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TABLE TALK

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RAIL & TRAM NEWS

QUEENSLAND



Cross River Rail bus replacement

TransLink has announced that a dedicated bus service, called StationLink, will operate to support Cross River Rail (CRR) construction works. The buses will have a distinct yellow and blue livery.

From Monday, 19 April, Yeronga train station will close for around six months. StationLink bus route 109 will run from Park Road station to Moorooka station via Boogo Road bus station, and Dutton Park, Fairfield, Yaronga and Yeerongpilly rail stations. The timetable sees services operate at least every 15 minutes on weekdays between 06:00 and 19:30, and every 30 minutes at other times when rail services usually operate.

Fairfield, Yeerongpilly, Moorooka, Rocklea and Salisbury stations will also temporarily close over time to enable CRR works to progress, with exact dates yet to be announced. **TRANSLINK**

NEW SOUTH WALES



Sydney Trains disruption

On Saturday, 20 March, various incidents impacted rail services across the Sydney metropolitan area with significant delays affecting a large proportion of travellers across the network. This coincided with consecutive days of rainfall across the eastern seaboard of the country, leading to flooding in multiple areas and road closures.

Around 08:00, an empty heritage train had a bogie from one carriage derail at Revesby, which necessitated the closure of the T8 Airport Up line between Glenfield and Revesby for most of the day,

with emergency buses operating a limited replacement service. Due to the subsequent derailment of a track maintenance vehicle near Central, the heritage train was not able to be re-railed until night.

At around 16:00, a Blue Mountains train with a braking issue at Burwood saw the line between Central Intercity platforms and Strathfield blocked, which necessitated trains being held on platforms at some stations for over an hour until the defective train could be safely moved out. At around 17:30, (not long after said train was moved), a track circuit failure at Redfern, also impacting two sets of points, put trains running in/out of Central Intercity to a standstill once again, with a delay of around an hour until the points were safely clipped and locked, to enable trains to once again resume. The failure is believed to have been caused by localised flooding in the Illawarra Dive, with reports of rubbish clogging drains.

The Burwood and Redfern issues led to delays of up to 2 hours to T1 Western, T9 Northern and Intercity Blue Mountains and Central Coast lines, with several service cancellations later in the night due to crew displacement resultant from the delays. Eventually, some services were diverted into the City Circle, although planned track possessions around Redfern limited the scope for immediate diversions.

At around 18:00, flooding of the rail line at Bardwell Park led to the closure of the T8 Airport line between Turrella and Revesby, although this only lasted for around half-an-hour before water receded to levels deemed safe for trains to resume. Trains were organised to shuttle between Central and Turrella in the interim.

Outside Sydney, on the South Coast line, activation of rainfall monitors between Helensburgh and Thirroul led to minor delays, as trains were required to be warned. Signal equipment repairs at Dapto led to the South Coast line being temporarily closed between Dapto and Kiama.

In the afternoon, on the Blue Mountains line, services were temporarily suspended between Emu Plains and Springwood due to excess rainfall causing flooding. On Sunday, 21 March, due to concerns over the integrity of a bridge near Penrith, trains ran at reduced speed.

On Wednesday, 24 March, the line between Katoomba and Lithgow was closed at around 08:45 due to a landslip near Blackheath. The line reopened at around 15:00.

From around 08:00 on Saturday 20th, flooding around Cockle Creek necessitated Intercity Central Coast Newcastle line (CCN) services to be replaced by buses between Newcastle Interchange and Fassifern (daytime)/Morisset (overnight). A shuttle train service was also arranged to operate between Broadmeadow and Newcastle Interchange. This closure lasted until Friday, 26 March with numerous trains stuck at Broadmeadow Yard, necessitating a revised schedule throughout the week. On 23, 24 and 25 March, a timetable alteration telegram was issued with many CCN services reduced in consist to four carriages, while some others variously increased from four to eight carriages, and two services operating via the North Shore in the morning and afternoon were cancelled.

From Thursday 18 until Friday, 25 March, all Hunter line services were suspended due to flooding in various areas including Sandgate, with bus replacement in lieu. On Friday 25 March, buses continued to replace trains between Maitland and Dungog due to localised flooding.

A very eventful week for Sydney Trains incident response crews.

Richmond line closure

From Tuesday 23 until Monday 29 March, the T1 Richmond line was closed between Schofields and Richmond due to high flood waters at various locations, with buses operating two routes:

- Schofields, Riverstone, Windsor and return.
- Schofields, express to Richmond and return.

Due to local road closures, no buses were stopping at Vineyard, Mulgrave, Clarendon and East Richmond stations for most of this time.

The **N71** NightRide bus service was also affected, with services from the city running only as far as Windsor (also skipping Mulgrave).

On the weekend of 27-28 March, pre-planned track maintenance saw buses replacing trains between Richmond/St Marys and Granville. On this weekend, road closures saw only Clarendon station being missed, with a "Windsor loop" bus operating as route **79T1** from Windsor towards Richmond and return. **80T1** buses from Granville were terminating at Windsor.

Light rail disruption

On Thursday 18 and Friday 19 March, L1 and L2 light rail services were suspended between Central Chalmers Street and Randwick/Juniors Kingsford due to overhead wiring repairs. This saw the need for emergency bussing to operate until the repairs could be completed, on the Friday afternoon.

From around 09:30 on Sunday, 21 March, a fallen tree caused the L1 Dulwich Hill line to be split into two, with shuttles services running for much of the day between:

- Central and Wentworth Park, and
- Lewisham West and Dulwich Hill.

Replacement buses were organised to operate between Wentworth Park and Lewisham West.

Greater Sydney: COVID restrictions eased

The state government announced that from Monday, 29 March, fitted face masks would no longer be mandatory on public transport services and waiting areas across Greater Sydney after almost three months of maintaining the requirement. NSW Health continues to "strongly recommend" the use of fitted face masks. **NSW GOVERNMENT**

VICTORIA



Lobbying for Mildura rail service

The *Sunraysia Daily* newspaper has publicised recent efforts by Northern Victoria Member of Parliament (MP) Tim Quilty, for the re-introduction of train services to Mildura.

The Liberal Democrat MP commissioned a report from the state's Parliamentary Budget Office, which found that a thrice-weekly "shuttle" service between Mildura and Maryborough would cost \$22 million over three years, with an intention for these services to connect with existing services into Melbourne. The cost includes not only operation of the shuttle service, but also upgrades to closed stations at Ouyen, Woomelang, Birchip, Donald, & St Arnaud, and regauging a V/Locity train to operate on the standard gauge line.

The MP has also claimed that the government could recoup its investment in fare revenue "almost immediately". He said "money allocated to Melbourne trams this year was 70 times more, let's not even try to work out how this compares to the billions being spent on the cross-city tunnel, let alone the suburban rail loop". **SUNRAYSIA DAILY**

Free transport initiative

On 1 March, the state government announced it had organised for free public transport across the state for seniors and Carer Card holders between 21 and 28 March (inclusive). The initiative was provided to encourage travel after a sustained period of depressed regional travel due to economic impacts from COVID-19.

The state's Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, Luke Donnellan, said "Last year we weren't encouraging people to get out and about. [Now] we are encouraging older Victorians and carers to enjoy all the fantastic sites our beautiful state has to offer".

Free travel for V/Line services was available for economy class travel only, with paid upgrades to first class available. A Myki card is required to be on the person for anyone using the initiative. Another fare-free week is planned to be provided this coming October during Seniors Festival and Carers Week. Fitted face masks continue to be mandatory for travel across the state including public transport and all flights in/out of Victoria. **SEVEN NEWS MELBOURNE, VICTORIAN GOVT**

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Metronet – Denny Ave crossing

On the Armadale Line, from the evening of Thursday, 1 April until end of service Sunday, 11 April, buses replaced trains between Gosnells and Armadale. On Friday, 2 April only, buses replaced trains between Perth and Armadale/Thornlie.

The above bus replacements enables replacement of the Denny Avenue level crossing with a four-lane road underpass, as part of the wider Metronet project.

Extra Easter rail services

TransWA operated two extra Prospector services on Thursday, 1 April in the lead-up to the Easter long weekend.

- **PX63** departing East Perth at 15:15 for Kalgoorlie.
- **PX64** departing Kalgoorlie at 15:25 for East Perth.

TransWA also put on extra road coaches around the Easter long weekend. See the *Bus News* section for a list of these services.

TRANSWA

NEW ZEALAND



Scenic services resume

The KiwiRail-operated scenic rail services resumed operating on March 11 (Coastal Pacific) and 12 (TranzAlpine and Northern Explorer), following the

easing of COVID-19 social restrictions, with the country now back at the lowest alert level (one).

Meanwhile, KiwiRail has also released its customary **winter schedule** for its scenic services. With international travel still on the back-burner, there is a noticeable reduction of some services. From 3 May (end of school holidays), to the end of the October school holidays, TranzAlpine services will be halved to just two weekly 'day return' services (one on Thursdays, and the second on Fridays). KiwiRail has said the service attracted three-quarters of its pre-COVID patronage from international tourism. The onboard Scenic Plus catering service is also suspended for the foreseeable future.

However, in better news, Coastal Pacific services will continue through the winter season for the first time in years, "reflecting strong demand" domestically, according to KiwiRail Group chief executive Greg Miller. There is no change to the Northern Explorer and Capital Connection schedules. **STUFF.CO.NZ, BUSINESS SCOOP**

INTERNATIONAL

Germany: More train/plane connections

German rail operator Deutsche Bahn (DB) will soon expand its 'Lufthansa Express Rail' partnership with German airline Lufthansa. The initiative provides a "connection guarantee", reserved first class seating, and free catering onboard selected DB services for business & first class Lufthansa passengers.

From July, the program will include services operating from Frankfurt Airport to Hamburg and Munich, then, from December, to Berlin, Bremen and Münster.

Additionally, from December, DB will begin to operate high-speed 'Sprinter' services to/from Frankfurt Airport, delivering time savings for passengers.

AIRLINEGEEKS.COM

US: Amtrak services to resume

Following on from *Table Talk's* American Recovery Plan article from last month, and the successful passage of the Biden administration's American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to deliver economic stimulus and aid recovery from COVID-19, Amtrak has confirmed it will be resuming services that it had cut in 2020 due to patronage impacts from COVID-19.

Under the Act, Amtrak will be eligible for \$1.5 billion in additional funding over the next three-and-a-half-years, provided it returns service levels on its lines to the level on or before 1 July 2020. Amtrak will also be required to resume gainful employment of any staff members furloughed since 1 October 2020 from COVID impacts.

From 24 May, provision of daily service returns on the California Zephyr, Coast Starlight, Empire Builder, and Texas Eagle.

From 31 May, provision of daily service returns on the Capitol Limited, City of New Orleans, Lake Shore Limited, and Southwest Chief.

From 7 June, provision of daily service returns on the Crescent, Palmetto, Silver Meteor, and Silver Star. **US CONGRESS, INT'L RAIL JOURNAL**

Dubai appoints integrated network operator

Dubai's Road and Transport Authority has appointed a joint venture between Keolis and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries to operate its metro and light rail networks for nine years starting from September. The contract also includes train and infrastructure maintenance.

The contract winners have said they look to implement real-time passenger information, timetable optimisation, and predictive and best practice maintenance processes.

The joint venture replaces Serco, which operated the network since 2009. **INT'L RAIL JOURNAL**

ENDS

BUS & COACH NEWS

NATIONAL



National operator timetables

Firefly

The following services were operating as of 27 March:

- FE 31 Melbourne – Sydney (overnight) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
- FE 21 Sydney – Melbourne (overnight) on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.
- FE 70 Melbourne – Adelaide (day) operating daily.
- FE 71 Adelaide – Melbourne (day) operating daily.
- FE 80 Melbourne – Adelaide (overnight) on Thursdays and Sundays.
- FE 81 Adelaide – Melbourne (overnight) on Fridays and Mondays.

Greyhound

The business has been split into two with Kinetic acquiring the mining and gas field transfer work with around 170 coaches based in all states except Victoria and Tasmania. The remaining express operation with around 58 coaches is retained by the existing shareholders and, subject to regulatory approval, will take effect from 1 April 2021.

Meanwhile, the Greyhound's chief executive expressed dismay in the media following the federal government's announcement of 'subsidised' flights to selected tourist destinations across the country in the week ending Friday 12 March, stating that Greyhound would be heavily disadvantaged and may not survive in the short to medium term.

Updated timetables for the following routes came into effect from Monday, 22 March:

- GX 411 / GX 443 Brisbane – Cairns
- GX 422 / GX 244 Brisbane – Sydney

The Sydney – Thredbo service (GX 200 / GX 203) commences from Monday 14 June 2021. All timetables are available on the Greyhound website at www.greyhound.com.au/travel-information/printable-timetables. **STEVEN HABY, FIREFLY, GREYHOUND**

NEW SOUTH WALES



Bikes rack up bus trial

Transport for NSW has resolved to undertake a trial of having bike racks installed on Wagga Wagga route 960 buses.

Called the "Bikes on Buses in the Bush" trial, it hopes to encourage bike riders to use buses as part of their transport trip with greater ease. The trial is expected to run for eight weeks across May and June. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

VICTORIA



Melbourne timetable changes

From Sunday, 11 April, the following bus routes will have changes - mainly across southern and northern suburbs of Melbourne.

The following routes will have changes to coordinate with Metro and V/Line train timetable changes that occurred earlier in the year:

Southern / South-eastern

- 601 Huntingdale - Monash University
- 623 Glen Waverley - St Kilda
- 624 Kew - Oakleigh
- 625 Elsternwick - Chadstone
- 626 Middle Brighton – Chadstone
- 627 Moorabbin Station - Chadstone SC
- 630 Elwood - Monash University
- 631 Southland SC - Waverley Gardens SC
- 693 Belgrave – Oakleigh
- 701 Oakleigh - Bentleigh
- 703 Middle Brighton - Blackburn
- 704 Westall Station to Oakleigh Station
- 705 Mordialloc - Springvale
- 706 Mordialloc - Chelsea
- 708 Carrum - Hampton
- 709 Mordialloc - Noble Park Station
- 732 Box Hill - Upper Ferntree Gully
- 733 Oakleigh - Box Hill
- 742 Eastland - Chadstone
- 760 Cranbourne - Seaford
- 767 Southland - Box Hill
- 770 Frankston - Karingal
- 771 Frankston - Langwarrin
- 772 Frankston - Eliza Heights
- 773 Frankston - Frankston South
- 774 Frankston - Delacombe Park
- 775 Frankston - Lakewood
- 776 Frankston - Pearcedale
- 777 Karingal Hub SC - McClelland Drive
- 778 Kananook - Carrum Downs
- 779 Frankston - Belverdere
- 780 Frankston - Carrum
- 781 Frankston - Mt Martha
- 782 Frankston - Flinders
- 783 Frankston - Hastings
- 784 Frankston - Osborne
- 785 Frankston - Mornington East
- 788 Frankston - Portsea
- 800 Dandenong - Chadstone
- 802 Dandenong - Chadstone
- 804 Dandenong - Chadstone
- 811 Dandenong - Brighton
- 812 Dandenong - Brighton
- 813 Dandenong - Waverley Gardens
- 814 Dandenong - Springvale South
- 815 Dandenong - Noble Park
- 821 Southland - Clayton
- 822 Chadstone - Sandringham
- 823 North Brighton - Southland
- 824 Moorabbin - Keysborough
- 825 Moorabbin – Southland
- 828 Hampton - Berwick Station
- 831 Berwick Station - Kingsmere Estate
- 832 Frankston - Carrum Downs
- 833 Frankston Station - Carrum Station
- 834 Berwick Station - Narre Warren Circle
- 835 Berwick Station - Narre Warren Circle
- 836 Berwick Station - Eden Rise SC
- 837 Berwick Station - Beaconsfield East
- 838 Fountain Gate - Emerald
- 839 Berwick Station - Berwick North
- 840 Gembrook - Pakenham
- 841 Narre Warren North - Cranbourne
- 843 Endeavour Hills - Dandenong Station
- 844 Dandenong - Doveton
- 845 Endeavour Hills - Dandenong Station
- 846 Berwick Station - Eden Rise
- 847 Berwick Station - The Avenue Village SC
- 848 Dandenong - Brandon Park SC
- 857 Dandenong - Chelsea
- 858 Edithvale - Aspendale Gardens
- 861 Endeavour Hills - Dandenong Station
- 862 Dandenong - Chadstone
- 863 Endeavour Hills SC - Hampton Park SC
- 885 Glen Waverley - Springvale
- 899 The Avenue Village SC - Berwick Station
- 900 Rowville - Caulfield

- 925 Pakenham Station - Lakeside/Botanic Drive
- 926 Pakenham - Fountain Gate SC
- 927 Pakenham Station - Pakenham North
- 928 Pakenham Station - Cardinia Rd Station
- 929 Pakenham Station - Pakenham North

Northern suburbs

- 356 Epping Station - Wollert East
- 357 Wollert West - Thomastown Station
- 358 Epping Station - Wollert
- 385 Whittlesea/Mernda North - Greensborough
- 386 Mernda North - Bundoora RMIT
- 387 Mernda North - Bundoora RMIT
- 526 Coburg - West Preston
- 556 Epping Plaza SC - Northland SC
- 577 Epping Plaza SC - South Morang Station
- 564 Bundoora RMIT - South Morang
- 569 Epping Plaza SC - South Morang

STEVEN HABY

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Keolis autonomous electric trial

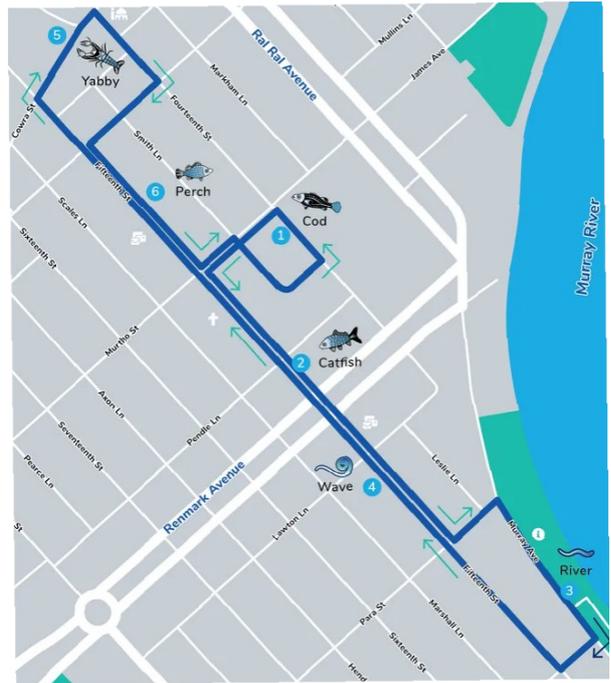
The state's Transport department, the local council, Flinders University and Keolis Downer are trialling an autonomous electric bus, called "Murray", in the regional city of Renmark's city centre.

From 9 February to June this year, the EasyMile EZ10 model trial bus operates a 2,400-metre loop route with six stops delivering a free hop-on/hop-off service to residents and visitors running to a 30-minute frequency on Tuesdays (10:00-13:00), and Wednesdays & Saturdays (10:00-16:00). The route map is provided top-right of this page.

While the bus drives itself, there is a Keolis representative onboard for the trial to monitor bus performance and provide customer service. This "security operator" can also take charge of the bus if required.

A trial was previously conducted with the same vehicle across 2019 and 2020. Operated by SAGE Automation, it ran to an hourly frequency on a 4,500-metre route.

Keolis says it has conducted over 30 trials of autonomous public buses over the past five years.
KEOLIS DOWNER, SAGE AUTOMATION



Signage replacement

The South Australian Public Transport Authority announced in February that it has started replacing Go Zone, CBD bus stop and other bus interchange signs and associated maps, which it says is to deliver a more consistent experience across the public transport network. The project which affects over 1,600 bus stops is expected to be completed by June.

The multi-modal "wayfinding" package being rolled out sees yellow as the overall "public transport colour", while each mode continues to have its own colour (blue for train, green for bus, and red for light rail). Go Zone branding branding moves from red to green, in line with other buses. **ADELAIDE METRO**



WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Additional school route trips

From Monday, 19 April, some additional morning and afternoon route trips will operate on some routes only on school days to accommodate school students, as follows:

Route	When	Location 1	Location 2	Via
328	PM	La Salle College	Chidlow	Midland station
442	PM	Sacred Heart College	Whitfords station	-
461	PM	Joondalup station	Whitfords station	Ocean Reef SHS
470 (trial)	PM	Prendiville Catholic College	Burns Beach	-
500	AM, PM	Bull Creek station	Santa Maria College	-
506	AM, PM	Willeston SHS	Parkwood	-
511	PM	Murdoch	Fremantle	Corpus Christi College
532	PM	Fremantle College	Coogee	-
559	PM	Warnbro station	Comet Bay College	-
915	AM	Booragoon bus station	Fremantle station	-

The additional route **328** trip listed above means that the previous first 767 school special trip will be withdrawn. This removes the requirement for students to change buses. Note the second 767 school special continues to operate.

In addition to the above, route **461** will have a second additional service operating on school day afternoons on a trial basis from Belridge Secondary College express to Ocean Reef Road then operate as per regular 461 route service to Whitfords station. Continuation will be dependent on "consistent and well supported patronage".

School special 755 has been withdrawn, with an extra **506** trip provided in lieu (see above).

School special 766 has been withdrawn "due to poor patronage". As a result, route **915** has two additional morning services (see above) departing Booragoon bus station at 07:54 and 08:06, also 'providing relief to heavily loaded' pre-existing 915 services.

An additional trip has been scheduled for **779** school special with an extra bus.

The afternoon 780 school special service operating to Joondalup station will have its route number altered to **465** (following the 465 route from Whisteria Parade), to provide access for Edith Cowan University students.

School special **784** now terminates at Marsengo Road before Broadhurst Crescent.

School special **786** now terminates at Warnbro station, to form the extra **559** service listed above.

Meanwhile, there will be an additional later route **96** trip in the morning departing Dog Swamp Shopping Centre 07:58 to Leederville station. Route **336** services will have a permanent routing change in Ellenbrook

with trips no longer operating through Galatea Pass, with services operating via Farmaner and Elmridge Parkways instead. Due to "late running", the **444** service to Duncraig Senior HS now departs Warwick station at the earlier time of 08:03. Selected routes and locations also have some bus departure bay changes. **TRANSPERTH** (including quotes)

Extra Easter coach services

TransWA put on extra road coaches across the Easter period, as follows:

- Wed, 31 March – **811** 07:15 East Perth to Geraldton via Mullewa
- Wed, 31 March – **931** 13:15 Geraldton to Meekatharra via Mullewa
- Thu, 1 April – **690** 08:35 Esperance to Kalgoorlie via Kambalda
- Thu, 1 April – **800** 11:30 Geraldton to East Perth via Mullewa
- Thu, 1 April – **671** 14:30 Kalgoorlie to Esperance via Kambalda
- Thu, 1 April – **PG1** 15:45 East Perth to Geraldton via Jurien Bay
- Thu, 1 April – **279** 16:00 East Perth to Augusta via Dunsborough
- Thu, 1 April – **AP7** 17:30 East Perth to Albany via Kojonup
- Thu, 1 April – **AP8** 17:30 Albany to East Perth via Kojonup
- Thu, 1 April – **531** 18:00 East Perth to Katanning via Northam
- Fri, 2 April – **278** 08:10 Augusta to East Perth via Dunsborough
- Fri, 2 April – **PG4** 09:30 Geraldton to East Perth via Jurien Bay
- Fri, 2 April – **522** 09:45 Katanning to East Perth via York
- Sat, 3 April – **277** 09:00 East Perth to Augusta via Dunsborough
- Sat, 3 April – **AP1** 09:00 East Perth to Albany via Kojonup
- Sat, 3 April – **280S** 15:05 Augusta to East Perth via Dunsborough
- Mon, 5 April – **PGX1** 13:15 East Perth to Geraldton via Jurien Bay
- Mon, 5 April – **PGX2** 13:00 Geraldton to East Perth via Jurien Bay
- Mon, 5 April – **AP5** 15:00 East Perth to Albany via Kojonup
- Mon, 5 April – **AP6** 15:00 Albany to East Perth via Kojonup

TRANSWA

NEW ZEALAND



by March (*Table Talk*, October 2020, p. 5-6), this has not happened. *THE DOMINION POST*

Wellington: Bus cancellations

Mass service cancellations reared their head again on Wellington's bus network in late February.

The period 21-25 February (inclusive) saw a total of 118 cancelled services, which Metlink advised represented 0.95 per cent of all timetabled services. Metlink's general manager, Scott Gallagher confirmed that it was working with its bus operators on driver recruitment to "minimise the impact for customers". Routes 23, 27 and 29 were reportedly the most affected routes. Then the week 28 February to 6 March saw a total of 203 cancellations.

Greater Wellington Regional Council transport spokesperson Roger Blakeley confirmed that there had been an increase in drivers calling in sick, as well as other complaints around working conditions, which backs up the claims from late last year of the local union.

However, extra rail replacement work has also increased the demands on bus drivers, with maximum hour limits reportedly impacting on the bus companies' ability to deliver contracted route services.

Although Wednesday, 10 March had 377 cancelled services, the vast majority were due to a stop-work meeting to discuss the next pay deal, with some negotiations reaching in-principle agreements, while others need further work. The Dominion Post has reported on 18 March that deals were made with Greater Wellington Regional Council and New Zealand Transport Agency for government to 'top-up' the base wage by 14 per cent from the existing \$NZ19.40 to \$22.10. However, negotiations were at an "impasse" with operator NZ Bus, which is looking to transfer its drivers over to the existing Auckland industrial agreement, which the Tramways Union has refused, with union secretary, Kevin O'Sullivan, saying "its a vastly inferior agreement". *THE DOMINION POST* (2) (3)

Wellington: Cashless trial

Metlink has announced that it will conduct a trial of select cashless bus services in the Wellington catchment. From June, for a period between three and six months, express services 30x, 31x, 32x, and 85x will not accept cash fare payments.

Data reveals that the vast majority of fares across the city's public transport are paid using Snapper (80 per cent). Greater Wellington Regional Council chairperson, Daran Ponter, said "we've been conscious for some time that the percentage of people using Snapper and Gold Cards has been steadily increasing, especially post-COVID".

The Snapper card is still not available for use on the rail network. While trials were planned to commence

Timaru On-Demand service

Canterbury Regional Council is mulling its options over the future of bus services in the town of Timaru, as the end of its MyWay 'On-Demand' service trial nears.

Initially beginning in April 2020, the service replaced most local bus timetables and their routes, which Council says suffered from poor patronage. Initially for a 12-month period, the trial has been extended by a further six months until October this year, with the service to be evaluated around June.

MyWay requires passengers to book a ride, which they can do through its mobile application or by calling into its call centre.

Meanwhile, Council is in the midst of its community consultation phase for its Regional Land Transport Plan. To maintain the provision of existing services and keep up with its responsibilities to its various stakeholders, Council has put forward two options for ratepayers:

- 24 per cent rate increase including MyWay
- 19 per cent rate increase without MyWay.

According to the Plan, MyWay will cost \$1.18 million to operate across the financial year (FY) 2021/22.

Councillor Peter Scott said, as a subsidised service, it is looking for a mandate from the Timaru community if MyWay is to continue. "It can work well for Timaru, as demonstrated by the extremely high ratings it receives through our app feedback. However, through these last few months of operating the service, it has become clear that the increased convenience comes at a cost; it is more expensive than a standard public transport system".

Upon launch, it was free to travel aboard MyWay services due to the country being under COVID-19 lockdown. Once the alert level was dropped, MyWay came out with a \$2 introductory fare. From Monday, 23 November, the normal \$2.50 fare began to be charged. From 27 November until 20 December, MyWay trialled extended operating hours on Friday and Saturday nights (to 10pm) with a \$5 evening flat fare. MyWay is tasked in having a maximum wait time of 30 minutes. Currently, passengers have an average journey time of eight minutes onboard MyWay vehicles.

At a recent Council meeting, public transport improvement manager, Jeremy Dickson, was asked whether MyWay could be integrated with some taxi services, to which the reply was "we are very aware that our intent was never to provide a subsidised taxi service. The key parameters of public transport is that it is a shared service, it's not a door-to-door service, it's a corner-to-corner service. It might stop outside people's houses, but it's not designed to do so. It's aimed at providing accessibility".

Metro notes that between 22 June 2020 and 30 January 2021, MyWay cost \$922,000 with funds

recouped from fare revenue (\$126,000) and NZ Transport Agency funding (\$796,000). Local school services and the Timaru Link route service add over \$500,000 to annual costs.

However, patronage increased in FY 19/20 year by 16 per cent, despite the pandemic and related lockdowns, which has given Council the confidence to extend the trial until October, as well as to better assess sustained patronage levels at COVID-19 alert level 1.

FINANCIAL YEAR	TIMARU AREA PATRONAGE
2018/19	95 000
2019/20	110 000

Whilst MyWay was only operating for the last three months of FY 19/20, with most of it during a COVID-19 lockdown, Metro also points to Timaru's route services previously averaging just 190 passengers a day (excluding Timaru Link), but as of February 2021, MyWay has compounded that number, with an average of 400-460 passengers a day - a 126 per cent patronage gain. Meanwhile, the Timaru Link service has had a corresponding fall of 43 per cent in weekday patronage since the introduction of MyWay.

Metro is also considering integrating the Timaru Link service onto the MyWay application in an effort to negate the cannibalisation from MyWay.

[TIMARU HERALD \(2\) \(3\)](#), [METRO](#)

Auckland: speeding buses

In mid-March, the *NZ Herald* broke a story about the number of fines being issued to bus drivers from speeding.

"In the past five years" (exact dates undefined), a total of 10,500 speed camera tickets, and over 550 red light tickets were issued to bus drivers totalling almost \$700,000 in fines generated. With a grand total of just over 11,000 tickets, this provides a daily average of six tickets per day (all days of the week being equal) for paid, professional drivers.

On this issue, an Auckland Transport spokesperson said – '[AT] is always working with operators to ensure bus services remained one of the safest ways to travel, monitoring events and altering light phasing cycles when issues were identified. Driver detection systems had been trialled and would be installed on all buses in the coming years'. AT also said that safety, performance and operator health & safety were taken into account in the awarding of route contracts, with the next cycle taking place in 2023. *NZ HERALD*

ENDS

FERRY & SHIP NEWS

TASMANIA



Spirit replacement

After delays attributed to COVID-19, including mulling over a report to build replacement vessels locally, the state government has recently decided to progress talks for a contract with a Finnish builder, Rauma Marine Constructions, to provide two steel monohull vessels for the Bass Strait service.

Back in December 2017, then-Premier Will Hodgman spruiked that the contract would be signed in 2018, with the new vessels to enter service this year.

Local builder, Incat Tasmania and its chairperson, Robert Clifford, have voiced their displeasure with these developments after previous comments by Premier Peter Gutwein on a desire to promote local jobs and the time spent on a report (completed last year) which looked at local options. *WIN NEWS TASMANIA*

ENDS

AIR NEWS

DOMESTIC



Regional Express: SYD-CBR

Regional Express (Rex) Airlines is introducing a Canberra-Sydney service, commencing from 19 April. It will start off with seven return flights daily, with plans to expand this number to 10, if demand warrants.

Supplied by – AGNES BOSKOVITZ

Source – REGIONAL EXPRESS

Flights to Nowhere?

On 9 March, the federal government announced a scheme of half-fare flights to various regional tourist locations, ostensibly ones that have lost much international tourist traffic during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The map is provided below:

Ticket to recovery: Targeted tourism destinations



Source: Sydney Morning Herald, 10 March.

The most intriguing destination is Lasseter, more or less correctly positioned on the map in the south-west corner of the Northern Territory (NT).

Google Maps can't find a locality of that name in the NT, but there is a Lasseter's Cave at a place called Kanupula. Associated with this name is Petermann.

The key use of the term Lasseter in the NT appears to be the naming of the Highway that connects the Stuart Highway with Uluru (Ayers Rock). This does have an airport with regular flights and is obviously the intended destination for the half price tickets.

But it does beg the question: Why refer to Lasseter rather than Uluru? Alice Springs is separately mentioned.

Another destination that is a bit weird is Avalon, near Geelong in Victoria and only about 70 km from Melbourne. Did someone in Canberra really believe that Avalon is the airport for the Great Ocean Road region that runs from near Geelong to Warrnambool in the South West?

The issue is that only one airline serves Avalon – Jetstar – and flights are limited & subject to cancellation as the following list of departures for Sunday, 14 March shows:

Scheduled	Flight	To	Status
06:00	JQ602	Sydney	
08:15	JQ604	Sydney	Cancelled
10:30	JQ612	Sydney	
15:05	JQ606	Sydney	
16:45	JQ630	Gold Coast	
20:45	JQ610	Sydney	Cancelled

Want to go there from Tasmania, Adelaide, Perth, Canberra or Brisbane? Forget it.

The airport is essentially used by passengers to/from Sydney to Melbourne using cheap flights and prepared to put up with the inconvenience of longer and more expensive ground transportation compared to Tullamarine Airport.

Another strange destination is Merimbula; only Melbourne passengers will get the discount. Qantas runs four flights a week, Rex two; both using small propjets.

Merimbula is hardly a destination that would appeal to international tourists; most would be driving Melbourne / Sydney. Merimbula would be a good half way stopping point but it's certainly not a place worth visiting on its own.

With thanks to JAMES WELLS

INTERNATIONAL



Australian travel bubbles

On 14 March, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported on plans by the federal government to consider Singapore as an international travel hub. The plan would help both countries to boost international travel, which has been decimated by the pandemic over the past twelve months. A COVID-vaccinated person from Australia (holding a digital 'vaccine certificate') would be allowed to travel into Singapore for work or pleasure, and vice versa without quarantine.

Meanwhile, the federal government continues to have discussions with New Zealand over opening up New Zealand to Australians, as the New Zealanders maintain their concerns over future COVID outbreaks in Australia. There have been multiple COVID-19 transmission outbreaks across Australia over the past six months.

In late January, the one-way travel bubble was suspended for three days following a small outbreak in Auckland. **SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, STUFF.CO.NZ**

UK bans more countries

Effective from 19 March, Ethiopia, Somalia, Oman and Qatar were added to the UK's travel ban list including both public and private flights. Cargo flights are not included in the ban. On the same day, Portugal and Mauritius were removed from the travel ban list. **SAMCHUI.COM**

Lufthansa streamlining fleet

Lufthansa confirmed recently further fleet retirements, in line with its strategy for the post-COVID operating world. It said that eight "intercontinental" aircraft

models would be gradually removed from service across its group of airlines, including 747-400, 777-200, 767-300, A330-200, A340 and MD-11 Freighter aircraft.

Table Talk's October 2020 edition (p. 16) advised of the retirement of the group's A380 and B737 aircraft. SAMCHUI.COM

Norway: All-electric aircraft

Norwegian airline, Wideroe has entered a partnership with aircraft framing business Tecnam and Rolls-Royce to construct a model of all-electric aircraft for regular passenger flights. The partnership aims to have the aircraft ready for services from 2026.

The model, called P-Volt, has been based on the existing Tecnam P2012 Traveller model. A Rolls-Royce spokesperson said it was working to achieve net zero carbon operations by 2050, with success in the commuter market being critical to achieve this.

The airline's chief executive said that the country's extensive network of short take-off and landing airports would be ideal for zero emission technology. SAMCHUI.COM

Thai Airways re-structure

Thai Airways is the latest airline to be working through a re-structuring process following detrimental numbers posted from COVID-19 impacts decimating most of its business.

Posting a \$AU6 billion loss in 2020, the largest ever for a Thai company according to their local stock exchange, with revenue falling 74 per cent to \$AU2 billion, the airline has been working through a debt restructuring plan to stop it from being declared bankrupt.

The airline is working on a new capital infusion of \$AU 2.1 billion. As part of its business rationalisation, in February, 240 managerial positions were cut, with the next four years to see around half of its workforce cut (to around 14,000) in an attempt to bring the airline out of insolvency.

The airline currently has 42 of its 100-plus aircraft listed for sale.

The airline said it believed with this plan, it would be able to return to profitability by 2025, also reinforcing their hopes of the success of the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccines to enable the re-opening of international travel. SAMCHUI.COM

ENDS

LETTER TO THE BUS EDITOR

Letters, rants and compliments to the bus editor...

Editor,

The policy of TfNSW to space bus stops further apart may indeed improve "bus travel times" (March 2021 issue), but it makes the overall trip times for passengers longer as they walk the further distance to the stops.

But I must admit that the *reliability* of the off-peak service on my home route (the 412) has improved dramatically following the recent increase in frequency. Very little "bunching" now.

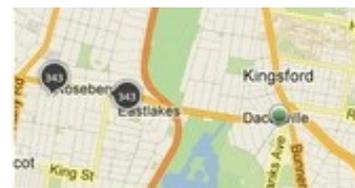
Allan Miles
Stanmore NSW

ODD SPOT

The pointy end of the bus

It is natural to assume that the pointy bit of these bus icons on TripView indicate the direction. But ... if you've ever watched (as I have) a bendy bus back up and make a three-point reverse turn, then you realise it's actually the pointy end (rear) of the bus.

With thanks to GEOFF LAMBERT



One route, two numbers

Dysons Buslines, Wodonga operates bus services in Wodonga and parts of Albury. Their Monday to Friday trunk route is the Albury-Wodonga. This service operates at a half-hourly frequency.

This timetable is found on ptv.vic.gov.au (Public Transport Victoria) and is designated **AW**. Meanwhile, across in NSW, on the transportsw.info website, this route is designated as route **904**.

The same situation applies for:

- West Albury WA (VIC)/901 (NSW),
- East Albury EA (VIC)/902 (NSW), and
- South Albury (VIC)/903 (NSW).

To confuse the situation further, buses on this route show numbers between 601 and 609 in the header (where the route number is normally displayed) – possibly these are the run numbers.

It is however noted that the Saturday service between Albury and Wodonga is provided by route 150 extending to South Wodonga suburbs and route 160 extending to North Wodonga suburbs.

Editor's note: The Victorian timetables appear to be more helpful as it includes intermediate stops. Also noted the Victorian versions are dated 1 April 2010, however the NSW-equivalent timetable is dated 1 January 2020.

With thanks to HILAIRE FRASER, THE AGE newspaper

Route AW Albury via Gateway Island		Service operates from 01.04.2010 until further notice															
Monday to Friday																	
Morning (semi) / Afternoon (pm)	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am	am		
Wodonga Library/Hotel St (Wodonga)	7:05	7:40	8:00	8:20	9:15	9:45	10:15	10:45	11:15	11:45	12:15	12:45	1:15	1:45	2:30	2:45	
Continuing Education Centre/High St (Wodonga)	7:06	7:41	8:01	8:21	9:16	9:46	10:16	10:46	11:16	11:46	12:16	12:46	1:16	1:46	2:31	2:46	
Warrens Motor Inn/High St (Wodonga)	7:06	7:41	8:01	8:21	9:16	9:46	10:16	10:46	11:16	11:46	12:16	12:46	1:16	1:46	2:31	2:46	
Sanctuary Park Motel/High St (Wodonga)	7:07	7:42	8:02	8:22	9:17	9:47	10:17	10:47	11:17	11:47	12:17	12:47	1:17	1:47	2:32	2:47	
St. Ives Hotel (opp) Lincoln Cause (Gateway Island)	7:11	7:46	8:06	8:26	9:21	9:51	10:21	10:51	11:21	11:51	12:21	12:51	1:21	1:51	2:36	2:51	
Elders St/Wodonga Pt (South Albury (NSW))	7:13	7:48	8:08	8:28	9:23	9:53	10:23	10:53	11:23	11:53	12:23	12:53	1:23	1:53	2:38	2:53	
K/Mart Car Park/Smollett St (Albury (NSW))	7:16	7:49	8:09	8:29	9:24	9:54	10:24	10:54	11:24	11:54	12:24	12:54	1:24	1:54	2:41	2:56	
Dean St/David St (Albury (NSW))	7:20	7:50	8:10	8:30	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:00	1:30	2:00	2:30	2:48	3:00
Monday to Friday																	
Morning (semi) / Afternoon (pm)	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	
Wodonga Library/Hotel St (Wodonga)	3:16	3:40	4:16	4:16	5:16	5:30	6:16										
Continuing Education Centre/High St (Wodonga)	3:16	3:41	4:16	4:16	5:16	5:31	6:16										
Warrens Motor Inn/High St (Wodonga)	3:16	3:41	4:16	4:16	5:16	5:31	6:16										
Sanctuary Park Motel/High St (Wodonga)	3:17	3:42	4:17	4:17	5:17	5:32	6:17										
St. Ives Hotel (opp) Lincoln Cause (Gateway Island)	3:21	3:46	4:21	4:21	5:21	5:36	6:21										
Elders St/Wodonga Pt (South Albury (NSW))	3:23	3:48	4:23	4:23	5:23	5:38	6:23										
K/Mart Car Park/Smollett St (Albury (NSW))	3:26	3:51	4:26	4:26	5:26	5:41	6:26										
Dean St/David St (Albury (NSW))	3:30	3:56	4:30	4:30	5:30	5:46	6:30										

904

Albury to Wodonga

Valid from: 01 Jan 2020

Creation date: 18 March 2021
NOTE: Information is correct on date of download.

Monday to Friday	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
David St at Dean St, Albury	07:20	07:55	08:15	08:35	09:00	09:30	10:00	10:30	11:00								
Wodonga Water Tower, High St, Wodonga (VIC)	07:30	08:15	08:30	08:50	09:15	09:45	10:15	10:45	11:15								
Monday to Friday	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
David St at Dean St, Albury	11:30	12:00	12:30	13:00	13:30	14:00	14:30	15:00	15:45								
Wodonga Water Tower, High St, Wodonga (VIC)	11:45	12:15	12:45	13:15	13:45	14:15	14:45	15:15	16:00								
Monday to Friday	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
David St at Dean St, Albury	16:00	16:30	17:00	17:30	18:05	18:30											
Wodonga Water Tower, High St, Wodonga (VIC)	16:15	16:45	17:15	17:45	18:20	18:45											

About Table Talk

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