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ASSOCIATION

TABLE TALK

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RAIL & TRAM NEWS

QUEENSLAND



ETCS testing

Queensland Rail (QR) successfully tested the use of European Train Control System (ETCS) on one night in July, trialling a train using the system along the Shorncliffe line. While the train control system will be used from day one of the Cross River Rail line, the system will also be progressively added onto the existing Brisbane suburban network, with QR's 160 and 260 series trains currently being progressively fitted with the in-cab equipment out of its Redbank facility by QR, Hitachi and Cross River Rail Delivery Authority.

ETCS relays information between the train and the rail control centre via a radio system, trackside technology and the onboard equipment. The state's transport minister, Mark Bailey, said that ETCS "allows a continuous flow of information of the train – its direction, its speed, all those sorts of things – to the control centre, so we can run more trains more often and more tightly together, and it's much safer than the current signalling system".

Trains using ETCS are planned to commence operating passenger services from 2025. *INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY JOURNAL, RAIL EXPRESS, THE AGE*

NEW SOUTH WALES



Sydney Trains: Timetable update

A new Sydney Trains Standard Working Timetable (SWTT) was scheduled to commence from Saturday 2 July, designated as version 9.40 to incorporate infrastructure changes, such as the commissioning of the *More Trains, More Services* turnback infrastructure at Hurstville. That work has been postponed, with the updated SWTT v9.40 withdrawn. The June SWTT (v9.31) remains in effect. The next SWTT update is expected in October.

The Hurstville postponement led to alterations in the T4 line working for the weekend of 2/3 July, with trains initially planned to only operate between Bondi Junction and Central (to a 12-minute service frequency) instead

extended to operate between Bondi Junction and Hurstville (to a 15-min frequency). Express replacement buses between Central and Kirrawee/Cronulla still operated over the weekend. **SYDNEY TRAINS**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIMETABLE TYPE</u>
TUE 28 JUNE	Reduced timetable
THU 30 JUNE	Skeleton TT with added services
FRI 01 JULY	Skeleton timetable
TUE 05 JULY	Some cancellations post-21:00
WED 06 JULY	Skeleton TT with added services
THU 07 JULY	Some cancellations post-21:00
FRI 08 JULY	Skeleton TT with added services
WED 27 JULY	Cancellations post-21:00
THU 28 JULY	Cancellations until around 06:00

Sydney & NSW Trains: Industrial action

Following on from last month's introductory item (pages 2-3) on the impacts of industrial action on the timetable, further detail was available after publication.

The timetable-relevant actions in this recent campaign of industrial action included:

- **Tuesday 28 June only** - Services kept to no more than 60 kilometres per hour.
- **Thursday 30 June only** - Drivers not to travel as "pass".
- **Indefinitely from Thursday 30 June** - No late notice service changes (i.e.: transpositions), excluding "emergency working". *Suspended 4 July*.
- **Friday 1 July** - Ban on working 4th generation rollingstock (M/H/A/B sets).
- **Wednesday 6 July** - Ban on working 4th generation rollingstock.
- **Friday 8 July** - Ban on working 4th generation rollingstock.

The so-called "slowdown" on **Tuesday, 28 June** led to extensive network delays, with some services running as much as two hours late, and the eventual termination of most trains in the mid-evening due to a lack of crew resources available to man said trains, therefore the majority of trains were put back to bed by Operations Control to ensure the normal timetable could be delivered

for Wednesday morning.

Unusually, for **Thursday 30 June**, instead of running the regular network timetable, with some services post-9pm cancelled, as occurred on 19 October last year, Sydney Trains drastically reduced the entire day's working.

Using the "skeleton timetable" as a base, with those services operated exclusively by non-privately-maintained stock (K, T and V sets), Sydney Trains 'Train Planning' added some additional services to provide a 15-minute headway or otherwise cover gaps using the newer Waratah A and B sets (referred to below as '4GT') between 06:00 and 19:00 hours only. The working for each line was as follows:

- **T1 North Shore and Western:** every 15 minutes alternating between Hornsby/Lindfield and Penrith/Richmond (all stations between Strathfield and Penrith/Richmond). 06:00-19:00 had an additional 4 trains per hour between Blacktown and North Sydney (not stopping at Flemington and Homebush) on a 12/18 min alternating frequency using 4GT. The extra services meant an average 7.5 minute service between Blacktown and the city. Hornsby-Berowra covered by Central Coast Newcastle services.
- **T2 Inner West Leppington:** every 30 mins between City Circle Inner and Leppington, stopping all stations (including Homebush this time!). 06:00-19:00 had an additional all-stations service every 30 mins between City Inner and Ashfield using 4GT to provide 15-minute headways.
- **T3 Bankstown:** every 30 mins between City Inner and Liverpool. 04:00-23:00 had an additional shuttle train service between Lidcombe and Bankstown operating every 30 mins utilising 2x 4GT, then replacement buses 23:00-01:00.
- **T4 Eastern Suburbs Cronulla:** every 15 mins between Bondi Junction and Cronulla/Waterfall (alternating). Additional shuttle service between City Inner and Hurstville every 30 mins 06:00-18:00 using 3x 8A sets - an unusual sight for the folk of Kogarah!
- **T5 Cumberland:** all services cancelled, with passengers required to change at Granville.
- **T7 Olympic Park:** services halved to every 20 mins until 23:00, then replacement buses to around 01:00.
- **T8 Airport:** every 30 mins between City Outer and Campbelltown, stopping all stations using older rollingstock. Limited buses operated between Campbelltown and Macarthur. Additional all-stations service between City Outer and Revesby every 30 mins to provide 15-minute headways 06:00-19:00 using 4GT.
- **T9 Northern:** services operating in a 20/10 min alternating frequency between City Outer and Epping/Hornsby. No additional service.
- **South Coast:** hourly all-stations service between Waterfall and Wollongong using mostly 4-car T sets, with buses operating between Wollongong and Port Kembla. Kiama-Bomaderry shuttle ran to the weekday timetable. 04:00-23:00 had an additional hourly all-stations service between Thirroul and Kiama using 4-car H sets, then 23:00-01:00 replacement buses between Wollongong and Kiama.
- **Blue Mountains:** services operated to weekend timetable (Bathurst Bullet weekday timetable).
- **Central Coast Newcastle:** services operated to

weekend timetable (with some additional peak services).

- **Hunter and other NSW TrainLink Regional** services were scheduled to operate to the weekday timetable.

It is unclear if this day's significantly reduced working was wholly because of the ban on drivers travelling "passenger" during their shifts, or if there were other factors at play.

On **Friday 1 July**, services were scheduled to the skeleton timetable (as above, without the "additional" services; also *Table Talk*, Nov 2021, p. 2; and March 2022, p. 3). On 30 June, a Tables Telegram was issued to provide an extra half-hourly shuttle service 05:00-22:00 between Central and Turrella using two extra 8-car T sets to provide 15-minute headways for airport stations. It is noted that this working coincided with the last day before the winter school holiday break.

Replacement buses covered service gaps as follows:

- **8T8 Campbelltown-Macarthur.**
- Lidcombe-Olympic Park.
- Lidcombe-Bankstown.
- **2SC Wollongong-Kiama.**
- **4SC Wollongong-Port Kembla.**

As per the working on 30 June, Central Coast Newcastle services made additional stops between Hornsby and Berowra, instead of a bus replacement being provided. The intermediate stations therefore had an hourly train service for most of the day.

On Tuesday 5 July, the combined rail unions agreed to enable two 4GT set types to operate on 6 and 8 July, because of various flooding impacts on the network and passengers from heavy rainfall in the previous few days. However, the union simultaneously added a new ban on Transport Officers issuing fines for both 6 and 8 July.

The agreement enabled Sydney Trains to add extra services for **Wednesday 6 July** and **Friday 8 July**, issued in a telegram on the evening of 5 July. The result was that the working for this day was in line with the skeleton and additional services provided on Thursday 30 June, although this was reconfigured to take into account the major trackwork on the Bankstown line, as follows:

T3 Bankstown: running every 30 mins between City Inner and Liverpool (limited stops via Strathfield) using a mix of T and K sets.

T4 Eastern Suburbs Cronulla: the additional Hurstville shuttle services were this time provided by 3x 8M sets.

T8 Airport: an extra half-hourly City Outer to Turrella service every 30 minutes, provided by incoming T3 Bankstown services.

It is unclear what difference there was, on the ground, with the bus service frequencies for Wollongong-Kiama/Port Kembla, Campbelltown-Macarthur, and Lidcombe-Olympic Park, in light of the bus availability issue.

A four-hour stop-work was scheduled to occur on **Thursday 28 July** between 00:01 and 04:01, with services expected to not operate from around 22:00 the previous night to at least 05:30. The action was called after further disagreement between the government and workers' representatives over proposed pay rises as part of a new Enterprise Agreement. A line-by-line overview of the last and first services is provided on page 4. **SYDNEY TRAINS, TRANSPORT FOR NSW, RAIL TRAM & BUS UNION**

Sydney & NSW Trains: Other disruption

In addition to the above, significant rainfall from an “east coast low” drenched Sydney, the Illawarra, and surrounding areas with rain between 2 and 6 July, with consequential impacts on trains running. For much of the disruption, only very limited bus replacement was available, due to what Sydney Trains called a “state-wide” shortage. Outside the comprehensive Bankstown line bus replacement across the fortnight, it is unclear what other issues may be contributing to this issue.

The **Southern Highlands** line was impacted between Campbelltown and Moss Vale, due to the usual flooding of the line at Picton. The line opened and closed several times during this period. Meanwhile, the **South Coast** line was also impacted, with line closure between Waterfall and Thirroul lasting around 1-2 days.

Hunter line train services did not operate from Sunday 3 July, due largely to flooding at Sandgate, but the rainfall and flooding event also saw the activation of the floodgates at Maitland, which sit directly on top of the rail lines while in use. The gates block the floodwaters from the Hunter River, as part of the local flood mitigation strategy. Limited to no replacement bus service was available along the line in the first few of days. On the morning of Wednesday 6 July, Transport advised that local bus routes **401-4, 180** and **180X** were cancelled outright due to flooding, while **181** and **145** services were “diverting away from Anderson Drive via New England Highway to Tarro and looping back into Beresfield and Woodberry”. By Thursday 7 July, the train replacement services were curtailed to operate between Newcastle Interchange and Victoria Street due to road closures further inland until 13 July, when buses could get into Maitland station, then the next day extended along the rest of the line. Train services resumed on Monday 18 July.

On Monday 4 July, **Richmond** line services were curtailed to operate only as far as Mulgrave, then extended later in the day to Riverstone, with limited replacement buses operating ex Schofields through to Richmond. By the next day, the buses were only operating express between Schofields and Richmond due to local road closures blocking access to intermediate stations. By the early morning of 6 July, **N71** buses were cancelled between Schofields and Richmond, while local route **668, 669, 671-80**, and **682** buses were significantly impacted due to flooding causing widespread road closures. On 7 July, it was reported that N71 buses had resumed running through to/from Richmond, but skipping Mulgrave and Clarendon stops by “diverting away from Hawkesbury Valley Way near Macquarie Street”. During the afternoon of Monday 11 July, Transport advised that route **668, 669, 672, 679, 680** and **682** services were cancelled. For the working week of 11-15 July, a Special Train Notice showed that trains had been rearranged with altered “zig zags” for services starting/finishing at Riverstone. Train services resumed operating through to Richmond from around midnight on the morning of Tuesday 19 July.

Due to a significant landslide, adjacent to the running line, the **Blue Mountains** line was closed between Katoomba and Mount Victoria due to a landslide from late night on Monday 4 July. Known working for this disruption has been provided in the following article, titled *Blue Mountains: Altered working*.

From Tuesday 5 July, the **Central Coast Newcastle** line closed between Wyong/Morisset/Fassifern and Cardiff due to flooding at Cockle Creek, with limited replacement buses available. On 7 July, the ad hoc services were settled to operate Strathfield/Hornsby-Wyong, and Cardiff-Newcastle Interchange, with a shuttle train service doing Wyong-Fassifern or Morisset. The line reopened on

Saturday 9 July.

Meanwhile, outside direct weather impacts on the network, an increase in COVID and influenza-related illness on staff also saw an increase in service cancellations across much of July, with a greater impact on afternoon services. Some days saw up to two dozen services cancelled across the suburban network.

TRANSPORT FOR NSW, SYDNEY TRAINS

Blue Mountains: Altered working

Continuing from the paragraph provided in the above article, a significant landslide forced the extended closure of the Blue Mountains rail line between Katoomba and Mount Victoria from the night of Monday 5 July onwards to enable extensive remediation works.

Ad-hoc shuttle train services were implemented to operate Penrith-Katoomba and Mount Victoria-Lithgow for the first week, with limited emergency replacement bussing operating along the closed section (Katoomba-Mount Victoria).

NSW TrainLink Regional Western services, including the Dubbo XPT and Broken Hill Xplorer services have been either partially or fully cancelled, with coach replacement provided where possible. For the Dubbo XPT, instances have seen coach replacement provided between Sydney and Bathurst, with an Xplorer set used to operate between Bathurst and Dubbo.

From **Monday 11 July**, Special Train Notices were being issued for train working, which meant the services were now running to an actual timetable again, and therefore reliably showing for passengers on interfaces such as Transport’s online Trip Planner and various mobile phone applications.

The weekday working provided for one four carriage V (1x 4V) set train to operate every 75 minutes between Mount Victoria and Lithgow (30 minutes journey time per direction). There was a sole 90-minute gap between last and first service each weeknight through the week, effectively providing a 24-hour service for passengers in the Up direction between Lithgow and Mount Victoria (the first train ex Mount Victoria at ~02:00 operates empty, meaning a nearly three-hour gap in that direction only). Strangely, all Up direction trips had mandatory stops at Zig Zag, whereas the Down direction trips had the usual ‘stop only on demand’. Bell has the conditional stops in both directions.

Meanwhile, east of the closure, a mix of Katoomba-Penrith (with 3x 4V providing an average hourly service) and Katoomba-Central (3x 8V providing an average two-hourly service) services were timetabled. It is noted that the Penrith-Central part of the full trip adds roughly 50 minutes of travel time to each leg for a train.

Meanwhile, on weekends, services have been scheduled to operate hourly between Blacktown and Katoomba (using 4x 8V). **SYDNEY TRAINS**

TRIP	AM	PM
Central-Katoomba	05	08
Penrith-Katoomba	08	13
Katoomba-Central	05	06
Katoomba-Penrith	09	12

Table: Blue Mountains Line daily special working for the working week 11-15 July. Post-midnight trips have been counted under ‘PM’

Line	Type	Service
T1 North Shore	Last	21:57 Hornsby to Central (Up) 22:50 Central* to Hornsby (Down)
	First	05:21 Hornsby to Central* (Up) 05:50 Waverton to Berowra (Down)
T1 West	Last	21:14 Emu Plains to Central (Up) 22:10 Central* to Penrith (Down)
	First	05:52 Blacktown to Central* (Up) 05:40 Central to Penrith (Down)
T2 Inner West	Last	21:21 Homebush to City Circle (Up) 21:52 Circular Quay to Homebush (Down)
	First	06:04 Strathfield to City Circle (Up) 05:58 Circular Quay to Parramatta (Down)
T2 Leppington	Last	21:39 Leppington to Central (Up) 21:33 Circular Quay to Leppington (Down)
	First	05:52 Leppington to City Circle (Up) 06:07 Circular Quay to Leppington (Down)
T3 Bankstown	Last	21:24 Liverpool to Sydenham (Up) 22:25 Sydenham to Lidcombe (Down)
	First	06:07 Bankstown to City Circle (Up) 06:18 Circular Quay to Liverpool (Down)
T4 East Subs Cronulla	Last	21:54 Waterfall to Central (Up) 22:45 Bondi Junction to Hurstville (Down)
	First	05:17 Hurstville to Bondi Junction (Up) 05:45 Bondi Junction to Cronulla (Down)
T5 Cumberland	Last	22:05 Liverpool to Blacktown (Up/Down A) 21:12 Richmond to Leppington (Down/Up B)
	First	06:21 Leppington to Blacktown (Up/Down A) 06:35 Blacktown to Leppington (Down/Up B)
T7 Olympic Park	Last	22:34 Lidcombe to Olympic Park (Up) 22:42 Olympic Park to Lidcombe (Down)
	First	05:54 Lidcombe to Olympic Park (Up) 05:42 Olympic Park to Lidcombe (Down)
T8 Airport East Hills	Last	21:28 Macarthur to Central (Up) 22:10 Central to Revesby (Down)
	First	05:40 Macarthur to City Circle (Up) 06:02 Circular Quay to Macarthur (Down)
T9 Northern	Last	21:56 Hornsby to Central* (Up) 22:18 Central to Hornsby (Down)
	First	05:30 Hornsby to Central* (Up) 06:16 Central to Hornsby (Down)
Central Coast Newcastle	Last	19:24 Newcastle Interchange to Central (Up) 21:15 Central to Gosford (Down)
	First	05:54 Gosford to Central (Up) 05:45 Central to Newcastle Interchange (Down)
Blue Mountains	Last	21:29 Katoomba to Central (Up) 19:18 Central to Katoomba (Down)
	First	08:42 Katoomba to Central (Up) 08:23 Central to Katoomba (Down)
South Coast	Last	19:49 Kiama to Central (Up) 21:23 Central to Wollongong (Down)
	First	05:57 Wollongong to Bondi Jct (Up) 06:54 Central to Wollongong (Down)
Southern Highlands	Last	19:06 Moss Vale to Campbelltown (Up) 20:50 Campbelltown to Moss Vale (Down)
	First	05:16 Moss Vale to Campbelltown (Up) 06:49 Campbelltown to Moss Vale (Down)
Hunter	Last	20:51 Scone to Newcastle Interchange (Up) 20:48 Newcastle Interchange to Telarah (Down)
	First	06:10 Telarah to Newcastle Interchange (Up) 05:29 Newcastle Interchange to Telarah (Down)

* - not the actual start/end location of the service.

NB: A number of short-workings not running In/out of Sydney city centre have been omitted.

Sydney Trains - Altered last service for Wednesday 27 July and altered first service for Thursday 28 July due to a 4-hour work stoppage 00:01-04:01 hours.

NSW TrainLink: South disruption

In the early hours of Sunday 10 July, freight train 3242, reportedly hauling wheat, derailed near Gunning, southern New South Wales, causing significant disruption for NSW TrainLink's Melbourne XPT and Griffith Xplorer services.

The derailment necessitated the need for extensive infrastructure remediation, including over five kilometres of track repairs and replacement of over 7,000 sleepers on the Australian Rail Track Corporation-managed line.

Initially, services were diverted to operate on the adjacent track under Special Proceed Authority working, however XPT services (Sydney-Melbourne) and Xplorer services (Sydney-Griffith) were cancelled for around a week, with restrictions on rail traffic through the area to allow for infrastructure repairs, with replacement coaches provided where possible. The line was reportedly reopened on Monday 18 July around 18:00, with most services resuming since.

INFRASTRUCTURE MAGAZINE, YASS VALLEY TIMES, GRAIN CENTRAL, NSW TRAINLINK

Inner West Light Rail

Builder CAF announced in July that it intended to see its fleet of cracked trams back on the rails of the L1 line (Central-Dulwich Hill) by the end of the year.

CAF's international division area director, Inaki Mendizabal said "a couple of months maximum", while also saying that CAF were still undertaking their own assessment into the cause of the cracking, almost a year since the issue was raised with the local fleet of 12 trams, and a similar issue with the CAF fleet on the West Midlands Line in Birmingham, England mid-last year.

He did however clarify that the cracking had not been found in each carriage, while the cracks found in those that did have them, were not in the same place.

"Each case, each route is different. The track, the environment is different, as well as how they are operated and maintained. So that's why it is critical that you assess and analyse the root causes so you know the solution you need to apply."

Inaki Mendizabal, CAF international Director

In the meantime, a reduced timetable is operating using Alstom's Citadis rollingstock from the newer L2/L3 lines, while the company is also in the process of supplying four additional trams for the L1 line, expected in the new year. **SYDNEY MORNING HERALD**

SECTION 11	W419	W419	W419	W419	W419
Consist	8 V	8 V	8 V	8 V	8 V
Table Telegram 342-22GM	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
	SatO	FO	TuO	ThO	WO
Central					
Sydney Terminal	00 18	00 18	00 18	00 18	00 18
Redfern	00 20	00 20	00 20	00 22	00 20
Stratfield	00 31	00 31	00 31	00 34	00 31
Parramatta	00 43	00 48	00 48	00 50	00 51
Westmead	00 45	00 51	00 50	00 52	00 54
Blacktown	00 52	01 03	01 03	01 03	01 06
Penrith	01 05	01 21	01 21	01 21	01 21
Emu Plains	01 06	01 22	01 22	01 22	01 22
	01 10	01 25	01 25	01 25	01 25
Lapstone	01 16	01 31	01 31	01 31	01 31
Glenbrook	01 20	01 35	01 36	01 36	01 36
Blaxland	01 25	01 40	01 41	01 41	01 41
Warrimoo	01 29	01 44	01 44	01 44	01 44
Valley Heights	01 33	01 48	01 48	01 48	01 48
Springwood	XUM 01 36 01 37=	01 51 01 52	01 52= XDM XDM	01 52= XDM XDM	01 52= XDM XDM
Faulconbridge	01 41	01 56	01 57	01 57	01 57
Linden (*)	01 46	02 01	02 02	02 02	02 02
Woodford	01 51	02 05	02 06	02 06	02 06
Hazelbrook	01 55	02 10	02 11	02 11	02 11
Lawson East TB					
Lawson	arr dep	01 58	02 13	02 14	02 14
Bullaburra (*)		02 01	02 16	02 17	02 17
Wentworth Falls		02 07	02 22	02 23	02 23
Leura		02 13	02 28	02 29	02 29
Katoomba		02 17	02 31	02 32	02 32

A good example of why you can't set your clock by the train these days, this Blue Mountains Line service had four different departure times across the week at Parramatta (11-15 July 2022). Despite the above being much messier than normal, it is not unusual for the departure times of trains to occasionally shift one or two minutes off for a day or two, for a number of reasons such as trackwork or interference by other trains.

VICTORIA



V/Line: Echuca & Swan Hill revised timetables

The **Echuca** line timetable has been revised, effective from Saturday 16 July, to incorporate the opening of the new railway station at Huntly. 18 services are tabled to stop there each week - one service in each direction every weekday, and two in each direction every Saturday and Sunday.

The **Swan Hill** timetable has similarly been revised, effective from Sunday 17 July, to incorporate the opening of the new Raywood station. 28 services are tabled to stop there each week - two services per direction daily. Services between Swan Hill and Raywood are now tabled to depart two minutes earlier, with Kerang and Swan Hill coach times adjusted to maintain connections.

Rail Express reported that it is the first time in 68 years that services have stopped at Huntly, while it was over 40 years between drinks for Raywood.

Goornong station opened last December (*Table Talk*, February 2022, p. 4) after 43 years' absence. **V/LINE, PUBLIC TRANSPORT VICTORIA, RAIL EXPRESS**

ENDS

BUS & COACH NEWS

QUEENSLAND



Route 554: Revised timetable

Translink says that with demand on route 554 (Garden City-Logan Central) at its highest between 15:00 and 16:00 hours, it has now revised the weekday afternoon timetable ex Garden City to reduce overcrowding, effective from Monday 11 July.

An additional 15:42 service is now scheduled to run from Kuraby, while the 18:02 service ex Kuraby has been simultaneously withdrawn. Other services after 15:00 have been adjusted by up to 16 minutes to spread the remaining services out. In one potentially significant change to users, the last service through to Logan Central now departs Garden City 16 minutes earlier at 18:17. **TRANSLINK**

Route 326: Route extension

From Monday 11 July, route 326 had a small extension to its route, with services previously ending at Mustang Street in Bracken Ridge now instead running down along Norris Road to terminate at Carseldine station. The change provides a closer service for more of the Fitzgibbon area as well as the ability to connect with trains at Carseldine.

Further, timing adjustments to arrival/departure times of up to 15 minutes have been made at various stops. **TRANSLINK**

Western Brisbane route changes

From July 11, routes **425** Chapel Hill, **430** Fig Tree Pocket, **435** Brookfield, **450** Riverhills/Mt Ommaney, **453** Mt Ommaney, **454** Riverhills and **460** Heathwood were rerouted to approach their city terminus at Queen Street Bus Station via the Roma Street Busway Station instead of the Cultural Centre.

Previously buses on these routes used an underground turnback to approach their platform at the Queen Street Bus Station. However, Brisbane Metro works at King George Square have closed this turnback.

While inward buses now approach Queen Street directly on the busway, outbound buses exit the Queen Street Bus Station, turn left into William St, left into Elizabeth St, left into George St, right into Turbot St then left into the busway. Outbound buses now operate along Milton Rd and Cribb St instead of Coronation Drive. **PAUL BROWN, TRANSLINK**

Additional Gold Coast services incoming

The state government and the City of Gold Coast have agreed to provide \$16.4 million in funding over the next three years for various bus service improvement trials for the Ormeau, Coomera and Pimpama areas.

Improvements are slated to include direct bus network access for upcoming residential development areas, a route incorporating the new \$90 million Pimpama Sports

Hub, and new services connecting to Pimpana railway station (part of the under construction Cross River Rail line).

Council's deputy mayor, Donna Gates, said "We have 50 per cent of our population now living in the northern Gold Coast and I think the figure is 27 per cent of them are under 15 years old", while she says that previous service levels as they were had been ineffective in naturally attracting increased demand. According to the Department of Transport and Main Roads, changes to route 722 (Ormeau-Pimpama-Coomera) in 2019 had delivered a 250 per cent boom in patronage within the first six months. MYGC.COM

Brisbane: Temporary service reductions

Translink also put up a notice from 11 July about "higher than usual driver absences due to influenza and COVID-19" impacting services in Brisbane and Toowoomba.

Translink said that the following temporary **weekday cancellations** have been made in an effort to reduce the occurrence of last-minute cancellations while ensuring service reliability.

- **251:** 06:12 ex Ormiston.
- **273:** 06:43 ex Cleveland.
- **275:** 06:20 ex Thornlands.
- **279:** 06:15 ex Victoria Point.
- **463:** 06:36, 07:35, 08:35, 15:37, 16:38, 17:39, 18:39 ex Forest Lake Village; 07:05, 08:05, 09:05, 15:07, 16:09, 17:09, 18:07 ex Goodna station.
- **506:** 05:40, 06:44, 07:42, 08:44, then hourly to 15:44, 16:36, 17:41, 18:41, 19:33 ex Leichhardt; 05:27, 06:31, 07:26, 08:23 then hourly to 15:23, 16:15, 17:20, 18:20, 19:15 ex Bell Street/Riverlink Shopping Centre.
- **509:** 06:23, 07:25, 08:27, 16:42, 17:52, 18:52 ex Yamanto; 06:55, 07:57, 16:02, 17:12, 18:12 ex Bell St/Riverlink SC.
- **512:** 06:39, 07:34, 08:34, 16:39, 17:39, 18:39 ex Brassall; 07:10, 08:10, 16:07, 17:07, 18:07, 19:07 ex Bell St/Riverlink SC.
- **515:** All 'UQ Ipswich-Brassall' and vice versa short-workings (22 trips per direction), & also the 18:27 Brassall-Yamanto trip.
- **541:** 15:11 ex Browns Plains; 15:33 ex Greenbank.
- **542:** 14:36 ex Park Ridge park 'n' ride.
- **545:** 06:32 ex Browns Plains; 07:36 ex Garden City.
- **904:** 08:09 ex Toowoomba bus station.
- **905:** 06:59 ex Westbrook.
- **906:** 15:22 ex Airport Estate; 16:36 ex Toowoomba Plaza.

These reductions mean that routes 463, 506, 509, and 512 have their service frequency halved to hourly (halved to every 30 minutes for the 515) throughout the day.

TRANSLINK

NEW SOUTH WALES



Driver shortages

Bus journeys cancelled due to driver shortages are now in excess of 1,200 trips daily across just four privatised Sydney regions on an average weekday in July, union figures supplied to the Sydney Morning Herald reveal. Figures for Region 9 buses (eastern and south-eastern suburbs, Transdev John Holland) show 280 cancelled trips on one day from a staff shortage of almost 100 drivers. Region 8 buses (northern beaches and lower north shore, Keolis Downer) have an average 360 trips cancelled daily from a shortage of 60 drivers. Region 6 buses (inner west, Transit Systems) in Region 6 have 500 trips cancelled, with a shortage of 100 drivers, the Rail, Tram and Bus Industry Union said.

All up, the state has 3000 fewer bus drivers than in 2020, according to a report in News Corp newspapers. Bus NSW executive director Matt Threlkeld said COVID-19 and an ageing workforce were the factors responsible. Bus union divisional secretary David Babineau said privatisation and the withdrawal of free travel for bus drivers had also contributed to the staff shortage.

"Transport NSW has a duty of care to make sure the service is being delivered and is fining the hell out of the companies that aren't meeting the KPIs of the contract. This is about buses not turning up and people not getting where they want. We need to help these companies make driving a bus more attractive."

A Transport for NSW spokesperson said workforce shortages were also impacting other industries - "Currently bus services are impacted due to an increase in COVID-related driver absences and an industry-wide driver shortage," it said. "Private operators are working to minimise the impact on customers by preserving service coverage across the network and limiting trip cancellations to high-frequency routes during short windows in the morning and afternoon peaks."

Operator Keolis Downer said was doing everything it could to maintain a full timetable - "We are making every effort to promote and encourage recruitment to support our driver workforce over the coming months," it said.

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

Snowy winter bus returns

As promised, the Snowy Mountains winter bus service has returned for 2022. The service underwent a trial during August and early September last year (*Table Talk*, Oct 2021, p. 9), but came to a premature end due to the state's second COVID-19 lockdown.

The Cooma Coaches-operated service resumed on Friday 1 July, and operates on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays 06:00-18:00 until Sunday 28 August. Services again operate between Jindabyne and Perisher/Thredbo. Just like last year, one-way tickets can be purchased online on the Cooma Coaches website or onboard the bus (with a debit/credit card or linked device), while return tickets can only be purchased through the website.

The timetable has been rejigged, with coaches now operating every 30 minutes during peak periods (06:10-00 and 14:18:00) and hourly in the interpeak. Services ex Jindabyne have a 60-minute end-to-end journey time scheduled, while services ex Thredbo and Perisher have an increased journey time of 75 minutes.

TRANSPORT FOR NSW

Regional 'On Demand' services to stay

Transport for NSW announced on 30 June that the state's seven remaining regional On Demand bus trials have been made permanent.

Effective from 1 July, the following services have been converted to permanent operation:

- **Burrumbuttock** (Riverina, Regional Buses)
- **Holford** (Riverina, Regional Buses)
- **Flexibus** (Sapphire Coast, Sapphire Coast Buslines)
- **Rixons** (South Coast-Canberra, Rixons)
- **LiveBetter** (Far West NSW, LiveBetter)
- **Woopi Connect** (Coffs Harbour, CDC Forest)
- **B-ConX** (Northern Rivers, Buslines Group)

Some of the services have simultaneously had minor adjustments made. **Flexibus'** Eden service has had its operating hours extended by 40 minutes, and now also operates year-round, instead of just during school terms, while the Bega and Merimbula Saturday operating hours have also been adjusted. Buslines' **B-ConX** service is another with adjusted operating hours, while **Regional Buses** has confirmed that it will replace its existing On Demand vehicles by the end of the year, with two new buses to operate the Burrumbuttock and Holbrook services, according to the state government announcement. **LiveBetter's** Collarenebri-Narrabri service now has additional stops in Burren Junction and Wee Waa incorporated into the service.

The Moree On Demand service, operated by Reynolds & Fogarty, became permanent back in December 2020.
NSW GOVERNMENT, BUSLINES GROUP, BEAGLE WEEKLY, NEWS OF THE AREA, LIVEBETTER, B-CONX



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Keoride On Demand trial extended

The seven-day-a-week Keoride On Demand trial has been extended to operate until January 2023. The service operates across Mount Barker, Nairne and Littlehampton. **AUSTRALIAN BUS & COACH NEWS**



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Perth: Timetable adjustments

Effective Sunday 17 July, several dozen bus routes across Perth were updated, as follows:

- **Route 83** - The 08:20 weekday trip ex Cambridge Street to Churchlands SHS has been withdrawn, with the 08:20 trip ex Perth Busport now deviating via the school in lieu; other trip timing changes.
- **403** - Additional Sunday evening trips; other trip timing changes.
- **414** - Earlier finish times on Saturdays, with the final trip in each direction withdrawn due to low patronage; other trip timing changes.
- **422** - 17:32 weekday trip ex Scarborough-Karrinyup and 07:24 Saturday trip ex Karrinyup-Scarborough have been withdrawn due to low patronage; other trip timing changes.
- **423** - 06:33, 07:03 and 07:53 weekday trips ex North Beach now instead start from Hillary's Boat Harbour; other trip timing changes.
- **425** - 17:23 and 17:53 Saturday trips ex Stirling station-Karrinyup now withdrawn due to low patronage. Meanwhile, two new Saturday trips ex Stirling station-Karrinyup have been added (08:08 and 09:08); other trip timing changes.
- **564** - The weekday afternoon peak-direction frequency has been halved to a bus every 20 minutes due to low patronage. The 16:57, 17:17, 17:37, 17:58, and 18:18 ex Warnbro and 14:36 ex Wattlebird Way trips are the withdrawn services.
- **569** - The timetable here has grown. Previously one trip operated on school day mornings only, whereas now there are 13 trips scheduled each weekday. The route now operates 06:00-16:00 between Daintree Street and Warnbro station via Stockland, instead of running to Baldivis Secondary College. However, on school mornings, the original trip does deviate via the college, before continuing through to Warnbro. On school holidays, this trip does not deviate.
- **584** - An additional weekday afternoon trip now added ex Mandurah Baptist College at 15:15, operating via Madora Beach to Mandurah station; other trip timing changes.

Meanwhile, routes 15, 81, 82, 84, 85, 402, 404, 407, 410, 412, 413, 415, 421, 424, 427, 428, 558, 586, 587, 591, 592, 593, 594, 597, 598, 600, 604, 605, and 990 have

VICTORIA



New regional contracts commence

Friday 1 July saw the beginning of new Department of Transport Regional Bus Service Contracts, covering the whole state, outside the capital city of Melbourne.

A total of 177 individual contracts have been entered into, across 58 operators, totalling \$2.3 billion in expenditure by the government over the next ten years. The contracts also finalise a program of fleet renewal that should see all regional buses be Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant by the end of 2023.

Bus operators that operate across Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and the Latrobe Valley are now subject to new performance measures for the first time, in line with standards across Melbourne. These would be CDC Victoria, Christians Bus and Latrobe Valley Bus Lines.

CDC Bus confirmed on 12 July that it had retained its operations in Ballarat, Geelong and Mildura, including general route services, and some school and V/Line services. **VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT, CDC BUS**

also had time adjustments to various trips. **TRANSPERTH**

Perth: Transdev retains Perth services

Multi-national public transport operator Transdev has had its commuter bus contracts for the Fremantle and Rockingham-Mandurah areas renewed by Transperth. The refreshed contracts commence from 2 October for a period of 10 years. **TRANSDEV**

NEW ZEALAND



Christchurch: Southbridge trial extension

Metro announced recently that its Southbridge-Lincoln commuter bus trial, route 87, has been extended for a further 12 months, until July 2023.

Launched in 2019, Metro says that the trial has been amended several times since then, in an effort to increase patronage, and warns that without growth in this 12-month period, the trial may not be extended again.

The timetable consists of three weekday services (as below), with intermediate stops in Leeston, Irwell, Doyleston and Springfield.

- 06:43 Southbridge to Lincoln University, and
- 16:11 & 18:08 Lincoln University to Southbridge.

METRO CHRISTCHURCH

Wellington: Airport Express

The Dominion Post reported on 7 July that Wellington's Airport bus service, operated by Mana Newlands by Transdev, had a strong first week of operation. In its first six days, over 4,500 passengers had been carried, which it said was four times the number carried by the previous Airport Flyer each month.

Councillor Roger Blakeley provided an interesting number, saying that the service, in its first four days, had an "80 per cent mode shift", a number that fellow councillor Thomas Nash clarified was based on the 20 per cent drop in route 2 patronage, meaning that the other 80 per cent came from car travel, which was "literally the only other way to get to the airport". **THE DOMINION POST**

Wellington: Cancellations continue

Over a thousand services per week are being cancelled across Wellington, as COVID-19 cases rise, and a driver shortage continues. For the week commencing Monday 20 June, a total of 1,116 services did not complete their route. On 27 June, a total of 270 services met this criteria. **NEW ZEALAND HERALD**

Dunedin & Queenstown service reductions

Otago Regional Council has reduced its bus services across its Dunedin and Queenstown bus networks due to driver shortages. The council said it expected the reliability of remaining trips to improve as a result, because of fewer last-minute cancellations.

From Tuesday 19 July, Queenstown services operate to a seven-day-a-week timetable, while Dunedin services have been reduced on weekdays only, with their weekend services untouched. **RADIO NEW ZEALAND**

INTERNATIONAL

Keolis Downer awarded European contracts

Keolis Downer, the joint venture between French multi-national public transport operator Keolis and Australian engineering/infrastructure/services firm Downer, confirmed it had secured a new 10-year contract for a bus network in Northern Jutland, **Denmark** consisting of seven routes and 31 buses.

Keolis Downer already operates bus services across 10 Danish cities including Copenhagen and Odense, as well as the country's first tram system in Aarhus.

Meanwhile, in Bordeaux, south-west **France**, the company has had its multi-modal public transport contract renewed for eight years, commencing 1 January next year. Improvements are set to include the introduction of seven new express bus routes, the inner-city service frequency to be increased from every three minutes to every 2.5 minutes, a new on demand service to launch in 2023, and a new mobile phone application for multi-modal journey planning. **AUST'N BUS & COACH NEWS (2)**

ENDS

FERRY NEWS

NEW ZEALAND



Auckland: Fullers update

Ferry operator Fullers360 recently revealed plans for a fare increase averaging 8.4 per cent for the **Waiheke** Island, Rangitoro Island and Coromandel ferry services.

It said in a statement that its operating costs for the Waiheke services had jumped by over 14 per cent in just the past 12 months. A spokesperson for the operator also said "[During COVID-19 lockdowns,] Fullers360 provided an hourly return service for the Waiheke community, operating in the recognition of our role as an essential services provider. Over this period, our business operated at a significant loss of \$67,000 per day due to reduced services and patronage".

Councillor Chris Darby challenged the need for the fare increase, pointing to the route's past as a very profitable service - "The Waiheke run has long been the most profitable ferry route in Auckland and Fullers has banked well off it. Just as Auckland Transport is absorbing costs

to entice commuters back to taking the bus, train and ferry, so too should Fullers. Their handy pre-COVID profits from the Waiheke run might need to be repatriated from the Glasgow owner".

The national transport minister, Michael Wood, says he has started the legislative process to remove Fullers' exemption from Auckland Transport integration, signed in 2013 by a previous government. While passengers on most other public transport services in the country have enjoyed half-price fares since April (now extended twice, to end in January 2023), the Waiheke service misses out, as it is not a taxpayer-subsidised service.

The minister also confirmed that the half-fare initiative had delivered significant patronage growth, including in Auckland, where public transport use across April increased by 57 per cent compared to March, although the government acknowledged that it needed to sift through the data to remove the impact on patronage from COVID-19 lockdowns. According to data from Metlink, Wellington's rail network patronage rose by 32 per cent in the same period.

On 16 July, Fullers and Auckland Transport (AT) announced that they had come to an agreement to integrate the **Devonport** route into the AT network. The effect of this agreement is that AT now controls the fares and timetable, as well as the operating contract and the ferry assets for the route. In return, Fullers will continue to operate the Devonport service under a new 12-year operating contract, while AT will purchase Fullers' existing four ferries, and fund their refurbishment (including more efficient diesel engines) for \$15 million, and provide \$80 million to fund the delivery of five new electric-hybrid ferries. Another two new electric ferries from EV Maritime are already under development.

Other ferry routes in Auckland will be due to go out to tender in 2023. **NEW ZEALAND HERALD, STUFF.CO.NZ (2) (3) (4)**

ENDS

AIR NEWS

DOMESTIC



Rex grows FIFO

Regional Express announced on 15 July that it would acquire freight and Fly-In Fly-Out (FIFO) flight operator National Jet Express (NJE), a division of Cobham Aviation. The division also provides charter services in Papua New Guinea.

Interestingly, the transaction will lead to joint venture ownership, with Regional Express owning 50 per cent, while the other half will be directly owned by a consortium, which includes Rex's Executive Chairman, Lim Kim Hai. He said "The joint venture will invest in modern aircraft and technology to enable NJE to expand from its traditional [state] bases of Western Australia and South Australia and bring our unique brand of FIFO services also to Queensland and Northern Territory. **REGIONAL EXPRESS**

INTERNATIONAL



Heathrow caps daily departures

In July, Heathrow Airport imposed a departure cap of 100,000 passengers per day due to a mixture of swelling demand for air travel post-COVID and industrial action from workers.

The airport went so far as to tell airlines to stop selling summer tickets to "limit the impact on passengers" from resultant flight cancellations. The airport's chief executive, John Holland-Kaye said "Over the past few weeks, as departing passenger numbers have regularly exceeded 100,000 a day, we have started to see periods when service drops to a level that is not acceptable: long queue times, delays for passengers requiring assistance, bags not travelling with passengers or arriving late, low punctuality and last-minute cancellations".

At this stage, the cap will be in place until at least mid-September. Pre-pandemic, *Executive Traveller* says that Heathrow was accommodating around 125,000 passengers per day.

On Monday 11 July, the airport forced airlines to cancel 61 out of 1,100 flights scheduled for that day. Aviation data business OAG estimates that the cap would hit airline revenues by \$US550 million (\$AU807 million) over the two months.

Heathrow was not the only European airport to be feeling the pressure, with **Lufthansa** announcing that it would be cutting flights in/out of Frankfurt Airport between 8 and 14 July to increase the reliability of the remaining flights.

While **Emirates** had initially refused to cut its six daily flights, and the airport later threatening legal action, both parties came to an agreement on 15 July, with a cap on future sales for the next month.

Australian airline, **Qantas**, reportedly moved its flights around by up to nine hours in order to massage through its arrivals and departures at Heathrow. A spokesperson for the airline said that it has "two flights a day to London, and we want to preserve them at all costs given people's travel plans are at stake". **YAHOO! FINANCE, SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, EXECUTIVE TRAVELLER**

ENDS

ODD SPOT

Ferry Funny

ATA member Geoff Lambert recalls a recent ferry trip across Sydney Harbour:

The 1PM Manly to CQ ferry today went via Cremorne Point, although it didn't pull into the wharf.

The exchange skipper was very surprised by this, but we both agreed the incoming service was just filling in time so that it had a slot at Wharf 3B.

The trip itself was really swell 😊

Geoff

ENDS

TIMETABLE ALERT

Bus - South-east Queensland - Translink

Translink has issued the following regional timetables effective 4 July 2022.

- **701 to 707** Maryborough
- **705 713 to 720** Hervey Bay
- **711 712** Hervey Bay West
- **801 to 805** Innisfail
- **841 to 844** Bowen
- **860** Whitsundays
- **890 891** Sunshine Coast Hinterland
- **970 to 974** Warwick

Translink has issued the following timetables effective 11 July 2022.

- **425 P426** Chapel Hill to City
- **430 431 446** Fig Tree Pocket to City
- **435** Brookfield to City
- **450 453 454 P455 P456** Riverhills/Mt Ommaney to City
- **460 N464** Heathwood to City
- **605 615** Caloundra/Maroochydore to Landsborough
- **610 612** Nambour to Maroochydore
- **611** Maroochydore to Meridan Plains

HILAIRE FRASER, TRANSLINK

Bus - regional New South Wales - Hopes Bus Service

Hopes Bus Service, Gunnedah has an undated timetable and route map for **451** and **452** Gunnedah Town Services.

PAUL BROWN, HOPES BUS SERVICE

About *Table Talk*

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Editor for Rail, Tram, Air and Ferry & Ship: Chris Pandilovski, tabletalk@timetable.org.au.

Editor for Bus: Steven Haby, busnews@timetable.org.au.

Production and Mailout: Steven Haby, David Hennell, Geoff Mann, Richard May, Katie Moss, Len Regan, Richard Talbot.

Proofreaders: Agnes Boskovitz, David Cranney, Geoff Hassall.

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