



TABLE TALK

AUSTRALASIAN TIMETABLE NEWS

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TOP TABLE TALK – V/LINE'S WTT 31 MARCH

The V/Line Network Service Plan (Working Timetable) for 31 March is on their website at <https://corporate.vline.com.au/Network-Access/Network-service-plan>

For an unknown reason, the South Western WTT does not include timings at Wyndham Vale, Tarneit, Deer Park, Ardeer and Sunshine. All trains are timed at Manor Junction then Footscray.

The daily 1720 up Albury-Southern Cross, no. 8630, had perhaps the worst schedule of a V/Line passenger train. Formerly it had no less than three crosses, each taking nine minutes, between Seymour and SX. A first glance at the new WTT seems to indicate an improvement as there is only one cross apparently scheduled, at Wallan Loop 2034-2041, for the northbound XPT. Closer inspection shows the improvement is an illusion. Although crosses are no longer indicated in the WTT, there is instead extremely slow running. The train is scheduled to take 20 minutes from Tallarook North End to Tallarook South End, 1952 to 2012, and ten minutes from Donnybrook North End to Donnybrook South End, 2048 to 2058. In fact, the train is now scheduled to arrive at SX even later than formerly, at 2145 instead of 2140. (This is complicated by the V/Line (operator) and ARTC (track controller) Working Timetables having times that vary by a few minutes!).

Max Michell comments: It would seem that the Editor is working off the V/Line WTT times which not only go into a lot more detail than the ARTC timetables but varies by a few minutes overall.

In fact, 8630 crosses MS2 at Tallarook (Mon-Fri), and then waits for MB9 (SCT, Mon - Wed and Sat only) at the same place, waits for the XPT at Wallan and waits for MB4 (Mon - Fri) at Donnybrook. On Thur - Sun there is anything from one to all freight trains missing but the slow schedule still maintains.

A superficial look indicates that putting 8630 back around five mins from Albury, coupled with tweaks to the freights to change the crossing places would in fact allow an arrival (using ARTC's own run times) at around 2120. Of course, while the track is plagued with Temporary Speeds then any timetable (current or improved) would be rather fraught. I am curious what happens on the days when there is less than a full list of freight - does 8630 pick-up time hand over fist or does it simply waddle along to allow the timetable to keep up?

There will be more on this in the June edition of our sister magazine the Times.

Business ID	8630	8630
Days Run	MF	Sat
Vehicle Formation	N+5N+PCJ	N+5N+PCJ
	8615	8615
Formed By On Arrival	15:55	15:55
	SPE	SPE
Train Movement Type	PSNG_SRV	PSNG_SRV
ALBURY	17:20	17:20
Murray River Junction	17:25*	17:25*
WODONGA	17:27/17:29	17:27/17:29
	E	E
CHILTERN	17:46	17:46
SPRINGHURST	17:56	17:56
WANGARATTA	18:12/18:14	18:12/18:14
	E	E
BENALLA	18:37/18:39	18:37/18:39
	E	E
VIOLET TOWN	18:56	18:56
EUROA	19:09	19:09
AVENEL	19:33	19:33
	MD@1930	MD@1930
Mangalore SG	19:39*	19:39*
Seymour Loop	19:41*	19:41*
Seymour Grade Crossing	19:45*	19:45*
SEYMOUR SG Platform	19:46/19:48	19:46/19:48
	MD@19:44	MD@19:44
Tallaroak Nth End	19:52*	19:52*
Tallaroak Loop	19:54*	19:54*
Tallaroak Sth End	20:12*	20:12*
Kilmore Nth End	20:24*	20:24*
Kilmore Grade Crossing	20:25*	20:25*
Kilmore Sth End	20:27*	20:27*
Wallan SG Loop	20:34/20:41	20:34/20:41
Donnybrook Nth End	20:48*	20:48*
Donnybrook Sth End	20:56*	20:56*
Somerton Loop	21:06*	21:06*
BROADMEADOWS	21:10/21:11d	21:10/21:11d
Jacana Flyover	21:12*	21:12*
Tullamarine BG Jct	21:14*	21:14*
McIntyre Loop	21:17*	21:17*
Tottenham Junction	21:21*	21:21*
	L	L
West Footscray Junction	21:26*	21:26*
Sims St. Junction	21:31*	21:31*
Sth Dynon Junction	21:32*	21:32*
SOUTH DYNON LOCO		
Moonee Ponds Creek Jct	21:33*/ML	21:33*/ML
Flyover Junction	21:37*	21:35*
Franklin Street	21:39*	21:36*
	UD	UD
	578	578
SOUTHERN CROSS	21:45	21:45
	Plat	2N
		2N
Forms	OFF	OFF

VIC - SA

Melbourne

TRAIN NO	2AM8	9784V	8630
LENGTH (Metres)	250	1500	0
DAYS	MON	MON	MON
SCHEDULE	MELBOURNE	MELBOURNE	MELBOURNE
PATH TYPE	M	M	M
OPERATOR	GSR	PNT	VLP
Tottenham _____ arr			
_____ dep	18:23	19:37	21:21
West Footscray Junction _____ arr			
_____ dep	18:27	19:41	21:24
Sims Street _____ arr			
_____ dep	18:36	19:49	21:29
North Dynon _____ arr			
_____ dep	18:38	19:51	21:30
Appleton Dock Junction _____ arr			
_____ dep	18:40	19:53	21:30
South Dynon Yard _____ arr		19:55	
_____ dep		_____	
Canal Siding _____ arr			
_____ dep	18:43		21:30
Melbourne Operations Ter _____ arr			
_____ dep	18:45		21:31
Moonee Ponds Junction _____ arr			
_____ dep	18:48		21:35
Southern Cross Station _____ arr			
_____ dep	18:50		21:43
Swanson Dock _____ arr			
_____ dep			
Appleton Dock _____ arr			
_____ dep			
FORMS OR DESTINATION	TERM	TERM	TERM

Extracts from the V/Line WTT of 31 March showing no. 8630 1720 Albury to Southern Cross (it also runs on Sundays) and from the ARTC WTT of 19 April showing no. 8630 close to Melbourne. Note the variation in timing points and in times. Further from Melbourne the variations are up to four minutes. The ARTC WTT has separate tables for each day.

RAIL AND TRAM NEWS

Federal Budget

The highlights of the Federal Budget, presented a month earlier than normal on Tuesday 2 April, as far as railway and public transport is concerned, were commitments to the Melbourne Airport Railway, a commitment to Fast Rail between Melbourne and Geelong and to investigate other Fast Rail projects. These had been announced in advance. In the event that the forthcoming Federal election results in a change of government, some of the following could be changed. In that event, the ALP has foreshadowed a mini-Budget in September. The new proposals are:

- \$5 billion towards the Melbourne Airport railway.
- \$2 billion towards Melbourne to Geelong Fast Rail. This will reduce travel time by about half to 32 minutes.
- \$40 million for studies of fast rail from Melbourne to Geelong, Melbourne to Shepparton, Sydney to Newcastle and Brisbane to the Sunshine Coast. The Federal government will investigate other proposals for Fast Rail such as Brisbane to the Gold Coast, Melbourne to Albury-Wodonga, Melbourne to Traralgon, Sydney to Wollongong and even Sydney to Parkes. The glaring omission, however, is any mention of Sydney to Canberra.
- \$14.5 million for a National Faster Rail Agency will be established to identify fast rail corridors and \$40 million for the development of business cases.
- \$700 million for duplication of the V/Line line from South Geelong to Waurn Ponds, 15.4 km.
- \$479 million for upgrades to Victorian regional railways.
- \$3.5 billion for the Western Sydney North-South Rail Link (ie, access to the new Second Sydney Airport).
- \$207.5 million to help remove three level crossings on the Armadale (Perth) line.
- \$115 million towards a new Fremantle rail and road bridge.
- \$10 million towards building Lakelands station (Mandurah line).
- \$500 million for commuter car parks. These will be at Gosford, Panania, Hurstville, Woy Woy (NSW), Croydon, Ferntree Gully, Mitcham, Ringwood, Bentleigh, Hampton (Vic), Mandurah (WA), Ferny Grove, Mango Hill (Qld).
- \$68 million for tranche 3 of upgrades to the Tasmanian rail freight network.
- \$20 million for Port Botany freight line duplication from Mascot to Botany and a crossing loop at Cabramatta.
- \$2.53 million for the 2019-20 financial year for stage 3 of other upgrades to the Port Botany freight line.
- \$14 million for rail shuttles from the Port of Melbourne.

- \$48 million for duplication from Beerburrum to Landsborough and upgrades from Landsborough to Nambour, Queensland.
- \$40 million for the 2019-20 financial year for the Brisbane Metro busway.
- \$13 million for Oaklands (Adelaide) grade separation.
- \$400,000 for design of an overpass over the Wynnum (Brisbane) line at Lindum.

Funding for the 2019-20 financial year for existing major rail projects are:

- \$477 million for the Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Freight Railway.
- \$16 million for the ARTC's Advanced Train Management System.
- \$22 million for the Inland Rail Interface Improvement Program.

The Victorian State Budget will be presented on Monday 27 May.

ANZAC Day Dawn Services

Queensland Rail **Citytrain** operated additional trains from:

Nambour at 0148
Varsity Lakes at 0228
Beenleigh at 0229
Rosewood at 0232
Cleveland at 0242
Shorncliffe at 0255
Kippa-Ring at 0255
Springfield Central at 0257
Ferny Grove at 0315.

Sydney Trains operated additional trains (to City Circle, unless indicated) from:

Emu Plains at 0226 to North Sydney
Richmond at 0230
Leppington at 0244 via Granville
Lidcombe direct at 0302
Lidcombe via Bankstown at 0250
Waterfall at 0253 to Bondi Junction
Bondi Junction at 0310 then every 10-15 minutes until commencement of normal services
Cronulla at 0257 to Bondi Junction
Macarthur at 0240.

NSW Trainlink operated additional trains from:

Newcastle at 0035 to Sydney via North Shore line
Gosford at 0207 to Sydney via North Shore line
Gosford at 0259 to Newcastle
Telarah at 0349 to Newcastle
Newcastle at 0637 to Telarah
Moss Vale at 0135 to Sydney
Kiama at 0113 to Bondi Junction
Lithgow at 0049 to Sydney.

Metro Trains Melbourne operated additional trains to Flinders St from:

Mernda at 0423 and 0435
Hurstbridge at 0407 and 0424

Lilydale at 0415
 Glen Waverley at 0441 and 0445
 Pakenham at 0404 and 0412
 Frankston at 0407
 Sandringham at 0445 and 0455
 Werribee at 0422 and 0435
 Sunbury at 0427 and 0439
 Craigieburn at 0433 and 0445
 Upfield at 0433 and 0447.

Additional trains operated from Alamein to Camberwell at 0424, from Belgrave to Ringwood at 0400, from Cranbourne to Dandenong at 0403, and from Williamstown to Newport at 0426 and 0446.

Yarra Trams operated additional trams on all routes except routes 30, 78, 82 and City Circle route 35. Swanston St Shuttles departed City Square towards stop 19 Shrine of Remembrance starting at 0434 and every three minutes (approximately) until 0532. All trams travelling along St Kilda Road prior to the Dawn Service terminated at stop 20 St Kilda Road/Park St. From 0545 to 1400 trams did not operate along St Kilda Road between Stop 8 Melbourne Central station and stop 20 St Kilda Road/Park St.

Adelaide Metro operated additional trains from:
 Gawler Central at 0431
 Seaford at 0423 and 0453 to Brighton, then substitute buses (see item below)
 Belair at 0454
 Outer Harbor at 0452
 Grange at 0512.

Adelaide Metro operated additional trams from:
 Glenelg at 0445, 0455 and 0555; Morphett Road at 0444; South Terrace at 0612 and 0612
 Entertainment Centre at 0533, 0543, 0553, 0633, 0643 and 0653.

TransPerth operated additional trains from:
 Joondalup at 0350, 0402, 0414 and 0426
 Mandurah at 0329, 0341, 0353, 0405 and 0417
 Fremantle at 0422 and 0437
 Armadale at 0347, 0405 and 0423
 Midland at 0405.

ARTC: Inland Freight Railway

The announcement in April *Table Talk*, page 5, that the Inland Freight Railway will be extended from Acacia Ridge to the Port of Brisbane was premature. In fact, a route for a future dedicated rail link to the port is currently being studied by the Federal and Queensland governments. It may be noted that there is already a standard gauge line from Acacia Ridge to the port, sharing the corridor of the Cleveland line between a connection at Dutton Park, and Lytton Junction, east of Lindum. There is also a narrow gauge line from Lytton Junction to the port.

Queensland Rail: Mt Isa line

The Mt Isa line reopened to freight on 29 April, three months after it was badly damaged by flooding. Queensland Rail staff and contractors have worked

160,000 hours over the past ten weeks to repair infrastructure between Oorindi and Hughenden. More than 200 sites across 300 kms required repairs, including from Hughenden to Richmond, Maxwellton to Nonda, and Tobarri to Oorindi, where the network suffered significant flooding, washouts and erosion. Over 47 kms of track and 38 bridge abutments were damaged, requiring more than 120,000 tonnes of ballast to repair. The rail line has been deviated at Nelia, while remediation works continue at the location where a Pacific National minerals train was swamped by floodwaters. PN have been able to remove all 81 wagons and are continuing works to remove their locomotive.

According to the State government, the uninterrupted access granted to repair and maintenance teams following the major flooding allowed for improvements to be fast-tracked along the Mt Isa line. These could cut travel times between Mt Isa and Townsville by almost an hour,

Queensland Rail Travel is operating substitute buses at least until 21 April. These take 12 hours (including a 40 minute meal break), compared to nearly 21 hours on the Inlander train.

Queensland Rail Citytrain: Real time tracking

The addition of more than 2,000 datapoints from 8 April allows for enhanced live tracking of trains for QR's passenger information smartphone app. The improved tracking information is provided by 2,670 track check points across the network, up from the previous 447. Previously, the data feeding to the app was only able to provide a train's location if it was at a platform or at a mid-point between stations.

Queensland Rail Citytrain: 13 May timetable

From Monday 13 May an extra 32 train services a week will be introduced ahead of further timetable improvements planned in 2019. These will add more than 14,000 seats each week and have been identified as a priority based on customer feedback, wait times, and patronage modelling, as well as some operational efficiencies. The extra services are:

Departing station	Departure	Arrival station	Arrival
Monday to Friday additions			
Kippa-Ring	0710	Central	0805
Cleveland	0639	Central	0734
Central	1709	Cleveland	1805
Monday to Thursday additions (These services already run on Fridays)			
Springfield Central	0651	Central	0732
Shorncliffe Central	0739	Central	0816
Central	0658	Shorncliffe	0735

Friday additions (These services already run Monday to Thursday)

Ferny Grove	0725	Central	0756
Varsity Lakes	0555	Central	0714
Central	0716	Domestic Airport	0740
Domestic Airport	0749	Central	0813
Central	1732	Cleveland	1835

Queensland Rail track diagrams

<https://www.queenslandrail.com.au/forbusiness/access/access-undertaking> has amended system track diagrams dated 11 April.

Queensland Rail Citytrain: Shutdown 6 and 7 April

On the weekend of 6-7 April the Shorncliffe, Caboolture, Redcliffe and Sunshine Coast lines were shut down north of Bowen Hills. Thirteen replacement bus services were provided. Timetables and replacement bus route network maps were colour coded, and produced in pdf format by TransitGraphics and available on the Translink website. This initiative hopefully allowed people to better plan their journeys.

The replacement network provided direct services from Bowen Hills to the major stations Northgate, Sandgate, Petrie, Caboolture, Landsborough and Nambour. Also direct services were provided from Bowen Hills to stations north of Nambour. Shuttles from these major stations served intermediate stations. Thus some travellers would need a train and two buses to get to their destination from Brisbane CBD. The "R" route designation indicates Rail Replacement.

Shorncliffe line replacement bus services were:
R347 Bowen Hills-Northgate-Sandgate Direct (colour green)
R348 Northgate-Shorncliffe All Stations (colour orange).

Caboolture and Redcliffe lines replacement bus services were:
R600 Bowen Hills-Petrie-Caboolture Direct (colour purple)
R601 Bowen Hills-Northgate-Petrie Direct (colour light blue)
R603 Bowen Hills-Northgate All Stations (pink)
R605 Northgate-Petrie All Stations (blue)
R607 Petrie-Caboolture All Stations (maroon)
R608 Petrie-Kippa-Ring All Stations (yellow)
All Shorncliffe, Caboolture and Redcliffe lines replacement services operated every twenty minutes day and night.

Sunshine Coast replacement bus services were:
R609 Caboolture-Nambour All Stations, (bright pink) every 60 minutes
R610 Bowen Hills-Nambour Direct, (brown) every 90 minutes
R611 Bowen Hills-Landsborough Direct, (aqua) every 90 minutes

R612 Bowen Hills-Yandina-Eumundi-Cooroy-Gympie North Direct (salmon): Inbound two trips Saturday, one trip Sunday. Inbound trips operated via Nambour, Outbound one trip Saturday, two trips Sunday

R613 Bowen Hills-Northgate-Petrie-Caboolture-Nambour-Yandina-Eumundi-Cooroy-Gympie North Direct: Outbound only Sat one trip, Sun two trips.

Freightliner Australia

Commencing Monday 8 April operation of Freightliner Australia's freight train no. 5182, 1100 Mon, Wed, Fri, Wee Waa to Botany, and its return workings were cancelled. These were the only scheduled trains on John Holland Rail Country Regional Network's line Narrabri Junction-Wee Waa-Walgett. Freightliner is owned by Genesee and Wyoming. The train conveyed containerised cotton. (JHR CRN Country Train Notice 97-2019 refers.)

Sydney NW Metro to open

It is believed that Stage 1 of the Sydney Metro will open on Sunday 2 June, providing rail transport to Sydney's NW Hills suburbs. Trains run automatically and there are screen doors at every station. The line is 36 km in length. The first 13 km from Chatswood to Epping is a conversion of the former Transport for NSW/Sydney Trains underground line. Tunnels continue for another 15 km to Bella Vista. The final 8 km is on viaduct to Tallawong.

Sydney Trains timetable 28 April

Sydney Trains' WTT of 28 April is version 5.5. It has the following changes:

- 22 x 8 car B set rosters to operate Sector 2 services.
- No S sets tabled.
- 8 car M sets tabled weekdays only.
- 4 car M sets tabled at weekends to operate Cumberland and Carlingford lines.
- Renumbering of trips.

T1 North Shore line

- Additional Up services run through Chatswood every three minutes from around 0730 to 0900. Four an hour will start from Gordon to accommodate passengers changing from the Metro. Chatswood now has ten trains an hour M-F interpeak. Services during all other time periods will be aligned to Sydney Metro frequencies.
- Dwell time of 60 seconds (minimum) at Epping and Chatswood.
- Wollstonecraft, Waverton and Artarmon gain eight extra services between 1500 and 1800. Chatswood and St Leonards have four more trains during this period.
- Additional trains (ex Blacktown) from central to Lindfield at 1529, 1629 and 1559.
- Hornsby, Warrawee, Turramurra, Pymble and Gordon have more morning peak hour services to the City. Double the number of services from the CBD for Pymble, Warrawee

and Wahroonga during the afternoon peak, with a train on average every seven to eight minutes.

- Service frequencies double during the afternoon peak at Mount Colah and Mount Kuring-gai, with a train on average every 15 minutes.
- Berowra has an extra two trains during the afternoon peak hour, meaning a train on average every eight to nine minutes from Sydney CBD.
- At least double the service frequencies from the CBD between 2200 and midnight for all stations between Gordon and Roseville.
- Central Coast and Newcastle line services via the North Shore from the Sydney CBD no longer stop at Asquith in the afternoon peak hour.
- Journey times for the majority of trips remain the same or similar.

T1 Western line

- Thirty additional services to accommodate changes on the T1 North Shore line. These include three extra express services from the CBD towards Western Sydney each weekday morning, including two operating in the morning peak hour. This means 16 T1 Western line trains running from Central to Parramatta during the morning peak hour, or a train on average every three to four minutes. The two additional morning peak hour services stop at Redfern, Strathfield, Parramatta, Blacktown, Marayong, Quakers Hill and Schofields. The third additional service at 0950 terminates at Blacktown.
- Three additional express services from Blacktown at 1451, 1521 and 1551 operate stopping at Parramatta, Strathfield, Redfern and Central then to Lindfield.
- Additional Central-Schofields trains at 0807 and 0822.

T2 Inner West and Leppington line

- Minor adjustments to two late night Friday services to accommodate changes on the T1 North Shore line. The existing 0018 and 0048 services from Central and stopping at Redfern, Burwood and Strathfield, are extended to Epping and hence will be renamed as T9 Northern line services.

Southern line

- A subsequent amendment provided that all formerly empty trains from Macarthur to Campbelltown after 2200 are now revenue runs.

T5 Cumberland line

- Minor adjustments to departure and arrival times for some T5 Cumberland line services to accommodate changes on the T1 North Shore line.

T9 Northern line

- The T1 Northern line is renamed the T9 Northern line to make it more easily identified from other T1 services by the different number and different colour. The T9 Northern line takes a path from Hornsby to Gordon via Epping, Strathfield and the City.
- There are some minor adjustments to accommodate changes on the T1 North Shore line, including an additional early morning service each weekday from Central stopping at Redfern, Burwood, Strathfield, Rhodes, West Ryde, Eastwood and Epping.
- There are also two more late night services on Fridays from the City.
- The existing T2 Inner West and Leppington 0018 and 0048 services from Central and stopping at Redfern, Burwood and Strathfield, are extended to North Strathfield, Concord West, Rhodes, Meadowbank, West Ryde, Denistone, Eastwood and Epping. As a consequence, these two services will be renamed as T9 Northern line services.
- Additional 0722 Central-Epping and 0759 Epping-Central.
- Users of the Metro North West line changing at Epping will have quick connections. For example, in peak periods, trains will run every five to six minutes on average.

Blue Mountains line

- Minor adjustments to accommodate changes on the T1 North Shore line
- 0924 Springwood to Central departs two minutes earlier at 0922. 1730 Springwood to Central departs two minutes earlier at 1728..

Central Coast and Newcastle line

- The 1605 Sydney to Gosford is extended to Wyong. The 1620 Sydney to Newcastle makes additional stops at Warnervale and Wyee. Wondabyne is an additional stop on the 1945 Newcastle to Central.
- Central Coast and Newcastle line services from Sydney no longer stop at Asquith in the afternoon peak. There remains the same number of services via the T1 North Shore line, with a train every 15 minutes. These are no more than two minutes longer than current Central Coast and Newcastle line services. This mirrors the morning peak, thus providing a simpler and more consistent service. If travelling from Asquith to Central Coast change at Hornsby or Berowra.
- The 0423 Newcastle-Sydney departs three minutes later at 0426
- Some journeys slightly longer.

Hunter line

- Services adjusted to provide better weekday connections between Newcastle and Dungog.
- 1029 Newcastle-Dungog now departs at 1329 and arrives at 1449. 1226 Dungog to Newcastle commences at Telarah 1310 arriving Newcastle at 1345. • 1614 Telarah to

Newcastle departs Dungog 1526 arriving Newcastle at 1652 (no longer stopping at Mindaribba). 1410 Telarah to Newcastle now starts from Maitland at 1413.

Regional North Coast line

- There are minor adjustments to times on the North Coast line. The up overnight XPT Casino-Sydney runs earlier from Dungog and arrives Sydney at 0644 instead of 0701 (weekends arrives at 0650).

Sydney Trains: How one person can close down a city

On Thursday 18 April at about 1030 a man started balancing on or near the overhead wiring at Redfern, at the very centre of Sydney's suburban network. Power was disconnected, it was not able to be restored until about 1200. Severe delays continued about mid-afternoon. The *Sydney Morning Herald* quoted ATA member Dr Geoffrey Clifton as saying that Sydney's rail network hadn't experienced delays due to a police operation similar to Thursday's incident "in my memory. Police and emergency services will likely have a debrief and they'll take lessons, if they need to, for the future.

NSW Trainlink: New bus services

As part of its continuing program of introducing new bus services, the following additional NSW Trainlink services operate on trial from Monday 8 April:

- Forster-Coffs Harbour: On Mondays and Fridays a bus departs Forster at 0600 via Taree, Wauchope, Port Macquarie, Kempsey, Macksville, Nambucca Heads and Urunga to arrive Coffs Harbour at 1055. Return departs Coffs at 1530, arriving Forster at 2033.
- Bathurst-Dubbo: On Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays a bus departs Bathurst at 0615 via Orange (0700), Molong, Wellington and Geurie to arrive Dubbo at 0900. Return is by the existing XPT train.
- Dubbo-Orange: On Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturday a bus departs Dubbo at 1000 via Tomingley, Peak Hill, Alectown, Parkes (1130) and Manildra to arrive Orange at 1245. Return is via the existing buses departing Parkes at 1723 or Orange at 1715.

In addition, NSW Trainlink is investigating:

- Broken Hill-Adelaide: Weekdays daily, Saturday morning to Adelaide, Sunday evening return.
- Broken Hill-Mildura: Daily return service.

Details are at <https://transportnsw.info/regional/nsw-trainlink-regional-coach-trials#regional-carousel>

NSW Trainlink: Delays

On Sunday 31 March the line between Penrith and Springwood was closed, as a 20 tonne boulder was threatening to topple onto the line near Glenbrook. A Sydney Trains spokesperson said specialist crews abseiled down the cliff face to secure the boulder with heavy duty chain mesh to avoid any further instability

during work. The boulder detached from the cutting wall close to 25 metres above the rail corridor. The complicated nature of work required, in difficult terrain, including measures to protect rail infrastructure, meant the work took several days before normal services resumed. In addition, the discovery of culturally significant indigenous artwork further delayed re-opening of the line. Services resumed from the morning of Saturday 6 April. On Wednesday, 3 April the Indian Pacific in both directions travelled via Goulburn.

An SCT Melbourne-Brisbane freight train derailed near Goulburn station about 0415 on Sunday 31 March blocking all tracks. NSW Trainlink services were replaced by buses, the evening Sydney-Canberra service by a Berrima Coaches school bus. The up main remained closed until 0600 on 2 April.

Transport for NSW: Sandown branch

On 24 March a stop block was installed across the Sandown branch in western Sydney, which in effect means it is closed.

John Holland Rail Country Regional Network information

JHR NSW CRN's list of forthcoming major possessions, special trains and other notable events, such as the introduction of new WTTs, is no longer published on their website. It provided excellent notification not only for JHR CRN but also, by implication, for neighbouring networks.

NSW: Maldon-Dombarton line rises from the dead?

A Labor government, if elected, will provide \$50 million to complete the Maldon to Dombarton railway in the NSW Illawarra region. This is one of Australia's longest-discussed and longest-stalled freight rail projects. It would provide a 35 km link between Sydney's southwest and Port Kembla, the Wollongong region's major port. It would include a four km tunnel, which would be one of the longest freight tunnels in Australia if built. It would also require high bridges over the Cordeaux and Nepean Rivers, and a crossing under the Hume Highway.

In making the funding announcement, Labor pointed to a NSW government business case which suggested by 2031, additional passenger train activity could confine freight movements on the existing Illawarra line to "night time only".

"Connecting the line from the port through to the Main South Line at Picton would be a boon for freight logistics in Illawarra and south-western Sydney, expanding business opportunities and creating new jobs across the region," shadow infrastructure minister Anthony Albanese said. The Maldon-Dombarton Link would also benefit commuters on overcrowded trains moving between the Illawarra and Sydney on the South Coast line by taking freight rail off the line and clearing the way for more commuter passenger services."

The previous Federal Labor government committed \$25.5 million for planning, geotechnical and engineering studies into the project, but the LNP has “shown no leadership” at the federal level, and “refused to progress” the project at the state level, Mr Albanese said.

Abba Abba Trundle Trundle

On Saturday 24 May the little station of Trundle on John Holland Rail’s Tottenham branch in western NSW will have the unusual attribute of hosting two special trains at the same time. These are for the annual Trundle Abba Festival. The Lachlan Valley Railway Society’s special, hauled by two 47 class, will be there from 1141 to 2210. The Rail Motor Society’s 621/721 train will be there at 1014 to 1118, then proceed to Tullamore (1152). Returning from Tullamore at 1210, it will be at Trundle from 1302 to 2306. (JHR Country Notice 108-2019 and ARTC Train Alteration Advices 243-2019 and 416-209 refer.)

Canberra Tram

The Canberra Tram commenced operation on Saturday 20 April, with festivities and free travel over the weekend. The line is 12 km from Civic to Gungahlin. Other than at intersections (which all have traffic lights), it has its own right -of-way in the median of Northbourne Avenue, Flemington Road and Hibberston St other than a couple of kms near the depot and EPIC and Racecourse stop which is on the western side of Flemington Road. Some stops have centre platforms and some side platforms. Observations show heavy loadings. The timetable was in April *Table Talk*, page 5. Proposed stage 2 will take the tram south from Civic to Woden, with a major feature being a bridge over Lake Burley Griffin.

The operating consortium for the Canberra Tram now calls itself CMET. Its website is <https://cmet.com.au/>

V/Line: Upgrades

Expressions of interest are being sought for a major contract to upgrade the Gippsland, Shepparton, and Bendigo and Echuca lines under Regional Rail Revival, a \$1.75 billion program jointly-funded by the Federal and Victorian governments. Construction should get underway in 2020, with a targeted completion in 2022.

The Gippsland line project will include upgrading signalling, duplicating track, extending a crossing loop, adding platforms at four stations, building a stabling facility, modernising train detection at level crossings and renewing the drainage structures beneath the rail. The Shepparton line project will include platform extensions and stabling to suit VLocity trains, level crossing upgrades and an extension of the Murchison East crossing loop, enabling VLocity trains to travel to Shepparton. The work is ‘stage two’ of the overall upgrade for the line. Stage one delivered a stabling upgrade at Shepparton, and 29 extra bus services between Shepparton and Seymour connecting with trains. A planned third stage – currently in the business case phase – would enable nine return services on the line. The Bendigo and Echuca line will include

signalling upgrades from Bendigo to Epsom and Eaglehawk.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Control Panels

The following are the **Train Control Panels** on Metro Trains as at April 2019:

BURNLEY OPERATIONS CONTROLLER: Flinders St: Platforms 1, 2, 3, 4 and no. 1A Track.
Southern Cross: Platforms 9 & 10.
Clifton Hill and Burnley Viaducts and Underground Loops.
All tracks between Flinders St and Burnley & Clifton Hill.

NORTHERN OPERATIONS CONTROLLER: Hours Monday to Friday 0600 to 1830, and other times as required due to operational requirements. Outside of these hours control is transferred to the Caulfield Operations Controller.
Flinders St: Platforms 4 & 5.
Southern Cross: Platform 11 and no. 10A Track.
Northern Viaduct and Underground Loop.
East Suburban and Main Suburban lines to North Melbourne.

CAULFIELD OPERATIONS CONTROLLER: Continuous Hours
Flinders St: Platforms 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 & 13 and no. 9A Track.
Southern Cross: Platforms 12, 13 & 14.
Caulfield and Through Suburban Viaducts and Caulfield Underground Loop.
All tracks between Flinders St and Caulfield, Sandringham and Special lines between Flinders St and Richmond Junction
Through Suburban lines to North Melbourne.

EASTERN LINE CONTROLLER: Hours-Sunday to Wednesday 0500 to 2130, Thursday to Saturday 24 hours
Clifton Hill to Mernda and Hurstbridge,
Burnley to Lilydale,
Ringwood to Belgrave,
Camberwell to Alamein,
Burnley to Glen Waverley.

CAULFIELD LINE CONTROLLER: Hours Monday to Friday 0600 to 2030, Saturday 1200 to 2000
And other times as required due to operational requirements. Outside of these hours control is transferred to the Western Line Controller.
Richmond to Sandringham,
Caulfield to Pakenham East,
Dandenong to Cranbourne,
Caulfield to Stony Point.

WESTERN LINE CONTROLLER: Continuous Hours
North Melbourne to Williamstown,
Newport to Werribee,
Altona Junction – Westona – Laverton,
North Melbourne to Sunbury,
North Melbourne to Craigieburn,
Newmarket to Flemington Racecourse,
North Melbourne to Upfield.

Following are the **Signal Control Panels** on Metro Trains:

CLIFTON HILL SIGNAL CONTROL PANEL:

Continuous Hours (between 2100 and 0600 one operator works Clifton Hill and Burnley Panels)
Flinders St: Platform 1, 1A & 14 track.
City Circle Viaduct & City Circle Underground Loop.
Southern Cross: 8 Centre, 8 South & 8 A only for trains departing towards Flinders St.
Flinders St to Victoria Park, Clifton Hill and Westgarth.

BURNLEY SIGNAL CONTROL PANEL: Continuous Hours (between 2100 & 0600 one operators works Clifton Hill and Burnley Panels)

Flinders St: Platforms 2, 3 & 4 (Down trains towards Richmond only).
Burnley Viaduct & Burnley Underground Loop.
Up & Down Burnley Local & Through lines between Flinders St & Burnley and Burnley Stabling Sidings.
Southern Cross: Platform 10.

NORTHERN SIGNAL CONTROL PANEL: Continuous Hours

Flinders St: Platform 4 & 5
Northern Viaduct & Northern Underground Loop.
Up & Down East Suburban & Main Suburban Lines between Southern Cross & North Melbourne.
Southern Cross: 10A & Platform 11, Platforms 8 North, 8 Centre, 8 South & 8A - for local movements & departures towards North Melbourne.
North Melbourne: Platforms 1 & 3.

CAULFIELD SIGNAL CONTROL PANEL: Continuous Hours

Flinders St: Platforms 6, 7, 8, 9, 9A, 10, 12 & 13.
Caulfield Viaduct & Caulfield Underground Loop.
Up & Down Caulfield Local, Through & Sandringham Lines between Flinders St & Richmond
Up & Down Through Suburban Lines Between Flinders St & North Melbourne.
North Melbourne Platform 5.
Leads towards Metro Freight Bypass line.

WESTERN SIGNAL CONTROL PANEL: Continuous Hours

North Melbourne: Platforms 2, 4 & 6
Lines on the Down Side of North Melbourne to Macaulay, Kensington, Sunshine (Main Suburban / Sunbury lines) & South Kensington (Through Suburban / Newport lines).

Melbourne disruption

On Monday 15 April, the first weekday of Melbourne's big rail construction shutdown, there were huge crowds at Caulfield waiting for substitute buses to the City in the morning peak. On the afternoon peak on Monday 15 April a level crossing accident on the outer end of the Sandringham line, which was still operating, caused a complete shutdown of the line. This disruption spread to all bus substitution services. There were huge crowds waiting long periods in the City to get home.

More than 100 extra tram services were scheduled on the weekend of 6-7 April to help AFL fans get to the MCG as the unprecedented rail shutdown (see April

Table Talk, pages 2-4) threatened the travel of more than half the footy crowds. About 60% of footy fans who usually rely on public transport were restricted to trams, buses, cars, bicycles or their legs to get to six matches scheduled at the MCG during the massive rail closure. Extra tram services on routes 70, 75 and 48 ran beginning up two hours before and continuing after the game, until the crowds cleared. The free tram zone was also extended, and the AFL handed out water, snacks and other sweeteners to help ease the pain.

Victorian Fares and Ticketing Manual

A new Victorian Fares and Ticketing Manual dated 28 March is available online at

<https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/footer/legal-and-policies/victorian-fares-and-ticketing-manual/> This replaces the edition of 1 January 2019.

ARTC: Victorian NE SG line

The Australian Rail Track Corporation has called expressions of interest for a \$235 million upgrade of Victoria's North East line. This will be the third upgrade in the last few years, but track quality has remained below standard. Work to be undertaken includes:

- Install two new sets of crossovers between Seymour and Benalla to improve track access for work crews to minimise disruption of the works program and allow greater operational flexibility.
- Add, replace and compact new ballast, to improve the track's foundation and drainage.
- Remove mud-holes where ballast has been contaminated, to improve drainage.
- Resurfacing including packing and compacting more ballast.
- Upgrade turnouts.
- Relocate overhead signal wires to underground to decrease risk of signal failures due to trees falling on wires or line wire theft.
- Install additional backup power supplies, including solar, in some locations to minimise signal outages due to power supply.
- Drainage improvements by creating and reforming trackside drainage to ensure water flows away from tracks properly.
- Grind rail tracks to provide a smoother, even interface between the track and wheels of the train.
- Replace older timber-top bridges with concrete and ballast-top bridges.
- Improve the track at level crossings.

Pacific National and V/Line: Merbein freight

Commencing 28 April, PN's Melbourne-Merbein (beyond Mildura) and v.v. container trains have again been altered. They now operate to different schedules each day. The summary timetable on V/Line track is:

	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Ararat East Jnc	0220	0240	0305	0345	0350
Merbein	1330	1400	1415	1535	1525

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Sun
Merbein	2105	2135	2150	2300	1600
	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Mon
Ararat East Jnc	0850	0920	0935	1045	0330

Victoria: Oops, we were wrong

The article "Where have the railways gone?" in April *Table Talk*, page 7, stated that the Hopetoun branch in Victoria was controlled by the ARTC. In fact, it is a V/Line standard gauge line.

Adelaide Metro: Seaford line

The Seaford line is closed between Adelaide and Brighton from Saturday 13 April to Monday 6 May to allow connection of the Oaklands Crossing Grade Separation. This also causes the cancellation of trains on the Tonsley line for this period. Substitute bus timetables are at

<https://www.adelaidemetro.com.au/Announcements/Service-Updates/Seaford-and-Tonsley-line-closures>

WA grain

WA grain handler CBH Group will upgrade six of its receival sites at Broomehill (77,400 tonnes), Lake Grace (84,000 tonnes) and Gairdner (46,800 tonnes). Cranbrook (152,000-tonnes), McLevie (236,000-tonne) and Dowerin West (122,000-tonnes) – a total of 700,000 tonnes. CBH's network upgrade program is budgeted for more than \$150 million in 2019.

WA: Aurizon

It is believed that current bulk train operations by Aurizon in WA are:

- Iron ore Karara-Geraldton
- Alumina, lime, caustic and coal Brunswick Junction-Collie
- Wood chips to Albany.

Auckland Suburban

Auckland Transport will seek a new franchise agreement covering suburban rail operations with effect from 2021 and has called for industry input to determine the terms of the contract. The franchise will include operations through the City Rail Link (CRL) when it opens, and there will be a large role for the rail operator in testing and commissioning the infrastructure in the lead up to the CRL opening. It is due to open in 2024, as a 3.45 km underground line linking Britomart and Mt Eden. The NZ government said it is the largest transport infrastructure project ever undertaken in NZ.

KiwiRail has begun building a 1.3 km line to a third platform at Ōtāhuhu station in Auckland's south as part of improvements to prepare the network for the City Rail Link.

Auckland, population 1.7 million, is served by a 185 km suburban rail network with 42 stations managed by Transdev. Services are operated by 57 three-car EMUs, with 15 additional trains on order from CAF. The network carries 20.6 million passengers per annum, which is growing at 9% per year.

KiwiRail: Premium service

Two additional carriages will be added to the TranzAlpine, Christchurch-Greymouth, and a carriage to the Coastal Pacific, Christchurch-Picton, offering Premium service. The introduction date is not yet known. The Coastal Pacific is now running all year around.

Thanks to Paul Brown, Dale Budd, Scott Ferris, Hilaire Fraser, Steven Haby, Victor Isaacs, David Langley, David Matheson, Max Michell, James Ng, Ross Morrison, Len Regan, Jim Wells, *Catchpoint*, www.railexpress.com.au, www.railpage.com.au, *Railway Digest*, ABC news, *Daily Telegraph*, *Sydney Morning Herald* for Rail news.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Dean Ogle writes about **European and North American Timetable PDFs** in March *Table Talk*, page 8: It should be noted that Amtrak does provide PDFs of timetables, but of individual trains or corridors only. Bad enough they discontinued the printed book, but apparently they can't even keep a master PDF file up to date. Plus, when they do change a PDF timetable, they are often slow to upload it.

BUS NEWS

QUEENSLAND

Queensland Rail Citytrain: Shutdown 6 and 7 April

Details are in the Rail news section.

Transit Australia Group

TAG has been sold to the AATS Group in Australia's largest private bus sale. TAG operates Surfside Buslines and Sunbus. AATS owns the Skybus

operation which has expanded to Hobart, Gold Coast and recently New Zealand.

NEW SOUTH WALES

NSW Trainlink: New bus services

Details of these are in the Rail news section.

Greater Sydney changes

From 28 April the following changes occurred:

- 194 St Ives to City QVB has additional peak shoulder and evening services.
- 270 Terrey Hills to City QVB and 271 Belrose to City QVB has additional peak shoulder and Sunday services.
- 370 Leichhardt Marketplace to Coogee has a route alteration in Alexandria.
- 573 Turramurra to Sydney Adventist Hospital, 577 Turramurra to North Turramurra and 599 Berowra to Berowra Heights have some altered trip times to support adjustments to T1 North Shore Line train timetable.
- 841 Narellan to Leppington has additional peak services between Gledswood Hills and Leppington
- M40 Chatswood to Bondi Junction renumbered 340
- M41 Macquarie Park to Hurstville renumbered 410
- M54 Macquarie Park to Parramatta renumbered 550
- 50/3 Woy Woy to Umina and Booker Bay and 163 Cessnock to Morisset have some altered trip times to support adjustments to Central Coast and Newcastle train timetable.
- 686 Katoomba to Echo Point has additional services with a ten minute Sunday service to reflect demand and 16 additional weekday services.

Bus services will be adjusted in stages through 2019 to serve Metro rail stations. In the first stage direct bus M2 services to and from the City will remain unchanged.

Dion's renumbers

From 1 April the following routes were renumbered:

- 1 Austinmer to Wollongong renumbered 90
- 1U Austinmer to Wollongong University renumbered 91
- 4 Bulli to Wollongong renumbered 92
- 4U Bulli to Wollongong University renumbered 93
- 1 Thirroul to Wollongong late night services renumbered 94N

This brings Dion's into line with the statewide numbering of bus routes.

Lismore trials on-demand services

Northern Rivers Buslines have commenced an on-demand service in the outer eastern part of greater Lismore. Town routes 682 and 685 have been truncated to terminate at Goonellabah shops and 661 Lismore – Ballina has been adjusted through Goonellabah and Alstonville to stay on the main roads. The new service is marketed as B-ConX and acts as a feeder from the various estates and connects with 661 in both directions. Hours of operation are 0645 and 1800 weekdays and 0745 and 1415 Saturdays.

Mudgee on-demand

In mid-2019 Odgen's of Mudgee will commence an on-demand service from Mudgee to Dubbo via Gulgong.

Coffs Harbour on-demand

Forest commenced an on-demand servicing Woolgoolga and the beaches area including Corindi operating 0700 to 1900 weekdays in 2019.

Other on-demand services

Live Better Services are to commence several on-demand services in mid-2019:

- Collarenebri–Narrabri
- Tullamore–Dubbo
- Portland–Lithgow
- Hay–Ivanhoe.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Transport Canberra bus books

Transport Canberra has issued new printed timetables in book format for the new network commencing 29 April. These are:

- Central Canberra (also includes the new tram)
- Gungahlin (also includes the new tram)
- Belconnen
- Woden, Weston Creek and Molonglo
- Tuggeranong.

Unlike the prior issue, there is no separate Weekend book. Weekend services are now included in the appropriate geographic books. These timetable books were, at least initially, available only in limited quantity and upon request. The City information office, at least initially, would only provide one book per person. In addition, a new Canberra Transport Guide (ie, folded map) was published. As there is no longer a separate weekend network, there is more space for listing of routes and other information.

Transport Canberra's weekend

There was speculation in March that the new weekend Canberra bus network would be compromised due to a lack of drivers. Presently no drivers are rostered to work weekends and it is purely on a voluntary basis. With an increase in services and a requirement for additional drivers there were concerns that the weekend services would not be able to operate at full capacity. A recruitment campaign has commenced to employ additional drivers.

VICTORIA

Skybus expands

Eastern suburbs airport bus operator Airport Bus Eastside has been acquired by Skybus. This now leaves Dandenong Airport Shuttle as the only other timetabled airport service in Melbourne.

Route 627 returns

The former route number 627 (used on a once very convoluted and meandering Elsternwick – Chadstone – Oakleigh – McKinnon service) has been reissued back into service with a new Chadstone – Moorabbin route to be introduced from Sunday 16 June 2019.

Operating seven days a week the timetable will see buses running from 0600 to 2100 weekdays, 0700 to 2100 Saturdays and 0800 to 2100 Sundays. The route will run Dandenong Road, Murrumbeena Road, East Boundary, Centre, Tucker, Patterson, Jasper and

South Roads to Moorabbin station. The operator is expected to be Ventura.

Melbourne's 'ghost buses'

In Wednesday 24 April 2019's online edition of the *Age* newspaper an article was published regarding some of Melbourne's worst performing bus routes in terms of patronage.

Data obtained under FOI provisions indicated that the following routes saw ten or less passengers per day in 2016 and 2017:

- 696 Olinda–Monbulk
- 886 Rosebud–Rosebud TAFE
- 777 Karingal–Langwarrin
- 687 Healesville town service
- 745 Knoxfield West–Bayswater station

The report also noted that Melbourne's much criticised replacement Nightrider network – Melbourne Night Buses suffered from abysmal patronage figures with almost a third of the network of 21 routes carrying less than five passengers on a Sunday morning.

Melbourne's bus network is seen as the Cinderella of public transport with decreasing patronage, unreliable services and meandering routes cause for concern.

The Greens spokesperson for public transport Sam Hibbins called on the Andrews government to put more funding into the bus network and there are new calls to undertake a route and branch review of the entire network.

TASMANIA

Redline cutbacks

A comparison of Redline's timetables advertised in the October 2018 and April 2019 editions of *Tasmanian Travellways* magazine reveals the following cutbacks:

- The 1730 Hobart-Launceston and 1730 Launceston-Hobart buses no longer run daily but only on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.
- The 1700 Hobart-Perth (connection to Launceston)-Burnie and 1700 Burnie- Perth (connection from Launceston)-buses on Fridays no longer operate.
- The 0700 Mole Creek-Launceston and 1500 Launceston-Mole Creek buses on non-school days no longer operate. The Mole Creek buses continue to operate on school days.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Regional improvements

The TransAlbany network has undergone a review which sees some significant improvements to services. From May 2019 route 801 Albany–Yakamia–Lockyer is replaced by two more direct routes (806 Albany–Yakamia–Langs and 808 Albany–Orana–Lockyer) operating Monday to Saturday with services finishing later and generally operating hourly on weekdays. Route 802 Albany–Spencer Park is replaced by 807 Albany–Spencer Park–Mira Mar. Changes were also made to longer routes 803 to 805. The inner suburbs of Albany will have significant improvements in frequencies comparable to those in Geraldton and Kalgoorlie. Interestingly Albany will see services on Saturdays finish at 1700 compared to midday in Kalgoorlie and 1500 in Geraldton.

Thanks for Bus news to Hilaire Fraser, Steven Haby, the *Age*, *Australian Bus Panorama* (Bus & Coach Society of Victoria), Victor Isaacs, Ross Morrison.

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