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TABLE TALK

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RAIL & TRAM NEWS

QUEENSLAND



COVID drops traveller demand

Analysis by *The Brisbane Times* revealed the biggest drops in patronage on south-east Queensland public transport stops, using average weekday boarding data for the 2020/21 financial year compared to 2018/19 (pre-COVID).

Unsurprisingly, the **rail** networks most impacted stations have been International (97 per cent), and Domestic (63 per cent). Outside the airport stations, the biggest drops have been seen by Dakabin, Yeronga, and Boondall (all down by 57-53 per cent).

On the **bus** network, the biggest drops were experienced with services operating to/from university campuses, with UQ Lakes down 60 per cent, and Griffith University down 57 per cent (which is more than the 49 per cent drop at its light rail stop), no doubt heavily impacted by the loss of international students. At regular commuter bus stops, the largest drops were experienced at Roma Street in the CBD (down 57 per cent) and both King George Square & Boggo Road (down 45 per cent).

Councillor at Brisbane City Council, Ryan Murphy, said bus patronage [in November 2021] was down 39 per cent on pre-COVID numbers, with numbers not rebounding as quickly as they had for trains and ferries.

On the **light rail** line, Surfers Paradise was top of the list (down 54 per cent), followed by Florida Gardens, Southport South, Cavill Avenue and Griffith Uni (down 49-51 per cent). Tables with the top 10 of each mode, along with 2019/20 year data is available in the article by *The Brisbane Times*.

Meanwhile, in early January, *The Brisbane Times* reported on rumours that Translink was looking to implement a reduced timetable across its public transport network due to Omicron impacts on staff availability, with trains to likely operate to a weekend-like timetable, while buses and ferries will also be reduced. Ferry services were altered from mid-

January, see *Ferry News* for more. **THE BRISBANE TIMES (2)**

Brisbane-Maroochydore rail

In December, *Nine Newspapers* reported on a confirmation by the state's Transport Minister that the government is considering a commuter rail service between Brisbane, Caloundra and Maroochydore. Mark Bailey said it is "absolutely viable", with discussions with the federal government to occur in the coming months.

The line would involve constructing a branch off the existing Sunshine Coast line at Beerwah to head through Caloundra and into Maroochydore.

Sunshine Coast's mayor, Mark Jamieson, said the "project is long overdue and no side of politics in either the state or federal governments has ever seen fit to commit to fund and deliver this critical project", while also saying that interstate migration into the Sunshine Coast would see population growth of around 17,000 annually – and over 500,000 extra residents "in the next 20 years".

A previous 2005 promise by a previous government did not bear fruit, although a corridor have been preserved for the line since 1999. **WATODAY**

Yeronga station closure extended

A Cross River Rail project spokesperson told ABC News that the reopening of Yeronga railway station would be delayed by a number of months due to "wet weather". The station was due to reopen in December, but this was now delayed until at least January. As of 23 January, a proper date had not been provided by Translink, but they did say that replacement bus route 109 continues to operate in the meantime. **ABC NEWS, TRANSLINK**

NEW SOUTH WALES



Trains: 'Dynamic' timetable returns

Across the second half of December, and into the new year, New South Wales has experienced a surge in COVID-19 cases with the Omicron variant spreading quickly throughout the community, coinciding with the removal of some restrictions, such as the need to use QR code sign-ins at shops and restrictions on unvaccinated people in licensed premises.

The Delta wave of COVID-19 several months earlier surged to a peak of around 2,000 cases before subsiding. However, the current Omicron wave has seen daily case numbers explode into the tens of thousands, while the state government has since moved to gradually reapply certain restrictions, including QR code check-ins and density limits in licensed premises. Service reliability on the Regional Hunter line had been hamstrung since December by multiple daily service cancellations.

In December, the state also got a new Transport Minister in David Elliott, as part of a cabinet reshuffle. Over the new year, the minister had flagged further reduced services as patronage continued to flatline with the Omicron wave, pushing for the continuation of a reduced timetable, saying we're "not going to run ghost trains", while also ensuring adequate staff available to service the timetable.

Rail services resumed operating to the regular weekday timetable from Tuesday 4 January, with the week met by dozens of services across the network cancelled every day due to train crew shortages resulting from COVID isolation requirements.

From Monday 10 January, the lockdown-era 'dynamic' timetable, as it is called by Transport planners because the timetable is freshly issued weekly with tweaks made as required, returned to the rail network to run on weekdays until at least the end of the month, providing for improved reliability because of reduced crew requirements during peak periods.

The timetable, using a Sunday base, provides for additional morning services on the T2 Leppington, T4 Eastern Suburbs and Cronulla and T8 Airport lines to supply a 15-minute service frequency from 04:30 to 09:00, and a half-hourly direct service between Richmond and the City. T5 Cumberland line services operate all morning between Liverpool and Schofields, instead of Leppington-Richmond, every 30 minutes.

Outside the metropolitan area, NSW TrainLink Intercity South Coast, Blue Mountains and Central Coast line services also operate to the Sunday timetable, with selected additional trips, while Regional South Coast and Southern Highlands services continue to operate to the weekday timetable, although in the case of the Southern Highlands line, three return trips have been removed (09:22, 14:02, & 17:39 ex Moss Vale; and 11:20, 15:50, & 19:08 ex Campbelltown) to alleviate crewing issues.

Of interest, an extra peak service is scheduled to operate from the Central Coast into the City via the North Shore line in the morning, with two services returning to Gosford in the afternoon peak.

A line-by-line overview of the dynamic timetable was provided in *Table Talk's* August 2021 edition (pages 3-4, week commencing 26 July). Outside some minor timing differences, some lines have also had even more extra services added in the early morning to support what Sydney Trains calls the 'construction worker peak':

- Four extra trains are provided in the morning peak (two ex Auburn Yard, two ex Leppington Yard) to each provide a single Leppington-Leppington loop service (04:49, 05:04, 05:19, & 05:34 ex Leppington, stopping all to Granville, Auburn, Lidcombe, Flemington, Strathfield, Redfern, all to Wolli Creek [via City Outer], Revesby (train no. 4 does all stops), all to Leppington) then put back to bed for the day.
- A fifth train (ex Auburn Yard) delivers an extra T3 Bankstown line revenue cycle (05:16 ex Liverpool, stopping all to Sydenham, Redfern, City Circle [via City Inner], then all to Bankstown) before being put back to bed.
- In sector three, three extra services have been added to depart Blacktown at 05:01, 05:24, 05:30 (stopping all to Granville, Auburn, Lidcombe, Strathfield, Redfern, all to North Sydney or Gordon, with two returning to Blacktown as revenue). A fourth train runs a revenue cycle (ex Penrith Yard) St Marys-North Sydney-Blacktown, then is put back to bed.

Even with the above increases, there is no requirement to use K sets to meet the timetable, while M sets are only used to operate some T5 Cumberland services.

Once again, connections outside Sydney show some significant waiting times between services. For instance, at Kiama, between 16:00 and 19:00, there are 50-60 minute gaps between the train from Sydney arriving (running on a weekend timetable) to the next diesel service departing for Bomaderry (weekday timetable). In all three cases, the Bomaderry train departs within 10 minutes prior to the train from Sydney arriving. It is the same situation that occurred with the dynamic timetable last year.

(Across week one, NSW TrainLink held some afternoon services back ex Kiama to deliver a connection, although predictably, this impacted on-time running for services for several hours with both passenger and freight services in both directions affected. A late notice telegram was issued for week two, adjusting the diesel departure times, although for some reason it was not reflected on timetable mobile applications and other programs, with some confusion by staff as a result, so trains were again delayed like week one. From week three, the diesel departure times were altered in the original Notice to provide the connections for these services).

Just days before the start date, Transport for NSW also advised that L2 and L3 **light rail** lines would also run to the Sunday timetable on weekdays, with

Transdev experiencing the same crew limitations.

From Monday 17 January, **Metro** services were also put onto a reduced timetable, with weekday trains now running to the Sunday timetable until further notice.

Meanwhile, **NSW TrainLink** coach services have resumed operating into bordering states and territories. However, some train services are still being replaced by coaches for all or part of their journey due to staff shortages. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW, SYDNEY TRAINS, THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

Country Regional Network

From Saturday, 29 January at 23:59 hours, UGL Regional Linx took over from John Holland as the custodian for the network of lines. File or print copies of the initial Working TimeTable have been included in this month's ATA Distribution List.

L1 Light Rail bus replacement

From Monday 17 January, 3L1 (Central-Lilyfield) and 4L1 (Dulwich Hill-The Star) light rail replacement buses began operating to a reduced 15-minute service frequency throughout the day. There was no change for route 2L1 (Central-The Star). **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

River Rail

South-eastern Sydney council, Georges River Council, released their Transport Strategy Report on 27 October. Among the projects on their 20-year wish list is a proposal for a 24-kilometre rail line connecting Kogarah on the T4 Eastern Suburbs line, with Parramatta (the city's second CBD) via Bankstown, dubbed "River Rail".

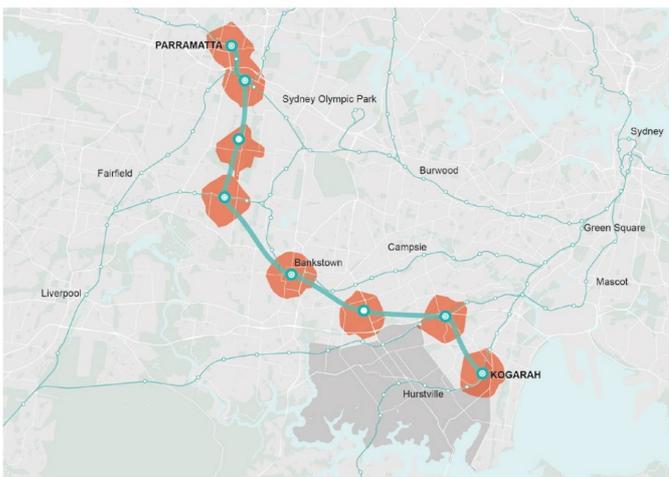


Figure 30 Walking catchments served by River Rail

According to the Strategy, the line would include "interchange opportunities" at Kingsgrove, Bankstown, Chester Hill, and Harris Park (although the adjoined map plots this stop at Granville), as well as other stops at Roselands and South Granville. A later potential extension would run from Parramatta onto Norwest.

According to the council's general manager, Gail

Connolly, "It is the only way that the state government's 30-minute city goal can be achieved for Sydney's south, bringing 100,000 more jobs and estimated \$7.5 billion back to our economy. An estimated 30,000 more trips by rail could be catered for by the River Rail each day in 2036, relieving congestion and saving around 5,000 hours of travel time daily, worth a potential \$700 million over 30 years".

It is noted that the state government's Future Transport 2056 blueprint provides for a rapid bus link between Parramatta and Hurstville or Kogarah via Bankstown. **ST GEORGE SUTHERLAND SHIRE LEADER, GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL, NSW GOVERNMENT**

VICTORIA



Melbourne City Loop

A report in Monday 13 December's edition of *The Age* newspaper revealed that Metro Trains' City Loop line will need to be closed sometime later in the year for a significant safety/security system upgrade.

The work includes new fire detection and suppression systems, smoke extractors and intruder detection systems throughout the tunnels and in all three stations. A business previously contracted to deliver the project collapsed, leading to deferral of the project, while the project also previously sustained cost blowouts.

The article did not specify how the works would be undertaken, the duration of the works or when the works will take place but quoted a Department of Transport spokesperson who said that planning is still underway to minimise disruption as much as possible, with the works deemed 'significant'.

The City Loop is used by trains across all of Melbourne's suburban train lines, except Flemington Racecourse, Frankston, Sandringham, Werribee and Williamstown (unless other circumstances dictate). **STEVEN HABY, THE AGE**

Yarra Trams: Route 58 adjustments

Adding to this article from last month (page 5), Route 58's E-class trams will be supplied by Southbank and Essendon depots. Route 58 operates between West Coburg and Toorak. Also, Saturday, 18 December was the last day that trams running out of Malvern Depot accessed Toorak Road at Glenferrie Road for normal passenger services.

Trams taking up running on the 58 from Southbank Depot will instead turn into Clarendon Street, then Spencer Street, then turn right into La Trobe Street, and into William Street to shunt. Essendon Depot cars will travel down Mt Alexander and Flemington Roads and probably shunt at Abbotsford Road / Royal Park.

Much of route 96 will be transferred to Preston New

Depot, which may see cars run along the Victoria Street extension at Victoria Market. A previous expansion to the depot has enabled Essendon to accommodate the E-class cars. **STEVEN HABY**

V/Line: Revised timetables

Effective Sunday 12 December, V/Line has issued new timetables for the Bendigo, Echuca and Swan Hill lines, with the opening of Goornong station. Goornong is now being serviced by two trains each weekday, and four each on Saturdays and Sundays. Trains depart Echuca two minutes later, to arrive at Southern Cross at the usual time, while in the opposite direction trains arrive at Echuca two minutes earlier. Weekday services to Swan Hill depart Southern Cross one minute earlier.

Also from 12 December, a new timetable has been issued for the Ballarat line, with more consistent stopping patterns affecting Deer Park, while coach times have also been adjusted to maintain connections, with new train times at Ararat.

Meanwhile, for the period 24 December to 16 January (inclusive), a temporary timetable was issued for the Traralgon line. A byline in the timetable advised that trains towards the city were departing stations between Traralgon and Nar Nar Goon 1 minute earlier, except for the 10:27 ex Traralgon, which was timetabled to depart these stops seven minutes earlier. **LEN REGAN, ROSS MORRISON, V/LINE**

V/Line: Albury VLocity testing

In early December, conductor training was undertaken between South Dynon Loco Depot and Southern Cross station, while on 12 December, a circular was in effect for testing on the standard gauge roads at South Dynon between 06:00 and 16:00 using the six-carriage consist 3VS93+3VS94.

Due to testing of the six-carriage VLocity standard gauge train (listed above), circulars were issued for the Monday, 20 December cancellation of the 12:05 Southern Cross to Albury and 17:20 Albury to Southern Cross services and the day's test runs to/from Albury. Anecdotal reports indicate the test trips did occur.

Following consultation with Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), the owner/manager of much of the line, all VLocity-operated passenger runs on the Albury line will have their unique train identifiers post-fixed with capital letter 'V' on the day.

Further to the recent *Table Talk* article ('V/Line: VLocity standard gauge testing', December 2021, page 5), the introduction of three-carriage VLocity standard gauge set into service (3VS93) did not occur at all in November. The train was finally introduced into passenger service on December 30. It operates the weekday 12:05 ex Southern Cross and 17:20 ex Albury, while V/Line also reiterated that the yet-to-be-delivered cafe/bar services would become available in the coming months

Meanwhile, in November, Alstom secured an extension to their VLocity and legacy locomotive maintenance contract, with the contract now running until 30 June 2023. **LEN REGAN, V/LINE, RAIL EXPRESS**

V/Line: Service resumption into SA

V/Line coaches resumed operating across the border into South Australia from 23 November, following the relaxation of border-entry requirements in line with the evolving COVID-19 situation. **RAIL EXPRESS**

The Overland returns

After several months in hiatus from COVID-19 border closures and associated social restrictions, *The Overland* made a welcome return between Adelaide and Melbourne, with the first westbound trip departing on Sunday 12 December, hauled by locomotive NR 51 and the usual consist of five carriages plus power/guards van. The train is seen below at Lovely Banks in Geelong, sweeping downgrade whilst running about 15 minutes late. **STEVEN HABY**



The Overland on 12 December 2021 (source: Steven Haby).

Planned bus replacement

Metro

Mernda & Hurstbridge lines

Replacement buses operate Parliament to Reservoir and Heidelberg (21:00 January 2 until end Jan 9).

Buses operate Parliament to Clifton Hill from 20:30 nightly (Jan 16-19).

Upfield line

Buses operate North Melbourne to Upfield from 20:30 nightly (Jan 2-5, 16-19, and 23-26).

Sunbury line

Buses operate North Melbourne to Sunshine from 20:45 nightly (Jan 2-5).

Sandringham line

Buses operate South Yarra to Sandringham from 20:15 nightly (Jan 2-5).

Belgrave line

Buses operate Ringwood to Belgrave (20:30 Jan 7 until end of service Jan 9).

Frankston line

Buses operate Moorabbin to Frankston, Stony Point (20:15 Jan 21 until end Jan 23).

Werribee & Williamstown lines

Buses operate North Melbourne to Werribee and Williamstown from 20:15 nightly (Jan 9-12).

Cranbourne & Pakenham lines

See Rail News article 'Cranbourne/Pakenham line closure', opposite.

Yarra Trams

Route 58

Buses replace trams from stop 19 (Royal Children's Hospital) to West Coburg terminus (from 16:00 until end Jan 3), then from stop 19 to stop 27 (Royal Park Railway station) (from start Jan 4 until 07:00 Jan 18, due to track and overhead renewal works).

Route 59

Buses replace trams from stop 19 to Airport West from 16:00 Jan 3 until 07:00 Jan 18, due to track and overhead renewal works.

V/Line

Bendigo line

Coaches replace night trains (Jan 2-4).

Gippsland line

Coaches replace night trains (Jan 2-5), then replace all services (20:00 Jan 11 to end Feb 10, due to level crossing removal project works). Coaches skip Clayton and Richmond stations (also skip Flinders Street post-19:00).

Ballarat (Ararat/Maryborough) line

Coaches replace services (Jan 8-9). During the daytime, trains run to Melton. After 19:00, coaches replace services through to Southern Cross.

Then nightly from 20:00 (Jan 10-11), coaches replace whole services.

Seymour line

Coaches replace some nightly trains, from 19:30 (Jan 16-19).

Supplied by - ROSS MORRISON, also with information from YARRA TRAMS, V/LINE, VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT

Cranbourne/Pakenham line closure

From 20:30 Tuesday, 11 January to end of Thursday 3 February, buses replace trains between Westall and Cranbourne/Pakenham due to level crossing removal works and track duplication works between Cranbourne and Dandenong, including a major reorganisation of track infrastructure at Dandenong.

As in previous occupations, a mixture of bus stopping patterns operated, as follows (note the letter codes denote stopping pattern type):

- **S** – Westall – Dandenong (all stations)
- **L** – Westall, Dandenong then all stations to Pakenham
- **L1** – Westall, Dandenong then all to Cranbourne
- **L2** – Westall, Berwick then all to Pakenham (weekday peak periods only)
- **E** – Westall – Dandenong (express, weekday peaks only)
- **E1** - Westall - Cranbourne (express, weekday peaks only).

This is the first significant bus replacement operation for Donric Group (Sunbury Bus Service) since taking over the contract from 1 January, previously held by Ventura Bus Lines. Donric operations staff were based at Westall, Dandenong, Cranbourne and Pakenham to oversee running of the replacement services.

Other operators supplying rail replacement buses on this occasion have included: Action Tours, EV Coaches, Linq (from NSW), Melbourne On The Move, Melbourne Premier Bus Lines, Murrays, Nathalia Coachlines, Nuline, Quest, Sandhu, Simcock (Railynx), SE Bus Lines, Sunshine Coaches (Sunshine Urban) and United Coachlines. Many of these operators (e.g. SE Bus Lines) only provide vehicles for rail occupation work, while some are subcontractors to larger companies (e.g. Nuline).

The end result for the Cranbourne line will be a new timetable, from Sunday 13 February, including ten weekday services extended from Westall/Dandenong through to Cranbourne, one off-peak service extended to Pakenham, and many services now stopping at Malvern. Journey time will also decrease for many passengers with the removal of wait line clear (WLC) time for many services at Dandenong and Lynbrook. **STEVEN HABY, also with information from VICTORIAN GOVT**

Bendigo: Lydiard Street level crossing

Updating the June 2021 edition of *Table Talk*, on Bendigo's Lydiard Street level crossing rectification project, the temporary automated gates were commissioned in November, enabling motorists to once again use the crossing. **ABC NEWS**

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Gawler bus replacement: Summer holiday

Bus service levels were reduced over 29-31 December on the Gawler rail line replacement, with a revised timetable provided for these three days. Express routes GA3 (Smithfield, Elizabeth, Adelaide) and GA4 (Gawler then Adelaide, peak-only) did not operate.

Both GA1 and GA2 operated every 30 minutes, although some GA2 short-workings were provided in

the early morning peak direction between Elizabeth and Adelaide (06:30-07:30), and a GA2 15-minute frequency afternoon peak service to Gawler was provided (16:00-17:30).

The Gawler rail line has been closed for an extended period to enable the electrification project to be completed. **ADELAIDE METRO**

Rail: COVID impacts

Adelaide's train network has not been immune to the wave of transport staff shortages from COVID-19 isolation requirements. Keolis Downer said it has recently impacted its ability to deliver the full timetable. While saying in December that the train network would return to the full timetable, Omicron has ensured this is not the case, with Adelaide Metro announcing that a summer timetable would be in place between 10 and 30 January. Adelaide Metro says that some morning peak services have been removed. **ADELAIDE METRO**

Light Rail: January holiday timetable

Selected commuter transport modes operated to a special summer holiday timetable throughout most of January, with a reduced timetable to account for lower patronage.

From Tuesday 4 to Sunday 30 January, light rail services continued to operate to a reduced peak-period service, with trams operating every 10 minutes in both directions. The timetable was unchanged in the off-peak and weekends.

Meanwhile, from Tuesday 14 December until further notice, all services are using platform two at Botanic Gardens as the "default platform". No reason was provided by Adelaide Metro for this change. **ADELAIDE METRO**

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Regional Fast Train concept

A teacher at Edith Cowan University, a pitched a fast train concept to the state government planners, according to ABC News. Mr Kevin McQuoid's pitch included the use of 180 km/h trains on lines which would run from Perth to Augusta, Albany and Esperance via Bunbury. The line would aim to run between Bunbury and Perth in under an hour.

Mr McQuoid said that the idea was an extension of the existing Perth MetroNet rail project, with now the time to develop plans in light of forecast future population growth in the regions.

A Curtin University sustainability expert, Peter Newman, said the idea had merit in light of the state's "very fast-growing regional economy", while the state government has previously committed \$8 million over

three years in various studies on a fast rail link between Bunbury and Perth. **ABC NEWS**



Mr McQuoid's Fast Rail network (source: ABC News).

NEW ZEALAND



Auckland: Summer holiday closedown

On **Friday 24 December** (Christmas Eve), additional trains were timetabled to operate across the Auckland rail network.

From Saturday 25 December to Sunday 16 January, the entire Auckland rail network underwent a shut down for works associated with the \$4.4 billion City Rail Link project, plus other general maintenance works by track owner KiwiRail. KiwiRail spokesperson David Gordon said "our projects would take years longer to complete without the ability to make big strides during intermittent shutdowns".

On **Christmas Day**, replacement buses were only provided on some lines, with the Eastern and Southern lines split into two separate routes (Britomart-Otahuhu and Otahuhu-Pukekohe), with interchange required at Otahuhu for travel in-between. The timetable called for services every 20 minutes during the day, and every 30 minutes at night, with a 10-minute transfer time between buses at Otahuhu all day in both directions. On the Western line, buses only operated between Henderson and Swanson to a 30-minute frequency. No replacement service was provided elsewhere.



RBE: Rail Bus Eastern



RBS: Rail Bus Southern



RBO: Rail Bus Onehunga



RBW: Rail Bus Western

From **Sunday 26 Dec**, replacement buses operated along all lines in their entirety (excluding Meadowbank and Parnell). Additionally, on the Southern line an extra "Puhinui Express" service operated every 30 minutes 07:00-18:00 (stopping at Britomart, Newmarket, & Puhinui and vice versa) with the 43-

minute journey time providing a 10-minute saving versus the all stops bus.

The routes ran to a combined weekend/public holiday timetable on 1-4, 8-9 & 15-16 Jan.

From **Monday 17 until Sunday 23 January**, limited trains resumed, while Britomart remained closed. Western line services continued to be replaced by buses, while Eastern line services terminated short at The Strand (buses The Strand-Britomart), and both Southern and Onehunga line services terminated short at Newmarket (buses Newmarket-Britomart). An even 10-minute transfer time was again provided from bus-to-train and train-to-bus services across the day.
AUCKLAND TRANSPORT, RAIL EXPRESS

Auckland 'cost per train trip' skyrockets

Throughout COVID-19 alert level 4 restrictions during the third quarter of 2021, the actual cost of the average train trip in Auckland was \$626, while the actual cost for a bus trip was a comparatively modest \$73.

Compared to pre-COVID (2019), Auckland Transport's chief executive, Shane Ellison, said that the agency was losing \$12-13 million each month, although this had varied depending on the alert level. This has been a result of passenger fare revenue falling off a cliff due to COVID-19 social restrictions.

Earlier in the year, prior to the third quarter Delta wave, the agency was generating \$500,000 in rail/bus revenue each week from 124,000 passengers, but at alert level 4, it was generating just \$27,000 a week from 20,600 passengers, and \$63,000 a week from 30,000 passengers at alert level 3. In late November, Auckland Transport said that it had 80,000 people travelling each week, the equivalent of 22 per cent of the patronage in the same period in 2019 (patronage numbers quoted are across all public transport modes).

Auckland deputy mayor, Bill Cashmore, said "AT has had huge losses in patronage, and other examples around the world show it could take three to four years for public transport numbers to recover". **STUFF.CO.NZ** (2)

Wellington: Summer timetable

Between 20 and 24 December, the Kapiti and Hutt Valley rail lines instead operated to the Saturday timetable, with the services stopping at all stations, due to KiwiRail speed restrictions after safety assessment of the area between Plimmerton and Paekakariki.

During the week, some additional peak services were added during higher patronage periods:

- 06:27 ex Wellington to Plimmerton (express).
- 07:00 ex Plimmerton to Wellington (all stops).
- 16:30 & 18:30 ex W'ton to Plimmerton (all stops)
- 17:05 & 19:05 ex Plimmerton to W'ton (express).
- 06:25 ex Wellington to Taita (express)
- 06:55 ex Taita to Wellington (all stops)

- 16:50 & 17:50 ex W'ton to Upper Hutt (all stops)
- 17:40 & 18:40 ex Upper Hutt to W'ton (express)

A "disruption timetable" (PDF file) was issued by Metlink, with some extra services listed separately underneath the table, rather than in the table.

Across Wellington, train and bus travel was fare-free on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve (until 04:00 on 1 January). The Snapper rail trial was also included, while East by West ferries were excluded from the initiative.

Meanwhile, Metlink has also confirmed the 25 per cent Snapper Early Bird discount trial has become permanent, valid for bus journeys starting prior to 07:00.

On Christmas Day, trains ran to the Sunday timetable on the Johnsonville and Hutt Valley lines, while Melling and Wairarapa line services did not operate.

On New Year's Eve, trains ran to the Saturday timetable, except for the Melling line, which operated to a special hourly timetable 06:00-18:00, while Kapiti line services were replaced by buses.

Meanwhile, from 10 January, buses are replacing daytime trains until further notice on the Wairarapa line. The four services affected are the 10:30 and 15:38 ex Masterton, and the 08:21 and 12:45 ex Wellington due to track works. Other trains continue to operate. **METLINK**

Tourist trains update

In December, KiwiRail confirmed that the TranzAlpine would return on 14 January (operating Fridays to Mondays), while the Northern Explorer and Coastal Pacific tourist rail services would remain suspended until at least mid-2022. Acting chief executive Todd Moyle said it was evaluating "different and better options for domestic and overseas travellers once borders fully reopen" and tourism picks up. Attempts in 2021 to encourage domestic travellers with school holiday discounts did not stop revenue declines and "we can no longer absorb these losses". **STUFF.CO.NZ**

Wellington: Weekend discount trial

Meanwhile, in March, Metlink will deliver a trial of either heavily discounted or fare-free weekends across the month, and was approved by local government in November.

Metlink general manager Scott Gallagher said that "We want to test the resilience of the network if we suddenly have public transport that's free on weekends [as part of the fare structure for the upcoming national smartcard ticketing project]... are the travel patterns much different to what we currently see and if they are different, what are those patterns?". Data would also be valuable if a weekly fare cap was introduced, with many weekend trips therefore being discounted or free for regular users, which is available in many other cities. **THE DOMINION POST**

Wellington: Upper Hutt duplication

In November, works to duplicate 2.7 kilometres of track between Upper Hutt and Trentham were completed. Part of the larger Wellington Metro Upgrade Programme, the delivery of this infrastructure aims to remove the bottleneck between passenger and freight trains operating through the area. The project also included a freight loop at Upper Hutt, new platforms for Trentham and Wallaceville stations, level crossing upgrades, and new car-parking facilities. **THE DOMINION POST**

INTERNATIONAL

UK: London network update

The Waterloo and City London Tube line resumed operating to the full weekday timetable on 22 November, after five months of a time-limited (weekday peak period only) timetable. The full weekday timetable provides a train every three minutes in peak periods, and every five minutes in the off-peak. However there continues to be no services on weekends. Transport for London said that it was unable to provide full-time services earlier in the year because drivers had been reallocated to deliver Central line services.

From 23 December, Waterloo and City line services were again suspended following another driver shortage caused by COVID impacts, with drivers again prioritised for use on the Central line.

From 10 January, the line returned to only operating during weekday peak periods. This means that services only operate 06:07-10:13 and 15:23-19:11 on weekdays.

From 15 January to mid-May, the Northern line is closed between Kennington and Moorgate to enable Bank Station Capacity Upgrade works to take place, with the station to be able to handle a 40 per cent boost in travellers. The remainder of the Northern line will experience service reductions while the works are occurring. A temporary bus route will operate between Oval and Moorgate to assist with passenger movement during the closure.

Also until mid-May, Central line services operating eastbound are skipping East Acton station to enable platform reconstruction works.

On the Elizabeth line/Crossrail, testing has been underway since 22 November with “trial operations” which reportedly consist of over 150 varying scenarios. Shadow running will be the final level of testing, likely to occur in the second quarter of the calendar year, before the line finally opens.

Transport Commissioner Andy Byford said of the project “When it opens, it will be the envy of the world. People will be blown away. It’s quiet, smooth, fully accessible. It’s spectacular”. **INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT (2), THE EVENING STANDARD, TRANSPORT FOR LONDON, THE GUARDIAN**

London transport “staring into the abyss”

Transport Commissioner Andy Byford conceded in an interview with *The Guardian* that public transport services in London were at a crossroads, with Transport for London funding being squeezed by reduced revenue resulting from reduced patronage due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic impacts on travelling, with changes in commuter travel patterns and uncertain future cash flows from government, which he surmises will see one of two future options:

- Infrastructure-led recovery, or
- Managed decline.

“It’s very easy to stop investing and slash services – it’s a long road back to rectify it”. He called a recent review into funding by Finance Controller Rishi Sunak “crushingly disappointing”. “We have a looming, major hole in our capital budget”. The previous emergency deal, in June 2021, was secured “at 14 minutes to midnight”.

Although Byford agrees that stringent financial management will be necessary from no later than March 2023 - “with very onerous cost-cutting, we will get back to financial sustainability – a massive task”, with Transport for London seeking £1.7 billion to cover a funding gap until then.

The interview was just weeks out from the end of an emergency funding deal with government, due to expire on 11 December. On 10 December, a one-week extension was announced, reportedly based on encouraging negotiations that needed more time to flesh out terms. Another extension of the emergency funding arrangement was subsequently announced, this time running to 4 February. Mayor Sadiq Khan said of the recent deal, “the government is forcing us to raise additional revenue in London through measures like council tax”, and said that a properly-funded public transport network was “an issue of great national importance”.

In early December, over 500 unfilled roles were set to remain vacant. **THE GUARDIAN, BBC NEWS (2), FLEET NEWS**

US: Washington Metro fleet update

Washington, D.C.’s Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) rail agency has been operating services to a reduced timetable due to a fleet shortage caused by issues with its 7000-series trains. At the time of writing, the reduced timetable of 22 November was extended to operate until at least 31 January.

On 14 December, WMATA said it had received permission to progressively begin returning the trains back into service, although this was frozen on 29 December, with all 7000-series sets again removed from service. A 12 January update advising that the re-introduction of these trains has now been delayed for a further three months, to allow time for engineering and mechanical experts “to focus on the root cause of the derailment (see *Table Talk*, December 2021, pp. 7-8) and acquire new technology to measure 7000-series wheelsets”.

Meanwhile, WMATA confirmed in December that Shady Grove and Rockville stations would re-open from Sunday, 16 January. **WMATA**

US: Amtrak to cut services again

Although it was a key beneficiary from increased funding from the national administration's Infrastructure Bill last year, Amtrak says it will be soon forced to cut services because of staff shortages, which it says are a result of the administration's vaccine mandate, despite having at least 95 per cent of its workforce either vaccinated or exempted. The services to be impacted have yet to be revealed. **FOX BUSINESS NEWS**

ENDS

BUS & COACH NEWS

QUEENSLAND



Extra services made permanent

The state government confirmed in December that eight temporary COVID-distancing weekday services operating in Brisbane would be added to the permanent timetable. This follows the same move made in 2021 with the extra train services (see *Table Talk*, March 2021, page 2). The retained services are:

- **Route 227** - 17:55 trip outbound.
- **261** - 08:08 trip inbound and 15:45 outbound.
- **550** - 05:47 trip eastwards.
- **555** - 05:00 trip inbound and 05:43 outbound.
- **P546** - 08:11 trip inbound.
- **P569** - 06:19 trip inbound.

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT

Gold Coast on-demand trial

The state government has announced that Surfside Buslines will operate a new 24-month on-demand bus trial on the Gold Coast, across Nerang, Highland Park and Pacific Pines. It will be integrated with the Translink system, allowing Go cards to be used, while the Hino Poncho buses used would be Translink liveried. Local member of parliament Meaghan Scanlon said it would fill the gap between regular linear bus services and door-to-door services. The trial commences later in the year. **QLD GOVERNMENT**

Greyhound awarded four new routes

Greyhound Australia added four new routes to its long-distance network after it secured five-year contracts from the Department of Main Roads. Beginning from 9 December, the routes are *Brisbane-Mount Isa*, *Brisbane-Charleville*, *Toowoomba-Rockhampton*, and *Townsville-Mount Isa*.

Meanwhile, Greyhound has also retained its *Rockhampton-Emerald* and *Rockhampton-Longreach* service contracts.

Greyhound has also committed to purchase 12 new Irizar/Volvo coaches for use on these routes. **THE NORTH-WEST STAR**

NEW SOUTH WALES



North Shore timetable adjustments

Effective from Friday 28 January, the start of the new school term, some adjusted timetables were implemented for selected North Shore routes.

Routes **172X** & **173X** have minor timing changes to some morning outbound trips, route **591** has one afternoon trip adjusted, while **565** has an extra three morning express trips and extra (one express, one regular extended) afternoon trips between Lindfield Learning Village and Lindfield station. Also on 565, one morning trip now extends to begin from Fullers Road nr Bellevue Street (Chatswood West), while some other trips have had timing changes.

From the same date, Transdev also begins operating new school bus services for St Ives High School with five extra daily express trips between the school and Gordon railway station (routes 8128-30 and 9028-29).

Meanwhile, in north-west Sydney, from Monday 31 January, Hillsbus began operating additional school bus services between Rouse Hill metro train station and the new \$150 million Santa Sophia Catholic College in Box Hill. A total of six morning and six afternoon trips have been added. Some pre-existing trips have been operating since the school initially opened in November.

The state government says that these adjustments provide a combined 110 extra services a week. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

Busways & Sydney Buses reductions

Bus services in the Blacktown, Penrith and Richmond areas, operated by Busways, ran to the Sunday timetable from Wednesday 29 December to Sunday 9 January, due to staff shortages from COVID-19 impacts.

As a result, a number of routes had no services operating during this period: 669, 671, 673, 674, 676, 678, 679, 718, 738, 739V, 742, 744, 745, 761, 781, 789, 793, S7, S11, S13.

Additionally, on 29-31 December, some additional trips were rostered to operate on routes 723 and 724 during the morning and afternoon peak periods.

Meanwhile, from Tuesday 4 January, similar impacts with Sydney Buses services in the eastern suburbs and inner-northwest saw multiple service cancellations. From Monday 10 January, the network operated to a reduced timetable. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

Sydney CBD diversions: Sat 15 Jan

On Saturday, 15 January, a planned protest led to early start/finish locations for multiple bus routes in the CBD/Surry Hills area, as well as the CBD light rail line.

From 11:30 to approximately 12:45, L2 and L3 light rail services were split into two sections, with trams not running between Moore Park and Central Chalmers Street stations.

According to Transport for NSW, the anticipated impacts to local bus routes were:

Route	Time frame	Altered CBD start/finish
308	11:45-13:30	Diversion via either Cleveland & Abercrombie Sts or Regent & Lee Sts
320		Diversion via Cleveland, Abercrombie Sts, Broadway and Pitt St/ Diversion via Castlereagh, Hay, Pitt, Lee, Regent and Cleveland Sts
304	11:45-15:00	<i>Specific diversion information not provided at time of writing</i>
311		
324		
325		
333		
339		
343		
373		
374		
396		
389	11:30-15:00	Route split into two parts, operating: Pyrmont-Town Hall, Park St; and The Domain (St Marys Cathedral)-Bondi Junction.
412	11:15-15:00	Pitt Street opp Barlow/ Pitt Street before Hay
423		
426		
428		
430		

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431	11:15-15:00	Haymarket light rail stop/ Pitt St at Barlow	
470			
438X			
461X			
440		11:15-15:00	Diversion via City Rd, Cleveland, Crown, & Oxford Sts
441			QVB, York Street/ QVB, Market St
504			Town Hall House/ Clarence St after Druitt
500X			Town Hall House, Druitt St/ Town Hall, Druitt St
506		11:45-13:30	

TRANSPORT FOR NSW

COVID testing impacts

A surge in COVID-19 infections together with the opened state border with Queensland saw testing demand greatly outstrip supply throughout the second half of December and into January. Vehicle queues across many COVID testing clinic locations across the city saw variable impacts on bus services.

For example, since Wednesday 5 January, and current as at 23 January, Transport for NSW reported that buses on routes 150, 160X and 166 are skipping the Northern Beaches Hospital stop due to the queues. Transport said a bus stop at Frenchs Forest High School was an alternative option. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**



Keolide Sydney coverage map (source: Keolis Downer).

Northern Beaches On-Demand

Keolis Downer's Sydney northern beaches on-demand service, Keoride, which was implemented as part of a number of trial services across numerous parts of Sydney and regional New South Wales, became a permanent part of the state's public transport network, effective from 31 October 2021.

Beginning in 2017, the service operates around Narrabeen, Mona Vale and Avalon (service area map provided below), and recently added four new Hino Poncho buses to its fleet. Keolis Downer also operates its Keoride on-demand service in Mount Barker, South Australia, which was recently extended by that state government to June 2022. **AUSTRALIAN BUS & COACH NEWS, KEOLIS DOWNER**

Busways North Coast update

The Port Macquarie region timetable, effective 30 November 2021, contained the following route number changes:

- 322/4 (Combined Port Macquarie-Lighthouse Beach Night Loop service) is now route **323**.
- 334K (Port Macquarie-Kendall) is now **333**.
- 335W (Port Macquarie-Wauchope) is now **336**.

The Kempsey region timetable, effective 30 November 2021, now includes route **344** (Kempsey-Willawarrin), which was previously school route 354. **HILAIRE FRASER, BUSWAYS**

Coffs Harbour driverless trial ends

The on-demand driverless bus trial in Coffs Harbour, operated by Busways, finished on Saturday 27 November. Initially expected to run for 12 months, the trial ended up running for three years. **BUSBOT**

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



New route 47

From 31 January, a new local bus route 47 connects the Molonglo Valley region with the Belconnen Town Centre via the Coppins Crossing of Molonglo River (downstream from Scrivener Dam). It will travel via the new suburb of Whitlam, the first Molonglo Valley suburb to the north of the Molonglo River. The service runs once per hour on weekdays and Saturday mornings, and every two hours on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. **AGNES BOSKOVITZ, ACT GOVERNMENT**

Summer holiday timetable

The territory's bus services ran to a revised timetable over the holiday period, with the revised weekday timetable reportedly consisting of service reductions

during peak periods to account for reduced patronage levels. The revised weekday timetable operated on 20-24, 29-31 December, 4-7, 10-14, 17-21, 24-25 & 27-28 January. On weekends and public holidays, buses ran to the Sunday timetable, except Christmas Day, where a special timetable operated. Both bus and light rail services on Christmas Day were fare-free. **TRANSPORT CANBERRA, AGNES BOSKOVITZ**

Interim timetable

From 31 January and until further notice, Canberra's buses will run to a new interim timetable which will include school services for the new school year. All local services and the Rapid 10 will run at least every 30 minutes during the weekday daytime period, while all other Rapids will run at least every 15 minutes. At other times the service can be less frequent. The light rail will continue to run as normal, with extra services in the peaks. **AGNES BOSKOVITZ, ACT GOVERNMENT**

VICTORIA



COVID affected services

Transdev (Victoria) has been affected by an increasing number of drivers being required to isolate due to COVID-19 positive results. As a result, a number of temporary timetables have come into effect from Thursday, 13 January until further notice.

These were made available from the PTV website which also noted that other modes have and will be affected by ongoing disruptions due to staff shortages (e.g. Metro suburban rail services have been affected in the first two weeks of January 2022).

The routes with temporary timetables issued include **202** Yarra Bend – Melbourne University, **216** Sunshine – City, **220** Sunshine – City, **232** North Altona – City, **234** Fishermans Bend – City, **235** Fishermans Bend – City, **237** Fishermans Bend – City, **246** Elsternwick – Clifton Hill, **270** Box Hill – Mitcham, **280** Manningham 'mover', **282** Manningham 'mover', **305** The Pines – Doncaster / City, **600** Southland – Sandringham, **603** Brighton Beach – Elsternwick, **604** Alfred Hospital – Gardenvale, **905** The Pines – City, **907** The Pines – City, **922** Southland – St Kilda, and **923** Southland – Sandringham. **STEVEN HABY, PUBLIC TRANSPORT VICTORIA**

TASMANIA



Hobart Southern suburbs network changes

Effective from Sunday 30 January, the following

express services were introduced:

- **X07** (Hobart City-Blackmans Bay): Provides seven services to Hobart in the morning peak, and seven services back to Blackmans Bay in the afternoon peak.
- **X08** (Hobart City-Kingston Central): Provides ten off-peak services to Hobart and nine off-peak services to Kingston. At a later date, once the new Huntingfield Park & Ride Facility is opened, the route will be extended to operate to and from this facility.
- **X13** (Hobart City-Snug): Provides five services to Hobart in the morning peak and five services to Blackmans Bay in the afternoon peak.

Additionally, peak bus route **X01** now operates eight trips to Hobart in the morning and six to Huntingfield in the afternoon, while also operating direct via the Southern Outlet (bypassing Kingston Central). **HILAIRE FRASER, TASMANIA TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT**

Hobart: Ashes Fifth Test 14-18 January

The fifth Ashes cricket test match (Australia v England) was held at Blundstone Arena (Bellerive Oval) in Hobart from 14-18 January. Metro, Tassielink and O'Driscoll Coaches operated a network of routes to convey ticket holders (for free) to the playing ground. Services were divided, with a set of routes towards the ground, then one route operating away from the ground, with interchange required at Hobart City, with a set of routes out of there, as follows:

Services to the match:

- **B1** Kingston Central-Blundstone Arena
- **B2** Claremont-Blundstone Area
- **B3** Bridgewater-Blundstone Arena
- **B5** Hobart City-Blundstone Arena
- **B6** Roches Beach-Blundstone Arena

Services from the match:

- **B1** Hobart City-Kingston Central
- **B2** Hobart City-Claremont
- **B3** Hobart City-Bridgewater
- **B5** Blundstone Arena-Hobart City
- **B6** Hobart City-Roches Beach

The arrangement requiring interchange in Hobart City when returning from the ground was intended to relieve congestion in Bellerive, a residential area, with patrons to catch the first available bus away from the ground, and into the City, where there was more space available. Curiously, some patrons had a westward trip across the River Derwent only to return to the Eastern Shore on route B3 or B6.

Derwent Ferries also operated a service from Brooke St, Hobart City to Bellerive, free for ticket holders. **HILAIRE FRASER, METRO TASMANIA**

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Christmas/New Year timetable

Bus and light rail services operated to a public holiday timetable on 25, 27, 28 December as well as 1 & 3 January. After Midnight buses still operated on both Christmas night and New Years Day.

From **Wednesday 29 to Friday 31 December**, most bus routes in the East/West and North/South contract areas operated to a Saturday timetable, while some routes also had some additional trips:

- Routes 333, 528, 579, J7, and J8 ran to a weekday timetable.
- 98A, 100, 106, 110, 115, 117, 118, 147, 148, 150, 155, 157, 167, 168, 171, 172, 174, 178, 190, 195, 196, 200, 202, 203, 206, 208, 230, 232, 235, 239, 241, 248, 251, 252, 253, 254, 263, 265, 271-273, 281, 286-288, 300, 320, 361, 600A/B, 601A/B, 645, 646, G10, G20, G21, H20, H22, H30, H33, C1, C2, J1, J2, M44, W90, and W91 ran to a Saturday timetable. Some had additional trips, below.
- 99, 101, 112, 140, 157X, 163, 170, 173, 176, 178X, 197X, 200B, 209F, 238, 245, 262, 371, 372, 376, 530, 578, 580, G20F, G21F, G22X, H23, H24, H32, and X30 had no service.
- 287 – normal Saturday timetable between Valetta Road and North Terrace with trips every 30 minutes until around 23:00. Every second regular trip in both directions diverted to operate to/from West Lakes (renumbered to 288). Alternating trips pre-18:00 Military Road-North Terrace and return renumbered to 286.
- 605 – The 16:56 Blackwood to Aberfoyle Hub trip did not operate.
- G30 – Weekday timetable (the 06:57 & 07:28 trips ex Blackwood did not operate). Ex King William Road, the 16:07 trip departed three mins earlier, 16:40 did not operate, 17:13 departed six mins earlier, and the 18:00 departed 23 minutes earlier.
- H21 – A reduced service departing ex Currie Street (City) at 08:19, then hourly until 17:19. In the opposite direction, departing 08:21 ex Paradise, then hourly until 16:21.
- 528 – These trips were removed from the timetable: 06:37, 06:58, 07:28, and 08:03 trips ex Folland Avenue. 16:54, 17:24, and 18:15 trips ex Currie Street (City).
- Some routes had one or more extra trips for these three days, as follows:
 - **98A** – 07:45 ex Gorte Street.
 - **106** – 08:55 ex Magill Road.
 - **118** – 06:18 ex Port Adelaide.

- **142** – 07:34 ex Glynburn Road.
- **150** – 05:46 ex Port Adelaide; 09:39, 10:39, 11:39, and 12:39 trips ex Victoria Road. In the opposite direction, 06:18 ex Grenfell Street.
- **168** – 06:44 ex Mooringe Avenue to North Terrace, and 17:16 ex North Terrace to Glenelg.
- **178** – 08:05, 09:33, and half-hourly until 16:03 ex Montacute Road to King William Street (F2). In the opposite direction, 06:47 and 07:47 ex Coulls Road (stop 34) to Paradise.
- **178S** – 10:18, and half-hourly until 16:18, & 17:18 ex King William Street (V1) to Montacute Road. The 08:32 trip ex Hutt Road (city) ran as route 178, extends through to Paradise.
- **190** – The 07:30, 09:28, 11:28, 13:28, and 15:28 ex Belair Road trips commenced earlier from Blackwood and ran instead as route 195 (07:30 & 13:28) or 196 (09:28, 11:28, & 15:28). In the opposite direction, the 08:02, 09:54, 11:54, 13:54, and 15:54 trips ex King William Road operated as route 195 (08:02 & 13:54) or 196 (09:54, 11:54, & 15:54), and extended to Blackwood.
- **195** – 07:03 & 13:00 ex Blackwood, and 08:02, & 14:03 ex King William St (all trips extended from route 190).
- **196** – 09:00, 11:00, & 13:54 ex Blackwood, and 09:54, 11:54, & 15:54 ex King William St (all trips extended from route 190).
- **200** – 06:44 ex Kent Road.
- **203** – 05:25 & 06:27 ex Baldock Road (stop 47) and in the opposite direction 07:12 ex Victoria Sq.
- **208** – 06:02 ex Folland Avenue.
- **235** – 06:23 ex Churchill Road (22), and in the opposite direction 06:44 ex Frome Road.
- **251** – 09:05 ex Medika Boulevard.
- **253** – 06:05 ex Hanson Road to City.
- **254** – 06:32 ex King William St (City).
- **263** – 05:53 ex Marion Centre.
- **273** – 06:23 ex Paradise, and in the opposite direction 16:54 ex Currie Street (D2).
- **286** – Trips every two hours between Military Road and North Terrace.
- **288** – Trips hourly 08:00-18:00 to/from West Lakes.
- **361** – 06:38 ex Tea Tree Plaza.
- **600** – 07:16 ex Aberfoyle Hub.
- **600A** – 17:58 ex Marion Centre, then 21:24 ex Marion Centre onto Blackwood.
- **601** – 07:33 ex Aberfoyle Hub.
- **601A** – 08:18 ex Marion Centre, and 06:03 ex Blackwood to Aberfoyle Hub. The 16:18 ex Marion Centre extended to Aberfoyle Hub. The 06:28 trip ex Marion Centre timetabled to depart four minutes earlier, and arrive Blackwood at the regular time.
- **G10/G10B/G10C** – 06:12, 07:24, & 07:56 ex Ayliffes Road, 07:17 ex Goodwood Rd, and 07:28 ex Marion Centre. In the opposite direction, 05:10, 05:40, 06:10, 07:24, & 07:50 ex Prospect Road.
- **G20** – 05:44 ex Aberfoyle Hub, and in the opposite direction 07:42 ex King William Road.
- **G21** – 06:44 ex Aberfoyle Hub.
- **H20** – 09:27 and hourly until 16:27, extra trips ex Glenelg to Paradise. Ex Paradise Interchange, 10:01 & hourly until 16:01 in the opposite direction.
- **H20C** – 08:14 ex Newton Rd to Currie St (City).
- **H22** - 17:29 ex Currie Street (B2) to Penfold Rd
- **H30** – 09:47, then every half-hour until 16:17, & 17:01 ex North Terrace to West Lakes.
- **H30C** – 07:36, 09:02 then every half-hour until 16:02 ex West Lakes Centre Interchange. In the opposite direction, 06:42 from Stradbroke Road to Currie Street (W1).
- **J1** – 06:00 and 16:32 ex Adelaide Airport to Elizabeth Interchange. 18:30, 19:31, and 20:31 ex Glenelg Interchange.
- **J1C** – 08:04 ex Adelaide Airport to Grenfell Street (H1).
- **M44T** - 06:29 ex Marion Centre to Tea Tree.
- **W90** – 07:05 ex Addison Ave to Marion Centre.

ADELAIDE METRO

January special timetable

Many bus routes also operated to a special summer holiday timetable throughout most of January, with a reduced timetable on account of lower patronage. From **Tuesday 4 to Sunday 30 January**, many bus routes across the city operated to a reduced weekday timetable. Over 150 services were removed across the below routes:

- **North/South** area buses 200, 200C, 202, 203, 206, 208B, 209F, 230, 232, 235, 238, 241, 245, 254X, 265, 273, G10, G10C, G20F, G21, G40, & M44, operated by Torrens Connect;
- **East/West** area buses 106, 110, 117, 118, 141, 142, 144, 155, 163, 171, 172, 174, 176, 178, 178M, 190, 190B, 195, 229F, 230, 232, 281, 286, H20, H20C, H21, H22, H30C, H32, H33, J2, W91, & X30C, operated by Torrens Transit;
- **Outer North** area buses 222, 225F, 225M, & 411, operated by Torrens Transit; and
- **Outer North-east** area buses 501-503, 506, 507, 528, 540, 541X, 542, 542X, 543, 543X, 544X, 545, 545X, 546, 546X, 548, 556, 557, 578, C1X, C2X, G40, J2 and M44, operated by Torrens Transit.

Adelaide Hills area buses 840X, 841F, 861, 863, 864, T840 and T863, operated by Keolis Downer, had base 10-20 minute peak-period frequency “trunk services”, while off-peak services ran to the normal timetable. Exceptions to this were services along Glen Osmond Road, which ran to a 30-minute off-peak service).

Outer south area buses, operated by Busways South Australia, were not impacted. **ADELAIDE METRO**

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Perth changes effective 30 January

Effective from Sunday 30 January, selected routes underwent minor timetable changes. Routes adjusted include 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 72, 75, 201, 202, 203, 310, 374, 403, 414, 421, 423, 425, 460, 484, 490, 491, 512, 527, 536, 537, 541, 542, 544, 558, 565, 586, 587.

A new route, **569**, has also started to operate from Baldvis Secondary College to Daintree St, Baldvis via Lochern Rd. It will eventually be turned into a full-time route to/from Warnbro station, with its final alignment to be established once the road network is completed in eastern Baldvis. **HILAIRE FRASER, TRANSPERTH**

NEW ZEALAND



Auckland: Eastern Busway stage one

Effective from Sunday 19 December, the opening of stage one of the Eastern Busway saw a re-routing of **70, 70H, 72C, 72M, and 72X** bus routes, to now operate via the new Busway, open between Panmure and Pakuranga. This means that they no longer stop at Panmure shopping centre.

Some bus stops on Pakuranga Road have closed as a result of these changes, while others on Queen Road and Church Crescent now have reduced service due to 70/72 buses not using them. **AUCKLAND TRANSPORT**

Auckland: COVID-19 impacts

A new COVID-19 traffic light alert system was implemented, effective from 23:59 on Thursday, 2 December. This saw Auckland placed in the Orange setting of the "COVID-19 Protection Framework" (see <https://covid19.govt.nz/traffic-lights> for more information). Bus capacity is back to normal with no physical distancing required, but face masks and QR check-ins remain mandatory.

While trains were already not running due to City Rail Link works (see *Rail News* above), bus services have also been reduced. While routes 352, 866, 966, 986 still operate to the regular weekday timetable, the remainder have been adjusted, as follows:

Modified timetable:

- **138**: weekdays, every 30 minutes 06:00-18:30.
- **321**: runs daily, every 30 mins 06:00-18:00.
- **351**: weekdays, every 30 mins 06:00-18:30.

- **395**: has only two weekday trips (06:50 ex Waiuku and 17:33 ex Papakura).
- **805**: weekdays, runs hourly 09:30-13:30.
- **884**: weekdays, every 30 mins 06:00-19:00.

Additional trips:

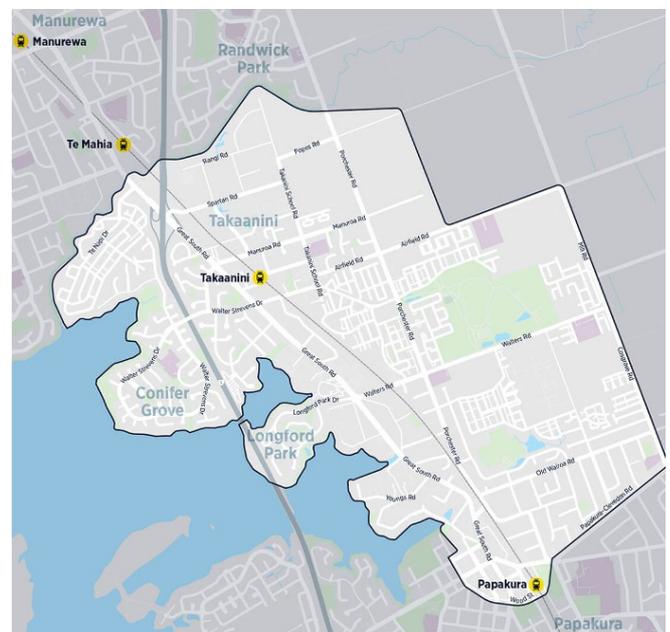
- **114**: 07:30 ex Westgate.
- **125**: 06:35 ex Helensvale (in lieu of 125X).
- **195**: 06:45 ex New Lynn.
- **333X**: 23:30 ex Britomart (doesn't run Sundays).
- **366**: 06:00 ex Manurewa.
- **941**: 05:30 ex Beach Haven, and 06:15 ex Takapuna.
- **982**: 05:36 & 06:36 ex Manly, and 06:05 ex Hibiscus Coast station.

Not operating under either Orange or Red alert level:

- 101, 125X, 129, 132X, 133X, 151, 209, 22A, 24W, 252, 253, 27T, 309X, 371, 399, 72X, 774, 775, 802, 842, 885 (however 884 is still operating), 924, 931, 933, 939, and 988.

However, in good news, simultaneously the change sees the reintroduction of late night buses on Friday and Saturday nights, with 60 services reinstated.

Auckland Transport said that bus service timetables would be "reviewed in the New Year". **AUCKLAND TRANSPORT, STUFF.CO.NZ**



Auckland Local coverage map and vehicle (source: AT).

Auckland: AT Local expanded, 371 gone

AT Local, the trial on-demand service, was expanded from 31 October, with a new presence in South Auckland suburbs, between Papakura Town Centre and Takaanini, taking in Conifer Grove and Kauri Flats.

Executive General Manager of Integrated Networks at Auckland Transport (AT), Mark Lambert, said that the service had been redesigned to improve integration with other modes of public transport.

Operational on both weekdays (05:30-21:30) and weekends/public holidays (06:30-20:30), the service includes nearly 400 pick-up and drop-off points (zone map above), meaning a maximum walk-up distance of 120 metres to access AT Local, while the service charges bus fares with AT HOP card integration. Vehicles currently have a maximum capacity of three per van.

Interestingly, AT says that it has suspended its wheelchair accessible vehicles temporarily to “ensure the service is safe for people with wheelchairs”, with that accessibility to return later in the new year. Presumably there is an issue with the vehicles that has to be fixed.

However, pre-existing linear bus route **371**, which was introduced in 2016, has been simultaneously withdrawn. **SCOOP NEWS, AUCKLAND TRANSPORT**

Wellington: Summer holiday timetable

On Christmas Day and New Year's Eve, buses ran to the Saturday timetable (except route 200 which ran to a 'special timetable'). On 31 December, buses also replaced trains on the Kapiti line. **METLINK**

Wellington: Reliability improving

Stuff Online reported that the bus cancellations impacting the Wellington bus network continues to drop. In October, just 0.9 per cent of all timetabled trips were cancelled (809 out of 90,588 services), down from 1.7 per cent (1,640 out of 98,454) the previous month. Simultaneously, Metlink's general manager, Scott Gallacher said that patronage is rebounding, with strong growth since the return to Level 2 COVID alert level. **THE DOMINION POST**

Wellington: Airport contract awarded

Updating previous *Table Talk* articles about the suspended Wellington Airport bus service, 'Mana Newlands by Transdev' has been awarded the new six-year contract to operate it. Positively, the service will return to being part of the Metlink network, use the Snapper ticketing system, operate seven days-a-week, and re-commence operations sometime later in the year. The company already operates bus services for Metlink in the Newlands and Tawa areas, while parent Transdev operates the city's commuter rail network. **METLINK**

Christchurch: Service reductions

Due to driver shortages at Go Bus, since Monday 6 December, new temporary timetables have been in use on some bus routes, until further notice. Buses on the below routes are effectively running to the Saturday timetable on weekdays, although for some of these routes, the final 1-2 services of the night from that timetable are not operating on weeknights.

Routes impacted include O (The Orbiter, both directions), 1 (Blue), 5 (Yellow), 7 (Orange), 17, 44, 60, 80, 95, 97, 107, 120, 125, 130, 135 & 820.

Unlike with what is happening in Australia, Environment Canterbury says that these shortages are a result of immigration and competitive labour market conditions, rather than COVID-19 vaccination and isolation requirements. Although Ritchie's has not been impacted as heavily, with their routes still operating to the regular weekday timetable.

From October, the 'no standing' rule for passengers onboard buses was removed in both Christchurch and Timaru, with no capacity restrictions meaning lesser issue with running a weekend timetable. This follows the area's COVID-19 alert level dropping back to level two from 8 September, although face masks continue to be required for people 12 years and over as well as checking-in with QR codes. Like Auckland, Canterbury has been on the Orange alert level of the new national COVID-19 protection framework since 3 December.

Meanwhile, Go Bus has secured an extension to its commuter and school bus operating contracts in Gisborne through to 30 June 2025. **METRO CHRISTCHURCH, GISBORNE HERALD**

Timaru on-demand service

Canterbury Regional Council confirmed in November that its on-demand trial service, MyWay by Metro, has been deemed a success, with patronage growing, unlike the previous all-fixed route network. Over the first 12 months of the trial, which included the operation of some fixed bus routes, patronage grew from 147,000 to 171,000 (up 17 per cent).

A report on the trial, prepared for Council, said that despite the patronage growth, the costs of running the system with MyWay included, had been double what was spent on the fixed route system (\$1.85 million compared to \$930,000). Additional costs were largely attributed to longer service hours, including weekend work, as well as additional labour required to operate additional vehicles.

On the city's bus future, “the intention of Environment Canterbury is to continue the service in Timaru, subject to continued funding”. **TIMARU HERALD**

INTERNATIONAL

England: Operators prepare 'route cuts' lists

The Guardian reports that operators have drafted lists

of routes to cut in the event funding grants are not extended past March, which together with staff shortages, are causing uncertainty in the ability to deliver contracted services.

With the latest Omicron-wave of COVID-19 infections, bus patronage has dropped from 80 to under 60 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.

Bus operators in England are required to give six weeks notice before withdrawing a route, so are now conducting their reviews to be ready for any eventuality.

Where profit is not made on a route, funding generally comes from local council subsidy to make up the difference. West Yorkshire stepped in recently to save route 205 (Pudsey-Dewsbury), which operator Arriva was looking to cut, which now costs the council £120,000 a year. In Tyne and Wear, passengers reportedly have to check online before travelling, due to daily short-notice cancellations, however more bad news may be to come. Managing director of Transport North East, Toby Hughes said "unless there's more money, it's very likely that 10% to 17% of services will be cut" at the start of the next financial year.

While rural routes have been more hit over the last decade, city bus services are at particular risk where light rail and tram systems also require subsidy. Hughes' budget has to cover the Tyne and Wear Metro, whose emergency funding will likewise expire in March: "There is a £20m shortfall. It has very high fixed costs. Transit systems will adapt but not overnight. We can't reduce the costs on the Metro quickly – but you can on buses, unfortunately for those involved. We are desperate for the government to pull its finger out and tell local authorities what, if any, COVID-19 support there will be for bus and light rail services after March." A Department for Transport spokesperson said: "We have provided unprecedented levels of funding for the bus sector during the pandemic, including the £1.5bn coronavirus bus service support grant and the ongoing £226.5m made available under the bus recovery grant.

Meanwhile, the Confederation of Passenger Transport says that 10 per cent of bus driver positions are currently vacant, with debate over whether there is sufficient strategy to deal with it. **THE GUARDIAN**

Letters to the Bus Editor

Hunter Valley and Blue Mountains buses

Thank you for your excellent coverage of Regional timetables. Just a few comments on CDC Hunter Valley and Blue Mountain timetable dates which all show 20 December 2021. These are all linked to the Transport for NSW website and not the CDC website. In this case they consist of school holiday-only timetables which will be replaced by Transport for NSW with school-term timetables dated 28 January 2022.

Transport for NSW reissues all bus timetables for Sydney and Outer Sydney Regions at the beginning of every school term and school holidays. Most operators now link their website to Transport for NSW timetables to save maintaining their own timetables. A couple of known exceptions are Red Bus Services and Premier Illawarra which still link to their own timetables – there could be others.

This does not apply to regional timetables. The two CDC lists

referred to are part of the Sydney Outer regions and hence are not considered regional for this purpose.

Regards – Lourie Smit

Hunter Valley buses

Hi Steven,

Happy New Year.

A few small points regarding your Hunter Valley timetable lists:

1. Unless I have missed something, routes 260-261 of CDC Hunter still serve Newcastle University. In Uni holidays such as now, they turn around at Jesmond.

2. Stockland offloaded Jesmond (and Wallsend) shops some years ago. Jesmond shops are now called Jesmond Central (as if it matters).

3. Now that they are privatised, I would assume that Newcastle Transport routes would be counted in country services?? The NT Jesmond terminus is also Jesmond Central.

Cheers, Geoff Hassall.

ENDS

FERRY & SHIP NEWS

QUEENSLAND



Extra services to continue

The state government confirmed in December that the additional COVID-distancing services on the Southern Moreton Bay Island ferry would continue to operate until April. Operator SeaLink is operating an additional 16 weekday services and 11 extra services every Saturday and Sunday. **QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT**

Reduced ferry services

Due to COVID-19 impacts on staff availability, some ferries are operated to a reduced timetable:

Bulimba to Teneriffe Cross River

From Friday 7 January, this cross river ferry is not operating until further notice.

CityCat

From Friday 14 January to Friday 21 January, these timetabled services were removed:

- 07:01, 08:01, & 09:01 Apollo Rd-Riverside express;
- 07:20 & 08:20 West End-QUT Gardens Pt express;

- 08:45 ex Northshore Hamilton all stops and 10:15 ex UQ St Lucia all stops; and
- 16:05, 16:20, 17:05, 17:20, 18:05, & 18:25 Riverside-Apollo Road express.

Also, on both Friday 14 and 21 January, ferries operated to the Thursday timetable, while on both Saturday 15 and 22 January, they ran to the Sunday timetable.

For period Monday 24 January to Sunday 27 February, a seven-day "temporary timetable" has been issued, with a four-page PDF document showing the reduced operation. The gist of changes includes the removal of all express services, and evening service frequency halved to every 30 minutes compared to the regular weekday timetable. **TRANSLINK**

NEW SOUTH WALES



F1 Manly ferry services update

The Transport for NSW website showed that additional Manly Ferry summer trips would operate until 26 January. These extra weekday trips consisted of Freshwater-class trips as per weekends, giving a 15-minute service frequency. However, these extra services ceased operating as from Monday, 10 January. As a result, weekday services have reverted to 3 Emerald-class ferries operating every 20 minutes as per normal timetable. The original advice has disappeared from the website and there has been no advice of the extra trips finishing early. However, it would help in managing staff shortages, while the pandemic continues to impact patronage. **LOURIE SMIT**

Palm Beach service reductions

From Thursday 30 December until Sunday 2 January, a reduced service was operating on Fantasea's Palm Beach-Ettalong//Mackerel ferry services due to COVID-19 impacts on staffing. A timetable screenshot adjoins this article. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW, FANTASEA**

Ettalong TimeTable - Thursday 30th Dec to Sunday 2nd Jan.						
Departing	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm
Departing Palm Beach	8.00	10.00	12.00	2.00	5.00	6.00
Departing Wagstaffe	8.25	10.25	12.25	2.25	5.25	6.25
Departing Ettalong	8.30	10.30	12.30	2.30	5.30	6.30

Basin Timetable - Thur 30/12 to Sun 2/01

Departing	am	pm	pm
Palm Beach	9.00	1.00	4.00
Bennetts	9.10	1.10	4.10
Bonnie Doon	9.15	1.15	4.15
Basin	9.20	1.20	4.20
Currawong	9.25	1.25	4.25
Mackerel	9.30	1.30	4.30
Arr. Palm Beach	9.45	1.45	4.45

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Sealink retains Kangaroo Island contract

Sealink Group announced on 8 December that it had retained its Kangaroo Island ferry contract for a minimum term of 15 years, with two five-year extensions available, based on operating performance.

The new contract starts on 1 July 2024, and includes a commitment to enhance the timetable from July 2024 with an additional 30 per cent of services, based on the Group's \$50 million funding commitment for two new drive-through vessels and shore-side infrastructure upgrades. A new fare structure will also be implemented.

The state has also secured a fare reduction for Kangaroo Island residents, which the Group says represents 10 per cent of the service's revenue base.

Meanwhile, the corporate side of the business has changed its name to Kelsian Group, effective from 10 November. In a statement, the business said that having begun in the South Australian ferry industry, it is now the country's largest multi-modal land and water public transport and tourism provider, with around 80 per cent of the Group's revenue generated from operating bus services. However, on the front-line, customer-facing brands, such as Sealink for its South Australian ferry operations, will not change. **KELSIAN GROUP**

NEW ZEALAND



Auckland: COVID-19 impacts

Ferries mostly operated to a reduced holiday timetable across the New Year holiday period, with only three routes operating seven days a week.

Hobsonville Point via Beach Haven: Effective 20 Aug 2021, services running daily (except for the 06:20 ex Hobsonville Point operating only on weekdays).

Half Moon Bay: Eff. 20 Aug 2021, running daily.

Bayswater, Northcote Point & Birkenhead: Effective 26 October 2021, running daily.

Pine Harbour: Effective 20 Aug 2021, weekdays only.

West Harbour: Effective 26 Oct 2021, weekdays only.

Gulf Harbour: Effective 26 Oct 2021, weekdays only.

Excluded from this were the **Devonport** and **Waiheke** ferries, which operated on their full summer timetable from Wednesday, 15 December to Sunday, 9 January. A new timetable page was issued for these two routes.

The full ferry timetable was due to return from Monday

10 January, although Auckland Transport (AT) said timetables would be “reviewed in the New Year”.

In early January, AT confirmed that reduced ferry services would operate until at least March due to COVID-19 staff shortages, impacting the Waiheke Island (six services cancelled), Half Moon Bay (two cancelled) and Gulf Harbour (seven cancelled).
AUCKLAND TRANSPORT, STUFF.CO.NZ

ENDS

AIR NEWS

DOMESTIC



Omicron wave impacts flights

Virgin Australia and Qantas have cut flights in light of the current wave of infections from the Omicron wave of COVID-19 battering domestic travel. With tens of thousands of cases now being recorded each day, the willingness of people to travel has taken a tumble, with usage of major cities' train and bus networks also falling parallel with the rise of Omicron.

Qantas has cut 30 per cent of previously advertised flights booked across the first quarter of the new year. Qantas had planned to operate 102 per cent of pre-COVID flight schedules, following the successful

reopening of most state/territory borders across late 2021. Qantas' international flights have also been cut by one-third to just 20 per cent of pre-COVID schedules. Qantas indicated the changes were temporary, with no changes for May and June made at this time (so far planned for 117 per cent of pre-COVID domestic flights and 70 per cent of international).

Meanwhile, **Virgin** has halted its only international route (Sydney-Fiji), temporarily frozen nine domestic routes (Adelaide to Darwin/Cairns/Sunshine Coast, Melbourne to Coffs Harbour/Hamilton Island/Townsville, Sydney-Townsville, Gold Coast to Launceston/Hobart), and limiting flights on many remaining domestic routes, which it said was a result of staff shortages from COVID infection/isolation requirements. A bunch of **Jetstar** flights were cancelled in the first week of January for this reason, while **Regional Express** reported no impact on its operations. **AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW, THE AGE**

Merimbula Airport closedown

The airport in the New South Wales south coast town of Merimbula will closedown from 31 January to enable runway extension and strengthening works to be undertaken. This forms the second stage of works in the project, on the northern extension. The circa \$20 million project has been funded by a mix of federal, state and local governments.

Flights operated by Regional Express and QantasLink will not be able to use the airport during the closedown. As of 17 January, looking at their respective websites, neither airline had provided their alternative plans for this period. The airport is due to reopen on Monday, 14 March. **BEGA VALLEY SHIRE COUNCIL**

ENDS

About *Table Talk*

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