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TABLE TALK

AUSTRALASIAN TIMETABLE NEWS

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RAIL & TRAM NEWS

NEW SOUTH WALES



Patronage surges with fare-free period

The 14-25 April fare-free period saw surging demand for public transport services, particularly in the middle of the day across greater Sydney.

It is worth noting that the 12-day initiative coincided with a bunch of public holidays, including the four-day Easter long weekend and Anzac Day, the two-week school holiday period, and the annual Sydney Royal Easter Show held at Olympic Park.

The Sydney Morning Herald reports that on Easter Saturday (16 April), trips across all modes between 09:00 and 16:00 increased by 29 per cent on the previous four Saturdays, and by the same (respective) metric, surged 54 per cent on Easter Sunday, and 13 per cent on Tuesday 19 April (the first business day after the Easter long weekend).

Within the same day period, patronage surged the highest on ferries, by 222 per cent on Easter Saturday, 101 per cent Easter Sunday, and 123 per cent on the Tuesday.

The morning peak period (06-09:00) on that Tuesday saw a 20 per cent drop in patronage across all modes, attributed to the school holidays, with children travelling to school and their parents to work a key trip generator in this time period. (*Editor's comment: Although it is unclear the impact the lax enforcement on students tapping on and off on their trips has on this data*).

Bus use was down during each of the three main time periods (the third is 16-19:00) on both Easter Sunday and 19 April. *SYDNEY MORNING HERALD*

Sydney Southwest Metro: Staged opening?

The state government is reportedly mulling a two-staged opening for the upcoming Metro City & Southwest line. The idea would see the opening of the Chatswood to Sydenham section earlier (sometime in 2023), whilst the remaining Sydenham-Bankstown section would then open 12-18 months later, although the state government reaffirms that the whole extension will still be open by the end of 2024, despite reported escalating costs and construction delays on the project.

Both rising inflation and supply chain issues are hampering projects in construction across the globe, at least partly fuelled by war in Ukraine and economic

stimulus due to COVID-19 pandemic impacts on economic activity.

Meanwhile, Sydenham station's extra northern concourse and station access is planned to open to the public in June. However, platforms 1 and 2, to be used by the new Metro line, should open with the rest of the line. *SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, INFRASTRUCTURE MAGAZINE*

Moss Vale-Unanderra closure

Since 15 March, the line between Moss Vale and Unanderra has been closed to enable Australian Rail Track Corporation to undertake repairs within the rail corridor, including infrastructure, necessitated by impacts from landslides and other severe weather impacts.

The initial possession between Unanderra and Moss Vale was extended through to Moss Vale commencing 20 May.

The Train Alteration Advice from ARTC notes that the end date of 5 August is "subject to change as works progress".

According to NSW TrainLink, some minor delays are expected to some services through Moss Vale caused by alterations to freight workings. *ARTC, NSW TRAINLINK*

VICTORIA



Glenroy opens

Glenroy station, on the Craigieburn line, opened to passengers on Friday 6 May, as part of the ongoing Level Crossing Removal project. It is the 35th station to be either upgraded or newly built by the project. A bus interchange was also opened adjacent to the railway station, saving a walk down to Blenheim Street for a bus. The nearby level crossing was also number 60 to be removed as part of the project. *RAIL EXPRESS*

V/Line: Geelong & Warrnambool line

The Geelong and Warrnambool line timetable has been reissued, effective from 29 May, with some changes to both train and coach services to account for the new platform at Waurm Ponds as well as infrastructure upgrades.

On the Geelong line, four trains extend to/from Waurm Ponds each weekday, while three weekday Wyndham Vale services will be scheduled to operate with a nine-car VLocity consist. On both lines, some services depart Southern Cross a minute earlier, while coach services have been re-coordinated to match train times, including at Waurm Ponds and Marshall stations.

Public Transport Victoria (PTV) advised that trains would operate at a slower speed along some sections around Waurm Ponds between 29 May and 29 June, with delays to journeys of up to nine minutes anticipated. **V/LINE, PTV**

V/Line: Warrnambool race day

Buses replaced V/Line train services between Geelong and Warrnambool between Saturday 30 April and Saturday 28 May for upgrading works to be carried out.

This disruption included Warrnambool's famous three-day racing carnival (May 3-5), including the Grand Annual Steeplechase and the Warrnambool Cup, both on the third day of the carnival.

For the Tuesday and Wednesday race meetings, an express bus departed Southern Cross at 7.46am and arrived at Warrnambool Station at 11.01am.

This bus also operated on Thursday, while two additional express buses departed Southern Cross at 7.15am (Warrnambool arrival 10.30am) and 7.30am (arrival 10.45am).

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the return express bus departed Warrnambool at 5.39pm with a scheduled arrival at Southern Cross at 8.54pm, while additional buses on Thursday departed Warrnambool at 6pm and 6.30pm, arriving Southern Cross at 9.15pm and 9.45pm.

The regular V/Line Warrnambool train departed Southern Cross at 7.50am, with passengers changing to buses at Geelong, departing at 9.02am to arrive at Warrnambool at 11.38am (stopping at Terang and Sherwood Park only). Another bus, also departing Geelong at 9.02am, stopping all stations from Waurm Ponds, arrived at 11.59am.

Racegoers were taken by local buses from the station to the racecourse.

While V/Line special race trains haven't operated for a number of years, buses replaced trains on the Warrnambool line in 2016.

By comparison, in 1978, the Victorian Railways operated three specials from Spencer Street to Warrnambool and an additional train from Geelong to Warrnambool. All told, that year 1,800 racegoers travelled by train. **ROSS MORRISON**

VLocity standard gauge services

Commencing from Sunday 3 July, more services on the Albury line will be scheduled to operate with new standard gauge VLocity stock. The converted services will be:

- 07:07 and 18:02 Weekdays ex Southern Cross
- 06:35 and 12:45 Weekdays ex Albury
- 07:05 and 18:02 Weekends ex Southern Cross
- 06:35 and 12:45 Weekends ex Albury

However, the weekday 12:05 ex Southern Cross and 17:20 ex Albury services will revert to being loco-hauled.

These changes will lead to the use of Albury Stabling Siding to store a VLocity train there overnight.

Meanwhile, V/Line continues with its **testing regime** for its new VLocity standard gauge trains, with set 3VS97 scheduled for testing for period 24-28 May, pending crew availability.

Commencing Tuesday, 24 May at 16:00, ex South Dynon Loco, the set was to run to Seymour Loco for overnight stabling.

On the following three days, it was to commence from the Loco siding at 05:30 (Wed)/06:20 (Thu/Fri) to then enter absolute possession for the testing from Longwood. Scheduled to exit the possession at Longwood at 13:25 each day, it was to return to the Loco Siding for stabling.

On Saturday 28 May, the set was to return back into South Dynon Loco with a 10:15 arrival. **LEN REGAN, V/LINE NETWORK PLANNING**

City Loop closedown inches closer

The state government has announced that the City Loop will close for two weeks this coming Summer.

As reported in the February 2022 edition of *Table Talk* (p. 3), a significant safety/security system upgrade is required throughout the tunnel and the three underground stations.

According to the state budget, the project will cost a total \$469 million to complete, over ten times the original 2011 estimate by the Napthine state government.

Further detail of the January possession will be revealed later in the year. **THE AGE**

Big Build: Service disruptions

With a number of large-scale infrastructure projects being undertaken in Melbourne and parts of regional Victoria, temporary possessions continue with replacement buses for selected Metro Trains, Yarra Trams and V/Line services (provided on page 3).

The state government's media release for the Frankston line disruptions in June and July advises that those works will involve the removal of two level crossings and the construction of a replacement station at Glenhuntly (*Ross' note: name spelt the other way in the government release*).

Source provided by - ROSS MORRISON

Source - PUBLIC TRANSPORT VICTORIA, VICTORIAN GOVT

Melbourne: IVic adviser says cut fares

An adviser with Infrastructure Victoria (shortened herein to IVic) says public transport fares should be cut in response to warnings of road traffic reaching capacity. This is despite recent increases in costs being borne by road users, such as rising fuel pricing and tollway charges.

The body's chief executive, Jonathan Spear said "If we offered off-peak fares for public transport, what we know that does in the modelling that Infrastructure Victoria has undertaken, is that it reduces the peaks of demand and spreads that out across the day".

According to IVic research, 70 per cent of the city's peak bus services are currently running at less than one-third of their true capacity, with fares on these buses the same as for long-distance peak train commutes.

Melbourne's Lord Mayor, Sally Capp, echoed these sentiments, saying that there was no more space to build new roads, "unless you want to see us do double-decker

Metro Trains

Line/s	Disruption	Works start	Finish
Frankston	Buses replace trains between Caulfield and Mordialloc.	Wednesday, 1 June	Thursday, 2 June
Sunbury	Buses replace trains between Sunshine and Sunbury.	Friday, 3 June	Wednesday, 29 June
Frankston	Buses replace trains between Caulfield and Mordialloc.	Friday, 1 July	
	Buses replace trains between South Yarra and Mordialloc.	Friday, 1 July	Sunday, 3 July
	Buses replace trains between Caulfield and Mordialloc.	Monday, 4 July	Thursday, 7 July
Belgrave and Lilydale	Buses replace trains between Camberwell and Ringwood.	Friday, 8 July	Sun, 10 July
		Sun, 10 July	Mon, 25 July
Craigieburn	Buses replace trains between Essendon and Broadmeadows.	Friday, 22 July	Sun, 24 July
		Monday, 25 July	
Pakenham	Buses replace trains between Dandenong and Pakenham.	Wednesday, 27 July	Sunday, 7 August
Sunbury	Buses replace trains between Sunshine and Sunbury.	Tuesday, 9 August	Tuesday, 23 August
Mernda	Buses replace trains between Parliament and Reservoir.	Friday, 26 August	Wednesday, 31 August
	Buses replace trains between Parliament and Epping.	Wednesday, 31 August	Sunday, 4 September

Yarra Trams

Route/s	Disruption	Works start	Works finish
96	Buses replace trams on Nicholson Street between Scotchmer (Stop 18) and Blyth Streets (Stop 23).	Sunday, 5 June	Monday, 6 June
16	Buses replace trams between Kooyong Station (Stop 65) and Cotham Rd (Stop 80).	Friday, 24 June	Sunday, 10 July
67	Buses replace trams between Glenhuntly shops (Stop 60) and Truganini Rd (Stop 68).	Friday, 1 July	Thursday, 7 July

V/Line

Line/s	Disruption	Works start	Works finish
Bendigo, Echuca and Swan Hill	Coaches replace trains from Southern Cross to Bendigo, and from Echuca to Swan Hill.	Friday, 3 June	Thursday, 16 June
	Coaches replace trains between Southern Cross and Gisborne.	Friday, 17 June	Wednesday, 29 June
Warrnambool	Coaches replace trains between Geelong and Warrnambool. Geelong services still operate between Southern Cross and Waurn Ponds.	Monday, 20 June	Wednesday, 29 June
Ballarat, Ararat and Maryborough	Coaches replace trains from Southern Cross to Ballarat, and from Ararat to Maryborough.	Saturday, 2 July	Thursday, 14 July
Seymour/Shepparton	Coaches replace trains between Southern Cross and Seymour/Shepparton.	Friday, 22 July	Monday, 25 July
Bairnsdale	Coaches replace trains between Southern Cross and Bairnsdale.	Wednesday, 27 July	Sunday, 7 August
Bendigo	Coaches replace trains between Southern Cross and Gisborne.	Tuesday, 9 August	Tuesday, 23 August

roads”.

The state government remains committed to its \$50+ billion Suburban Rail Loop, plus other projects such as the Metro Tunnel. *THE AGE*

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Budget 2022/23

Infrastructure Magazine reports that the state government released its 2022/23 Budget in May. It includes funding for transport projects including the continuation of various MetroNET projects (\$1 billion shared with the federal government, including cover for cost overruns from supply chain and inflationary pressures), and money for numerous roads and ports infrastructure projects. *INFRASTRUCTURE MAGAZINE*

NEW ZEALAND



Wellington: Snapper on Rail expands

Metlink has announced it will expand the availability of the Snapper smartcard ticketing system across the remainder of the rail network, with a gradual rollout planned across the month of November 2022.

A Metlink spokesperson said that 80 per cent of Johnsonville line passengers have taken up the smartcard since it was introduced as a trial in November last year. *Source supplied by PAUL BROWN, source METLINK*

Auckland Transport's financial mess

Auckland Transport (AT) has publicly revealed the intense financial pressure it is under as a result of rising costs, unexpectedly reduced funding, and falling revenue & patronage.

The agency revealed that it has identified \$215 million in reduced construction project funding from NZ Transport Agency, almost \$200 million in added work costs due to inflation, and patronage floundering at around 40 per cent of pre-COVID levels. The possible cessation to the Regional Fuel Tax next year would also deliver it a further \$1 billion black hole over 10 years.

AT says it will not be able to afford to oversee the operation of the existing public transport system in its current form from 1 July.

As at early April, AT was hoping the three-month half-fare initiative would bring enough people back to public transport to then convert them into paying customers from 1 July. Regardless of those results, the agency said it has postponed the introduction of new services and upcoming timetable improvements due to this financial squeeze.

Talks are ongoing between AT, Auckland Council, and the New Zealand government, while the agency awaits the

Auckland Council budget as well as the government's own budget in May. According to Transport Minister Michael Wood, "They are seeking a further subsidy on their side of fare box recovery. That is something we are looking at closely".

Commentator Matt Lowrie told 1News that AT aims to recover 80 to 90 per cent of pre-COVID patronage, but didn't have a time frame in mind - "It's just the question is, how long is that? Is it two years? Is it five years? We don't have five to 10 years to wait to get it back to where it was. We need it to be far ahead of that by then."

He also acknowledged the problems faced in New Zealand were shared with the world, saying there aren't yet any global cities that had seen their public transport networks recover from the pandemic's impacts. *STUFF.CO.NZ (2), 1NEWS*

INTERNATIONAL

Scotland: Rail nationalisation complete

From 1 April, passenger rail operations within Scotland began to operate under the government-owned ScotRail Trains entity, ending the private operation of the business under Dutch operator Abellio. Despite the contract initially due to run until 2025, the government announced in December 2019 that the contract would be terminated early under a contractual break clause.

BBC News reported in 2019 that there have been many critics of the service because of poor service reliability under Abellio. The government made its thoughts on rail privatisation clear, with Transport Secretary Michael Matheson saying in 2019 that "the current franchising regime... has failed. The rail industry as a whole must embrace reform". The government said that the private operator had made some improvements since 2015, however the increased subsidy required for its proposed changes moving forward were unjustifiable.

Despite this, Abellio has said that its plan "would have delivered an improved service for our customers at a reduced cost to the taxpayer". It also said that Abellio had seen the biggest investment in trains and stations in over 150 years of Scottish rail since starting its contract back in 2015.

Just like Transport for London, ScotRail has been receiving emergency funding from the government since March 2020, which ScotRail has also attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on passenger revenue.

The new ScotRail Trains operator, which is said to operate up to 2,400 services each day, is overseen by a new government entity, Scottish Rail Holdings. *BBC NEWS (2), THE SCOTTISH SUN*

UK: Crossrail finally opens

London's new Elizabeth line finally opened to passenger services on Tuesday, 24 May. Trains are operating at a less-than-full timetable for its first 12 months. Between 06:30 and 23:00, services operate every five minutes between Abbey Wood and Paddington six days a week.

Bond Street station has been excluded from the opening, with construction issues/delays as early as 2014. Reportedly, construction at the station was 18 months behind the rest of the 'central section' stations at one stage. The issues apparently so bad that Transport for

London brought those activities in-house in 2020, with the station now slated to open by September. **BBC NEWS, EVENING STANDARD**

Musk's Hyperloop testing

The Boring Company, founded in 2016 by Elon Musk, is planning to conduct full-scale Hyperloop testing by the end of the year. Part of Musk's long-term vision, he says that Hyperloop could achieve significant travel time savings for users. He has estimated a trip between Washington, D.C. and New York could eventually be done within 30 minutes.

Musk has said that Hyperloop would be ideal for any trip under 2,000 miles, with starship ideal for trips further than this "from a known physics standpoint". **FOX BUSINESS**

ENDS

BUS & COACH NEWS

NEW SOUTH WALES



Bankstown Central Interchange

Changes at the bus interchange located at the Bankstown Central shopping centre came into effect from Sunday, 15 May. Each of the three pre-existing stands at the Interchange has moved to a new area nearby, with stage one of the shopping centre upgrade to now progress full steam ahead.

The new stands are located across Link Road (Stand A) and The Mall (Stand B and C). **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

Further inner-northwest Sydney changes

In addition to last month's advertised withdrawal of route 543, Transport for NSW belatedly announced on 27 April that the relocated Marsden High School (HS) in Meadowbank would have additional commuter route and school trips scheduled, while other school services would either be withdrawn or renumbered. Effective from Tuesday, 26 April:

- Commuter route **501** has a new trip scheduled for school-day afternoons ex Marsden HS, while the **624w** school bus trip ex Ermington Public School has been converted into a public trip, as part of route 501, still operating 'school days only' (SDO).
- Routes **513** and **523** both have additional services. On both routes, one pre-existing AM trip has been extended from West Ryde station to Marsden HS on school days, while one new PM trip runs from the HS to Carlingford (513)/Parramatta (523), all SDO. The 513 PM trip was converted from previous school route 622w.

Unpacking the 543



In this month's edition of...

The Times

- School routes 623w, 626w, and 627w are fully withdrawn, while school routes 800w and 802w have been introduced, with one AM and one PM trip each.

TRANSPORT FOR NSW

Sydney CBD bus shelters delayed

If you have walked in the Sydney CBD in recent months, you have probably noticed the lack of bus shelters at many stops.

The City of Sydney Council signed a new 10-year street-level advertising contract with QMS Media back in June 2020, which includes street furniture including bus shelters and bins. The bus shelters carry an advertising panel on the off-side of the shelter, which is monetised by the out-of-home advertising partner.

Both parties have blamed COVID and wet weather for the delay, with the initial January completion date now pushed back to September. By that time, it expects to have 340 new bus shelters installed, with 20 public toilets expected by November (subject to development approvals).

As of early May, about 100 shelters had been put in place out of the 340 total. **SYDNEY MORNING HERALD**

Tamworth Country Music Festival

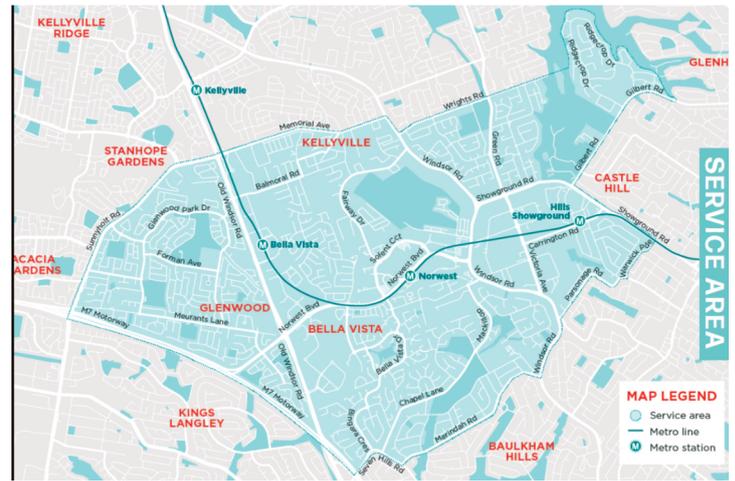
Tamworth Buslines operated **Festival Express** buses for the festival, with a timetable issued for dates Monday 18 to Saturday 23 April. No services operated on the final day, Sunday 24 April. The one-pager provides for four routes:

- Route **428** Quirindi to Tamworth - four return trips daily.
- Route **428** Quirindi Town Loop - four daily trips (one is split in the timetable).
- Route **443** Manilla to Tamworth - four return trips daily.

- Route **444** Bendemeer to Tamworth - three daily trips ex Caroline Street (two AM, one PM), four daily trips ex Brisbane Street (one AM, three PM).

While regular route services are provided with the above routes and numbers, it appears the company provided the above services additionally for the festival.

A special “festival wristband” fare was available, providing unlimited travel across the six days (\$40 adult, \$25 RED eligible holders), available from both bus drivers and at a physical ticket office located on the corner Brisbane and Peel Streets. **TAMWORTH BUSLINES**



Norwest On Demand discontinued

The CDC Hillsbus MetroConnect-operated Norwest On Demand bus service ceased to operate after close of business on Friday 27 May. Transport for NSW (TfNSW) said that the learnings from the three-year service period would assist the agency to plan future transport services in the area.

The On Demand service operated for peak-hour commuters on weekdays (06:00-10:00 and 16:00-21:00; coverage map below). Patronage numbers indicate, despite a promising start, that numbers have not fully recovered from the first COVID-19 lockdown early 2020.

According to TfNSW's notification, numerous commuter bus routes are available for travel to Norwest, Bella Vista and Hills Showground metro rail stations.

The services' coverage area is provided top right. **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

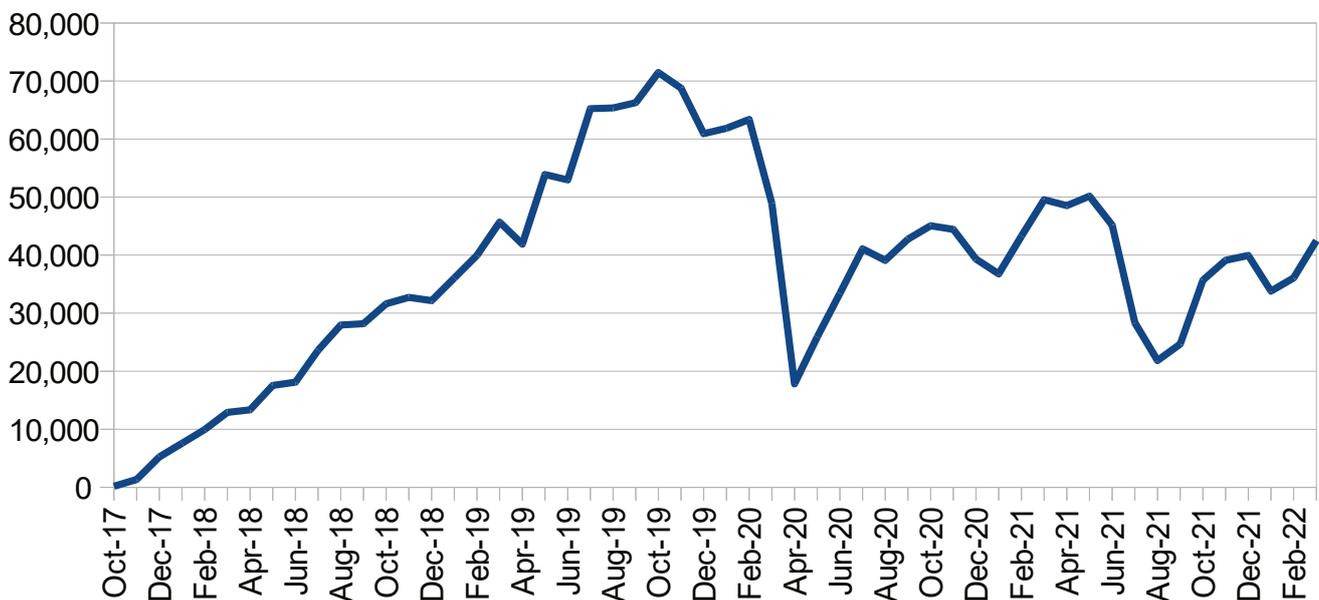
Regional Buses On Demand

As part of Transport's dabble in the On Demand sphere, since 2019 Regional Buses has been operating **two** distinct regional on demand services, as follows:

- 1) Since 11 February 2019, the Burrumbuttock/Walla/Jindera/Albury service. It is available on weekdays 07:00-18:00.
- 2) Since 1 July 2019, a unique service operates, known as the Holbrook service, with different areas serviced depending on the day of the week:
 - **Mondays and Wednesdays:** Holbrook/Morven/Culcairn/Gerogery West/Albury.
 - **Tuesdays:** Holbrook/Morven/Culcairn/Henty/Yerong Creek/The Rock/Uranquinty/Wagga Wagga.
 - **Thursdays:** Henty/Culcairn/Gerogery/Albury.
 - **Fridays:** Holbrook/Woomargama/Mullengandra/Albury.

Continues next page, with map >>>

NSW On Demand Bus - Monthly Patronage



Includes all metropolitan and regional 'On Demand Bus' trips across New South Wales. Many of the services have been operated on a trial basis, with some experimentation on service provision/availability, impacting potential patronage. Data source: Transport for NSW.

According to TfNSW, the Thursday service departs Henty at 07:30, to return at 15:45, while on other days, it departs Holbrook at 07:30, to return to Holbrook at 16:30. A map for this route-like second service is provided below from TfNSW.

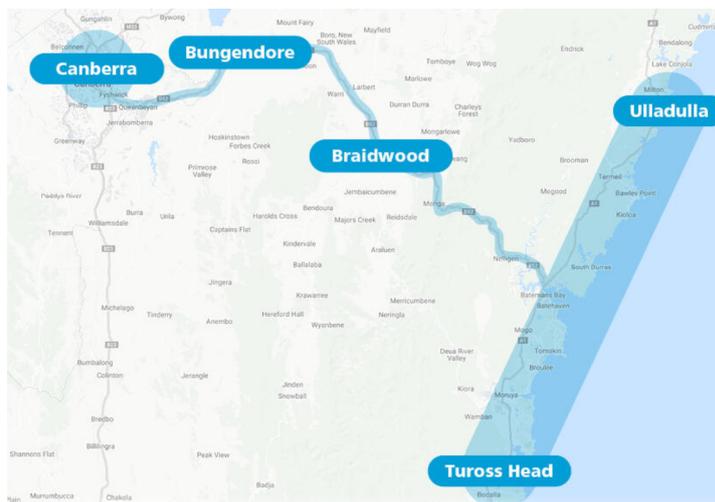
Regional Buses is a partnership between two bus operators: Bookabus and Burrum Bus Service. Initially, these services were contracted for six-month periods for up to 24 months total, however the continuation of these services indicates their success so far. **REGIONAL BUSES, TRANSPORT FOR NSW**



Rixons On Demand

Rixon's Buses provides a South Coast-Canberra On Demand service on Sundays through to Fridays (including public holidays except Christmas Day), with a service (called Rx1) departing the Bay at 07:30 to arrive Canberra 09:45, and return (called Rx2) departing Canberra 16:45 to arrive back at the Bay 18:45.

The operator does advise that, in addition to the predetermined stops on the service, "the shuttle includes our trademark (optional) front door pick up and/or drop off at coastal locations between Milton and Tuross" (see map below, which at least adds adds some meat to the 'on demand' idea). **TRANSPORT FOR NSW**



LiveBetter On Demand

LiveBetter Services operates three On Demand services in regional New South Wales as follows:

- **Central West:** Ivanhoe-Hay operates every second Thursday, to depart Ivanhoe 07:30 then arrive Hay 10:20, and return departing Hay 13:30 to arrive Ivanhoe 16:00. Collarenebri-Narrabri operates every Friday, to depart 08:30 then arrive Narrabri 10:30, and return departing Narrabri 13:00 to arrive Collarenebri 15:30.
- **Tottenham-Dubbo:** Operates on Wednesdays, departing Tottenham at 08:15 to arrive Dubbo 10:45, then departs Dubbo 14:00 to arrive Tottenham 16:35.
- **Wyangala-Canberra:** Operates on Fridays, departing Wyangala at 07:30 to arrive Canberra 11:20, then departs Canberra 14:30 to arrive Wyangala 18:20.

It is not immediately clear why these services fall under "On Demand" transport as they appear to be scheduled like a daily route service with predetermined stops, although the service information on the website does provide for a little bit of flexibility. For example, with the Dubbo service, the website states that "additional pick up and drop off points can be discussed when making the booking", providing Dubbo Airport, train station or hospital as examples. The website also states "there is no eligibility criteria to use this service. Your driver can pick you up at home (or near your home) and drop you off at a predetermined place of interest, & vice versa". **LIVEBETTER**

VICTORIA



Budget funds timetable improvements

The state government confirmed in its May Budget that it is planning to introduce new FlexiRide On Demand bus services for Greensborough and St Helena. The state government has allocated \$109 million for bus service improvements across 2022-23 financial year.

The government said it would also spend \$5 million to upgrade 80 existing bus stops. **VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT**

Tarneit bus interchange

The state government announced in early April that it plans to develop a new bus interchange at Tarneit railway station, to be located in the southern car park area. The project is set to double the number of stopping bays available.

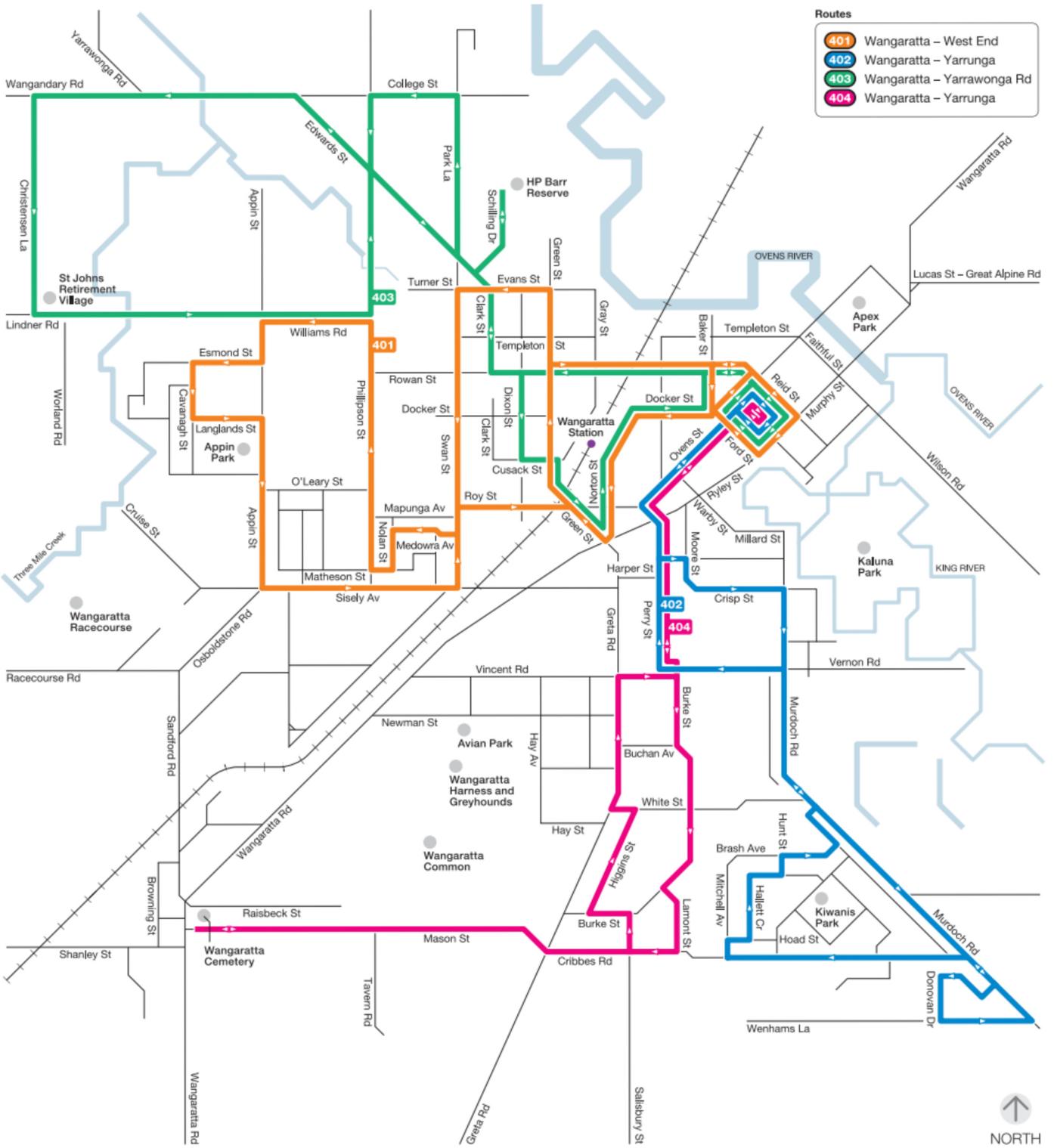
The government says that Tarneit is the second-busiest station on the V/Line network, with over 1.24 million commuters using it each year.

This project will be funded through the state's Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution fund. Construction is expected to commence by the end of this year.

Tarneit will also be a beneficiary of the state government's Car Parks for Commuters program, with up to 500 (either) new or upgraded parking spots. Those works will occur over the 2022/23 financial year.



Wangaratta bus network



Information



For more information visit ptv.vic.gov.au or call 1800 800 007 (6am – midnight daily)

MAP NOT TO SCALE
Effective 4 November 2009

© Public Transport Victoria 2013

FlexiRide On Demand service is also planned to launch in the Tarneit area later this year. **VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT**

Bus strike

Over 1,500 bus drivers went on strike on Friday 6 May in a 24-hour work stoppage, impacting bus users in Melbourne's eastern, south-eastern, and north-eastern suburbs. The striking drivers were from operators Dysons and Ventura.

According to the local union, Dysons is so far refusing to pass on a government funded 2.19 per cent wage increase. Meanwhile, with Ventura, the union said that it had yet to reach an agreement on working conditions. **ABC NEWS**

Wangaratta bus network

Previously unreported are details of the Wangaratta bus network, comprising the four routes below:

- 401 Wangaratta-West End
- 402 Wangaratta-Yarrunga via Murdoch Rd
- 403 Wangaratta-Yarrowonga Rd
- 404 Wangaratta-Yarrunga via Mason St

Monday to Friday services operate every thirty minutes and Saturday morning services every sixty minutes.

The map provided by PTV of these routes is provided on page 8. **Report by HILAIRE FRASER, source PUBLIC TRANSPORT VICTORIA (PTV)**

TASMANIA



Free fare initiative

Whilst Tasmania's five-week fare-free period (28 March-1 May) had a poor start, good time allowed this to be turned around, according to **ABC News**. Service cancellations have dogged the state's bus system throughout, potentially resulting in some potential users staying away from trying the system. For example, on 30 March, over 80 service cancellations were recorded.

According to Metro Tasmania, the cancellations were caused by "unprecedented" numbers of driver illness (with 23 from Hobart, eight from Launceston that day), with the state also at the time experiencing record daily COVID-19 infection numbers. It also said it had driver-licenced administration staff driving to help ease the strain.

This reason was disputed by local union officials, who said that a recent driver survey that they had conducted found security of drivers a major issue of concern amongst respondents, with anti-social behaviour increasing in frequency and severity. A Metro Tasmania spokesperson indicated some driver resignations had occurred in late 2021 attributed to the reopening of state borders after pandemic lockdowns with Metro having "a mature workforce".

Late in May, Transport Minister Michael Ferguson said that overall, patronage had increased, despite the cancellations, by between 9 and 16 per cent across the state.

Metro Tasmania's chief executive, Katie Cooper, said "It's been a challenging period which was unfortunate timing ... but overall if we look across the state, there's been a 15 per cent increase in patronage and I think that's incredibly pleasing. That means we've had more people either try the service for the first time travelling or perhaps they've been a regular user and have been able to use it more..." **ABC NEWS (2)**

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Adelaide: Service reductions

The list of routes with selected service cancellations across Adelaide's bus network due to COVID-related staff shortages, as reported in recent editions of *Table Talk*, continues to reduce.

For period 2-15 May, **Hills** region routes 840X, T840, 861, 863F, and T863 were the only ones with pre-scheduled cancellations. Since 16 May, only the T863 and 863F continue to be impacted.

As of 20 May, many routes in the **East-West, North-South, Outer North** and **Outer North East** regions continue to have one or more daily service cancellations, with a five-page list provided by Adelaide Metro.

Outer South region services are no longer impacted by these reductions, with the full timetable back in operation as of early May. **ADELAIDE METRO**

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Perth: Service reductions

Transperth advised in late April that some of the city's commuter routes have been experiencing frequency reductions due to COVID-19 related staff shortages. This is still current as at 23 May. **TRANSPERTH**

NEW ZEALAND



Whanganui to gain new spine

Horizons Regional Council plans to implement a new "spine" connector bus service between Castlecliff and Aramoho. Using four new buses, it will have improved service frequencies and extended operating hours of service compared to the existing services. Buses will operate every 20 minutes on weekdays (07:00-19:00, then hourly to 23:00) and Saturdays (09:00-15:00).

The new service is planned to commence in early 2023. A mapped overview of the new spine route is provided top left of the next page. **HORIZONS REGIONAL COUNCIL**



Otago, Auck bus use rises with halved fares

The *Otago Daily Times* reported an immediate positive impact of the national government's half-price public transport fare initiative, which commenced on Friday 1 April for a three-month period. Across in Dunedin, bus patronage across the weekend of 2-3 April was up 20 per cent on the previous weekend. On the same metric, Queenstown bus use rose by 17 per cent.

Meanwhile, in Auckland, public transport use (which includes all modes) reached a 2022 record on Thursday 7 April, with 175,774 trips recorded (and up 20 per cent on two weeks earlier). This was the equivalent of 47 per cent of normal pre-COVID levels. **STUFF.CO.NZ, OTAGO DAILY TIMES**

Bid to increase public transport use

Plans are afoot to triple the use of public transport services in the lower North Island region over the next 10 years. The area, under the auspices of Horizons Regional Council, covers 5 per cent of the country's population, and includes the population centres of Palmerston North, Feilding, and Whanganui.

The HRC is reviewing a draft Public Transport Regional Plan, which would focus on achieving this boost between 2022 and 2032. A ten-year plan is already in force for the period 2015-2025, however the 2021 Regional Land Transport Plan update necessitated the updated public transport plan.

According to the draft Plan, HRC expects expenditure on passenger public transport services, which makes up around 85 per cent of its annual transport budget, to nearly triple between 2021 and 2031, from ~\$NZ7 million to ~\$NZ18 million.

A review of Palmerston North bus services has been underway for some time (*Table Talk*, November 2021, p. 12), while the new white-liveried Feilding Orbital service (*Table Talk*, November 2021, p. 12-13) commenced operation on Tuesday, 25 January this year. According to the draft Plan, the pre-existing Palmerston North to Feilding regional bus route was one of the fastest recovering services post-COVID lockdowns. Further Palmerston North changes, such as route & frequency changes and the inclusion of Ashhurst in the urban network, are expected to be implemented in November 2023.

A review of Whanganui's urban services has also been undertaken, an overview of the proposed Castlecliff-Aramoho service is provided in the previous article.

The report also says that Council intends to look towards unifying all local public transport services under a single multi-modal brand by 2024 and, in the process, provide a one-stop shop for public transport information. A number

of Australasian jurisdictions have already achieved this over the past 15 years, in particular, including New South Wales (Transport for NSW) and Victoria (PTV). The report lists at least 11 existing contracts in place with Council across the region.

Other key targets include at least 10 per cent of all travel to be done using public transport, 90 per cent customer satisfaction, and at least 200 per cent increase in patronage by 2032 (based on 2018/19 BeeCard data).

The new final plan is expected to be signed off in August. **STUFF.CO.NZ, MANAWATU DISTRICT COUNCIL (MDC), HRC**



New Feilding Orbital bus, operated by Uzabus (source: MDC).

ENDS

AIR NEWS

DOMESTIC



Jetstar expands Canberra flight choice

Jetstar has announced that it will soon commence new flights servicing the nation's capital.

The budget airline initially entered the Canberra market last December with flights to/from Brisbane. Now it has announced that daily flights operating Canberra-Melbourne will begin on July 1, with a Canberra-Gold Coast service starting in mid-September.

The territory's Chief Minister, Andrew Barr, said Jetstar's Brisbane-Canberra route had proven successful over its first five months, with more than 80 per cent of seats sold. Quotes from Mr Barr included: "This is a real vote of confidence from Jetstar in the Canberra market. It's also going to open the door for thousands of extra tourists to be able to get to Canberra in an affordable way. Visit Canberra will work with Jetstar on cooperative marketing campaigns to promote the new services. Melbourne is our second biggest inbound market after Sydney, so it's going to be an easy opportunity for us to grow our Victorian tourism and particularly short-break tourism

over weekends. Now to have four airlines flying [to Melbourne] and competing, really is fantastic news. One of the challenges for us is that it's often been cheaper to fly to Bali or to other parts of Australia than it has been to fly into Canberra, so this is a game-changer for us."

Canberra Region Tourism Industry Council chief executive, Naomi Dale, agreed "Just the way that Canberra is perceived as an expensive place to visit or travel to, it will make a huge difference having access to that budget airline". *Source supplied by ROSS MORRISON, source ABC NEWS*

Rex culls expansion flights, eyes Delta link

Regional Express (Rex) announced on 19 May that it would no longer fly on the Melbourne-Albury route after its last flight on 29 May.

The airline has effectively conceded on its expansionist idea to take on the capital city high flyers Qantas and Virgin, by announcing on 24 May that it would also end its Canberra-Sydney flights on 29 May.

In other news, Rex recently signed a Letter of Intent with Delta Airlines to commence providing reciprocal interline ticketing and baggage services by September. Chairperson John Sharp said that a final agreement would allow them "easy access to Rex's expansive network of over 60 routes throughout regional Australia". *AGNES BOSKOVITZ, THE CANBERRA TIMES, REGIONAL EXPRESS, SIMPLE FLYING*

Brisbane flight paths

Airservices Australia has proposed an increase in the allowable tailwind threshold for incoming flights from five to seven knots, which would enable arriving flights to make more use of Moreton Bay when descending into Brisbane Airport, rather than inner Brisbane residential suburbs.

Brisbane Airport is itself supportive of the proposal, having last year supported an unsuccessful push to 10 knots, saying that in the past the airport had had a 10 knot maximum for three decades. A spokesperson for the Airline Pilot's association has defended the existing limits,

saying any increase would increase risks. Complicating matters is the recent federal election, that saw the Greens gain the seat of Griffith, and very close in the race for the seats of Ryan and Brisbane, with the party gaining supporters from the fight to impose an airport curfew and move flight paths away from the suburbs.

Nine News reports that a Boeing report had found that, between 2003 and 2010, 42 per cent of runway overruns had occurred when tailwinds were at five knots or greater. *NINE NEWS BRISBANE*

INTERNATIONAL



Project Sunrise

As part of its now long-known Project Sunrise program, Qantas has finally confirmed that from late 2025, it will commence operating long-haul flights non-stop between Sydney and New York/London/other European destinations.

The airline's chief executive, Alan Joyce, called this project the "final fix for the tyranny of distance", slashing journey times by 3-4 hours, and in the process will likely become the longest commercial flights in the world.

This announcement coincided with the revelation of a new order for 12 Airbus A350-1000 aircraft which will contain capacity for 238 passengers across first, business, premium economy and economy classes.

Simultaneously, the airline has confirmed that it is also ordering 20x A321XLRs and 20x A220-300s for domestic use from late 2023, replacing its existing Boeing 717s and 737s. *SAMCHUI.COM*

ENDS

TIMETABLE ALERT

Bus - Sunshine Coast, Queensland

All Sunshine Coast timetables effective 2 August 2021 have now been reissued in the new pink and blue colours on the Translink website:

- 600 602 Caloundra-Maroochydore
- 603 Caloundra-Little Mountain
- 604 606 Caloundra-Caloundra West/Baringa
- 605 615 Landsborough-Caloundra/Maroochydore
- 607 618 Caloundra-University & Kawana-Sippy Downs
- 609 Caloundra-Pelican Waters
- 610 612 Maroochydore-Caloundra
- 611 Maroochydore-Sunshine Coast Uni Hospital
- 614 619 Kawana-Maroochydore
- 616 617 Maroochydore-University/Sippy Downs
- 620 622 Maroochydore-Noosa Heads

- 626 627 Tewantin-Sunrise Beach/Sunshine Beach
- 628 629 Noosa-Tewantin
- 630 631 632 Noosa-Nambour/Cooran
- 636 Nambour-University
- 637 638 Nambour Local Services

Report by HILAIRE FRASER, source TRANSLINK

Bus - Perth, Western Australia

The following Transperth timetables have been reissued on their website (transperth.wa.gov.au):

Effective 24 April 2022:

- TimeTable 63: Routes 441 442 Whitfords-Warwick
- TT 78: Routes 483 484 Clarkson-Alkimos
- TT 83: Routes 490 491 Butler-Two Rocks/Yanchep
- TT 89: Routes 279 291 294 297 304 Midland-Carousel/Kalamunda
- TT 93: Routes 343 345 Morley-Beechboro/Bennett Springs
- TT 106 Routes 66,67, 68 Perth-Morley & Mirrabooka
- TT 202: Route 950 Morley-QE II Medical Centre

Effective 8 May 2022:

- TT 5 Routes 219 220 Perth-Armadale
- TT 7 Routes 240 241 250 Kelmscott & Armadale Local Services
- TT 124 Routes 540 to 544 Kwinana Local Services
- TT 135 Routes 564 to 569 Baldivis Local Services

Report by HILAIRE FRASER, source TRANSLINK

About Table Talk

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