



AUSTRALIAN TIMETABLE
ASSOCIATION

TABLE TALK

AUSTRALASIAN TIMETABLE NEWS

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RAIL & TRAM NEWS

QUEENSLAND

Fast rail

The state government is working on two separate business cases for fast rail in the south-east that would see trains running at up to 160 kilometres per hour. The proposed routes are:

- Maroochydore to Nambour (named Fast Rail)
- Brisbane to Gold Coast

BRISBANE TIMES

NEW SOUTH WALES

Sydney Trains: timetable update

From Sunday 25 October, an updated working timetable, marked version 7.00, will become effective across the Sydney Trains rail network.

The bulk of changes centre around improving the reliability of existing services, the allocation of train types, and train roster build-ups.

The timetable will also provide New Intercity Fleet (NIF) train rosters for NSW TrainLink Intercity operations. However, the introduction of the NIF class into passenger service will be delayed pending the outcome of an ongoing industrial dispute with the employees' union on the diminished role of the "Guard" and increased workload for "Drivers".

For the first time in a number of years, a Tangara will be rostered to operate in sector two. It will be timetabled to operate on weekends between Macarthur, the City and Homebush. *TRANSPORT FOR NSW*

Syd Trains: Traffic Management System

The state government has signed an \$80 million contract to procure a new "Traffic Management System" from Siemens Mobility. Working alongside other existing systems, the software would monitor the position of all trains.

The state government says this will 'help to keep services running on time and assist with incident response' but it is unclear from the state government's media release how "monitoring" would achieve this outcome.

Sydney Trains expects to switch on the Traffic Management System in 2023 starting with selected sections of the T4 Eastern Suburbs and Illawarra Line:

- Sutherland to Cronulla, and
- Redfern to Bondi Junction.

It would subsequently be rolled out across the remainder of the network. *TRANSPORT FOR NSW*

Light rail replacement buses

On the weekend of 26/27 September, planned maintenance works saw buses replace light rail services on the L2 and L3 lines between Central Chalmers Street and Randwick/Juniors Kingsford. Buses were timetabled to operate:

- 0500-0700 – every 10-15 minutes.
- 0700-1900 – every 6-10 minutes.
- 1900-0100 – every 10-15 minutes.

In the meantime, the line between Central Chalmers Street and Circular Quay enjoyed a service every eight minutes between 0500 and 0100.

Transport for NSW advised that the replacement buses were Opal-enabled, with standard light rail fares being applied. *TRANSPORT FOR NSW*

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Light rail stage two

Ahead of the October election, the Canberra Liberals have thrown a spanner into the works with the confirmation that, if elected, they would halt further progress on the stage two light rail extension to Woden, instead commissioning an analysis to consider if stage two should instead be the proposed line between Belconnen and the Airport.

Currently, the Belconnen-Airport line forms the third stage of the government's plans for light rail expansion across the ACT. Chief Minister Andrew Barr warned that this would undo the effort already put in across the year to stage two to Woden. *ABC NEWS*

VICTORIA

Post-pandemic demand

The following is a condensed version of an article published by Melbourne's *The Sunday Age* newspaper by reporter Timna Jacks:

The Department of Transport is considering expert warnings that the rail mode will be hardest hit once the virus subsides, with usage to return to just 70 per cent of normal (pre-pandemic) levels.

A Monash University survey (of 2,000 people) found one-in-five people will stop travelling into the CBD as work-from-home arrangements increase by 75 per cent, significantly reducing the number of white-collar workers commuting into the city. However, the CBD would experience worsening gridlock, as nine per cent of the state's public transport commuters switch to the private vehicle. Business leaders are pushing for more parking on the city's fringe as cars become the primary mode of travel, making up 61 per cent of all trips to work — a rise from 57 per cent. Cycling would rise by 55 per cent, making up three per cent of all work-related trips. Work-related public transport trips are expected to fall from 36 per cent to 30 per cent, with the study warning these trends could take up to seven years to reverse.

"A decline in public transport and a growth in car driving is not a good outcome," lead researcher Professor Graham Currie, also Chair of Public Transport, warned. "We are going to have more and different congestion hot spots in Melbourne." He also said there had been a shift in attitudes about public transport, noting the second lockdown had marked a significant turning point - "Crowding and infection fears are new major concerns for users."

Executive director of the International Association of Public Transport Michelle Batsas said rail would continue to be the "backbone" of the city's public transport network, but people would likely shift to shorter, suburban trips which was the trend occurring in Singapore. On-demand services such as 15-seater buses that could be booked on an app might become more popular, especially in suburbs on the city's fringe, she said.

To keep services running, the Andrews government gave Metro and Yarra Trams emergency funding relief in June, which is understood to amount to roughly two-thirds of revenue losses on their operations and maintenance contract (excluding losses on advertising or infrastructure project delays). While the government refused to confirm the amount, sources close to the deal said Metro was lent about \$56 million — \$8 million a month between June and December. The state is set to be reimbursed about 66 per cent of the payment once usage returns to 80 per cent capacity and the operator turns a profit. The cash injection was supposed to last until the end of the year, but operators may ask for another lifeline in the wake of the second lockdown.

Metro Trains' parent company, Hong Kong's MTR Corporation, reported that a \$HK70 million (\$AU12.5 million) loss across its international subsidiaries in the

first half of 2020 was "mainly due" to the dramatic dive in patronage and revenue on the Melbourne network. "Like every organisation, we're navigating uncharted waters through this pandemic," said Metro Trains chief executive, Raymond O'Flaherty. 97 per cent of Metro's revenue typically went back into operations, maintenance and employee salaries, which had risen to 100 per cent with no return to shareholders during the pandemic, Mr O'Flaherty said. But the chief executive confirmed that Metro was "committed to Melbourne for the long term".

Yarra Trams' new chief executive, Julien Dehornoy, said it was a "challenging" time and the government's funding injection would provide "certainty" to passengers as the network recovered.

A full recovery, however, may be slow. A month after the first round of stage three restrictions in March, patronage returned to just 40 per cent of normal levels, up from 10 per cent at the height of the lockdown.

Internationally, in cities such as Vienna, Oslo and Berlin, usage has not exceeded 80 per cent capacity months after restrictions eased.

Article supplied by - ROSS MORRISON

Source - THE SUNDAY AGE

Fare Reform



On 23 September, *Infrastructure Victoria* released a report titled *Fair Move: Better Public Transport Fares for Melbourne*. The report proposes a 'fare reform' scenario where there is a peak/off-peak pricing structure across Melbourne's public transport system. The report argues that cheaper off-peak fares would help avoid congestion at the busiest times of the day, while passengers travelling outside peak times would save a substantial amount of money on their journeys.

The report advocates for the implementation of peak fare zones on weekdays 07:30-09:30 and 16:30-18:30 only in the peak-flow direction. Meanwhile, in the peak counter-flow and outside the peak times, a 50 per cent off-peak discount would apply. Additionally, the report proposes the removal of the fare-free tram zone. This would be replaced by a new "city zone" containing the city loop and all future Metro Tunnel stations. Another proposal from the report is to decrease fares charged on "under-used" modes such as buses with all-day off-peak fares.

Fare elements include peak and off-peak charges, mode pricing, directional discount for train and a new City Zone. City Zone stations include City Loop service stations (Flinders Street, Southern Cross, Parliament, Melbourne Central and Flagstaff) and all Metro Tunnel stations (Anzac, Town Hall, State Library, Parkville and Arden)

Express Bus routes defined: 302, 303, 304, 305, 309, 318, 905, 906, 907, 908, 200, 207

	Train		Tram [^]		Express Bus		Bus
City Zone + any other zone	\$5.00 (peak)	(\$2.50 off-peak)*	\$2.50 (peak)	\$1.25 (off-peak)	\$2.50 (peak)	\$1.25 (off-peak)	\$1.25 all times
City Zone only	\$4.00 (peak)						
Zone 1+2							
Zone 1 only	\$2.50 all times						
Zone 2 only		\$1.25 all times					

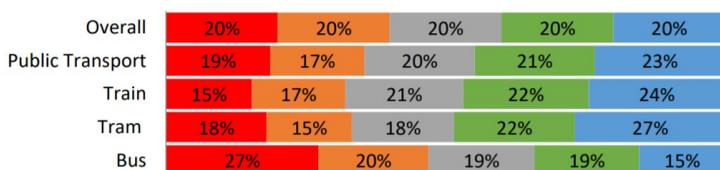
- **Peak fares** apply weekdays 7.30-9.30am (AM peak) and 4.30-6.30pm (PM peak). Peak fares apply to users who *touch off during AM peak and touch on during PM peak*.
- **Concession discount** – 50% off full fare prices.
- ***Directional pricing** – Off-peak fares are charged for train journeys that travel in *counter-peak flow direction during peak*. This means any train journey that travels *away/out from the City Zone in the AM peak* (even if you begin within the City Zone) or *towards/into the City Zone in the PM peak* (even if you end in within the City Zone) has this discount applied.
- **^Multimodal trips** – If a journey is multimodal, the user only pays the highest fare of any of the modes travelled. If a tram is used as part of a multimodal trip that involves a train, then an additional tram transfer fee of \$1.25 is also charged. A journey is defined as complete once an agent begins a different activity. Removed all two-hour limits and daily caps.

(source: Infrastructure Victoria)

On the abolition of the fare-free zone, the report refers to Yarra Trams' submission to a Parliamentary Inquiry into the Extension of the Free Tram Zone which said that there was a 30 per cent increase in patronage within 12 months of its establishment resulting in an increase of dwell times anywhere between 7 and 38 per cent whilst Yarra Trams also started using over 60 new trams on its network of 24 lines. The report argues that it has resulted in unnecessary congestion on board trams including on one of the busiest tram corridors in the world where service capacity is at a maximum during the peak – St Kilda Road and Swanston Street – with 60 trams per hour.

Additionally, the report also found that different modes had different income profiles. Trains and trams see proportionately more use by wealthier households (the top 40 per cent of incomes account for 46-49 per cent of total travel on the public transport system), while on the bus network, 47 per cent of bus usage come from the bottom 40 per cent of household income. For each mode, the income profiles are predictably greater in peak periods, than the off-peak.

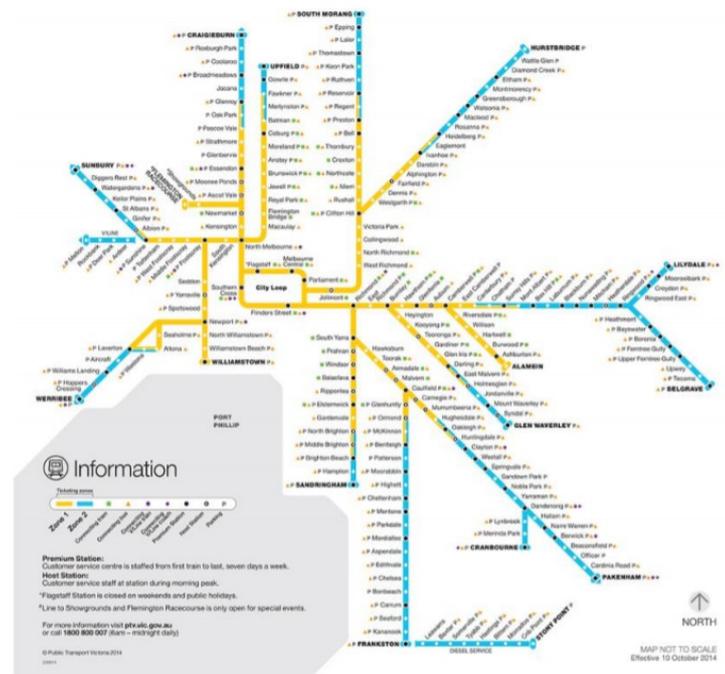
Figure 9 Public transport users by equalised household income quintiles



■ quintile 1 (lowest) ■ quintile 2 ■ quintile 3 ■ quintile 4 ■ quintile 5 (highest)

Source: VISTA data 2018, Infrastructure Victoria analysis

Figure 32 Archived 2014 PTV Metro trains map

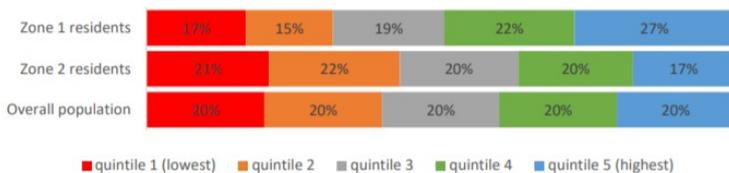


Source: The Age, 2014: <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/melbou>

The two fare zones also have separate income profiles. Where the income profile within zone 1 residents sees 49 per cent within the top 40 per cent of income, the reverse is the case within zone 2. The rail network map below shows which stations of the network fall under zones 1 and 2. Yellow denotes zone one; blue denotes zone two.

Another consideration of the report was research which had found that 82 per cent of respondents easily understand a fare structure with a simple peak/off-peak pricing structure without differences to account for mode-type, distance or multi-modal, but when a second form of fare type was added this substantially dropped to 37 per cent or lower.

Figure 38 Zone residency and equivalised household incomes



Source: VISTA data 2018, Infrastructure Victoria analysis

Table 1 Scenarios analysed in SGS-BIT (2020)

	Peak and off-peak pricing	Distance-based pricing	Mode-based pricing	Multimodal journey
Scenario 1	✓	✗	✗	✗
Scenario 2	✓	✗	✓	✗
Scenario 3	✓	✓	✗	✗
Scenario 4	✓	✓	✓	✗
Scenario 5	✓	✓	✓	✓

Figure 5 Responses regarding difficulty of fare structures in SGS-BIT experiments

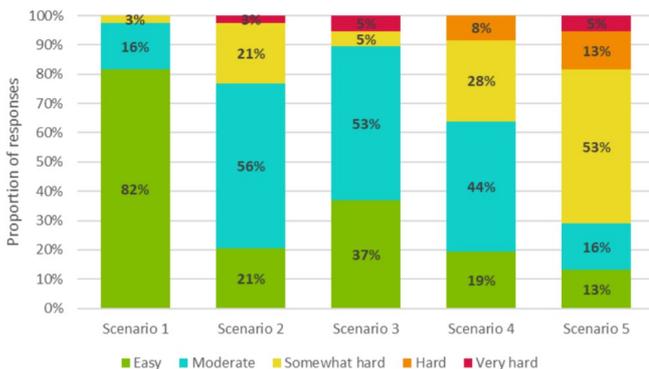
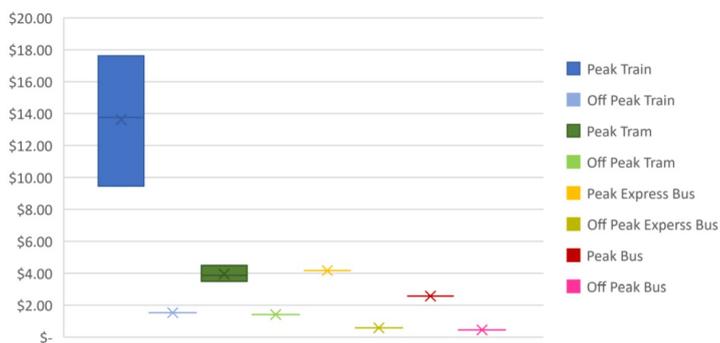


Figure 14 Financial costs of additional public transport trips, by mode and time of day



Source: estimates produced by Infrastructure Victoria using the CIE model for social marginal cost.

Another report commissioned by Infrastructure Victoria, Estimating the social marginal cost of public transport in Victoria, summarised that the costs of increasing capacity at the highest points of demand (typically peak time) were infinitely higher, than massaging demand towards underutilised services and times. Case in point the state government's \$11 billion

Melbourne Metro which, at least in part, aims to increase transport capacity through the city centre during the peak periods. The financial costs shown in the chart below do not consider the social costs including road congestion, pollution and taxation costs.

The report sources Department of Transport data analysed by the report authors which found that, including work trips, 13 per cent of passengers could shift their time of travel by more than one hour, and 24 per cent by up to one hour.

Infrastructure Victoria's chief executive, Michel Masson, said the proposals would give "public transport users power to decide how much they want to pay for public transport, based on when and how they travel". On the details of the report, Premier Daniel Andrews said "I'm not necessarily agreeing with that specific proposal, but we will certainly look at it because we are in the process of looking at lots of different things."

The full reports are available from Infrastructure Victoria's website.

Article supplied by – ROSS MORRISON

Sources – ABC NEWS, INFRASTRUCTURE VICTORIA

New V/Locity trains

The most recent order of 18 V/Locity trains for the state's regional network are currently under construction at Bombardier's Dandenong factory. The trains will be in standard gauge and will replace the older trains on the North East line from next year. VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Train operator contract awarded

The state government has awarded the \$2.1 billion eight-year contract to operate the suburban rail network to Keolis Downer. Keolis Downer already operates Melbourne's Tram network and Newcastle city's light rail and bus network. The previously government-operated network will become privately operated from the end of January 2021.

Keolis Downer has said that it will implement a new customer experience strategy which would include digitisation of processes for staff to increase passenger-facing hours. Other near-term benefits already announced, such as the opening of an electrified Gawler Line and additional services, will coincide with the first few years of the contract.

Article supplied by – RICHARD TALBOT

Sources – ADELAIDE METRO, ABC NEWS

Pay negotiations

Talks are ongoing on a new enterprise agreement between the rail network employees' union and the state government. The Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) is targeting a four per cent annual pay rise,

while the state Treasurer, Rob Lucas, said that a two per cent pay rise would be more reasonable. **NINE NEWS**

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland repair backlog

A review by consultancy Opus has found a backlog in infrastructure repairs across the Auckland rail network of approximately \$NZ200 million, with claims of a maintenance schedule that is reactive, rather than proactive, and statistics showing that disruptions for passengers have reliably climbed in the last few years.

The issues noted include poor track alignment, wooden sleepers beyond their 40-year lifespan, and failing, worn rails due to a reduction in opportunities to undertake repairs (due to increased number of services in the timetable), general under-investment, and the absence of locally based track-welders.

The review found wooden sleepers up to 60 years in age still in use on the network, rails on top of the sleepers are “in poor condition” and “a gradual deterioration of underlying assets to undesirable condition”. This is despite considerable investment in shiny new trains and electrification.

KiwiRail said that “recent testing revealed that about 100km of rail in the Auckland network needs repairing or replacing. A speed restriction of 40km/h is in place across Auckland and it is anticipated this will be progressively lifted as the repair work is carried out. Work done across a 14-day closure would take more than 100 days if done only piecemeal at night and over weekends, as we are doing currently. While this stoppage will enable us to make significant progress, there will be further work required before we can return this section to full line speed”. KiwiRail also said it was working to develop a six-month program for works and associated closures. “The right access to the track will allow us to substantially complete the work in about six months, and in a way that enables a progressive return to normal line speeds”.

As for the cause of the increased wear, KiwiRail's general manager said he “didn't know that yet” in response to a question of whether the new electric trains introduced in the past six years could be the reason. Ultrasonic testing found “rolling contact fatigue” on not just curves, as initially believed, but on straight sections as well.

Eastern Line services between Otahuhu and Britomart were initially replaced by buses for a fortnight between 24 August and 7 September. KiwiRail advised on 3 September that the shutdown had to be extended by another two weeks.

In early September, KiwiRail had acknowledged that agreement had been reached for a program of rolling four-week closures to conduct these works over the coming months.

From 21 September, a four-week closedown sees buses replace trains between Newmarket and Penrose. **AUCKLAND TRANSPORT, KIWIRAIL (2) (3), STUFF.CO.NZ (2)**

COVID-19 update

Face coverings became mandatory on the Auckland and Wellington public transport networks on Monday 31 August as authorities work to stop the latest COVID-19 infection outbreaks. This follows the government's determination that all areas under Alert Level 2 or higher must have mandatory face coverings aboard public transportation services. After almost three weeks, Auckland dropped back down to Alert Level 2 at 23:59 on Sunday 30 August.

Updating the status in Wellington from the previous edition of *Table Talk*, the city did extend their Level 2 COVID Alert. Since 23:59 on Thursday 3 September, vehicles have had QR codes displayed. In mid-September, the government produced almost 70,000 QR code stickers which are being applied to all seats on board vehicles. Passengers are required to scan these using a smartphone using the NZ COVID Tracer mobile application upon boarding all public transport and point-to-point services. The data supports contact tracing in the event someone tests positive to COVID-19. For passengers without smartphones, Auckland Transport is encouraging people to ensure their HOP Card is registered with up-to-date contact details.

An adviser to the government on the pandemic, physics professor Shaun Hendy, estimates that the face covering requirement will now remain until a vaccine is available. “Mask use can really help prevent another cluster appearing”.

On Monday 14 September, the Prime Minister removed the requirement for physical distancing on board trains, buses, ferries and aircraft. However, the requirement for a face covering remains, while the government continues to encourage physical distancing at stations, bus stops and wharves while people wait for their next service.

This means that public transport operators can now allow normal capacity to return on board their services. For example, the capacity on board Metlink services in Wellington now returns from 30-35 per cent (ferries from 50 per cent) back to 100 per cent because they no longer need to enforce the most recent ruling of one metre distance between passengers. **AUCKLAND TRANSPORT (2) (3), METLINK, STUFF.CO.NZ (2), (3), THE DOMINION POST**

Editor's note: A 'QR code' is a type of barcode filled with various small black and white squares which represent a website address that can be read and interpreted by a smartphone.

Wellington: Snapper expansion

Greater Wellington Regional Council has finally endorsed the implementation of the Snapper card on its rail network, as the city looks to retire its paper ticketing system.

Metlink has said that implementation of Snapper capabilities would allow them to test their systems ahead of the launch of the national integrated ticketing system from 2022.

Metlink has subsequently said it would conduct trials in the first quarter of 2021 calendar year. Snapper has been used on Wellington buses since 2008. **THE DOMINION POST**

INTERNATIONAL

French clamour back to public transport

Recent numbers from mobile application, Citymapper, indicate that in France, where passenger numbers dropped to as low as just five per cent of normal patronage, confidence in public transport has resoundingly returned, with many cities registering nearly the same number of users as they had immediately pre-pandemic.

Lyon was the standout with patronage at 98 per cent of February levels, while Paris sits not far away at 88 per cent. The only other cities to register above 70 per cent of pre-pandemic levels have been in Russia – Moscow (83 per cent) and Saint Petersburg (92 per cent). **THE INQUIRER**

UK COVID-19 service update

More rail services are now running in Scotland, as patronage levels continue to increase. Since 3 August, 90 per cent of normally timetabled services have been operating – 100 per cent during peak hours. ScotRail has also uploaded a video of the challenges they have faced from COVID-19 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCLixuGSMYo>) such as the suspension of driver training.



Five rules for safer travel



ScotRail are currently promoting a minimum physical distancing of one metre by passengers.

Staying with ScotRail, it has been running on emergency government funding since April due to COVID-19 impacts which saw at one stage a 95-per cent drop in patronage. The Scottish government has now agreed to extend the arrangement until 10 January to allow negotiations to take place on future plans. ScotRail has retained all of its staff to date.

Meanwhile, in England, additional services have been operating since Monday 7 September. Transport for London (TfL) advises that their weekday rail services are now running at normal levels with weekend services at “near-normal levels”.

TfL has also released a new mobile application, TfL Go, which provides real-time train data, step-free travel visibility, and advice on travelling at quieter periods. For the moment, the app is only available for iPhone, with an Android version currently in development. Upcoming new features still to come include live bus information, lift status updates and locations of key facilities such as toilets. **SCOTRAIL, TRANSPORT FOR LONDON**

Scotland service disruption

Some lines have had services replaced by buses due to flood damage between Glasgow Queen Street and Edinburgh Waverley since 12 August. Damage included track and power lines being washed away, while trees also fell on tracks at multiple locations.

Whilst the repairs by Network Rail are ongoing, ScotRail has established a number of rail shuttle services as sections of line have been fixed. From Monday 14 September, a shuttle service started operating from Glasgow stopping at Linlithgow, Edinburgh Park, Haymarket and Edinburgh Waverley. Replacement buses continue to operate between Linlithgow and Falkirk Grahamston.

Additionally, following the derailment on 12 August at Aberdeenshire (see page 6 of *Table Talk* September edition), ScotRail had replacement buses in operation. From Monday 31 August, a shuttle rail service has operated between Aberdeen and Stonehaven also stopping at Portlethen – limited services extend to start/finish at either Inverurie or Dyce, while replacement buses continue to operate between Stonehaven and Dundee. **SCOTRAIL**

Amtrak cuts

Amtrak has finally released further detail of service cuts, which are a result of continued poor ridership levels caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amtrak says with ridership levels down by at least 80 per cent and Federal funding levels unclear for Fiscal Year 2021, they are aligning service levels with current demand.

From October, many long-distance services will be reduced from daily to only three-per-week.

From 5 October:

California Zephyr

- Train #5 (Westbound) departs Chicago: MON / WED / SAT
- Train #6 (Eastbound) departs Emeryville, CA: TUE / THU / SAT

Capitol Limited

- Train #29 (Westbound) departs Washington, DC: WED / FRI / SUN
- Train #30 (Eastbound) departs Chicago: MON / THU / SAT

City of New Orleans

- Train #58 (Northbound) departs New Orleans: WED / FRI / SUN
- Train #59 (Southbound) departs Chicago: MON / THU / SAT

Crescent

- Train #19 (Southbound) departs New York: TUE / FRI / SUN
- Train #20 (Northbound) departs New Orleans: TUE / THU / SUN

From 12 October:

Coast Starlight

- Train #11 (Southbound) departs Seattle: MON / WED / SAT
- Train #14 (Northbound) departs Los Angeles: MON / WED / FRI

Lake Shore Limited

- Train #48 (Eastbound) departs Chicago: MON / THU / SAT
- Train #49 (Westbound) departs New York: WED / FRI / SUN

- Train #448 (Eastbound) departs Chicago: MON / THU / SAT

- Train #449 (Westbound) departs Boston: WED / FRI / SUN

Southwest Chief

- Train #3 (Westbound) departs Chicago: MON / THU / SAT
- Train #4 (Eastbound) departs Los Angeles: TUE / THU / SAT

Texas Eagle

- Train #21 (Southbound) departs Chicago: TUE / FRI / SUN
- Train #22 (Northbound) departs San Antonio: TUE / FRI / SUN

From 19 October:

Empire Builder

- Train #7 (Westbound) departs Chicago: MON / THU / SAT
- Train #8 (Eastbound): departs Seattle: TUE / THU / SAT
- Train #27 (Westbound) departs Chicago: MON / THU / SAT
- Train #28 (Eastbound) departs Portland, OR: TUE / THU / SAT

Palmetto

- Train #89 (Southbound) departs New York: MON / THU / SAT
- Train #90 (Northbound) departs Savannah: WED / FRI / SUN

Amtrak says the changed schedule has been designed to retain as many connecting opportunities as possible. To preserve east-west and west-east connections, the long-distance hub in Chicago will offer arrivals and departures primarily on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays. On average, more than 75 per cent of connecting market opportunities will remain available on dates when tri-weekly service is offered.

Amtrak will also suspend the employment of nearly 2,000 employees including 100 managerial roles.
AMTRAK

New York COVID-19 update

Since April, face coverings have been mandatory when riding on the New York suburban rail and bus system. In July, Operation Respect was started, encouraging the use of face masks which included the distribution of four million free (state funded) masks across New York City Transit, Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad.

State governor Andrew Cuomo signed an executive order on September 14 for \$50 fines to begin being issued to non-compliant passengers. The governor said that his priority was that “people feel comfortable coming back to public transportation”.

A recent Metropolitan Transit Authority survey found that 90 per cent of passengers have been compliant.
RAILWAY AGE

Sichuan-Tibet railway

China will imminently begin construction on the Sichuan-Tibet railway, which President Xi Jinping says will strengthen unity in the region, following recent tensions between China and India over the border. The countries have been engaging in a military standoff for several months at the border.

The \$AU56 billion 1,000-kilometre project will connect the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, with Chengdu with intermediate stops at Nyingchi, Kangding and Yaan.
RAILWAY TECHNOLOGY

ENDS

BUS & COACH NEWS

NATIONAL

Firefly Express

All services between Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney remain cancelled until further notice due to COVID-19 restrictions.

QUEENSLAND

Additional school services

TransLink has announced a raft of changes including additional services for Buslink school bus services across the Sunshine Coast from early October at the start of term four of the school year.

From Tuesday 6 October, the following changes will take effect:

- New services from the growing Harmony Estate, Palmview to Chancellor State College, Siena Catholic College, Mountain Creek State High School, Matthew Flinders Anglican College, Immanuel Lutheran College and Maroochydore State High School.
- New services from Glenview State Primary School to parts of Glenview and Palmview.
- A new service from Good Samaritan College to Mons via Kuluin, Alexandra Headland and Buderim.
- New services from Sunshine Coast Grammar from Buddina via Parreara and Brightwater.
- Improved services to address passenger loading on Meridan State College, Sunshine Beach High School and Coolum State High School buses.
- More direct and dedicated services from Cooroy State School, Noosa District High School, Noosaville State School, Tewantin State School, Good Shepherd Lutheran College, St Teresa's Catholic College, St Thomas More College, St Andrews Anglican College, and Peregrine Springs State School.
- Extension of some services into new housing developments in Brightwater, Pelican Waters and Bli Bli to improve service coverage and walk up access for students.
- From term 1, 2021, a new service from the Harmony Estate will also provide travel options for residents to the new Palmview State Primary School and Palmview State Special School.

TRANSLINK

Additional safety officers

The state government has invested in a further 12 "senior network officers", bring their numbers up to 63. The investment follows concerns over bus driver safety due to increased anti-social behaviour. Main Roads Minister, Mark Bailey, agreed that fare evasion was a "growing problem".

Statistics from 2018 showed that there were 1.53 million instances of fare evasion on board school buses alone. *BRISBANE TIMES*

NEW SOUTH WALES

October bus changes

A smorgasbord of additional services will be added to Transit Systems bus services from 25 October. Benefits are advertised to include faster runs on Parramatta Road and more services on Sundays.

Additionally, Transport for NSW's renumbering of selected routes in line with their existing numbering standard continues, the dismantling of the Metrobus brand continues, while other changes are also made:

- M10 (Maroubra Junction to Leichhardt) is withdrawn (replaced by **440**, **394**, **L94**, **396**, **397**, **399** and L3 Light Rail).
- M50 (Coogee to Drummoyne) is withdrawn (replaced by **502**, **503**, **504**, **373**, **374**, **376**, **377** and L2 Light Rail).
- **348** (Wolli Creek to Bondi Junction) has additional weekday and weekend services.
- **389** (Pyrmont to Bondi Junction) has an increase in weekday service frequency to every 12 minutes.
- **407** (Burwood to Strathfield) operates via Newton Rd throughout the week.
- **412** (Martin Place to Campsie) has weekend daytime frequency increased to every 15 mins City-Dulwich Hill and every 30 mins City-Campsie.
- **413** (Martin Place to Campsie) altered to now run between Railway Square and Campsie. On Sundays, increased 30 mins frequency.
- **420** (Burwood to Eastgardens) has weekday service increased to every 15 mins.
- **423** (Martin Place to Kingsgrove) and **428** (Martin Place to Canterbury) had weekend service increased to every 15 mins.
- **431** (Martin Place to Glebe Point) and **433** (Pitt St to Balmain Gladstone Park) have Saturday services increased to every 12 mins and Sunday services increased to every 15 mins.
- 436 (Pitt St to Rodd Point & Chiswick) is replaced by new **437** Five Dock to QVB via City West Link, with 15-minute weekday, 20-minute weekend and 30-minute evening service frequencies.
- 438 and L38 (Martin Place to Abbotsford) is replaced by **438X** Limited Stop service (10-minute frequency daily) and **438N** All Stop service before 06:00 and after 22:00.
- 439, L39 (Mortlake to Martin Place) are withdrawn (replaced by **464**, **502**, **438X** & **438N**).
- **440** (Bondi Junction to Rozelle) has extra peak services between Leichhardt and Railway Square, and Sunday services increased to operate every 15 mins.
- **445** (Campsie to Balmain) has Saturday service increased to every 15 mins.

- 447 (Lilyfield to Leichhardt Marketplace) is withdrawn (replaced by **437**).
- 461 (Burwood to Domain) replaced by **461X** Limited Stop service (15-minute frequency daily) and **461N** All Stop service early morning and late nights.
- **464** (Mortlake to Ashfield) has weekday and Saturday services increased to every 15 minutes (every 10 mins during weekday peak).
- **466** (Cabarita Park to Ashfield) is altered to operate between Burwood and Bayview Park with weekday peak services now extending to Cabarita Park via Ian Parade instead of Concord Shops. **502** will now operate an alternative service between Cabarita Wharf, Concord, Five Dock and Drummoyne (extending to Sydney CBD in peak periods).
- **470** (Lilyfield to Martin Place) has weekday daytime and evening services improved to operate every 10 mins and Sunday services increased to every 15 mins.
- **480** (Strathfield to Pitt St via Homebush Road) has its frequency changed to every 60 mins during weekday off peak and on Saturdays.
- **483** (Strathfield to Pitt St via South Strathfield) has its frequency improved to every 30 mins daily.
- **487** (Bankstown to Canterbury) has all services operating via Roselands Shopping Centre instead of running direct via Canterbury Rd.
- **502** (Five Dock to Town Hall) is altered to operate between Cabarita Wharf and Drummoyne via Concord and Five Dock daily. Route in Five Dock will be changed to operate via Fairlight St & Ingham Av (instead of via Park Rd, First Av & Heath St). During weekend peak periods, services will continue to/from Sydney CBD via Victoria Rd.
- **503** (Drummoyne (Bayswater St) to Town Hall) is a new peak hour route replacing 508 and M50 services between Drummoyne and Sydney CBD. Services no longer start or finish at Victoria Place, Drummoyne.
- **504** (Chiswick to Domain) has daytime services improved to every 15 mins daily and weeknight services increased to every 15 mins replacing M50 services between Drummoyne and Sydney CBD.
- L23 (Kingsgrove to Martin Place) and L28 (Canterbury to Martin Place) are renumbered **423X** and **428X** respectively.
- L37 (Haberfield to Town Hall) is withdrawn (replaced by new route **437** Five Dock to QVB via City West).
- X04 (Domain to Chiswick) is renumbered **504X**.

Additional Grafton services

Since Monday 21 September, additional services are operating from Grafton operated by Busways Grafton.

- Route **373** to South Grafton via Fairway Drive (loop) – Additional weekday services with operating hours now extended to 07:00-18:00. Also, additional services are operating on Saturdays.
- **374** to South Grafton via Bimble Ave (loop) – Additional services six days a week (excludes Sundays) with operating hours now extended to 21:00. Transport for NSW advises that on weekdays after 17:30, services operate to an adjusted route.
- **375A** to Westlawn – an additional evening service operates departing at 18:52.
- **378** to Cangai – During school holiday periods on weekdays, the 07:18 service now starts from Grafton Fire Station, and the 16:25 service now terminates on Prince at Fitzroy St.
- **380** to Yamba – extended operating hours six days a week (excludes Sundays). On Saturdays, additional trips have been timetabled to depart Grafton at 12:48 and 18:25, and depart Yamba at 11:03 and 19:32.

TRANSPORT FOR NSW, HILAIRE FRASER

Additional Bomaderry/Nowra services

Since 26 September, additional services have been running on Saturdays on various routes across Nowra operated by Shoal Bus, Stuart's Coaches and Nowra Coaches (these services do not use Opal). The following changes are for Saturdays only, unless advised otherwise:

- Route **101** to Worrigea – extended operating to 6pm. In addition, there is a new weekday service to Nowra departing University of Wollongong's Shoalhaven campus at 17:15.
- **102** to Vincentia – extended operating till 18:30 (Bay & Basin time).
- **110** to Greenwell Point – two additional return services.
- **111** to Culburra – three additional return services.
- **112** to Cambewarra – four additional return services.
- **120** to Callala – three additional return services. Also, during school holiday periods, services now operate to the Saturday timetable.

Bolding of the route number indicates a new or continuing route. HILAIRE FRASER

- **130/139** combined route to Shoalhaven Heads and Berry – routes have been combined on Saturdays. An extra return service sees the shared route operating until 15:00.
- **131** to Bomaderry – additional return services sees extended operating until 17:00. The route has also been adjusted to run via the new Bomaderry Shopping Centre.
- **132** to North Nowra – additional return services sees extended operating until 17:00.
- **135** Bomaderry to Berrera via Nowra, Tomerong & Sussex Inlet – additional return service in the morning, while the existing return service between Sussex Inlet and Bomaderry has adjusted times to cater for connection with the Kiama train service.

New timetables have been issued effective from Monday 21 September. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW, HILAIRE FRASER**

NSW TrainLink trial coach changes

NSW TrainLink's trial coach service operating between Broken Hill and Adelaide has been extended until June 2021. Transport for NSW says that "customer feedback and preference has been reviewed during this trial and that combined with the patronage numbers on the service have led to the trial" being extended.

Meanwhile, Transport for NSW has advised that due to COVID-19 impacts in tandem with low patronage numbers, a number of their trial coach services will be cancelled from 30 September:

- Broken Hill to Mildura
- Forster to Coffs Harbour
- Goulburn to Canberra

The 587/588 Broken Hill to Mildura service has been suspended since July 8 due to the border closure with Victoria from COVID-19 (see August's edition of *Table Talk*).

Furthermore, a larger number of trial coach services will be suspended from 30 September pending future developments:

- Anglers Reach to Cooma
- Ben Lomond to Guyra
- Bigga to Goulburn
- Delegate to Nimmitabel
- Goodooga to Lightning Ridge
- Moree to Walgett
- Walgett to Moree.

TRANSPORT FOR NSW

VICTORIA

Melbourne bus tenders

Documents have been released on the VicTenders website for the tendering of a new contract for the services currently operated by Transdev. Industry briefings were held in the week ending Friday 26 September, which included proposed service upgrades along the Eastern Freeway such as the construction of a dedicated busway. As part of this process, a comprehensive review of bus routes in the Whitehorse and Manningham local council areas will take place. Transdev's contract was temporarily extended until next year despite well-documented issues with fleet and service reliability issues which saw the majority of the fleet withdrawn in 2018 due to defects.

Route 509 minor amendments

Effective Monday 14 September, the bus terminus at Barkly Square shopping centre was relocated from Barkly to Weston Street. Minor timetable adjustments have been made in line with the change. A copy of the timetable is currently available on the PTV website.

Two new Werribee routes

Next year, two new bus routes will be added in the Werribee area. No further details are available other than that new route 152 will operate from Williams Landing to Tarneit and route 182 will operate from Werribee to Tarneit via Tarneit West. These routes were the result of a campaign by local MP Ben Carroll.

TASMANIA

Hobart City Interchange

The upgraded Hobart City Interchange will open on Sunday 11 October – it's first major upgrade in almost 30 years. Benefits include new shelters, seating, signage and improved timetable information.

With hotel construction now complete, buses can once again access the western side of the interchange. Some bus stop locations and names are changing. Also some bus routes have tweaked arrival/departure times. A map/route list is provided on the next page.

The various Bus Stops will host services as follows:

- **A1/A2** – Northern Turn Up & Go and Express
- **A3** – Eastern Shore Turn Up & Go and Express services, and routes to Geilston Bay and Risdon Vale
- **C1** – routes to Goodwood, Lutana, Howrah Heights, Rosny Point, Mornington/Warrane and Seven Mile Beach
- **D1/D2** – routes to Sandy Bay, University, Tarroona, South Hobart and Kingston, and regional services to the Channel and Huon Valley



Hobart City

Interchange Map

A1 Interchange - Elizabeth St

- 500 Glenorchy
- 501 Glenorchy
- 502 Glenorchy
- 503 Tolosa Park
- 504 Jackson Street
- 510 Austins Ferry
- 511 Claremont
- 512 Cadbury Estate
- 513 Chigwell
- 520 Bridgewater
- 522 Gagebrook
- 722 New Norfolk

A2 Interchange - Elizabeth St

- X10 Granton
- X11 Claremont
- X20 Bridgewater
- X21 Brighton
- X22 New Norfolk
- X23 New Norfolk
- X30 Bridgewater

A3 Interchange - Elizabeth St

- 601 Shoreline
- 615 Tranmere
- X15 Tranmere
- 616 Tranmere
- X16 Tranmere
- 624 Clarendon Vale
- 625 Clarendon Vale
- 634 Roches Beach
- X34 Roches Beach
- 635 Seven Mile Beach
- X44 Opossum Bay
- 646 Opossum Bay
- 685 Geilston Bay
- 695 Risdon Vale

B1 Interchange - Elizabeth St

- 541 Metro Springfield
- X42 Glenorchy
- 550 Glenorchy
- X50 Glenorchy
- 551 Lenah Valley
- 552 Lenah Valley
- 553 Lenah Valley

C1 Interchange - Macquarie St

- 560 Glenorchy
- 561 Glenorchy
- 562 Metro Springfield
- 606 Shoreline
- 654 Mornington
- 655 Mornington
- 664 Seven Mile Beach
- X64 Seven Mile Beach
- 676 Rosny Park

D1 Interchange - Macquarie St

- 401 Lower Sandy Bay
- 402 Lower Sandy Bay
- 407 Blackmans Bay
- 408 Blackmans Bay
- 409 Blackmans Bay
- 410 Kingston
- 411 Howden
- 412 Margate
- 413 Snug
- 415 Woodbridge
- 416 Middleton
- 417 Gordon
- 426 Tarroona
- 427 Blackmans Bay
- 428 Blackmans Bay
- 429 Summerleas
- 500 Blackmans Bay
- 501 University
- 601 University
- 710 Huonville
- 712 Ranelagh
- 714 Cygnet
- 716 Geeveston
- 718 Dover
- 719 Dover

D2 Interchange - Macquarie St

- 446 Marlyn Road
- 447 Strickland Avenue
- 448 Fern Tree
- 449 Fern Tree
- 457 Mount Nelson
- 458 Mount Nelson
- X58 Mount Nelson

D4 Interchange - Elizabeth St

- 725 Richmond
- 726 Campania
- 731 Sorell
- X31 Sorell
- 732 Dodges Ferry
- X32 Dodges Ferry
- X33 Sorell
- 734 Nubeena
- 736 Swansea
- 737 Bicheno

L1 Interchange - Liverpool St

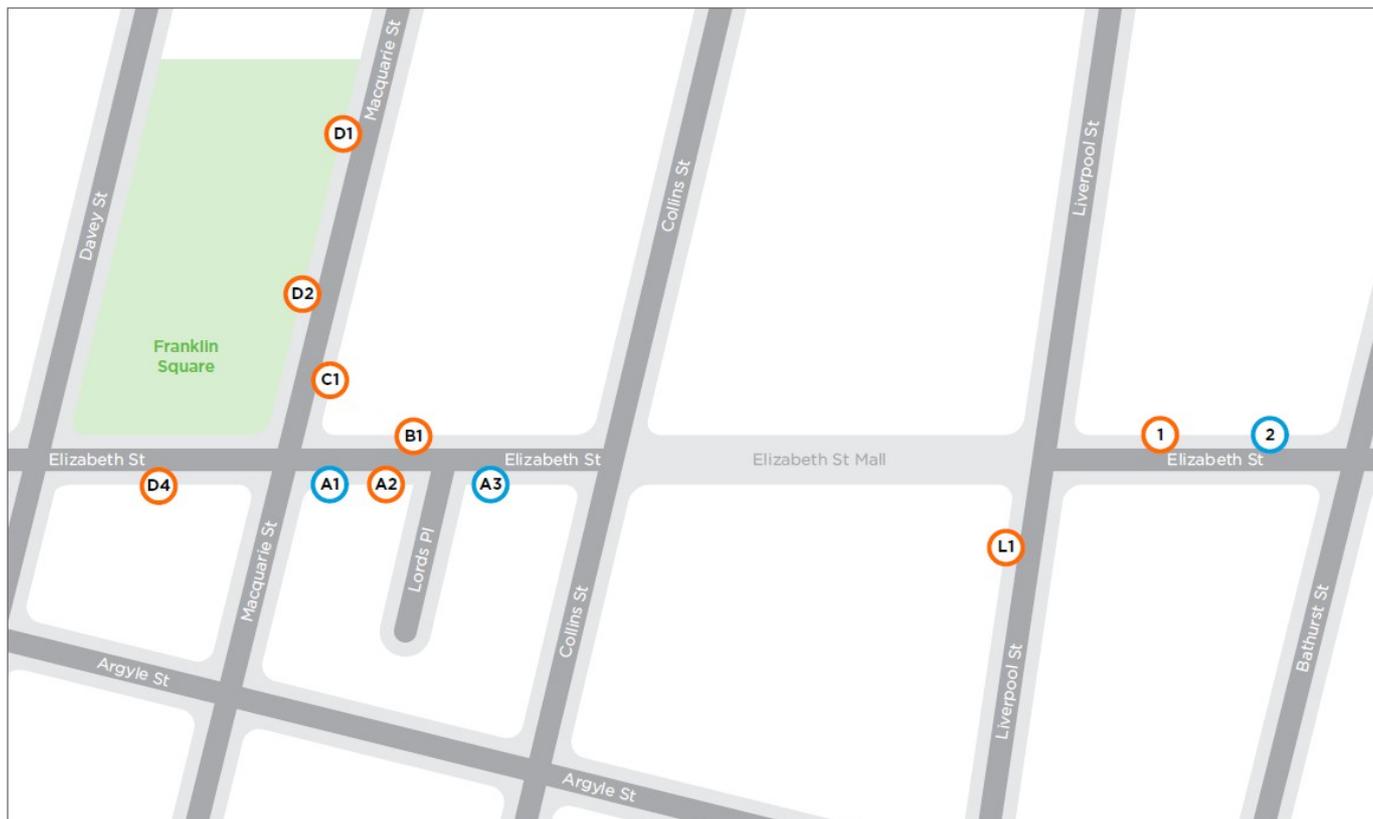
- 540 Mount Stuart & West Hobart

1 Elizabeth St (north)

- 541 Metro Springfield
- 550 Glenorchy
- X50 Glenorchy
- 551 Lenah Valley
- 552 Lenah Valley
- 553 Lenah Valley

2 Elizabeth St (north)

- 500 Glenorchy
- 501 Glenorchy
- 502 Glenorchy
- 503 Tolosa Park
- 504 Jackson Street
- 510 Austins Ferry
- 511 Claremont
- 512 Cadbury Estate
- 513 Chigwell
- 520 Bridgewater
- 522 Gagebrook
- 605 Austins Ferry
- 722 New Norfolk



Online trip information
transport.tas.gov.au

The updated Hobart City Interchange map (source: Tasmanian Government - Transport Services).

- **D4** – regional services to Tasman Peninsula, Sorell, Richmond and East Coast.

**TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT – TRANSPORT SERVICES,
METRO TASMANIA**

Statewide ticketing system

The state government has called for expressions of interest in developing a new statewide ticketing system. The brief will consist of a new ticketing system for Metro Tasmania, which would be eventually expanded across the remaining transport operators across the state. The state government said that it recognised the complex market environment and diverse needs of bus operators, so the process will encourage innovative contracting or partnership arrangements to develop, implement and manage the system in a cost effective way. **PREMIER OF TASMANIA**

NEW ZEALAND

Government help needed

The following is an edited version of an article published by Radio New Zealand:

Some public transport operators fear for the future of transport once the government stops ploughing money into propping up transport due to COVID.

During COVID level one and two restrictions, capacity was at only one-third of normal levels.

For most of the year, the New Zealand Transport Agency, Waka Kotahi (NZTA), with government assistance, has been covering all COVID costs including sharp drops in passenger demand, extra cleaning crews and equipment. The government has provided NZTA with \$210 million in COVID funding to distribute to operators. NZTA spent almost \$92 million until the end of June 2020, with another \$111 million now budgeted to be spent across FY20/21.

Dr Pim Borren, from the Bus and Coach Association, said "There's not an endless pot of gold that the government can keep adding money to. We know that COVID is costing the government so much money - and ultimately taxpayers so much money that they can't keep funding everything forever - and that's the concern."

Tour, coach and charter demand has been decimated meaning virtually no income stream for these operators. Dr Borren also said that operators were locked into long-term contracts and he was worried the additional money kicked in by the government would not cover these large costs - "While that money may be guaranteed for this year, what's going to happen for the remainder of these [nine-year] contracts?"

"We need to have some confidence that the government is going to continue to fund those large additional tranches of money in a fair and reasonable way under a normal contract variation process." Dr Borren said he was not confident the government has a plan that addresses the sector's concerns, and operators feel shut out from discussions.

Regional councils and Auckland Transport contract private operators to provide services. The revenue from fares pays for about 40 per cent of services provided, while regional ratepayers and NZTA roughly split the remaining funding.

Local Government New Zealand president Stuart Crosby said, after meeting with NZTA, that he was confident that the issue was on the agency's radar. "Because it's a big impost for them, and of course they're losing revenue as well, particularly in the Auckland area as people aren't driving so much and they're not getting the various taxation through fuel taxes, etc. So it's quite a significant issue that will land back on the government's table."

Crosby said so far they were getting good support from the government - but they needed to keep having robust discussions about funding.

Greater Wellington Regional Council transport committee chair Roger Blakeley said a positive indication in his area was the recent bounce-back in passenger numbers to about 70 or 80 percent of pre-COVID levels. "Even at the weekend (12/13 September) we're finding we are at 100 percent of [pre-COVID] patronage. So the public seems to be saying that they trust public transport and want to continue to use public transport. So that's really encouraging, both for us and for the bus operators.

He said none-the-less the sector would likely need additional support for at least another couple of years. "It's always possible that we'll get more waves of Covid infections, and the government seems very clear [that] that is possible.

For its part, NZTA said it is working closely with regional councils and Auckland Transport in modelling scenarios, including possible changes to services to meet the "new normal", regularly reviewing how much extra it is paying out to cover COVID costs.

A spokesperson for the Transport Minister, Phil Twyford, said New Zealanders should be assured that public transport will continue to be adequately funded by the government. **RADIO NEW ZEALAND**

ENDS

FERRY & SHIP NEWS

NEW SOUTH WALES

River Class controversy

The state government came under criticism, particularly from the political opposition, in late August, when it became public knowledge that the newly procured Indonesian-built River Class ferries have been built so tall that commuters would be unable to safely travel on the top deck whilst the ferry runs under the Gasworks Bridge and the former railway bridge at Camellia on the Parramatta River.

In practice, Transdev Sydney Ferries employees will be required to request passengers to vacate the top deck during this section of the F3 Parramatta River route.

The state government defended the procurement, stating that the fact passengers would now be able to enjoy travelling in a top deck not previously available for the majority of the trip was a win for passengers. Transport Minister Andrew Constance, in defending

claims from the opposition leader said "I know [opposition leader] Chris Minns thinks that I personally build ferries, I get in my tool shed and I start putting them together, but I don't".

This followed criticism earlier in the month when it was revealed that three of the new ferries had been found to contain solid asbestos (which has since been removed). **ABC NEWS (2)**

Parramatta wharf reopens

Following wharf upgrades and work on the new Escarpment Boardwalk, Parramatta ferry wharf reopened to ferry services on Wednesday 23 September. See the April 2020 edition of *Table Talk* for a look at works undertaken. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

VICTORIA

Searoad (Queenscliff – Sorrento)

Due to COVID-19 stage 4 restrictions which severely limited travel, Searoad cancelled all weekend sailings during August. However, weekend services recommenced from Saturday 19 September on a restricted timetable. Sailings from Sorrento are at 08:00 then every two hours until 16:00, while Queenscliff sailings are at 09:00 then every two hours until 17:00. **STEVEN HABY**

Searoad (Western Port Ferries)

Since 3 April, Searoad have been operating their Stony Point - French Island - Cowes -Stony Point services on a reduced timetable. See right for updated timetable information. **STEVEN HABY**

TASMANIA

Devonport commuter ferry

Devonport's MerseyLink 'on demand' commuter ferry returned to service on 1 September following a five-month winter break. While the ferry was due to undergo a shorter maintenance break, this period was extended by the service ending earlier (31 March) as a result of COVID-19.

The ferry operates across the Mersey River between Devonport and East Devonport from Mondays through to Saturdays. **WIN NEWS TASMANIA, MERSEYLINK**

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: Stanley Bay axed

With the city left with a \$750 million fiscal hole as a result of COVID-19, Auckland Council has handed down an emergency budget.

Auckland Transport has had to initiate \$10 million in cuts. Due to low patronage, ferry services at Stanley Bay will cease from 24 December. Instead, these services would effectively move to Hobsonville Point (starting in January) where there has been significant growth in patronage and demand for additional services.

The 728 and 729 peak-only bus services will also cease from December. **1 NEWS**

Ferry terminal tussle

There is a tussle between Wellington's ferry operators (Bluebridge and KiwiRail) on the location of proposed new berths.

Whilst the early money was on a new multi-user wharf at Kaiwharawhara, backed by local councils and the "Future Ports Forum" (which included a cavalcade of local stakeholders including both ferry operators),

Stony Point to French Island Travel Time - 15 mins			
Mon Fri	Tue Wed Thu	Sat	Sun
7.10am	7.10am	-	-
7.50am	7.50am	8.45am	8.15am
10.00am	10.00am	10.00am	10.00am
11.50am	11.50am	-	-
3.25pm	3.25pm	2.00pm	2.30pm
4.15pm	4.15pm	-	-
5.10pm	5.15pm	4.30pm	4.45pm

French Island to Stony Point Travel Time - 15 mins			
Mon Fri	Tue Wed Thu	Sat	Sun
7.30am	7.30am	-	-
9.00am	9.00am	9.05am	8.35am
10.20am	10.20am	11.20am	11.20am
12.10pm	12.10pm	-	-
3.45pm	3.45pm	2.15pm	2.50pm
4.35pm	4.35pm	-	-
6.15pm	5.35pm	5.55pm	6.05pm

French Island to Phillip Island Travel Time - 15 mins			
Mon Fri	Tue Wed Thu	Sat	Sun
8.05am	-	-	-
-	-	10.20am	10.20am
5.25pm	-	4.50pm	5.05pm

Phillip Island to French Island Travel Time - 15 mins			
Mon Fri	Tue Wed Thu	Sat	Sun
8.30am	-	-	-
-	-	10.50am	10.50am
5.50pm	-	5.25pm	5.35pm

Stony Point to Phillip Island Travel Time - 30 mins			
Mon Fri	Tue Wed Thu	Sat	Sun
7.50am	-	-	-
-	-	10.00am	10.00am
5.10pm	-	4.30pm	4.45pm

Phillip Island to Stony Point Travel Time - 30 mins			
Mon Fri	Tue Wed Thu	Sat	Sun
8.30am	-	-	-
-	-	10.50am	10.50am
5.50pm	-	5.25pm	5.35pm

more recently, KiwiRail's Interislander has cited seismic concerns from geotechnical experts. KiwiRail's preferred option is to be alongside Bluebridge's existing wharf at Kings Wharf.

The Interislander will need an upgrade in its facilities to accommodate the introduction of new higher ferries, due in 2024.

Both operators have an agreement with port operator, CentrePort, to use their facilities for their services.

Meanwhile, Bluebridge have said they hold their own safety concerns if Interislander were to instead use the Kings Wharf area with a new nearby wharf, including the potential for collisions "due to proximity when berthing" and difficulties in "navigation and manoeuvring in a tight space while also interacting with... smaller vehicles (yachts, recreational craft)". Bluebridge's owners cited simulations conducted of ferries using such a layout, with a 64 per cent success rate in berthing safely.

The 2016 Kaikoura earthquake saw the country's second-largest ever insurance payout, \$600 million, from damage to CentrePort facilities, which was finalised just last year. *STUFF.CO.NZ (2) (3), KIWIRAIL*

ENDS

AIR NEWS

DOMESTIC

Qantas

On Thursday 24 September, the first flight for months between Adelaide and Sydney took off following the lifting of travel restrictions between South Australia and New South Wales. Reports in the media indicated that scheduled flights between the two capitals were 'booked out in minutes' encouraging airlines to schedule additional flights post haste. *STEVEN HABY*

Rex expansion proposals

Media reports indicated that on Tuesday 22 September, Rex announced that it was in negotiations with an Asian private equity business to raise \$150 million which they would use to finance the expansion of services on the lucrative Melbourne – Sydney – Brisbane sector in direct competition with Qantas and Virgin. *STEVEN HABY*

Alliance to Moranbah

On 17 August, Alliance Airlines began flying seven return flights per week between Brisbane and Moranbah, Central Queensland. Alliance said that flights have been scheduled to meet the needs of the resources industry and the local community, with further flights to be added in the future if demand warrants.

Alliance's chief executive officer, Leo Schofield, said "We believe the speed, comfort and reliability of the Fokker 70 jet will make Alliance an attractive option for residents and resource workers travelling between Brisbane and Moranbah. The fact we are introducing competition to this important route will also ensure the whole region benefits from additional capacity and lower fares".

Passengers are subject to a COVID-19 screening which includes a temperature check and health questionnaire. **ALLIANCE AIRLINES**

Brisbane to Moranbah

Flight	Day	Depart Brisbane	Arrive Moranbah
QQ 4352	Monday	07:40	09:15
QQ 4350	Tuesday	06:00	07:35
QQ 4360	Tuesday	16:35	18:10
QQ 4354	Wednesday	07:35	09:10
QQ 4358	Wednesday	14:45	16:20
QQ 4358	Thursday	14:45	16:20
QQ 4356	Friday	13:05	14:40

Moranbah to Brisbane

Flight	Day	Depart Moranbah	Arrive Brisbane
QQ 4353	Monday	09:45	11:15
QQ 4351	Tuesday	08:05	09:35
QQ 4361	Tuesday	18:40	20:10
QQ 4355	Wednesday	09:40	11:10
QQ 4359	Wednesday	16:50	18:20
QQ 4359	Thursday	16:50	18:20
QQ 4357	Friday	15:10	16:40

Alliance starts-up Canberra flights

Alliance Airlines has announced that from 23 October, it will start flying twice-weekly between Canberra and the Sunshine Coast then onward to Cairns. The services take advantage of Queensland's re-opening of its border, without quarantine, to ACT residents, from 01:00 on Friday 25 September. As Queensland's border remains closed to most of New South Wales, the opening is for air travel only at the time of publication.

Supplied by – *AGNES BOSKOWITZ*

Sources - *CANBERRA AIRPORT, QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT*

Ownership secured, Virgin restructures

Virgin Australia, now secured with Bain ownership, moved in September to restructure its services. Flights which had been suspended earlier this year due to COVID-19 impacts and are now confirmed as not returning are:

- Sydney to Albury
- Sydney to Uluru
- Sydney to Hervey Bay
- Sydney to Port Macquarie
- Sydney to Tamworth

- Melbourne to Mildura
- Brisbane to Cloncurry
- Mount Isa to Cloncurry
- Brisbane to Port Macquarie

In March, Virgin also cancelled plans for a new pilot school in Tamworth. Tamworth Regional Council have recently said that they are in discussions with other carriers about flying on the Sydney to Tamworth route.

A Virgin spokesperson left the door slightly open to the future - in addition to maintaining a regional network of twenty locations, it would "continue to review [its] network as travel restrictions ease and demand returns".

Article supplied by - ROSS MORRISON

Sources - ABC NEWS, NINE NEWS

INTERNATIONAL

Singapore cuts Canberra route

Singapore Airlines has suspended its Singapore to Canberra and Singapore to Wellington, New Zealand routes indefinitely. After Singapore closed its Canberra offices, there are doubts as to whether these flights will ever return. The airport has officially said it was "hopeful" of Singapore's return whenever international borders reopen.

From 22 August, Canberra Airport discontinued operations on Saturdays – winding back to a six-day week in light of near non-existent number of flights and passengers with most domestic and international borders closed due to COVID-19. *CANBERRA TIMES (2)*

Air New Zealand

Following on from the likely long-term impacts on international travel caused by COVID-19, Air New Zealand has confirmed it will move its business focus towards being a domestic and Trans-Tasman airline. The airline released their annual financial numbers in August which confirmed a \$AU80 million loss during FY2020.

The airline said it would maintain the capability to scale back up should the international market start to recover in the coming years. The main areas of focus would be building up its domestic tourism and corporate business, growing cargo operations, and exploring development opportunities in the digital, loyalty and sustainability fields.

Air NZ has deferred delivery of one ATR72-600 to next year and five A321neo's into 2022/23. *SAMCHUI.COM*

Virgin axes Tonga flights

Virgin Australia has formally axed their previously suspended flight route between Sydney and the Tongan capital, Nuku'alofa – an outcome of the airline's operational review. *ABC NEWS*

NZ removes physical distancing

The New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, announced that from 14 September, airline carriers would no longer need to enforce physical distancing of one metre on board their services which now allows them to offer 100 per cent of their normal capacity after six months where this was not possible. Under level 2 COVID-19 restrictions, face coverings remain required by all passengers.

Following this news, Jetstar announced that after a one month break (following the most recent cluster of COVID cases), they would resume operating roughly 60 per cent of their normal New Zealand domestic flight schedule across Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Queenstown with 75 flights across six routes.

Jetstar had said it was unable to continue operating their services economically whilst they were required to keep middle seats unoccupied. The airline also said they expected demand to bounce back quickly, which they said happened back in July when they returned after the first set of heavy COVID restrictions.

Meanwhile, over at Air New Zealand, the airline said it had released 180,000 of its cheapest fares to 20 destinations across the country, with 160,000 of these under \$50. Air New Zealand CEO, Greg Foran, said "While our borders are closed, we know Kiwis are keen to get out and explore or visit friends and family, so we want to make travel as easy as possible – and this is also great news for local tourism". He also said these fares were a 'thank you' for customers assistance throughout 2020.

The New Zealand Air Line Pilots Association president, Captain Andrew Riddling, also commented, saying "It's a well-known fact that filtered air on board aircraft is safer than even the air in hospital operating theatres. This means the risk of transmission of Covid-19 through cabin air is very low". *STUFF.CO.NZ (2)*

Lufthansa tightens COVID requirements

From 1 September, Lufthansa has tightened its COVID-19 mask requirements. All passengers must wear a mask unless:

- They have posted a negative COVID-19 test result within 48 hours of travel, or
- They provide a signed medical certificate where the passenger has a medical condition which inhibits them from safely wearing a face mask whilst onboard.

While the airline has made wearing masks mandatory since May, the exceptions to this have now been strengthened. *SAMCHUI.COM*

Lufthansa retiring aircraft

Bloomberg has reported that German carrier Lufthansa will retire all of their A380 and B737 aircraft. In addition, most of their A340s will also be retired as the airline reviews their aircraft needs post-COVID. These cuts are in addition to what was initially flagged by the airline.

The German government previously took a significant stake in the airline in return for a cash injection to keep the airline afloat. SAMCHUI.COM

Emirates secures government funding

Emirates has secured \$AU2.7 billion in funding from the Dubai government, due to impacts from COVID-19 across the calendar year. The funding will allow the airline to resume paying all of its employees their salaries in full from October. The airline laid off some pilots and cabin crew in July due to continued depression in demand across the international travel industry.

Meanwhile, Etihad says it will continue to reduce staff payments by at least 10 per cent until the end of the financial year. Until recently, Etihad had cut pay by between 25 and 50 per cent. SAMCHUI.COM

Emirates looks to Dubai-Tel Aviv flights

Following recent "landmark" agreements to normalise political ties between the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel, airline carrier Emirates holds plans to begin flying between Dubai and Ben Gurion Airport in Israel's capital, Tel Aviv, from early 2021 for the first time. The airline also recently committed to investing in a Dubai facility to provide kosher food catering. SAMCHUI.COM, DEUTSHCE WELLE

Saudis to resume international flights

Saudi Arabia re-opened their country to international flights on Tuesday 15 September following a six-month ban on air, land and sea transport caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The country had amongst the highest rates of COVID-19 infections across the Gulf. SAMCHUI.COM

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About *Table Talk*

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