

# TABLE TALK

AUSTRALASIAN TIMETABLE NEWS

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## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

As the situation with COVID-19 (Coronavirus) continues to unfold with daily developments, some stories involving the Coronavirus may be out-of-date at the time of reading. Concerned readers should consult with the respective governments and operators for the latest transport and societal arrangements.

## RAIL & TRAM NEWS

### NATIONAL

#### Coronavirus

The escalation with the coronavirus pandemic has forced public transport operators to more regularly and stringently clean their vehicles in an effort to reduce the potential for spreading COVID-19.

Due to enhanced border restrictions, **national** luxury rail provider Journey Beyond Rail has implemented a full suspension of their *Indian Pacific*, *The Ghan* and *The Overland* services until at least 31 May. People who already had booked for future journeys will be given a credit for up to 110 per cent of the value and valid until 31 December, 2022.

In **Queensland**, TransLink said that it is working to prepare and have plans in place to respond to future recommendations from Queensland Health. On the Gold Coast light rail, vehicles are getting daily sanitised cleans. Queensland Rail started a new disinfecting process with its South-East Queensland trains from 17 March. On 25 March, TransLink announced further measures including suspension of cash transactions on buses and ferries, and rear-door only boarding on buses. Brisbane's lord mayor said transport services may revert to the weekend timetable if there was to be a staff shortage.

In **New South Wales**, Transport Minister Andrew Constance said that Transport for NSW had deployed "cleaning squads" across trains, buses, light rail and ferries, with a focus on high-traffic areas. He also said that travelling outside peak periods could help reduce the chance of transmission because "sick people in close proximity to others is causing the global spread of the virus". Transport Officers (ticket checkers) are now no longer touching Opal cards when checking for valid tickets. On 24 March, NSW TrainLink ceased operating into Queensland. Until further notice, the Brisbane XPT is terminating at Casino with a replacement coach connection running in both directions to/from Tweed Heads. The daily coach services from Casino to Surfers Paradise, Robina and Brisbane via Murwillumbah will all only run as far as Tweed Heads. The Melbourne XPT already terminates at Albury. NSW TrainLink advises "the government is advising against all non-essential travel within NSW". NSW TrainLink also advises it has a new booking process that accommodates "social distancing" guidelines. For the moment, Sydney Trains services continue to operate to the normal timetable, in large part to assist with "social distancing". Light rail vehicles are also automatically opening and closing all doors at each stop. Transport for NSW announced on 25 March that all buses across the Opal network had become cashless. On March 26, private ferry operators Manly Fast Ferry and Captain Cook Cruises suspended non-essential services, while all casual employees had been laid off with permanent staff asked to take leave. From 29 March, L1 light rail services have been skipping The Star station.

In the **Australian Capital Territory**, in addition to increased cleaning regimes, the Minister of Transport, Chris Steel, said that the territory government had engaged Robson Environmental to undertake a study for further recommendations on local cleaning practices. On 24 March, the ACT government said that the normal network would continue to operate, however services should only be used for "essential travel". Transport Minister, Chris Steel, said "don't use public transport to get on the beers at your mate's house, and definitely do not use public transport if you are feeling sick or unwell". Ear-door boarding and the suspension of all cash transactions was also implemented on the Action bus network. The new bus network planned for 28 April has also been delayed indefinitely.

A **Victorian** Department of Transport spokesperson said it had asked all operators to activate increased cleaning protocols. Metro and V/Line trains will undergo nightly sanitation, while trams will get a "deep clean" before each

service. The “deep clean” includes wiping stop buttons, hand rails and grab straps. Bar services onboard V/Line trains have been suspended. Rail operators Metro and V/Line are currently (respectively) losing \$2 million and \$1 million every week due to a sharp fall in fare revenue. See the Victorian bus section for coach changes.

In **Tasmania**, the state's border closure meant, from 24 March, the Spirit of Tasmania was no longer available for non-essential travel. Non-residents with bookings were being contacted to advise they could not self-isolate in caravans and motorhomes. The state has also formed “police compliance teams” to force business and individuals to follow the state's coronavirus restrictions. Local bus operators have enhanced their cleaning schedules. Metro is encouraging passengers to use a Greencard rather than cash.

In **South Australia**, the Public Transport Authority is disinfecting trains, buses and trams daily – with particular focus on hard surfaces including handrails, validators and push buttons. The Premier, Steven Marshall said “if we receive advice (from health authorities) with regards to any further closures (including public transport) we will take that advice and put it in place immediately”. With AFL games initially playing without crowds, and now suspended, the normally scheduled Footy Express services have been cancelled until further notice.

In **Western Australia**, TransPerth trains are receiving a full sanitation clean every day. On 25 March, TransPerth announced it was in the process of installing a “cash box” in every bus positioned “near the driver” where passengers can drop cash into it with no change provided. It was recommending cash-wielding customers get a SmartRider card.

In **New Zealand**, Auckland Transport (AT) has installed public hand sanitiser stations while increasing the instances of vehicle cleaning. AT said “while many Aucklanders are working from home... those continuing to use public transport should use good hygiene practices”. On 24 March, AT implemented rear-door only passenger boarding on its buses to help protect its drivers. Due to an “unprecedented” lockdown, from 26 March, AT made its transport network free. However, services are only available for essential travel including essential jobs, travel to/from grocery stores, for medical reasons and moving essential goods. Passengers could be asked for identification such as a work identification card or a letter from their employer. In Wellington, from 23 March, bus drivers aged over 70 were stood down and all cash transactions were suspended (see our separate article on page 9). However, Transport Minister, Phil Twyford, said “it's still safe to use public transport if you're well, and I really want to reinforce that”. From 25 March, Metlink made the buses and trains free for travel. Buses also moved to a daily Sunday timetable with rear-door only boarding. Trains were also moved to a special weekend timetable while the first carriage of every train became reportedly reserved for employees, while ferries were suspended until the Level 4 restrictions can be reduced. Since 26 March, the Wairarapa Line has been replaced by buses. From 23 March until further notice, KiwiRail suspended three tourist rail services – TranzAlpine, Northern Explorer and Coastal Pacific.

Our “International” section on page 9 provides news from selected operators and regions outside 'ANZ'.

## **Indian Pacific - 50 years of service**

On 23 February, the 4,300 kilometre trans-continental Indian Pacific rail service celebrated 50 years of operation. The train enabled the first direct rail journey from Australia's east coast to its west coast. The service currently conveys 22,000 travellers every year across the Nullarbor.

With the more recent success of the service, there is a plan to increase the length of the train to 880 metres by adding seven carriages to the current 29 from September. This would increase seating capacity by 250 passengers. The West Australian government has also started preliminary work on moving the Perth destination from Perth Terminal to Fremantle.

**Update:** *The Indian Pacific was suspended from service on March 23 until May 31 due to COVID-19 border controls.*

## **QUEENSLAND**

### **Gold Coast light rail extension**

On 7 March, the state government revealed the preferred route for Stage 3B of the Gold Coast light rail extension. It would run from Burleigh Heads down the Gold Coast Highway to Tugun. The highway route will enable the neighbouring corridor to be kept for a future heavy rail link to the airport. This is the final piece of Queensland's inaugural light rail line.

Meanwhile, Stage 3A contracts are scheduled to be awarded later this year.

### **NSW TrainLink suspension**

Since 24 March, due to coronavirus border controls, NSW TrainLink trains are not operating into Queensland until further notice. From Sydney, the XPT service starts/finishes at Casino. Road coaches from Casino only operate to/from Tweed Heads.

## Sunshine Coast enjoys new train

Nambour saw the new NGR train in service for the first time on Monday 3 March, where an NGR set has since been allocated to operate eight weekday Sunshine Coast services.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### Sydney Trains network disruption

Early in the morning of Tuesday 25 February, overhead wiring repairs at Hornsby Maintenance Centre caused by a train that pulled overhead wiring down caused service reductions, delays and cancellations on the T1 and T9 North and West lines. Later that same morning, a medical emergency at Erskineville/Redfern led to significant delays on the T4 Eastern Suburbs and South Coast lines of up to an hour. Additionally, a mechanical issue at Lidcombe caused minor delays for T2 Inner West services while a fire alarm at Town Hall caused some peak hour trains to skip that stop.

Prior to first service on Tuesday 3 March, a trackwork vehicle derailed in the City Circle near Circular Quay. Initial complications in the recovery saw the vehicle remain until just after 07:00. T2 Inner West, T3 Bankstown and T8 Airport line services experienced substantial delays as trains had to be squeezed onto other lines into the City which caused delays on most lines across Sydney until the afternoon.

On the afternoon of Monday 9 March, urgent rail repairs at Town Hall caused by a broken rail significantly impacted passenger services on T1 and T9 West and North lines across the city with delays of up to two hours and numerous cancellations. Where trains normally operate every three minutes in peak hour through Town Hall, trains were relegated to an average 8-minute frequency from snail-paced running through the incident site and the requirement for Condition Affecting the Network (CAN) Warnings (a safeworking publication which advises employees of changed conditions to the line ahead). This resulted in extensive delays and reduced service frequencies on these lines for the remainder of the evening.

### Newcastle LR hospital extension priority

The Newcastle Herald reported on 14 March on a consultant's report ordered by Transport for NSW into possible extensions of the Newcastle light rail line into the suburbs. ATA member, Geoff Hassall, has kindly provided a review of the article below:

The study was a condition of the deal with the NSW Upper House to agree to the closure of the inner-city heavy rail line over four years ago. Four potential corridors from Newcastle Interchange out of an initial list of 18 in the Newcastle Transit Plan (2017) were studied:

1. To John Hunter Hospital via Broadmeadow and McDonald Jones Stadium;
2. To Mayfield via Maitland Rd;
3. To Wallsend via the Newcastle Road corridor; and
4. To Charlestown via the Pacific Highway.

Each route has advantages and disadvantages, but the hospital corridor (route 1) was the only one to have a "positive economic benefit, despite having the most expensive construction cost". Without the results of a detailed economic assessment being revealed, each route was estimated to cost "between approximately \$900 million and 1.5 billion". On a 'per kilometre of track' basis, "the Charlestown route is the least expensive, while the hospital route is the most costly".

However, when potential revenue and other long-term factors such as "place-making and urban renewal", development precincts and housing close to employment hubs were considered, route 1 came out on top. It also has more potential for urban infill and "population growth up to 14,146 people". Obviously the hospital provides the highest projected ridership - as does the stadium (on event days). The report said that six additional trams and a new depot would be needed to service this route extension.

Seven stops are proposed along the extended route. It would use Tudor & Belford St, through "Nine Ways" Broadmeadow, then cross the heavy railway on or beside the existing Lambton Rd bridge. It would then follow Lambton Rd and then the "narrow and rising" (up to 9 per cent grade) Russell Rd corridor, which would be the biggest obstacle in this route's construction. No evidence is provided as to whether the line is proposed to replace motor traffic on Russell Rd or share with it, but closure during its construction would at least be envisaged. The line would then follow the Lookout Rd median to and through the hospital entrance.

Of the other three routes studied, Charlestown has fairly steep gradients and some narrow roads, and Mayfield is short, with "poor transport patronage outcomes" and potential for growth (and, may I say, the regressive situation of a tramway sharing the use of a narrow main road -Maitland Rd- without the possibility of dedicated median running).

The Wallsend route, although relatively flat, with potential for median running, would also have traffic implications due to forming part of the increasingly-busy main access to the Hunter Expressway and the M1, as well as "encountering stage 5 of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass" currently under construction.

Lest anyone gets too excited about this plan, a ten-year lead time is proposed. In the interim, a dedicated bus corridor along the hospital route was recommended, which "could be easily converted" if light rail was to proceed.



Proposed routes (north to south) route 2, route 3, route 1 and route 4 (source: Transport for NSW).

## L1 Light Rail update

Due to the closure of The Star casino and associated establishments from the latest restrictions imposed by the coronavirus pandemic, from 06:00 on Sunday 29 March, all services on the L1 line are skipping The Star station until further notice.

In addition, all late night services between 23:00 and 06:00 have been suspended since 23:00 on 28 March. Coincidentally, late night trackwork was scheduled for the nights of 30 March to 1 April and 4 April with replacement buses scheduled to operate in lieu. At the time of publication, it was unclear if these contracted replacement buses would continue to operate.

## Melbourne XPT update

Following on from the closure of Victoria's North East line due to the Wallan derailment in February, at the

close of February, V/Line resumed operating services along the North East rail line with significant service delays being experienced once again due to track speed restrictions.

In early March, NSW TrainLink started operating the XPT again from Sydney to as far as Albury, with coaches operating on the rest of the journey to Melbourne. The Transport for NSW advisory from 14 March follows:

*Rail network manager ARTC has implemented speed restrictions on the North East Rail Lines in Victoria. To maintain service times and connections with other services the Sydney to Melbourne, Melbourne to Sydney XPT train service has been replaced by road coaches to/from Albury and Melbourne.*

## Public transport patronage soars

Transport for NSW's own estimates on future transport patronage between 2012 and 2031; have now been exceeded – only five years in! While patronage reached the estimated 2031 levels back in the 2017 financial year, in 2019, 54 million more trips were made on buses, and 40 million more trips on trains than was forecast for 2031 which demonstrates the continuing increase in demand being experienced for Sydney's established public transport services.

## Newcastle LR cracks found

It has been revealed that four distinct cracks were found in welding back in January near Civic where a 10 km/h speed restriction has been placed to enable trams to continue operating. Downer EDI will repair the tracks in line with its warranty responsibilities.

## Newcastle light rail

Transport for NSW announced that in its first year of operation, the Keolis Downer-operated Newcastle Light Rail conveyed over 1.2 million trips. The line is reportedly averaging 3,700 trips every weekday.

## Badgery's rail line could be delayed

Added pressure on both state and federal government budgets from the recent bushfires, drought and the ongoing coronavirus pandemic could see the 'second airport' line construction delayed for a number of years.

In addition to the Federal government's \$17 billion in coronavirus economic stimulus plunging the federal budget back into deficit, the State government also soon after announced their own multi-billion dollar economic stimulus package.

Both are going halves on the \$8 billion estimated project cost of the line which would provide a rail connection between the new Badgery's Creek Airport and St Marys.

## Future rail freight concern

Rail freight operators, grain processors and farmers have teamed up in an effort to rally against new draft NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) standards which they say will obliterate the local rail freight industry within five years. They have written to Environment Minister Matt Kean warning of unintended consequences from implementation of the standards.

NSW Farmers Wagga district branch chairman Alan Brown said the new draft diesel engine emissions and noise restrictions would increase costs for farmers, would not deliver a net gain for the environment and would make transportation costs more expensive and less efficient - "If you remove the rail then the only option is by road and that is far more destructive in

terms of wear on the roads and it creates more carbon emissions through using more fuel to shift the grain".

Shooters Fishers and Farmers Murray Member of Parliament, Helen Dalton, said she would also raise concerns with the minister - "I'm extremely concerned by the impact of these proposed new standards on regional grain branch lines, particularly Hillston and Boree Creek... it's just bizarre, the proposed EPA environmental standards are actually likely to increase greenhouse gas emissions by forcing more trucks onto the road. It's the exact opposite of what the NSW Government keeps promising to do: getting the trucks off the road."

## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

### Xplorer patronage increases

Patronage on the Canberra to Sydney Xplorer service hit 250,000 trips across 2019 financial year. This was a 34 per cent increase on 2015. Across the four-year period, the particular service with the highest growth in patronage was the evening Sydney to Canberra service, train 635, with an increase of 69 per cent.

### Wire-free 2A to amp up project costs

The ACT government has confirmed that the decision to make Stage 2A of the Canberra Light Rail wire-free will see the need for all 14 light rail vehicles to be retro-fitted on the roof with batteries. Although the government was being tight-lipped on the real cost increase to taxpayers, estimates suggest it will be up to one-fifth of the original acquisition cost of each vehicle. Transport Minister, Chris Steel, said the cost increase would not be "prohibitive".

### Future light rail extensions

The territory government has ordered a pre-feasibility study for each of Stages 3 and 4 of the Canberra Light Rail Project.

Stage 3 would link Belconnen to Canberra Airport as its own line, while Stage 4 would link Woden with Tuggeranong. Stage 4 would further extend the inaugural line following the completion of Stage 2.

Transport Minister, Chris Steel, put paid to speculation about trackless trams or guided buses as "unproven technology".

## VICTORIA

### Yarra Trams agreement

The Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) announced on 25 February that it would cancel its previously planned tram strikes scheduled for the period 12-15 March following intervention by the state government. The government is now facilitating mediation between the union and Yarra Trams.

On 27 February, agreement was finally made after a year of negotiations between the union and Yarra Trams with both parties now compromising on their positions. Yarra Trams employees have secured a 3.5 per cent annual pay rise from 1 July 2019, while Yarra Trams gets an increase in its part-time employee cap from four to six per cent of its workforce. This cap increases to eight per cent in the third year, then 10 per cent in the fourth and final year.

## Upcoming planned disruptions timetable

The state government's *Big Build* website provides the below table of upcoming planned service disruptions due to various construction projects:

### Buses replace trains and trams

<b>Line</b>	<b>Disruption</b>	<b>Works start</b>	<b>Works finish</b>
<b>Belgrave, Lilydale and Alamein</b>	Buses replace trains between Parliament and Camberwell	Friday 6 March, 8.30pm	Monday, 9 March
<b>Cranbourne and Pakenham</b>	Buses replace trains between Westall and Cranbourne/Pakenham	Friday, 10 April	Sunday, 12 April
<b>Frankston</b>	Buses replace trains between Moorabbin and Mordialloc on weekdays	Friday 20 March, 9pm	Friday 27 March, 8pm
	Buses replace trains between Moorabbin and Frankston on weekends	Friday 20 March, 9pm	Friday 27 March, 8pm
	Buses replace trains between Mordialloc and Frankston/Stony Point	Thursday 30 April, 9pm	Sunday, 3 May
	Buses replace trains between Moorabbin and Mordialloc	Saturday 23 May, 9pm	Mid-July
<b>Sandringham</b>	Buses replace trains between Flinders Street and Sandringham	Saturday, 28 March	Sunday, 5 April
<b>Sunbury</b>	Buses replace trains between North Melbourne and Sunshine	Friday 6 March, 8.30pm	Saturday, 7 March
	Buses replace trains between North Melbourne and Sunbury	Sunday, 8 March	Sunday, 8 March
	Buses replace trains between North Melbourne and Sunshine	Thursday 14 May, 9pm	Wednesday, 20 May
<b>Upfield</b>	Buses replace trains between North Melbourne and Upfield	Monday, 20 July	October

### Station closures

<b>Station</b>	<b>Disruption</b>	<b>Works start</b>	<b>Works finish</b>
<b>Cheltenham Station</b>	Station closed	Friday 20 March, 9pm	Friday 27 March, 8pm
	Station closed	Wednesday, 15 April	Saturday, 1 August
<b>Mentone Station</b>	Station closed	Friday 20 March, 9pm	Friday 27 March, 8pm

### Coaches replace trains

<b>Line</b>	<b>Disruption</b>	<b>Works start</b>	<b>Works finish</b>
<b>Ballarat, Ararat and Maryborough</b>	Coaches replace trains between Southern Cross and Ballarat/Ararat/Maryborough	Wednesday, 22 April	Sunday, 3 May
<b>Bendigo, Swan Hill and Echuca</b>	Coaches replace trains for all or part of journey	Sunday, 8 March	Sunday, 8 March
	Coaches replace trains between Southern Cross and Bendigo, Swan Hill and Echuca	Saturday, 23 March	Monday, 1 June
<b>Geelong</b>	Coaches replace trains for all or part of journey	Friday 20 March, 10pm	Sunday, 22 March
<b>Geelong and Warrnambool</b>	Coaches replace trains between Geelong and Warrnambool	Thursday, 26 March	Sunday, 12 April
	Coaches replace trains between Melbourne and Warrnambool	Thursday, 31 March	Friday, 10 April

## Tram works

Route	Disruption	Works start	Works finish
Routes 3/3a, 5, 16, 64 and 67	Buses replace trams on St Kilda Road between Commercial Road and Union Street	Saturday, 4 April	Sunday, 12 April
Route 5 and 16	Buses replace trams along Glenferrie Road between High Street and Wattletree Road	Saturday, 16 May	Monday, 18 May
Route 6	Buses replace trams between Glen Iris terminus and Commercial Road/St Kilda Road	Saturday, 4 April	Sunday, 12 April
Route 30 and City Circle	No trams along La Trobe Street between Queen Street and Russell Street	Saturday, 2 May	Wednesday, 6 May
Route 58	Buses replace trams between Royal Park and Dawson Street	Saturday, 23 May	Monday, 1 June
Route 70, 75 and City Circle	No trams along Flinders Street between Elizabeth Street and Russell Street	Monday, 23 March	Saturday, 28 March
Route 86	Buses replace trams between Bundoora RMIT and High Street/Miller Street	Saturday, 21 March	Sunday, 29 March

The Victorian government also produced a media release, released 23 February, for the upcoming construction work. Works will include level crossing removal, road works and infrastructure maintenance.

Toorak Road level crossing will be removed six months ahead of schedule after nine-days straight of construction over the April school holidays. Major works continue in Cheltenham and Mentone with buses replacing trains from 20 to 27 March to prepare for the two-month construction "blitz" starting on 23 May. The blitz sees three level crossings removed with two new railway stations constructed - see page 6 of the February edition of *Table Talk* for further information.

From 20 July, three months of construction sees tracks on the Upfield Line elevated with the removal of four level crossings and two stations being re-built.

Various road construction works were also advertised in the media release.

### Level crossing removal project

The Berwick level crossing removal project scope has now been expanded to include relocation of the bus interchange to the southern side of the railway line.

### Yarra Trams derailment

A route 12 tram derailed on 1 February. This incident caused route 12 services to be shortened temporarily, whilst a replacement bus service was organised to operate between Stop 130 on Albert Road/Clarendon Street and St Kilda.

### Overland uncertainty

Another deadline looms with the end of allocated funding by the Victorian government for the Overland rail service, operated by Great Southern Rail between Melbourne and Adelaide. This also places into jeopardy the Route 5 bus service at Horsham which connects with the Overland service.

At time of publication, there was no commitment made for any further government funding past 31 March.

*Update: The Overland service was indefinitely suspended from 23 March due to South Australia closing its borders to non-essential interstate travel. Have we seen the last of The Overland?*

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### New light rail operator announced

The state government announced on 10 March that Torrens Connect had been the successful tenderer to operate Adelaide's light rail services for the next eight years beginning from July 1. Torrens Connect is a joint venture between Torrens Transit, John Holland and UGL Rail. This ends state government operation of Adelaide's light rail services.

The light rail forms part of the North South contract area which also contains local bus route services. See our *Bus News* section below for more.

Meanwhile, the suburban rail network contract will be awarded later in the year.

## Gawler electrification

Adelaide Metro advises of various closures coming up to enable works to continue on the Gawler electrification project.

Between Monday 16 March and Thursday 9 April, all post-9pm train services between Adelaide and Salisbury Interchange are being replaced by buses. Note Saturday nights are the only exclusion, with train services continuing to operate until last service. After the 20:20 train departs from Adelaide, Gawler Line services only operate between Salisbury Interchange and Gawler Central. The final through service departs Gawler Central at 19:55. Adelaide Metro has also again organised for an extra train to operate from Salisbury Interchange 30 minutes after the last normally timetabled service to ensure a connection with the last replacement bus from Adelaide.

From Saturday, 11 April until Friday 24 April, the line between Adelaide and Salisbury Interchange will be under a two-week shutdown with replacement buses operating all day. A shuttle train service will operate between Salisbury Interchange and Gawler Central.

In the weekend in the middle of the above two-week shutdown, the entire Gawler Line will be replaced by buses. On 18-19 April, replacement buses will operate from Adelaide all the way to Gawler Central.

Adelaide Metro provided a PDF timetable file for the late night replacement buses on their website.

Train & Substitute Bus Timetable – Gawler Central to Adelaide							
		PM				PM/AM	
<b>Gawler Central to Salisbury Train Services</b>							
Gawler Central	8.25	8.55	9.25	9.55	10.25	10.55	11.25
Gawler Oval	8.26	8.56	9.26	9.56	10.26	10.56	11.26
Gawler	8.29	8.59	9.29	9.59	10.29	10.59	11.29
Evanston	8.32	9.02	9.32	10.02	10.32	11.02	11.32
Tambelin	8.34	9.04	9.34	10.04	10.34	11.04	11.34
Kudla	8.37	9.07	9.37	10.07	10.37	11.07	11.37
Munno Para	8.39	9.09	9.39	10.09	10.39	11.09	11.39
Smithfield	8.42	9.12	9.42	10.12	10.42	11.12	11.42
Broadmeadows	8.45	9.15	9.45	10.15	10.45	11.15	11.45
Womma	8.47	9.17	9.47	10.17	10.47	11.17	11.47
Elizabeth	8.49	9.19	9.49	10.19	10.49	11.19	11.49
Elizabeth South	8.51	9.21	9.51	10.21	10.51	11.21	11.51
Nurlutta	8.54	9.24	9.54	10.24	10.54	11.24	11.54
Salisbury	8.56	9.26	9.56	10.26	10.56	11.26	11.56
<b>Transfer from Train to Substitute Bus</b>							
<b>Salisbury to Adelaide Substitute Bus Services</b>							
	GA1	GA1	GA1	GA1	GA1	GA1	GA1
Salisbury, Salisbury Interchange Zone A	9.01	9.31	10.01	10.31	11.01	11.31	12.01
Chidda, Stop 45 Salisbury Highway	9.06	9.36	10.06	10.36	11.06	11.36	12.06
Parafield, Stop 41 Salisbury Highway	9.08	9.38	10.08	10.38	11.08	11.38	12.08
Parafield Gardens, Stop 37 Salisbury Highway	9.10	9.40	10.10	10.40	11.10	11.40	12.10
Greenfields, Stop 34R Salisbury Highway	9.12	9.42	10.12	10.42	11.12	11.42	12.12
Mawson, Mawson Interchange Zone D	9.16	9.46	10.16	10.46	11.16	11.46	12.16
Dry Creek, Temp Stop Cavan Road	9.25	9.55	10.25	10.55	11.25	11.55	12.25
Kilburn, Stop 20 Churchill Road	9.29	9.59	10.29	10.59	11.29	11.59	12.29
Islington, Stop 14 Churchill Road	9.31	10.01	10.31	11.01	11.31	12.01	12.31
Dudley Park, Stop 10 Churchill Road	9.33	10.03	10.33	11.03	11.33	12.03	12.33
Ovingham, Stop 8 Churchill Road	9.35	10.05	10.35	11.05	11.35	12.05	12.35
Adelaide Railway Station, Stop D North Terrace	9.46	10.16	10.46	11.16	11.46	12.16	12.46

Extract of late night replacement services - 16 March to 9 April.

## Meyer Road bridge reconstruction

As part of the reconstruction of the Meyer Road bridge, over the next few months, the Seaford Line will experience service disruptions on selected weekends and late weeknights.

The \$4 million dollar project started in February and is slated for completion in the middle of the year. It is jointly funded by the Commonwealth government and the local council.

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All-day on Sunday 29 March, the Seaford Line will be closed between Brighton and Seaford from midnight. Replacement buses will be in operation with trains operating across the remainder of the Seaford Line.

Over the Easter long weekend (starting 19:30 Thursday 9 April until end of Monday 13 April), buses will replace trains between Brighton and Seaford.

From 20:00 on Monday 20 April, there will be another multi-day shutdown with buses replacing trains between Brighton and Seaford until end of day Thursday 23 April.

The same section of line will again be replaced by buses for the whole day on Sunday 10 May from midnight.

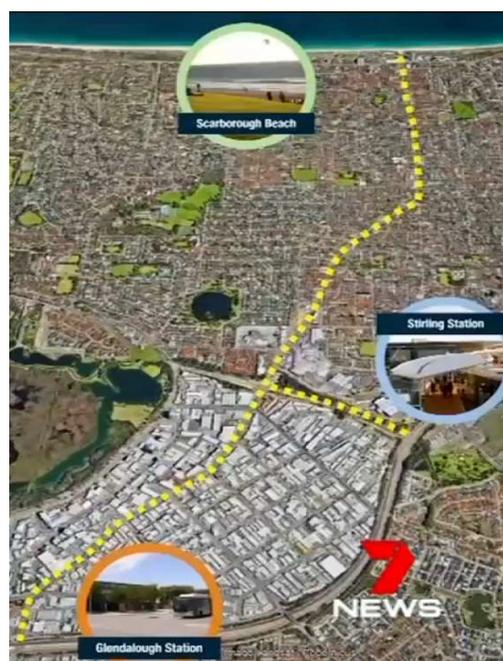
## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### Train disruption

On 27 February, significant afternoon disruption was experienced after a train failed on approach to Esplanade station at around 17:00 hours. A second train was terminated in order to give power to attach and move the failed train at around 17:45 back to the depot.

### Trackless trams for Perth?

A long-term project between five of Perth's local councils could see trackless trams operating between Scarborough Beach and Glendalough station via Innaloo shops. Perth's City of Stirling mayor, Mark Irwin, said it was the only local government to have "planning in place to achieve trackless trams down a corridor". He said he believed it would make money because it "gets more people to invest along that corridor". Work could potentially start as early as this year if the Commonwealth provides funding.



Proposed trackless tram route for Perth (source: 7 News Perth).

According to the mayor, “the roads have already been seeded ready for widening. We need a business case, that would take about six weeks, then we’d be ready to start”.

## NEW ZEALAND

### New Hamilton to Auckland service

A new commuter service will begin operating on 3 August between Hamilton and Auckland. It will include two return trips on weekdays and one return trip on Saturdays. The morning services operate from Frankton in Hamilton, with the afternoon/evening service from Papakura in Auckland. The 'Te Huia' service is being funded from \$NZ 80 million in New Zealand Transport Agency funding over five years with another \$NZ 12.5 million annually from local authorities.

The Waikato Regional Council has previously estimated that up to 100,000 people could be using the service annually by the third year of operation.

### KiwiRail unable to meet freight demand

KiwiRail Group chief executive, Greg Miller, explained on 20 February to the parliamentary committee review of the *Land Transport (Rail) Legislation Bill* as to why 92 per cent of the country's freight is not using rail and the importance of the draft *NZ Rail Plan*, a new planning and funding framework for the KiwiRail network, in turning KiwiRail around.

He said the Plan “lays out a pathway for sustainable planning and funding that will allow rail to play the important role it should in the country's transport system. Our rail lines and our freight systems are so run down that it has taken a huge level of commitment from both the Government and from our team to start moving the company into a position where it can return to profit. We have had no capacity for market reclamation” due to historic short-term decisions where cost-cutting resulted in a lack of drivers, locomotives, wagons and fully usable track. “With increasing freight volumes, growing road congestion and maintenance costs, and the need to meet emission reduction targets, rail is a critical part of our transport system.”

## INTERNATIONAL

### TGV derailment

A French TGV train derailed near Strasbourg in Eastern France on 5 March with 348 passengers on board. 21 people were injured in the incident, including the driver who was taken to hospital with serious injuries. SNCF has advised the cause was a landslide which led to debris on the tracks which was struck by the train.

## British rail franchise changes

Many passenger rail franchises agreements have been suspended, with “Emergency Measures Agreements” now implemented between the Department for Transport and operators for at least six months. With patronage numbers, and revenue, down by two-thirds due to the coronavirus pandemic, franchisees will now operate services for a fee of no more than two per cent of the normal (i.e.: pre-pandemic) cost base of the franchise.

Where a franchisee does not want to take either option, the “government's operator of last resort” will step in.

## Coronavirus halts cash

Concerns that some operators across the world may halt the use of cash payments for fares have come true in Wellington, New Zealand. From Monday 23 March, Metlink stopped handling all cash sales, with incentives given to encourage EFTPOS sales. All monthly passes sold between April and June using EFTPOS will get a 50 per cent discount. As Metlink have removed all ticket checking and cash sales, with the exception of very limited spot-checks at some stations, it has implemented an “honesty policy” on its ten-trip tickets, asking customers to tick their own tickets after each trip. On its buses, any patrons who boarded without a Snapper card between 23 and 30 March, were to be given a free card uploaded with \$5 in credit.

In February, China's central bank reportedly cleaned and quarantined thousands of bank notes to try to control the outbreak with bills isolated for 14 days before returning into circulation. Disinfecting was done with ultraviolet light at high temperatures.

**Update:** *Wellington's bus and trains were made fare free from March 25.*

## Coronavirus

The **Indian** Railways cancelled all of its passenger services from 22-31 March. 12,000 services were affected. This came after 12 people infected with the virus reportedly travelled on the network between 13-16 March.

In **Italy**, one of the countries with the most widespread COVID-19 infection rates, high-speed rail operators Trenitalia and NTV-Italo have cut many of their services. Passenger lounges at stations are now staying closed, hand sanitisers have been installed on board some trains, and train cleaning has increased with specific procedural instructions. Meanwhile, Thello has suspended overnight services between Venice, Milan and Paris; the EuroCity is suspended between Innsbruck, Austria and Italy; and the Danish State Railway (DSB) are now running longer trains in off-peak periods, while also no longer accepting cash payments. DSB says it is simply supporting the Danish government's efforts to curb the coronavirus.

In the United Kingdom, with nearly 1,000 reported coronavirus cases in **London** alone, the London Tube announced some stations and lines would shut down. The Waterloo and City line was shut down in its entirety from Friday, 20 March, including the Night Tube and Night Overground. Transport for London estimated that up to 40 tube stations that do not have any interchange would close. London mayor, Sadiq Khan, said that “people should not be travelling, by any means, unless they really, really have to”. As at Sunday, 22 March, 37 stations had closed, according to Transport for London. The latest updates can be found on their website, [tfl.gov.uk](http://tfl.gov.uk).

Financially, Transport for London has said it should handle the initial reduction in passenger revenue quite well, with £2 billion in its cash reserves now forecast at the end of this financial year. It currently estimates the total hit from coronavirus at up to £500 million in lost fare revenue.

**New York's** subway ridership has fallen 18.5 per cent comparing 11 March to the same day last year. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority has also increased cleaning standards, with its stations receiving twice-daily sanitation cleans and carriages also cleaned daily. Amtrak has also reported to have increased its cleaning.

Closer to home, in Indonesia, the **Jakarta** Governor imposed limitations on the operating hours of the local railways and bus services from 16 March; however the result was large crowds and lines at stations. A bus passenger reported to *The Jakarta Post* that passengers were “squeezed against each other inside the buses”. The railway operator MRT Jakarta reportedly reduced the carriages on their trains from 16 down to just four. Coincidentally, this all was an effort by the city to promote social-distancing.

## Luxembourg makes public transport free

Unrelated to coronavirus, from 1 March, all public transport became free across Luxembourg. A spokesperson for the government said it hoped to alleviate heavy road congestion with trains, light rail and buses now free to use.

The government is now sacrificing nearly \$50 million in annual fare revenue for an operation costing its taxpayers over \$560 million to run. The government says that the local economy is running so well that it can afford to take this budgetary hit.

**Thanks** to Geoff Hassall, Paul Brown, Ross Morrison, [mygc.com.au](http://mygc.com.au), *The Courier Mail* newspaper, Sydney Morning Herald, Murray Valley Standard, WSFM radio, Transport for NSW, Nine News, *The Ballarat Courier* newspaper, Newcastle Herald, The Canberra Times, ABC News, *Herald Sun* newspaper, *The Age* newspaper, [bigbuild.vic.gov.au](http://bigbuild.vic.gov.au), Rail Express, *The West Australian* newspaper, PerthNow, Seven News Perth, Radio New Zealand, New Zealand Herald, NewsHub, [stuff.co.nz](http://stuff.co.nz), Metlink, Railway Technology, Mint India, The Jakarta Post, The Guardian, Transport for London, CNN and International Railway Journal for *Rail & Tram News*.

*Table Talk - April 2020*

# BUS & COACH NEWS

## NATIONAL

### Greyhound changes

Due to the strong impact of the coronavirus pandemic on tourism and both interstate and intrastate travel, the following services have been suspended until at least November:

- **GX442/GX447:** Brisbane to Airlie Beach / Agnes Waters.
- **GX441/GX445:** Brisbane to Hervey Bay.
- **GX428/248:** Brisbane to Byron Bay.
- **GX702, GX704, GX706, GX713, GX715, GX716, GX741 and GX752:** Brisbane to Toowoomba and Miles.
- Stops at Sydney and Brisbane international airports have also ceased until at least June.

As the situation continues to evolve, there will without doubt be further amendments to timetabled services.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### Eastern Suburbs changes pending

A draft document seen by the *Sydney Morning Herald* confirms plans to make changes to almost two dozen bus routes across the Eastern Suburbs to integrate the CBD South East Light Rail into the public transport network.

The document, dated January 2020, said the aim, following the recent heavy investment in the new light rail line from Randwick, was to reduce the number of peak hour bus services running into the city.

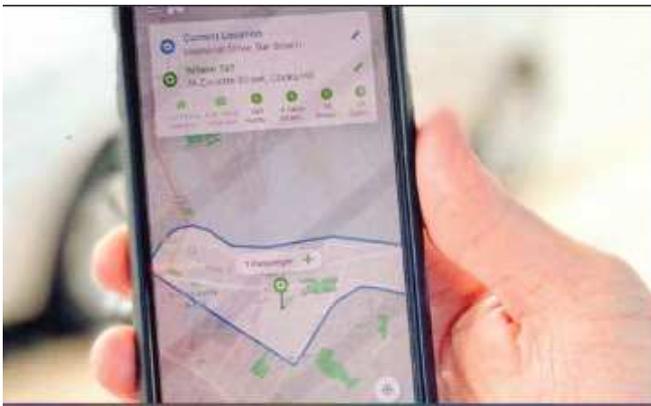
Readers may be aware that the line has suffered from poor timekeeping and disruptions since it opened with average trip times for a one way journey anywhere up to 50 minutes compared to roughly 30 minutes for the previous bus routes.

The routes indicated to be removed were quoted as 302, 314, 317, 373, 376, 377, 393-395, 397, 399, L94, M10, M50, 891 and 893. The routes indicated to be modified were quoted as 373X, 377X and 393X.

A NSW government spokesperson said 'planning was in the early stages', pending the opening of the L3 Kingsford light rail line, with a review of customer journey patterns from Opal card data to help determine the final bus plan for the region, which would be several months after the Kingsford branch line opens.

### Newcastle 'on demand' bus network

The service is available during weekday peak periods for travel from the inner suburbs (pink area on the map, page 12) to the CBD, Hamilton shops, and Broadmeadow station.



# Newcastle On Demand

Services now being trialled

## It's easy to book

1. Download the Newcastle Transport On Demand App from the App Store or from Android and register.
2. Select your preferred payment option: OpalPay or credit or debit card.
3. Move the pin or type in the address of your pick up locations and where you want to be dropped off.
4. Track your ride and head to the pick up location.



Getting to and from key locations in the Newcastle CBD is easy with On Demand public transport services

Find out more at [newcastleondemand.info](http://newcastleondemand.info)



Five bus routes operate through these suburbs, with these frequencies in weekday peak periods:

- **Route 12:** 15 minutes
- **Route 14:** average 15 minutes
- **Route 21** to CBD: average 30 minutes
- **Route 21** to Hamilton: average 30 minutes
- **Route 22:** average 30 minutes.

As well as this, there is an additional bus route that runs along Tudor St linking Broadmeadow station, Hamilton shops and the CBD with a combined frequency of 13 trips in the peak hours.

## No demand for cheap trip

BY MAX MCKINNEY

A HUNTER transport analyst has called for an overhaul of Newcastle's on-demand service after the release of patronage figures which show it is barely being used.

City of Newcastle's on-demand transport, a weekday morning and afternoon shuttle between inner-city suburbs and the city centre, Hamilton's Beaumont Street or Broadmeadow train station, was launched in October with the hope it would "encourage higher levels of public transport patronage" and make for a "more pedestrian-friendly city centre".

The service operates from 5.30am to 9am, and 3.30pm to 6pm. Customers book via an app, are picked up at their nominated pick-up point and then dropped off at their selected destination. A one-way trip costs only \$3.20 and can be paid for with an Opal card, or a bank card.

But after 100 days of operation, the Newcastle Herald can reveal the service has attracted only 200 passengers, equating to an average two customers, or one customer making a return trip, per day.

The service, funded by a federal grant council received to invest in mobility initiatives, is operated by Keolis Downer on a \$650,000 year-long contract. Despite the patronage, a City Newcastle spokesman said it had been a "positive start".

"More people explored the affordable transport service following the summer holidays, with 100 riders registering in January to take the total number of registered users to 217," he said. "At \$3.20 per ride, we expect passenger numbers to increase with the return of university students and as more people become aware of the service and its convenience."

The Herald asked if the service might be discontinued given the patronage, but with a 12-month contract locked in that appears unlikely.

"Evidence from other on-demand trials, such as the Newcastle Transport Lake Macquarie on-demand service, suggests that patronage takes time to build," the council spokesman said.

While much cheaper than a taxi or ride-sharing fare, the \$3.60 cost is slightly more expensive than using existing bus routes. The pick-up and destination zones could also be considered waiting or cycling distance of each other.

Newcastle-based transport analyst Ron Brown said the service's travel zones were "skewed to the south" of the city and offered a small pool of potential customers.

"The Newcastle scheme focuses on commuter trips," he said. "They might attract more interest if they included an area within five kilometres of the CBD and took in areas such as Carrington, Wickham, Idlington, Hamilton, Broadmeadow, Lambton, Waratah and Mayfield."

He said the service appeared to have had little advertising and needed targeted promotion at city workers.

"I'm surprised they've invested that much," he said.

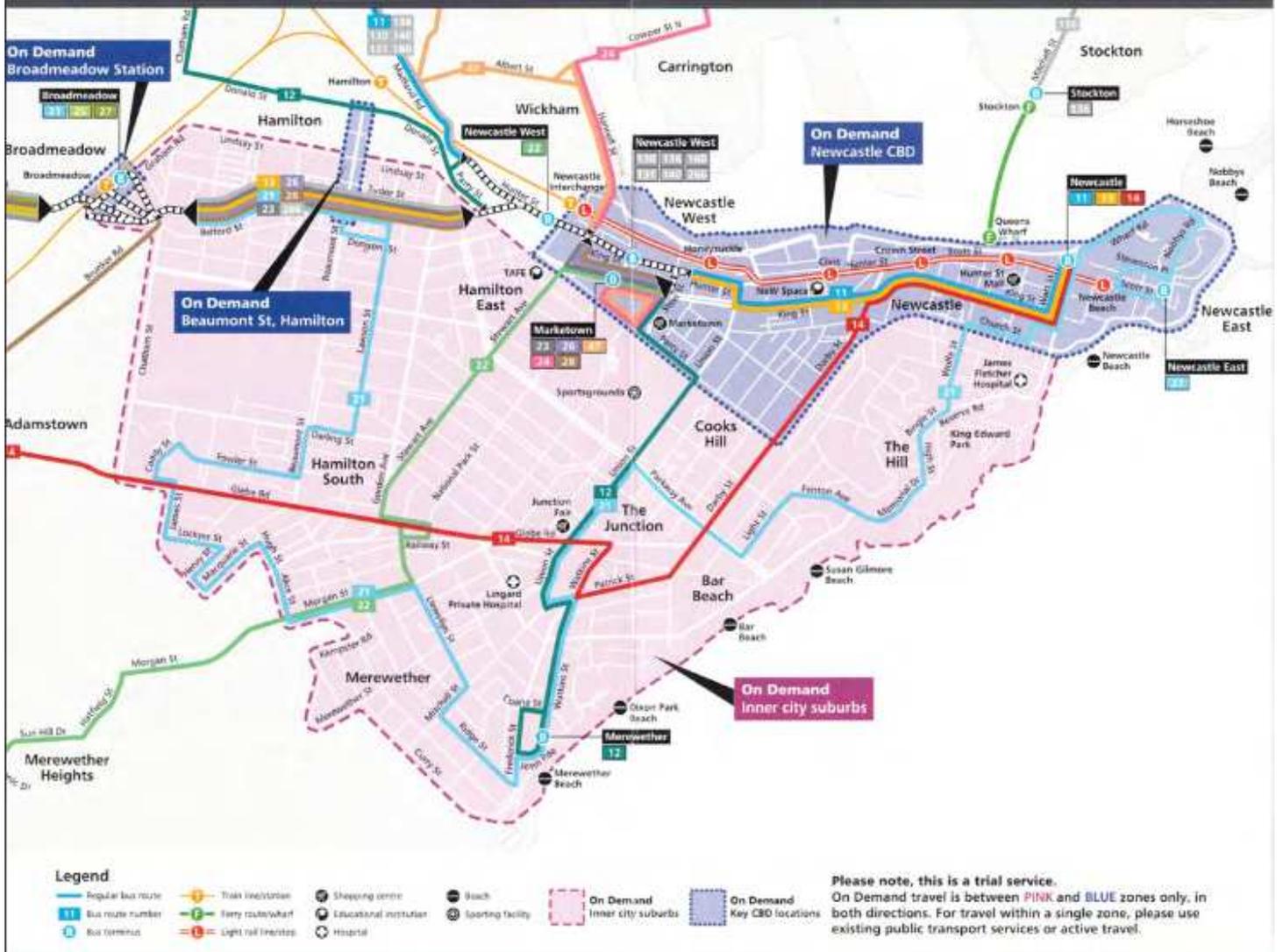
LAUNCH: Keolis Downer general manager Mark Dunlop at the launch of City of Newcastle's on-demand transport service in October. Picture: Simone De Peak

Newcastle Herald article.

## Newcastle On Demand trial area.

You can travel between the inner-city suburbs in the pink area to the CBD, Beaumont Street or Broadmeadow Station in the blue area, in both directions.

Newcastle On Demand service operates Monday to Friday between 6.30am and 9.00am in the morning and between 3.30pm and 6.00pm in the afternoon.



Book via the Newcastle Transport On Demand App

## Tweed Heads changes

A new bus network, operated by Surfside Buslines, was implemented on 16 December 2019. The new network is centred on Tweed City Shopping Centre in Tweeds Heads South, rather than Tweed Mall in Tweed Hills Central. The new network is as follows:

- **New route 600** Tweed Mall to Banora Point via Tweed Hospital and Tweed City - also duplicates with route 601 to provide a 15-minute service between Tweed Mall and Tweed City via Tweed Hospital.
- **601** West Tweed to Kingscliff via Coolangatta, Tweed Mall, Tweed Hospital and Tweed City

– service frequency increased from 60 minutes to 30 minutes.

- **602** Tweed City to Banora Point via Greenaway Drive - the through service to Tweed Mall is discontinued.
- **603** Tweed City to Pottsville – the through service to Tweed Mall is discontinued.
- **604** Tweed City to Banora Point via Hillcrest Av. - the through service to Tweed Mall is discontinued.

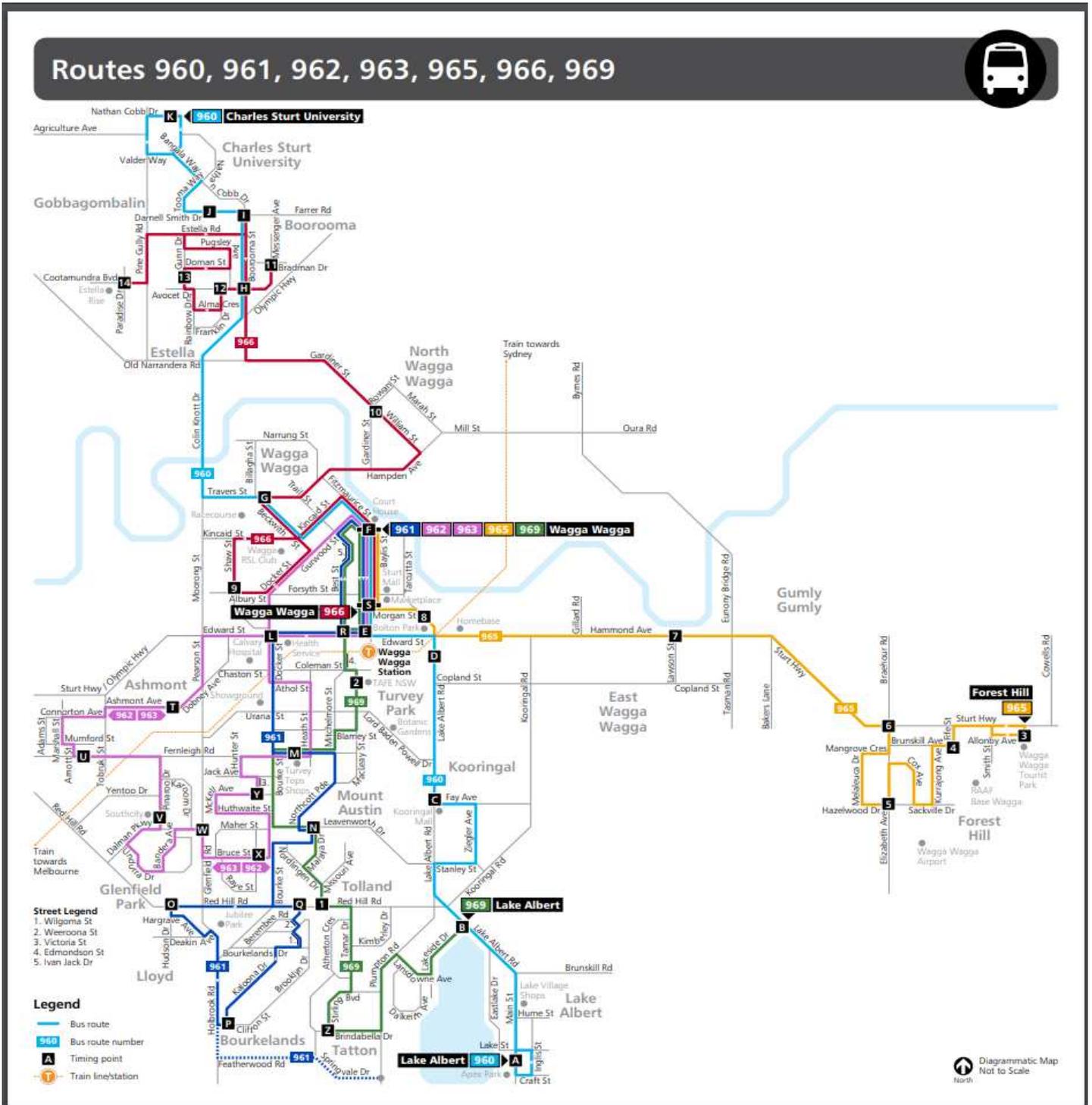
- **605** Tweed City to Murwillumbah – the through service to Tweed Mall is discontinued.
- **606** Tweed City-Fingal Head – service reduced to one service each way.
- **607** Tweed Mall to Flame Tree Park - withdrawn. The route has been replaced by modified 602 and 604.
- **608** Tweed City to Bilambil Heights - now operates directly to and from Tweed City. Connections to Coolangatta and Tweed Mall are now provided by route 601 at West Tweed.

- **New route 609** Murwillumbah to Kingscliff TAFE - Five trips are provided on weekdays.

On 17 February, further changes were made to routes 600, 601 and 608 to provide greater coverage.

Three timetables booklets are provided at [surfside.com.au](http://surfside.com.au) as follows:

- 600 (colour code is aqua) and 601 (blue).
- 602 (pale blue), 604 (green) and 606 (pink).
- 603 (yellow), 605 (orange), 608 (tan) and 609 (grey).



Above: New Wagga network map; Page 14 images: excerpts from new network timetable (source: Transport for NSW).

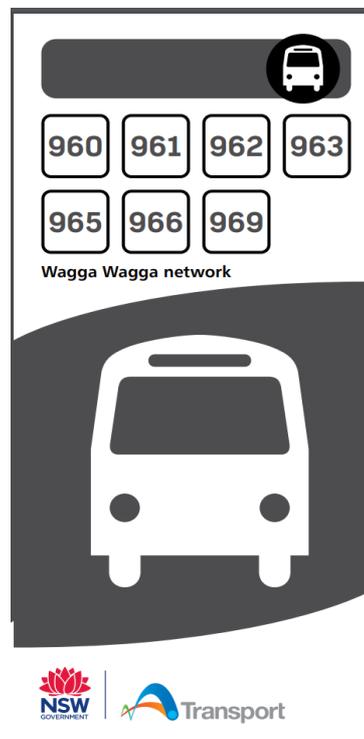
## Wagga Wagga service boost

From Monday 30 March, a new trial On Demand service, numbered 970, started operating between Wagga Wagga's suburbs and Bomen Business Park six days a week. It operates on weekdays only.

Additionally, a new timetable was implemented for local route services funded by Transport for NSW's Regional Growth Buses Program. It delivers extra bus services operated by Busabout Wagga.

Timetable alterations include routing changes, services running later in the evening on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and services now operating on all routes on Sundays between 08:00 and 16:00. Clock-face timetabling has also been delivered for patrons with timing changes to many individual services. School timetables have also been impacted.

This is the second regional area to receive a public transport overhaul as part of an election commitment to improve public transport services to 16 regional centres, according to Paul Toole, Regional Minister for Transport and Roads. The Tweed Heads changes listed above was the first.



### How to use this timetable

This timetable provides a snap shot of service information in 24-hour time (e.g. 5am = 05:00, 5pm = 17:00). Information contained in this timetable is subject to change without notice. Please note that timetables do not include minor stops, additional trips for special events, short term changes, holiday timetable changes, real-time information or any disruption alerts.

For the most up-to-date times, use the Trip Planner or Departures on [transportnsw.info](http://transportnsw.info)

### Trip planning

You can plan your trip using the Trip Planner or Departures on [transportnsw.info](http://transportnsw.info) or by downloading travel apps on your smartphone or tablet.

The Trip Planner, Departures and travel apps offer various features:

- favourite your regular trips
- get estimated pick up and arrival times
- receive service updates
- find nearby stations, stops, wharves and routes
- check accessibility information.

Find the latest apps at [transportnsw.info/apps](http://transportnsw.info/apps)

### Accessible services

All new buses are wheelchair-accessible with low-level floors and space for wheelchairs, prams or strollers. Look for the  symbol in this timetable. Some older buses may not have all the features you need. There will be more accessible services as older buses are replaced.

We try to make sure accessible buses run as intended. If an accessible bus is not available for a scheduled route, we apologise for the inconvenience.

### Who is providing my bus services?

The bus services shown in this timetable are run by Busabout:

**busaboutwagga.com.au**  
office@busaboutwagga.com.au  
(02) 5942 6600  
264 Hammond Ave, WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

### Fares

Contact Busabout for ticket options. You cannot use Opal on this service.

Valid from: 30/03/2020

NOTE: Information is correct as of the above date. For the most up-to-date times, use the Trip Planner on [transportnsw.info](http://transportnsw.info)

### Explanation of definitions and symbols

<b>A</b>	Journey terminates at cnr Stanley St & Lake Albert Rd.
<b>B</b>	Journey operates via Edward St and Baylis St to Fitzmaurice St.
<b>C</b>	Journey operates direct via Bourke St to Fernleigh Rd.
<b>D</b>	Journey operates direct via Edward St and terminates at corner Baylis St.
<b>E</b>	Journey terminates at the corner of Lae Ave and Fernleigh Rd.
<b>F</b>	Bus stops at Forest Hill Public School before proceeding to Forest Hill Caravan Park.
<b>G</b>	Journey diverts via Coleman St, Collins St, Railway St and operates via Koorngal, then Red Hill Rd to Tamar Dr.
<b>H</b>	Journey operates during school holidays only.
<b>J</b>	Journey diverts via Koorngal and operates via Red Hill Rd, then Lake Albert Rd, Railway St, Collins St to Coleman St, then normal route.
<b>K</b>	Journey commences at corner Edward St & Baylis St and operates via Baylis St, Fitzmaurice St, Gurwood St, Docker St, Bourke St, Bruce St, Glenfield Rd, Dalman Pkwy and Pinaroo Dr to South City Shopping Centre.
<b>L</b>	From Fife St journey diverts via Allonby St, Elizabeth St and Brunskill St to Kurradjong Rd.
<b>M</b>	On school days bus diverts from Bourke St via Temerloh Ave, Malaya Dr, (Mt Austin High School) and Leavenworth Dr back to Bourke St.
<b>MTW</b>	Journey operates on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday only.
<b>N</b>	Journey operates via route 966 (North Wagga Wagga) between Wagga Wagga and Estella.
<b>P</b>	Journey commences from corner of Plumpton Rd and Springvale Dr 9 minutes earlier and operates along Springvale Dr, Featherwood Rd, Holbrook Rd and Red Hill Rd to Hudson Dr.
<b>Q</b>	Journey operates direct along Hammond Ave and Edward St to opposite Baylis St, arriving at 15:29.
<b>R</b>	Bus operates to Forest Hill Caravan Park before operating to Forest Hill Village and Brunslea Estate.
<b>S</b>	Journey operates on school days only.
<b>TF</b>	Journey operates on Thursday and Friday only.
<b>U</b>	Journey operates direct via Nathan Cobb Dr to NALSH building before arriving at Crow Bar, Darnell Smith Dr.
<b>W</b>	Journey commences at corner Edward St & Baylis St and operates via Baylis St, Fitzmaurice St, Gurwood St and Docker St to Edward St.
<b>X</b>	From Sturt Hwy journey operates via Lake Albert Rd to Railway St, where you transfer to route 960.
<b>Y</b>	Bus diverts from Bruce St via Raye St (east) to and from Red Hill Public School.
<b>Z</b>	Journey diverts via Bourke St, Bruce St, Raye St, Ramus St, Red Hill Rd and Bourkelands (in the reverse direction to that shown on the map) before operating to Lloyd.
	Wheelchair Accessible.

The routes are:

- **960** Lake Albert to University via Wagga Wagga & Colin Knott Drive – replaces route 967. Tatton is now served by new route 969.
- **961** Wagga Wagga to Bourkelands.
- **962** Wagga Wagga to Glenfield Park anti-clockwise loop - combines former 962 outwards and 963 inwards.
- **963** Wagga Wagga to Glenfield Park clockwise loop - combines former 963 outwards and 962 inwards.
- **965** Wagga Wagga to Forest Hill.
- **966** Wagga Wagga to Estella Rise & University via North Wagga Wagga - incorporates routes 964 and 968.
- **New route 969** Wagga Wagga to Tatton.

Old routes 964, 967 and 968 have been withdrawn due to redundancy with other routes now taking in their various areas.

## Macq. Park 'On Demand' trial ceases

Transport for NSW announced its 'On Demand' trial service in the Macquarie Park area, operated by Keolis Downer, ceased on 20 March after two years of operation. 80,000 trips were reportedly made in that period with an average of almost 5,000 a month.

A Transport for NSW spokesperson said "the Macquarie Park 'On Demand' trial tested flexible and easy ways for customers to travel between their home and key hubs. The [On Demand] trials help us learn more about the needs of customers and how they travel during the first and last mile of their journey".

## Armidale driverless trial ceases

Transport for NSW announced that its free autonomous electric bus trial in Armidale, ARDi, finished on 20 February. The trial was delivered in partnership with Armidale Regional Council, EasyMile, Transdev, WSP, QBE Insurance, Edwards Coaches and the University of New England.

## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

### Updated Canberra timetables

Updating our story in the March edition of *Table Talk*, the planned bus network changes for 28 April have been delayed indefinitely due to the coronavirus pandemic. Transport Minister Chris Steel said "our focus must be on trying to maintain current transport services as much as possible".

## New Ginninderry bus service

A new free bus route, number 903, servicing the new Canberra suburb of Strathnairn, started on 2 March 2020. The service provides regular half-hourly services, 7 days a week, with an additional 15-minute frequency during weekday peak periods. The route is served by a 26-seater Hino Poncho bus, smaller than regular route buses but big enough to carry all the current residents of Strathnairn twice over, according to *The Canberra Times*. Strathnairn is the first housing development in the new area of Ginninderry – a joint venture between the ACT Government and Corkhill Brothers looking to provide housing development to the territory for the next 30 years.

The bus service connects to the rest of the Transport Canberra network as well as local schools and shops. The bus was supplied by the developer of Ginninderry, while the drivers are from Transport Canberra. The timetable is available online:

[https://www.transport.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/1485116/19468\\_TC\\_A4\\_tt\\_903-Gin-timetable.pdf](https://www.transport.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1485116/19468_TC_A4_tt_903-Gin-timetable.pdf)

## VICTORIA

### SkyBus changes

As expected, SkyBus has implemented service reductions across its network from 22 March.

The following services are now operating on the weekend timetable until further notice:

- Southbank to Docklands to Tullamarine.
- St Kilda to Tullamarine.
- Peninsula to Tullamarine.
- Western Express (Werribee) to Tullamarine.
- Eastern suburbs to Tullamarine.

The Avalon to Southern Cross service is now operating on a reduced weekday timetable.

The following services are now suspended from operation until further notice:

- SkyBus Link.
- Avalon to Geelong.

### V/Line service changes

Due to the South Australian border being closed to non-essential travel, from 25 March, all V/Line scheduled coach services that run into South Australia will only operate to the final timetabled stop before the South Australian border until further notice.

V/Line advises the following coaches will be affected:

- Speedlink services between Albury and Adelaide (connecting with trains between Albury and Melbourne) run between Albury and Murrayville only.

- Daylink services between Bendigo and Adelaide (connecting with trains between Bendigo and Melbourne) run between Bendigo and Lillimur only.
- Services between Ballarat and Mount Gambier (connecting with trains between Ballarat and Melbourne) run between Ballarat and Casterton Hospital (also stopping in Casterton township) only.
- From 16:00 on 24 March, Warrnambool and Mount Gambier services (connecting with trains between Warrnambool and Melbourne) only run between Warrnambool and Dartmoor.

V/Line coaches continue to operate between Ballarat/Ararat and Nhill for passengers wishing to travel to/from Stawell, Horsham, Dimboola or Nhill with V/Line trains still operating between Melbourne and Ararat.

Passengers who have booked travel across the border on affected services can claim a full refund.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### Adelaide Metro bus contracts awarded

The state government has awarded new bus operator contracts across the city for six contract areas.

Torrens Transit, a SeaLink Travel Group company, has kept its existing contract areas while also adding a fourth in the Outer North. It continues to be involved in North South services as part of the Torrens Connect joint venture. Busways is the new entrant with its new local division, Busways South Australia, obtaining the Outer South contract area.

All operators will implement new route networks in their contract areas later in the year with the government claiming this will enable simplification, better integration between services and modes, and more frequent services. The contracts are each for eight years with an option for a two-year extension.

The new contract winners are:

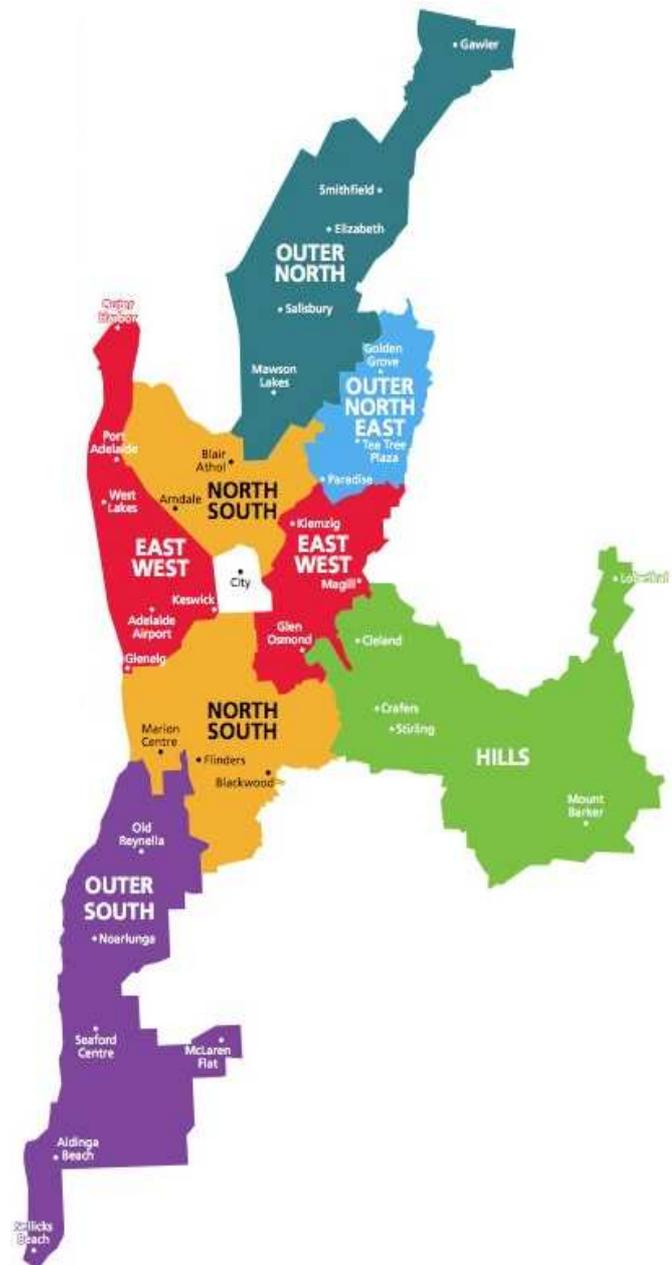
- **Outer North East** – Torrens Transit.
- **East West** - Torrens Transit.
- **Outer North** - Torrens Transit.
- **North South** - Torrens Connect.
- **Hills** – Keolis Downer.
- **Outer South** – Busways South Australia.

The revamp of Outer North region services will be delayed until the completion of the Gawler electrification next year.

On its plans for Outer South, Busways managing director, Byron Rowe, said they “have designed an improved and simplified Outer South network that makes it easier to understand and plan journeys”. Busways also said “the great wins for customers will

be a clearer route network with reduced route number variants and more consistent services across all days and time periods; strengthened key corridors with more direct trip connections and improvements to many services into major centres and railway stations; and improved connectivity through a scheduled pulsing of services”.

Community consultation of the new networks is expected between April and June, with final implementation due by the end of the year.



The six bus contract areas (source: SA Government).

### New airport shuttle operator

Following a “competitive tender process”, Adelaide Airport announced on 10 March that SkyBus would operate its shuttle bus services for the next five years starting in April.

## Airport buses going electric

Adelaide Airport has announced it will procure fully-electric buses from Precision Buses. They are expected to be in service by early 2021.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### Bus changes implemented

The proposed bus changes listed in our December 2019 edition of *Table Talk* were implemented by TransPerth on Sunday 8 March. In summary:

- **New routes:** 374, 375, 448 and 449.
- **Withdrawn routes:** 352, 365, 372 and 469.
- **Route alterations:** 355, 376, 377, 385 and 386.
- **Timetable changes:** 344, 371, 378, 384, 387, 388, 389 and 450.

## NEW ZEALAND

### Auckland's double-deck standbys

In anticipation for the city's highest demand period of the year, Auckland Transport organised for six double-deck Explorer buses, normally used on sight-seeing tours of the city, to standby during March in case existing services were unable to meet the demand.

Auckland Transport said that the buses would be used on the NX route along the Northern Busway to the city, if required.

### Auckland bus driver strikes

In February, union members voted 86 per cent against NZ Bus' offer of a 43 cent per hour pay rise.

On Tuesday 3 March, 250 Auckland bus drivers from two depots at NZ Bus undertook strike action with a stop-work meeting between 04:00 and 08:00. 144 services were cancelled as a result.

Other NZ Bus drivers were expected to continue with stop-work meetings over the following few days as members met to vote on further action. However, these were postponed after NZ Bus and the unions agreed to recommence negotiations.

On Friday 13 March, strike action recommenced, following a deadlock unable to be broken with more negotiating. 150 bus services were cancelled that morning between 04:00 and 08:00 from two different depots. The union said NZ Bus was unwilling to sacrifice or reduce the 14-hour work shifts, whilst NZ Bus said it was offering a "generous" 8.7 per cent wage rise over 22 months.

## Wellington bus cancellations

A total of 20 bus services were cancelled on the morning of Monday 2 March. Metlink said that "above average sickness" led to these cancellations which reportedly saw some passengers delayed with several buses running past their bus stop already full.

From 23 March, coronavirus concerns saw all drivers aged over 70 stood down. Representing 14 per cent of the workforce, numerous service cancellations are occurring every day.

### Go Bus sold

Christchurch bus company, Go Bus, has been sold to Australian operator Kinetic by its Kiwi joint-venture owners after six years of ownership. Go Bus' chief executive said it will be business as usual for its daily operations. The transaction is currently pending approval from New Zealand's Overseas Investment Office.

**Thanks** to Hilaire Fraser, Len Regan, Steven Haby, Agnes Boskovitz, Ross Morrison, Yahoo News, Auckland Transport, Sydney Morning Herald, Transport for NSW, The Canberra Times, ACT Government, ABC News, V/Line, *insideevs.com*, Adelaide Airport, New Zealand Herald, Star News and *www.stuff.co.nz* for *Bus & Coach News*.

## FERRY & SHIP NEWS

### NEW SOUTH WALES

#### Temporary wharf closure

From 7 April until September, Parramatta wharf will be closed to all ferry services due to construction works taking place for the Escarpment Boardwalk.

The Escarpment Boardwalk is a \$16.4 million project from Parramatta City Council, funded by the state government, designed to help link and activate the Parramatta River foreshore between Parramatta Park and the Western Sydney University's Rydalmere campus.

With ferries starting/finishing at Rydalmere, Hillsbus has been contracted to provide a replacement bus service, 60F3, operating between Rydalmere and Parramatta.

See the next page for full excerpts from the replacement timetable.

**60F3****Rydalmere Wharf to Parramatta Wharf****B**

Valid from: 07 April 2020

Creation date: 27 March 2020

NOTE: Information is correct on date of download.

**Monday to Friday**

Rydalmere Wharf, Rydalmere	06:48	07:48	09:18	10:18	11:18	12:18	13:18	14:18	15:18
Parramatta Wharf, Phillip St, Parramatta	07:03	08:03	09:33	10:33	11:33	12:33	13:33	14:33	15:33

**Monday to Friday**

Rydalmere Wharf, Rydalmere	16:18	17:24	18:24	19:24
Parramatta Wharf, Phillip St, Parramatta	16:33	17:39	18:39	19:39

**Saturday**

Rydalmere Wharf, Rydalmere	08:18	09:18	10:18	11:18	12:18	13:18	14:18	15:18	16:18
Parramatta Wharf, Phillip St, Parramatta	08:33	09:33	10:33	11:33	12:33	13:33	14:33	15:33	16:33

**Saturday**

Rydalmere Wharf, Rydalmere	17:18	18:18	19:18
Parramatta Wharf, Phillip St, Parramatta	17:33	18:33	19:33

**Sunday & Public Holidays**

Rydalmere Wharf, Rydalmere	08:18	09:18	10:18	11:18	12:18	13:18	14:18	15:18	15:42
Parramatta Wharf, Phillip St, Parramatta	08:33	09:33	10:33	11:33	12:33	13:33	14:33	15:33	15:57

**Sunday & Public Holidays**

Rydalmere Wharf, Rydalmere	16:18	16:42	17:18	17:42	18:18	18:42	19:18
Parramatta Wharf, Phillip St, Parramatta	16:33	16:57	17:33	17:57	18:33	18:57	19:33

**60F3****Parramatta Wharf to Rydalmere Wharf****B****Monday to Friday**

Parramatta Wharf, Phillip St, Parramatta	06:29	07:29	08:24	09:38	10:38	11:38	12:38	13:38	14:38
Rydalmere Wharf, Rydalmere	06:44	07:44	08:39	09:53	10:53	11:53	12:53	13:53	14:53

**Monday to Friday**

Parramatta Wharf, Phillip St, Parramatta	15:38	16:38	18:04	19:00
Rydalmere Wharf, Rydalmere	15:53	16:53	18:19	19:15

**Saturday**

Parramatta Wharf, Phillip St, Parramatta	07:38	08:38	09:38	10:38	11:38	12:38	13:38	14:38	15:38
Rydalmere Wharf, Rydalmere	07:53	08:53	09:53	10:53	11:53	12:53	13:53	14:53	15:53

**Saturday**

Parramatta Wharf, Phillip St, Parramatta	16:38	17:38	18:38	19:37
Rydalmere Wharf, Rydalmere	16:53	17:53	18:53	19:52

**Sunday & Public Holidays**

Parramatta Wharf, Phillip St, Parramatta	07:38	08:38	09:38	10:38	11:38	12:38	13:38	14:38	15:38
Rydalmere Wharf, Rydalmere	07:53	08:53	09:53	10:53	11:53	12:53	13:53	14:53	15:53

**Sunday & Public Holidays**

Parramatta Wharf, Phillip St, Parramatta	16:38	17:38	18:38	19:38
Rydalmere Wharf, Rydalmere	16:53	17:53	18:53	19:53



Design of Parramatta Escarpment Boardwalk (source: Hill Thalys Architecture).

## Service suspensions

Both Manly Fast Ferry and Captain Cook Cruises announced on 26 March that they had suspended all “non-essential” services including dining, sightseeing and Hop On Hop Off cruises until at least 31 May. This was attributed to the coronavirus pandemic and the associated government-ordered shutdowns causing service demand to dry up.

It was reported through the Maritime Union that 50 casuals at Manly Fast Ferry and Fantasea Cruises have had all future shifts cancelled for the foreseeable future, while another 130 at Captain Cook Cruises had also been stood down.

Meanwhile, “line handling and launch service” provider National Maritime Services also shut up shop earlier that same week blaming not only the coronavirus but also ongoing industrial negotiations.

## VICTORIA

### Spirit of Tasmania

The Spirit of Tasmania could change its Victorian berth from Port Melbourne to Geelong due to a disagreement with the pier's operator. According to Tasmanian Premier, Peter Gutwein, the Victorian Ports Corporation, which operates Station Pier in Port Melbourne, wants to 'price gouge' by increasing the amount that the Spirit would be required to pay the Corporation to continue to use Station Pier – “they are looking to take every last cent they possibly can from Tasmanian businesses and customers”. Spirit's operator, TT-Line, said their lease at Station Pier does not expire until 2022, however confirmed that negotiations were ongoing.

## NEW ZEALAND

### Auckland ferry demand surge

March saw the usual annual surge in demand for ferries in Auckland which left many passengers stranded for up to “75 minutes”. The surge is blamed

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on fewer workers taking annual leave early in the year while university students also returned to class for the first time since last year.

Steady population growth with the redevelopment of the former air force base at Hobsonville Point has also led to increasing demand for ferries over the last few years. 2,300 homes have been built with that number expected to double in the coming years.

Auckland Transport (AT)'s group manager for metro services, Stacey van der Putten, said “discussions have been held with the operator, Fullers360, around securing an additional vessel, however, the costs of an additional vessel are considerably outside of available funding and would not support AT's future vessel specification”. This particular issue highlights a bigger problem facing AT, how to improve and expand ferry services which are the most-heavily subsidised mode.

Meanwhile, the current fleet of ferries, owned by the operators, is stretched to capacity during the morning and afternoon peak periods.

**Thanks** to Transport for NSW, Hill Thalys Architecture, Sydney Morning Herald, ABC News and *stuff.co.nz* for *Ferry & Ship News*.

## AIR NEWS

### DOMESTIC

#### Coronavirus

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has pushed flight operators to cut flights and routes.

On 25 March, **Virgin Australia** announced (in addition to the grounding of international aircraft), starting from 28 March, it would cut 90 per cent of its domestic capacity and stand down around 8,000 employees (80 per cent of its workforce) for at least two months on leave without pay. The remaining domestic capacity would be used only for transporting essential services, critical freight and logistics.

**Tigerair**, the Virgin low-cost carrier, initially announced it would cut five unprofitable routes from its domestic network by May with mounting financial losses (nearly \$100 million in the previous six months). Tigerair would also simplify its fleet – removing seven Airbus A320s to become a full Boeing 737 airline, with the transfer of two 737s from Virgin - reducing its total fleet from 14 to just eight aircraft.

The following routes would be axed:

- Sydney to Coffs Harbour,
- Melbourne to Coffs Harbour,
- Sydney to Cairns,
- Adelaide to Sydney, and
- Hobart to Gold Coast.

On 25 March, Virgin updated this plan saying that all Tigerair planes would immediately be grounded with all flights suspended indefinitely.

Meanwhile, **Qantas** and **Jetstar** have also made substantial cutbacks domestically with a 60 per cent service reduction. Qantas has also stood down two-thirds of its workforce – 20,000 employees – for at least two months. On 25 March, Qantas announced that it had secured a \$1.05 billion loan at 2.75 per cent interest to mature in 2030. It is reported to currently have \$2.95 billion in cash reserves.

A host of QantasLink and Jetstar flights have been suspended, with the remainder rolled back until at least May.

**Regional Express** (Rex) initially cut its total flights by half. Flights from Sydney to Newcastle and Armidale, and Adelaide to Port Augusta to be suspended from 6 April. Flights on many other routes would also be scaled back. See page 14 for that comprehensive list.

Rex's review of its Queensland and WA networks are ongoing, meaning further cutbacks are likely to be announced soon.

**Rex Update:** *On 22 March, following an emergency board meeting, Regional Express announced it would go further by now cutting all flights across the country from 6 April (with the exception of routes wholly within the state of Queensland). Rex left the door open for this to not happen if governments were willing to underwrite the airline's losses.*

**Update 2:** *On 28 March, the deputy prime minister, Michael McCormack, announced an additional \$298 million in funding for regional airlines to ensure continuity of essential service provision for the outback. He also said regardless of the additional funding, "it is not the government's intention to nationalise airlines".*

*At the time of publication, it was unclear how this money would be distributed.*

## Virgin and Tigerair troubles

On March 26, Virgin Australia said from the pool of 8,000 employees being stood down, 1,000 would be made redundant including all 220 Tigerair pilots at the end of April. The chief executive, Paul Scurrah, said this was necessary to ensure the business could preserve its remaining \$900 million cash reserve. "Nobody knows how long this crisis is going to last for. We've taken action that will preserve cash for as long as possible and that's based on an assumption that this will be a long crisis".

A note from a Credit Suisse analyst estimated that Virgin Australia could end up eating its entire \$900 million in cash reserves by the end of June. The note said that the business would need another \$829 million for the 2020/21 financial year.

Allaying fears that Virgin would dissolve its low-cost carrier, Virgin said it had every intention for Tigerair to continue trading after the pandemic clears, but

instead it would rely on a single workforce of pilots to operate both Virgin and Tigerair flights.

## Rex troubles

WIN News has reported on some fears that airline Rex may not survive the pandemic. Rex chief operating officer, Neville Howell, said the airline could fold within six months. It needed to drastically reduce flights and routes to survive the near-term plunge in demand. However, it also said this alone would not be sufficient if the health authorities' predictions for coronavirus became true. Rex had gone so far as to write directly to the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael McCormack, on the need to waive the "grossly unfair" fuel levy, and suspending the contentious baggage security costs at regional airports. Rex threatened "if regional carriers collapse, so will many regional communities for which the air service is their lifeline".

"This capacity reduction alone will not be enough and we have reached out to local councils (airport owners) to seek a reduction in airport charges to keep operating costs to a bare minimum so that the reduced services can be sustainable.

Following the announcement of the cutbacks, shares in the airline on the Australian Securities Exchange dropped 30 per cent.

The airline however divulged that it had received some support from various councils recently. Its general manager for network strategy and safety, Warrick Lodge, said "Rex is appreciative of the heartfelt support of many councils, like Parkes Shire Council, who proactively approached Rex in the spirit of partnership to grant a total waiver of airport charges during Rex's hour of need. Rex promises to also stand by these local councils in their moment of adversity when Rex is solidly back on its feet."

Mr McCormack, also the MP for Riverina, announced on 18 March a relief package including the waiving of various fees and charges as above in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic.

However the debt-free airline did say it was disappointed that it had not included a sovereign guarantee of new loans to tide them over the period of negative cash flow.

On 22 March, following an emergency board meeting, Rex advised it would now suspend all regularly scheduled flights across the country (with the exception of Queensland) due to demand now forecast to nosedive by 80 per cent year-on-year. The Queensland government is underwriting Rex's flights across that state.

As a result, Rex Group's remaining operating business, until further notice, will be:

- Regular Queensland services.
- Ambulance Victoria fixed-wing air services.
- Charter contracts with mining businesses.
- Freight haulage.

- Pilot training at NSW and VIC academies.

Deputy Chairman, John Sharp, said “we can expect the year-on-year reduction of passenger numbers to nosedive to around 80% from the 60% we are experiencing today. There is a tipping point in the airline business beyond which it will no longer be sustainable to operate reduced services. We believe that with only 20% of our passenger numbers left we have reached that point and the Rex Group has decided that the quasi suspension of all services at this stage presents the best option to preserve its cash”.

He also said the recently announced Commonwealth relief package would see \$1 million a month flow to Rex, whilst the airline would still be losing \$9 million a month after the introduction of the previously listed flight suspensions/reductions.

“Regional air services provide an invaluable and priceless contribution to the socioeconomic well-being of local communities throughout regional and remote Australia. State and Local Governments should be leading the charge in extreme times like these to assist regional carriers rather than leaving it to the Federal Government. So far the State Governments have not tabled any concrete proposals although their latest decisions of closing the borders and lockdowns will simply further decimate what remains of regional air travellers. Local councils are also a true disappointment with only two councils having proposed any meaningful assistance for Rex.”

“If an assistance package of sufficient magnitude and viability can be negotiated by the end of the week, Rex may be able to reconsider its plans to suspend services. Failure to achieve any traction in this regard will see regional communities lose their air services for many months ahead and even after this is all over, we are afraid that some of the more marginal communities will no longer have an air service.”

Rex said people with bookings after 6 April have to wait until after 27 March before writing in via Rex’s website to put their bookings on credit for a future flight. Rex said that no refunds would be made ‘as is the standard practice of all airlines during this crisis’.

## Regional airlines to coordinate flights

On 26 March, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) gave permission to Rex to co-ordinate service provision, and share revenue, with QantasLink and Virgin on 10 regional routes.

The routes included in this exercise are:

- Sydney to Wagga Wagga,
- Sydney to Dubbo,
- Sydney to Albury,
- Sydney to Armidale,
- Melbourne to Mildura,

	Weekly Return Services	
Adelaide Network	Current	Proposed
Broken Hill	18	11
Ceduna	12	6
Coober Pedy	7	3
Mildura	Ad Hoc Reductions	
Mount Gambier	18	12
Port Augusta	Suspended	
Port Lincoln	52	27
Whyalla	28	12

Melbourne Network	Current	Proposed
Albury	18	12
Burnie	27	7
King Island	7	7
Merimbula	12	8
Mildura	20	17
Mount Gambier	18	12
Wagga Wagga	15	12

Sydney Network	Current	Proposed
Albury	25	12
Armidale	Suspended	
Bathurst	18	12
Broken Hill	18	12
Cooma	6	6
Dubbo	30	18
Grafton	18	11
Griffith	37	24
Lismore	18	11
Merimbula	19	12
Moruya	19	12
Narrandera	19	19
Newcastle	Suspended	
Orange	29	17
Parkes	18	12
Wagga Wagga	31	13

Queensland Network	Current	Proposed
Cairns Bamaga	8	6
Other	Under Review	

WA Network	Current	Proposed
ALL	Under Review	

*\*subject to change*

*Service reductions initially proposed by Rex. They have now been superseded (source: Business News Australia).*

- Adelaide to Port Lincoln,
- Adelaide to Whyalla,
- Adelaide to Kangaroo Island,
- Townsville to Cairns, and
- Townsville to Mount Isa.

The ACCC made this conditional that fares charged to customers were no higher than those on 1 February

2020. ACCC chairperson, Rod Sims, said the watchdog recognised the urgency of the interim authorisation, which will help provide certainty for regional flight operators to support services on these routes for people who need to use them.

The ACCC also said coordination “may involve arrangements such as each carrier on a route operating one daily service, with revenue shared between carriers, or an operator suspending operation on a route to allow another carrier to maintain a viable service”.

## Air New Zealand troubles

Air New Zealand has secured a nine-figure loan from its major shareholder – the NZ government – to ensure the continued operation of the airline.

The 20 March announcement divulged that the government would provide two tranches of finance which were negotiated at “arm’s length”. Analysts have estimated Air NZ to be burning between \$NZ 160-210 million each month. The airline was reported to have just over \$1 billion in cash reserves at the end of 2018/19 financial year.

The first tranche lends \$600 million at around seven per cent interest. Another \$300 million could be later provided at a heightened interest rate of nine per cent.

The loan will mature in 24 months. If Air NZ becomes unable to pay back, the government will be able to convert the debt into additional equity in the business.

Transport Minister Grant Robertson said “Air NZ will play an important role in our economic recovery, when the disruption caused by this global pandemic is over”. However Air NZ confirmed there would still be job cuts due to the cut in international capacity.

On the securities exchange, Air NZ stock lost 45 per cent of its value during the day of the announcement.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Coronavirus

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has pushed multiple flight operators to cut flights and routes.

**Virgin Australia** announced on 18 March that all international aircraft would be grounded from 30 March until at least 14 June. Chief executive Paul

Scurrah said “we have entered an unprecedented time in the global aviation industry” and Virgin was “well-positioned to weather this storm”. In the period until 29 March, Virgin operated to a reduced schedule.

**Qantas** has announced their flights to Shanghai will remain suspended until September, while their flights to Hong Kong from Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane are now halved for the same period. From 18 April, flights from Brisbane and Melbourne to San Francisco will be suspended, and, flights across June/July on the seasonal Sydney to Vancouver route will also be suspended. From 20 April, flights from Sydney to London will begin stopping over in Perth, rather than Singapore. Additionally, Qantas has postponed the launch of its Brisbane to Chicago route until late 2020. Some other flights have changes to aircraft throughout this period due to changes in demand.

On 19 March, Qantas further announced that it would ground over 150 aircraft, including all Airbus A380s and Boeing 787s, with a halt on all international flights including its budget carrier Jetstar. Jetstar Japan and Jetstar Pacific have made similar cutbacks in Japan and Vietnam respectively. Jetstar Asia has suspended all flights from 23 March to 15 April.

Qantas has also stood-down two-thirds of its workforce, with guaranteed four weeks of paid leave, and some access to half-paid leave or long service leave, however it confirmed some unpaid leave would be “inevitable”. Despite this, Qantas is continuing with the refurbishment of its grounded A380s.

**Air New Zealand** has drastically cut its trans-Tasman flights, with total international capacity cut by 80 per cent.

**Singapore Airlines** has cut 96 per cent of its flight capacity after the Singapore government banned passengers from overseas. In financial news, the airline has secured a \$AU 21 billion funding package from banks and its state-owned owner to help it through this time.

**Thanks** to Paul Brown, Ross Morrison, ABC News, The Weekly Times, SBS News, Business Traveller, WIN News Northern NSW, Forbes Advocate, Business News Australia, North Queensland Register, Regional Express, The Brisbane Times, *The Age* newspaper, The Australian Financial Review, Qantas, Illawarra Mercury and [www.stuff.co.nz](http://www.stuff.co.nz) for *Air News*.

## COMMENT TO THE EDITOR

### Re: Newcastle LR extension priority - Geoff Hassall

It is a great pity that a broader array of possibilities was not considered. For example, a Wallsend line could easily be built as a branch of the Hospital line from Turton Rd to Jesmond, then the proposed corridor to Wallsend with minimal traffic concerns. In fact, this central section was the route of the original Wallsend tramway, and still exists in the form of a linear carpark and a bike-way. Of course, this could be added later - except that a tram-sized right-of-way would be needed under the Inner Bypass now being constructed! Is that sort of foresight possible today? GH



## **V/Line CO-VOID-19 [sic] Update**

As the COVID-19 (coronavirus) situation evolves, V/Line is implementing additional measures to ensure the safety of both our customers and staff. We are working closely with the Department of Transport and Department of Health and Human Services on these.

These measures will mean that your journey with V/Line may look and feel different. Below are some questions we are being asked by customers and the ways in which your journey may change.

### **Is it still safe to catch public transport?**

Yes. But like all other health advice if you are unwell or required to isolate please do not catch public transport for the safety of other customers and our staff. However, long distance bus or train services should be reconsidered if it is not essential.

### **Are trains being cleaned more frequently?**

Yes. V/Line have implemented an increased cleaning regime.

### **Will conductors still be travelling on my train?**

Yes, conductors will continue to travel on all V/Line trains to make announcements, perform essential operational tasks and provide assistance to anyone who need help. Conductors and station staff will also be visible to customers at station stops for any assistance.

Customers can wait in the Boarding Assistance Zones on all regional platforms and platforms 3A and 15A at Southern Cross Station to alert conductors that they need help with their journey.

If you do need a conductor while on your journey, please press the emergency button in your carriage and they will be able to assist. Conductors and station staff will also be visible to customers at station stops for any assistance.

### **Will refreshments still be available to purchase on board?**

No. Our café/bar service will not be open until further notice. We encourage you to bring your own food and non-alcoholic beverages on board. Please ensure your drink containers have a secure, fastening or spill proof lid. Water will still be available on all V/Line train services.

### **Any change to ticketing?**

No. You still require a myki or paper ticket valid for your journey and can still purchase tickets and top-up myki cards at stations and ticket agents as usual. Please ensure you touch on and touch off with your myki to ensure you pay the correct fare Remember if you are feeling unwell, do not travel.

***NOTE to ATA readers: This page inserted by the Production Manager to make this issue an even 24 pages. Also note: VLine cannot spell***

# Transport Canberra is responding to COVID-19



Transport Canberra

13 17 10

[transport.act.gov.au](https://transport.act.gov.au)

March 28 - Transport Canberra's rear-door bus boarding advice (source: Transport Canberra).

## About *Table Talk*

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We welcome contributions to *Table Talk* at all times.

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