously tabled (will now match Tuesday)

**9837** (PNRB 850m) for ----F- will run as previously tabled to pass Hermitage 2225, pass Wallerawang 2242, arrive Rydal 2253, depart 2308, pass Tarana 2329, Raglan 0004, arrive Bathurst 0015, depart 0020, Newbridge 0111, Murrobo 0130, Blayney 0133, Polona 0146, Spring Hill 0154, Orange East Fork Jct 0204, Molong 0237, arrive Manildra 0302 – forms 8136

**1837** (PNRB 640m) for --T---- will run as previously tabled to pass Hermitage 0135 *Wed*, pass Wallerawang 0150, Tarana 0219, Raglan 0254, arrive Bathurst 0305, depart 0310, pass Newbridge 0401, Murrobo 0420, Blayney 0423, Polona 0436, Spring Hill 0444, arrive Orange East Fork Jct 0455, depart 0500, pass Molong 0535, arrive Manildra 0601 – forms 8138

**8138** (PNRB 640m) for ---W--- will depart Manildra 1542, pass Molong 1618, arrive Orange East Fork Jct 1724, depart 1729, pass Spring Hill 1747, Polona 1757, Blayney 1806, Murrobo 1810, Newbridge 1829, arrive Bathurst 1905, depart 1915, pass Raglan 1936, Tarana 2015, arrive Rydal 2041, depart 2050, pass Wallerawang 2105, Hermitage 2122 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

**8148** (SSH 1280m) for --T-T-- will run as previously tabled to pass Bathurst 2245, depart 2250, pass Raglan 2309, Tarana 2348, arrive Rydal 0014, depart 0029, pass Wallerawang 0044, Hermitage 0101 thence as previously tabled

**8148** (SSH 1280m) for -----S will run as tabled by ARTC to pass CRN/ARTC Boundary Main Line - Dubbo MW 1745, pass Geurie 1817, Wellington 1847, Stuart Town 1933, Orange 2054, Orange East Fork Jct 2058, Spring Hill 2115, Polona 2125, Blayney 2134, Murrobo 2138, Newbridge 2157, Bathurst 2233, Raglan 2251, Tarana 2330, Wallerawang 0008, Hermitage 0025 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

**1YN2** (PNIN 1100m) for S----- will run as previously tabled to pass Raglan 1805 *Mon*, Tarana 1841, arrive Rydal 1903, depart 1915, pass Wallerawang 1928, arrive Hermitage 1945 thence run as previously tabled

**6SP7** (PNIN 1500m) for -----F- will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 2352, arrive Wallerawang 0005, depart 0015, pass Tarana 0048, Bathurst 0135, Newbridge 0215, Murrobo 0231, Blayney 0234, Polona 0244, Spring Hill 0251, arrive Orange East Fork Jct 0301, depart 0306, pass Molong 0339, Manildra 0400, Parkes 0504, CRN/ARTC Boundary Main Line - Parkes 0508 thence run as tabled by ARTC

**1845** (SSH 900m) for S----- will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 0845, pass Wallerawang 0900, Tarana 0929, Raglan 1004, arrive Kelso 1010 – shunt to Siding, forms 8146

**8146** (SSH 900m) for S----- will depart Kelso 1720, arrive Bathurst 1730, depart 1815, pass Raglan 1836, Tarana 1915 Wallerawang 1953, arrive Hermitage 2010 – terminate

**1845** (SSH 900m) for -M----- will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 1428, arrive Wallerawang 1444, depart 1448, pass Tarana 1520,

Raglan 1555, arrive Kelso 1600 – shunt to Siding, forms 8146

**8146** (SSH 900m) for -M----- will depart Kelso 2250, arrive Bathurst 2300, depart 2350, pass Raglan 0011, Tarana 0050, Wallerawang 0128, arrive Hermitage 0145 – terminate

**1845** (SSH 900m) for --T---- will depart Hermitage 2248, arrive Wallerawang 2304, depart 2315, pass Tarana 2346, Raglan 0021, arrive Kelso 0026 – shunt to Siding, stable

**8146** (SSH 900m) for ---W--- will depart Kelso 1845, arrive Bathurst 1855, depart 2011, pass Raglan 2031 thence as previously tabled

**1845** (SSH 900m) for ----T-- will run as tabled by Sydney Trains to pass Hermitage 1428, arrive Wallerawang 1444, depart 1448, pass Tarana 1520, Raglan 1555, arrive Kelso 1600 – shunt to Siding, forms 8146

**8146** (SSH 900m) for ----T-- will depart Kelso 2230, arrive Bathurst 2240, depart 2333, pass Raglan 2354, Tarana 0033, Wallerawang 0111, Hermitage 0128 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

**8146** (SSH 900m) for -----S will depart Kelso 1020, arrive Bathurst 1030, depart 1120, pass Raglan 1140, Tarana 1219, Wallerawang 1257, Hermitage 1315 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

**8102** (SYT 301m) for ----T-- will shunt ex G Frame to Bathurst Loop 1650, depart Bathurst 1750, pass Raglan 1811, Tarana 1850, Wallerawang 1928, Hermitage 1944 thence as tabled by Sydney Trains

**1821** (PNRB 640m) for S----- will run as previously tabled to arrive Coxs River 0055 *Mon* depart 0057, arrive Wallerawang 0102, depart 0132, pass Tarana 0203, Raglan 0238, arrive Kelso 0245 – shunt to Siding, forms 8122

**1821** (PNRB 640m) for -----S will run as previously tabled to pass Hermitage 0357, pass Wallerawang 0412, Tarana 0445, Raglan 0520, arrive Kelso 0525 – shunt to Siding, forms 8122.

### Additions

**8849** (SSH 500m) for -M----- will run as tabled by ARTC to pass CRN/ARTC Boundary Main Line - Narromine 1155, Trangie 1237, arrive Nevertire 1317, depart 1327, pass Nyngan 1434, arrive Hermidale 1540 – forms 8840

**8840** (SSH 500m) for -M----- will depart Hermidale 2020, pass Nyngan 2127, arrive Nevertire 2233, depart 2243, pass

Trangie 2322, CRN/ARTC Boundary Main Line - Narromine 0000 thence as tabled by ARTC.

### Deletion

**D801** (SCT L/ENG) for -M----- .

## John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network: Wheat line upgrade

The NSW government has announced the expenditure of almost \$30 million to upgrade 87 km from Temora (489 from Sydney) to Calleen (576 from Sydney beyond West Wyalong). The \$28.6 million Fixing Country Rail grant will allow increases in weight and speed for freight trains. The maximum axle load will be increased, allowing the gross wagon tonnage to increase from 84 tonnes to 100 tonnes per wagon.

## Canberra Metro

Construction of the Canberra tramway, 12 km, is complete. All 14 trams have been delivered. Testing is underway. Unconfirmed reports suggest that services will commence on 27 April to coincide with the new Canberra bus network, but other unconfirmed reports suggest the tram will commence operation in late March or early April.

## Metro Trains Melbourne: Stony Point

From an unknown date the Fridays only additional trains, 2007 and 2140 Frankston-Stony Point, and 2056 and 2232 Stony Point-Frankston, have operated on Mondays to Fridays. The Stony Point line is Metro Trains' only non-electrified line. It is operated with Sprinter DMUs provided by V/Line.

## V/Line: Increased and altered services 31 March

### Shepparton and Seymour trains and buses

From Monday 1 April, there will be ten extra weekday services on the Shepparton line each week. An early morning Seymour train will commence from Shepparton at 0553, arriving in Melbourne before 0900. Two extra trains have been added – a train with buffet from Shepparton to Southern Cross Station departing at 0953 stopping all stations except Tallarook, Heathcote Junction and Donnybrook, and a new weekday peak service from Melbourne to Seymour, departing Southern Cross Station at 1602 stopping all stations except Tallarook and Heathcote Junction.

Some Seymour train journey times will increase by up to three minutes and Shepparton train journey times will increase by up to five minutes to reflect actual running times, incorporating permanent speed restrictions. A weekday, Saturday and Sunday service on the Seymour line will now be scheduled to run as sprinter trains, reducing journey times by 5-7 minutes on those services.

The new timetable will be available online at [ptv.vic.gov.au](http://ptv.vic.gov.au) and at staffed V/Line stations from 1 March.

This follows completion of stabling upgrades at Shepparton enabling two trains to be stored there overnight. Work is now underway on stage two of the Shepparton line upgrade, which will allow VLocity trains to operate on the line reducing travel time by 20 minutes. Work has started to upgrade Wallan and Donnybrook stations.

The 0650 weekday bus from Tocumwal to Shepparton will depart at 0630, connecting with the retimed 1014 train from Seymour to Southern Cross. The 0755 bus from Seymour to Shepparton will no longer run because of the new train service.

Bus timetables to and from Albury-Wodonga, Barmah, Alexandra, Cobram-Tocumwal-Griffith and Echuca-Moama will be reissued to reflect changes to connecting trains.

## Waurm Ponds trains and Lorne bus

From 31 March the 1733 train from Melbourne to Waurm Ponds will be altered to depart at 1732 and will have one minute additional journey time. The 1806 train from Waurm Ponds to Melbourne will be altered to depart at 1805 and have one minute additional journey time. Six train services will have altered arrival and departure times at some or all stations. To improve journey times through the section of track shared with Bendigo and Ballarat trains.

Buses between Apollo Bay, Lorne and Geelong will stop at Waurm Ponds Shopping Centre. Consequently, there will be 9-11 minutes additional journey time. The Grovedale stop will be relocated to Pioneer Road.

## Grampians bus

From 31 March there will be an additional bus service from Stawell to and from Halls Gap each day. Additional stops will be introduced and some existing stops renamed.

## New timetables

V/Line has issued 11 new pocket timetables for service alterations from 31 March.

Apollo Bay - Melbourne

Geelong - Melbourne

Halls Gap - Melbourne Grampians Link

Daylesford - Melbourne via Woodend, via Ballarat

Echuca - Melbourne including Deniliquin

Barmah - Melbourne

Albury - Melbourne via Wodonga

Cobram, Tocumwal, Griffith - Melbourne

Shepparton - Melbourne including Cobram, Tocumwal and Griffith

Alexandra - Melbourne via Seymour

Seymour - Melbourne

These timetables are included in the March 2019 ATA Distribution List.

## V/Line: Geelong proposal

Geelong City Council is endorsing a report offering options for cutting travel time between Geelong and Melbourne to 32 minutes, proposing billion-dollar tunnels between Melbourne and Footscray, and sky rail along Geelong Road in Melbourne. It would require two 7 km tunnels from West Footscray to Southern Cross station passing under the Maribyrnong River costing \$1.57 billion, and twin 2 km tunnels through Sunshine costing \$546 million and Sky rail or rail under road at Ardeer. Geelong Mayor Bruce Harwood said he had sought a meeting with Transport Minister Jacinta Allan to discuss the report.

## V/Line: Ararat direct link

From 18 February a direct link was brought into use at Ararat, enabling trains to operate direct from the Maroona direction through Ararat to Maryborough, avoiding the need for freight trains to proceed to and from Pyrenees Loop and reverse there. On 18 February V/Line Ararat trains only operated to/from Wendouree to enable the works to be completed.

Following this, the schedules for the V/Line portion of freight trains to/from Merbein is now:

	<b>Wed, Fri</b>	<b>Tue, Thur</b>	<b>Sat</b>
Ararat East Jnc	0110	0155	0255
Maryborough	0410-0515	0455-0505	0555-0600
Dunoilly	0553-0555	0553-0555	0638-0640
Donald	0735-0820	0735-0820	0820-0905
Ouyen	1124-1129	1124-1129	1209-1214
Merbein	1315	1315	1400

	<b>Sun</b>	<b>Mon to Thur</b>
Merbein	1600	2040
Ouyen	1752-1757	2232-2237
Donald	2112-2157	0152-0237
Dunolly	2335-2340	0415-0420
Maryborough	0015-0020	0455-0505
Ararat East Jnc	0330	0825

### **Melbourne: More level crossings removal**

Major works have commenced to remove three level crossings around Carrum on the Frankston line. There will be 900 metres of elevated railway, and a rebuilt Carrum station. The elevated rail is expected to open in early 2020. In the meantime, a temporary track will be built so trains can continue to run – however Carrum station will be closed during construction, with buses provided.

A rail bridge will be built to remove the level crossing on Toorak Road in Kooyong which is a major bottleneck. This is one of Melbourne’s busiest and most congested roads, with the boom gates down 35% of the morning peak, which will grow as more trains are introduced. This design avoids the need for buses to replace trains on the busy Glen Waverley line for an extended period and which is used by 160,000 people each week. The Victorian government says that building a road underpass beneath the line, or road bridge above it, is not possible due to the area’s topography and proximity to the Monash Freeway.

### **Victor Harbor Horse Tram temporarily cancelled**

The Victor Harbor Horse Tram has been temporarily suspended upon advice from the SA Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI). Following an incident on New Year’s Day where a pylon on the heritage listed causeway partially gave way, DPTI have undertaken a condition assessment of the causeway to determine the extent of the damage. There is deterioration of a small number of piles at different locations along the structure. As a

precautionary measure, the horse tram service has been suspended.

The Clydesdale horses will still be at the stables near the Causeway daily so visitors can meet them and take photos.

### **Genesee and Wyoming Australia: Eyre Peninsula lines**

The current contract between GWA and grain handler Viterra expires in April. Future grain handling on the Eyre Peninsula, SA, is uncertain. GWA has invited staff, particularly drivers, at Port Lincoln, to apply for redundancy. At present about 750,000 tonnes of grain is railed to Port Lincoln annually.

Gypsum haulage between Kevin and Thevenard will increase. A rolling stock maintenance facility will be established at Thevenard. This means the line between Thevenard and Wudinna will no longer be required to transfer locomotives and wagons to Port Lincoln for maintenance, and so is likely to close.

### **Transwa: Bunbury services disrupted.**

Bunbury line Australind trains did not fare well in February. All trains were replaced by buses from 12 to 22 February “due to a mechanical issue”, and then from 23 to 28 February when Arc Infrastructure replaced two bridges near Burekup.

### **WA wheat harvest**

WA grain handler CBH Group says it’s completed its second biggest harvest on record, with 16.4 million tonnes of grain received across its network throughout the 2018/19 season. The large crop, which is in stark contrast to the drought-stricken grain harvest in the east, broke multiple records. The Kwinana Zone recorded 8 million tonnes of grain delivered, beating the record from 2013/14 of 7.5 million tonnes. In all, 25 sites broke season receival records. 17 sites across the Kwinana Zone broke daily receival records.

### **Metlink: Wellington alterations**

From Monday 25 February there are minor changes to the Kapiti line timetable to increase capacity during the morning peak, and to improve punctuality of peak services. Demand for rail services has grown and is well above forecast growth with an increase of 7% this year.

**Additional Service:** The 0646 Waikanae to Wellington service is a permanent addition to the timetable.

**Changes to services:** Two Plimmerton services have been cut back to Porirua. This is to resolve consistent delays caused by congestion on the line. The 0703 Plimmerton to Wellington train will commence from Porirua at 0711. The 1539 Wellington to Plimmerton service will become a Porirua service departing Wellington at 1541.

Several services have had changes made to departure times from stations to create a more accurate timetable.

## KiwiRail Marsden Point line

KiwiRail says the first stage of planning is complete for a 20 km branch to Northport at Marsden Point, north of Auckland. Workers have spent the last three months drilling into hills, land and coastal areas to understand the challenges of building what would be NZ's first new significant branch line in over half a century.

The next planning stages include further work along the route to advance the design of the line and prepare for the next phases of the project. "Concurrently we are looking at how we can upgrade the North Auckland line between Auckland and Oakleigh," KiwiRail acting CEO Todd Moyle said. "The tunnels on that line are old, low and narrow. We have had two significant

derailments on the line in recent months due to a lack of funding for maintenance. It has been unable to carry passengers for the past year and freight options are restricted. This is the result of low freight volumes on the line and KiwiRail needing to spend its limited capital where the most freight flows."

**Thanks** to Paul Brown, Dale Budd, Hilaire Fraser, Steven Haby, Victor Isaacs, Ross Morrison, James Ng, Len Regan, Tris Tottenham, Roger Wheaton, *Catchpoint*, [www.railexpress.com.au](http://www.railexpress.com.au), [www.railpage.com.au](http://www.railpage.com.au). *Railway Digest*, *Australian*, *Newcastle Herald*, *Sydney Morning Herald* for Rail news.

## RECOMMENDED READING

"The Geraldton Iron Ores", by Phil Melling, *Railway Digest*, February 2019, pages 36-41. Details the operation of iron ore trains in the Geraldton, WA area in recent years, and currently.

## ODD SPOT

The *European Rail Timetable* has been informed that they might have to change the .eu domain name when Britain leaves the EU. They chose the .eu domain as it fitted in with the company name and assumed .eu stood for Europe, but apparently it stands for European Union.

It is quite unfair to look up a line that does not have regular services. Nevertheless, it was fun. A check on

7 February of the PTV site for the Flemington Racecourse line showed one train in one direction only on one day of the year. The timetable showed a train at 0509 from the racecourse to Flinders St on Australia Day.

**Thanks** to *Friday Flyer* (newsletter of *European Rail Timetable*) and Victor Isaacs for Odd Spot.

## LETTER TO THE EDITORS

**Albert Isaacs** writes:

The February *Table Talk* includes an illustration of part of PT>'s new website showing a list of various Route 1 buses from places right across Victoria. Nevertheless, the accompanying *Table Talk* article mainly deals with the map section of the new website, and does not really cover the TT section, nor does it explain the unusual illustration.

If one goes to <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/timetables>, and clicks onto "Bus" and then goes to "Select line or route", you'll see that all Victorian routes are listed chronologically. Unfortunately this means that we actually have 21 different Route 1s from right across the State! Although every Route 1 appears to be listed, the Route 1s are not alphabetical and they're not even geographical – they appear to be listed at random! After the highest numbered route (929), there's a list of routes without numbers that does appear to be alphabetical.

There are worse problems if one compares the present website with the one that it replaces, which was quite user-friendly. To get to the TTs one requires, one has to press about twice as many buttons as one used to.

Whilst conceding that many people would use the TT section for finding their next train, tram or bus, there is also a large group of people who use the website for preparing for a trip at some time in the future. For those planning an immediate trip the new website is adequate, but if one is preparing for a prospective trip, the new website poses problems. When you press the "later" button for TTs other than the next eight journeys, it takes much longer than it used to bring up trips for the rest of that day. If one is planning a journey for the next day, or even further into the future, the new website poses bigger difficulties, as there doesn't appear to be a way of changing the date of TTs. The easiest way to do such planning is: a) download the PDF file and go through the whole of the weekly TT, or; b) click on the "more" button at the top of the website, and scroll down to "Back to our old website".

The author of this item is a rail enthusiast, and if he has problems navigating the new website, one can only imagine the difficulties for those not as familiar with the Melbourne public transport system as he.

To summarise the new PT> website, I have used a thesaurus which helps me to describe it as: ridiculous, ludicrous, preposterous, absurd, silly, outlandish, bizarre and nonsensical!

# BUS NEWS

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### Forest Coachlines

Minor timetable updates took effect from 28 January across their Sydney network mainly with additional wheelchair vehicles introduced.

### Newcastle changes

In conjunction with the opening of the Newcastle Light Rail on 18 February the following bus services now terminate in the vicinity of Newcastle Interchange, Wickham instead of Customs House Interchange adjacent to the former Newcastle station:

- 130, 131 Newcastle-Fingal Bay operated by Port Stephens Coaches.
- 138,140, 266 Newcastle to Lemon Tree Passage, Raymond Terrace, West Wallsend operated by Hunter Valley Buses.
- 160 Newcastle to Cessnock operated by Rover Motors.

### Port Macquarie changes

Busways Port Macquarie introduced additional wheelchair services on ten of their routes from 11 February.

### Ulladulla Bus Lines

Ulladulla Bus Lines was acquired by Bus Lines Group in late December 2018.

## VICTORIA

### V/Line alterations

Alterations to V/Line services in the North-east, South-west and Grampians areas from 31 March are detailed in Rail news above.

### Sita acquired by Transit Systems

One of Melbourne's largest bus companies, Sita Bus Lines / Sita Coaches has been acquired by Transit Systems which operates in NSW, South Australia, NT and overseas. Sita Bus Lines operates a network of routes in Melbourne's western suburbs including the popular 402 Footscray – East Melbourne service. This

only affects the Sita Footscray operations and not other bus companies operated by the Sita family.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### Adelaide bus tenders called

The Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure have called tenders for the operation of Adelaide's bus routes. Tenders close at 1400, 28 February. It is believed that there is widespread interest from established interstate bus companies.

### Further Adelaide bus network review

It is expected that a further review of Adelaide bus routes will commence in July 2019. The first review conducted last year focused on low patronage routes and those that parallel existing rail/tram corridors.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### TransPerth changes

The following timetables were updated with the opening of the new Curtin Central Bus Station on 17 February:

- 30 Perth-Curtin Uni via Labouchere Road extended to Curtin Central.
- 34 Perth-Cannington via Como now diverts into Curtin Central.
- 70 Perth-Curtin Uni via Kensington discontinued, replaced by a diversion of route 33 Perth-Karawara via Kensington into Curtin Central.
- 101 Cannington Bridge-Curtin Uni extended to Curtin Central.
- 284 Belmont Forum-Curtin Uni extended to Curtin Central.
- 960 Mirrabooka-Curtin Uni via Perth now diverts into Curtin Central.

**Thanks** to Hilaire Fraser, Steven Haby, Victor Isaacs, Laurie Smit, Richard Talbot, the *Advocate* (Burnie).

# FERRY NEWS

### Brisbane City Council

On Thursday 14 February ferry services (including CityCats, CityFerries and CityHopper) experienced a work stoppage due to protected industrial action by Transdev employees. Services ran to different schedules.

### Port Melbourne – Williamstown trial commuter service

Operated by St Kilda Ferries using MV *Coastal Flyer* this service operated as a trial from 11 February to 22 February. It only operated Monday to Wednesday with the first trip ex Gem Pier at 0700 and the first trip ex Port Melbourne at 0730. Two morning and two afternoon trips operated with the last service ex Port Melbourne at 1730. Tickets were \$7.00 per one way trip.

### Toll upgrades Bass Strait service

The largest Australian flagged container ship MV *Tasmania Achiever II* is to commence service on 1 March between Webb Dock (Melbourne) and Burnie. This new vessel has 40% more capacity than her smaller sisters which has coincided with a significant increase in tonnage exported from Tasmania. This has had a flow on effect with TasRail reporting increases in container traffic. A one way sailing takes 13 hours one hour less than is currently the case.

*Photograph © Simon Sturzaker,*



Meanwhile competitor SeaRoad has flagged plans to introduce a larger vessel to replace the ageing and smaller MV *Searoad Tamar* and has considered lengthening the two-year old MV *Searoad Mersey II*.

**Thanks** to Paul Brown, Steven and the *Advocate* (Burnie) for Ferry news.

## AIR NEWS

### International

**Qantas** is to resume Sydney-Nadi, Fiji flights from 31 March on Tues/Fri/Sat/Sun.

**Air Vanuatu** is to introduce Melbourne-Port Vila flights from 18 June on Tues/Thurs/Sat.

**Air Asia** is looking at flying Perth to Lombok in the second half of 2019.

**SilkAir** will operate four return flights from Singapore to Broome on 13, 17, 20 and 24 June 2019, coinciding with two Broome Turf Club race meetings and the *Staircase to the Moon* natural phenomenon. In 2018 50% of the seats were filled but outbound tickets were limited to one Broome agency. This year they can be booked online or through any travel agency.

**Thanks** to Tris Tottenham and David Whiteford for Air news.

## About *Table Talk*

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