



# TABLE TALK

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timetable  
and fares

Timetable and fares effective  
from 1 October 2008.

[www.traveltrain.com.au](http://www.traveltrain.com.au)

## Brisbane to Charleville Westbound THE WESTLANDER

Departing	Tues & Thurs
Brisbane (Roma St)	7:15pm
Corinda	7:45pm
Ipswich	8:14pm
Rosewood	8:30pm
Lendley	9:07pm
Gatton	9:15pm
Helidon	9:32pm
Toowoomba	11:20pm
Wed & Fri	
Oskey	12:17am
Dalby	1:11am
Chinchilla	2:37am
Miles	3:26am
Yuleba	4:56am
Wallumbilla	5:19am
Roma	6:31am
Mitchell	8:19am
Moreen	10:13am
Charleville	12:00pm
Arriving	Wed & Fri

### Coach Connections

Charleville Station to Cunnamulla	
Departing	Wed & Fri
Charleville	12:05pm
Cunnamulla	2:35pm
Charleville Station to Quilpie	
Departing	Wed & Fri
Charleville	12:05pm
Quilpie	2:40pm

## Townsville to Mount Isa Westbound THE INLANDER

Departing	Sun & Thurs
Townsville	12:40pm
Charters Towers	3:43pm
Pentland	5:36pm
Torrens Creek	6:36pm
Hughenden	8:19pm
Richmond	10:46pm
Mon & Fri	
Julia Creek	2:11am
Cloncurry	5:20am
Duchess	7:44am
MT Isa	9:35am
Arriving	Mon & Fri

## Charleville to Brisbane Eastbound THE WESTLANDER

Departing	Wed & Fri
Charleville	6:15pm
Moreen	8:02pm
Mitchell	9:47pm
Roma	11:37pm
Thurs & Sat	
Wallumbilla	12:23am
Yuleba	12:43am
Miles	2:23am
Chinchilla	3:20am
Dalby	4:55am
Oskey	6:05am
Toowoomba	7:00am
Helidon	8:41am
Gatton	9:01am
Laidley	9:18am
Rosewood	9:52am
Ipswich	10:19am
Corinda	10:47am
Brisbane (Roma St) arrive	11:15am
Arriving	Thurs & Sat

### Coach Connections

Cunnamulla to Charleville Station	
Departing	Wed & Fri
Cunnamulla	3:05pm
Charleville	5:35pm
Quilpie to Charleville Station	
Departing	Wed & Fri
Quilpie	3:05pm
Charleville	5:40pm

## Mount Isa to Townsville Eastbound THE INLANDER

Departing	Mon & Fri
MT Isa	1:30pm
Duchess	3:13pm
Cloncurry	5:43pm
Julia Creek	9:01pm
Tues & Sat	
Richmond	12:03am
Hughenden	2:39am
Torrens Creek	4:56am
Pentland	5:00am
Charters Towers	7:02am
Townsville	10:10am
Arriving	Tues & Sat

## About *Table Talk*

*Table Talk* is published monthly by the Australian Association of Timetable Collectors Inc. (Registration No. A0043673H) as a journal of record covering recent timetable news items. The AATTC also publishes the *Times* covering timetable history and analysis. Contributions are very welcome and should be sent to the appropriate Editor.

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**Membership of the AATTC** includes monthly copies of the *Times*, *Table Talk*, the Distribution List of timetables, and the twice-yearly Auction catalogue. The membership fee is \$50 pa. Membership enquiries should be directed to the Membership Officer, Unit 7, 11 London Street, Nundah, Qld 4012, (07) 3260 5329.

# TOP TABLE TALK

## At last – A system-wide Timetable for QR Traveltrain

by Albert Isaacs

2008 saw the reintroduction of a system-wide QR TT for their country services that have been, for many years, marketed as Traveltrain. This is significant because there has not been a full country Queensland TT since 31 July 1990 and that was an aberratory, single issue to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of QR. With the exception of some scrappy and very brief summary TTs, the last regular Traveltrain TT was issued as far back as 29 June 1986 and, ironically, until 2008, it was both the first and last TT to use the Traveltrain name on the cover. For most of the last 22 years, the only other QR TTs available for non-suburban services were brochures or black and white A4 sheets for individual services, both in Queensland but also for main services throughout Australia.

Paradoxically, QR has made up for their lack of recent system booklets by producing three in six months – the first on 1 April, then 1 June and a further reissue on 1 October 2008. All are full colour, glossy booklets of 28 pages, 98 x 210 mm. However, they're really only 26 pages as pages 26 & 27 are "intentionally left blank" as TT compilers for other systems are wont to say.

Apart from different front cover illustrations on the June and October issues there are three somewhat dramatic time reductions albeit over short sections:

- the Southbound *The Sunlander* (Wed,Fri,Sun) now arrives at Brisbane (Roma St) at 1555 instead of 1620 (although the TTs show these in 12 hour clock), thus reducing the time for the 51 km Caboolture-Brisbane journey (Roma St) by 25 minutes, possibly as a result of the recent duplication north of Caboolture;
- the Southbound Cairns *Tilt Train* (Mon,Thu,Sat) now arrives at Brisbane (Roma St) at 0910 instead of 0935, again reducing the time from Caboolture by 25 minutes;
- the Northbound Rockhampton *Tilt Train* (Mon,Sat) now arrives at Rockhampton at 0025 instead of 0125, thus reducing the time for the 74 km Mount Larcom-Rockhampton by 60 minutes.

All other times, including those of other trains over these two sections, are identical in both the June and October TTs. The only other minor modifications appear in the *fine print* legal conditions on the back page where the official name of the company has been changed from QR Limited to QR Passenger Pty Ltd, and an ACN number has been replaced by an ABN number. All other information, including fares, is indistinguishable.

By looking at the features of the October issue we are, of course, covering the attributes of both editions:

- The layout is attractive, easy to read and comprehend. It has a number of illustrations including diagrams of all seating and sleeping berth options.
- The TT includes all fare information, a feature sadly missing from the recent TTs for most other Australian systems.
- The cover heading refers to *TRAVELTRAIN Holidays*, which is something of a disenfranchisement of regular travellers.
- All QR Traveltrains are shown, as is the privately operated *Savannahlander*, albeit the latter only in summary form. Buses to Shute Harbour, Urangan-Kingfisher Terminal, Yeppoon-Roslyn Bay Boat Harbour, Winton, Cunnamulla and Quilpie are also shown. (The Brisbane Valley bus appears in the Ipswich-Rosewood suburban TT and, thus, is not included in the Traveltrain TT.)
- A longstanding fault of other, recent QR country TTs is again perpetuated. That is, that there are separate tables for each train, including distinct tables for both the Bundaberg-Rockhampton and the Cairns *Tilt Trains*. This means that if one wants to travel from Brisbane (Roma St) to Rockhampton or intermediate stations, one has to consult no less than four tables to discover the full services (ie. the two *Tilt Trains*, *The Sunlander*, *Spirit of the Outback*). Of course, in part, this could be explained by the third point (above).
- On pp 2/3, there is an attractive map entitled "Rail adventures in Queensland" showing all services covered in the booklet, along with a small inset, obviously designed for overseas visitors, showing Queensland in relationship to the rest of Australia. This inserted map does not show any railways. Unfortunately, the Contents (p 5) refers to the map, not by the above title, but as "Australian Travel Map". Are QR, advertently or inadvertently trying to suggest that within Australia, one can only travel in one state?
- The tables do not include the distances to the various places listed. As it is well-known that overseas visitors, particularly those from Europe, have always had trouble getting their heads around the huge distances involved in Australian travel, this becomes a major omission. The only distance mentioned is the 1681 kms (sic) covered by *The Sunlander* and that information is **hidden** in a small paragraph about the *Queenslander* class, under the heading "Which train suits me?". When I say **hidden**, let me elaborate: your author knew that he'd seen that information somewhere in the TT but, prior to writing this article, he had to search no less than three times before he found it again. The fact that the one distance is shown without a coma (ie, not 1,681 kms) tends to hide it even more.
- Although the booklet contains a lot of useful information, there are a number of things that are not covered, for example, some of the stringent conditions now placed on sleeping berth passengers. For instance, how many people realise that a single traveller can no longer book a berth in a *Westlander* twinette (there are no roomettes on this train) and is thus demoted to an Economy sleeper that will be shared with two strangers?
- Important information about such things as the 325 day advance booking arrangements and luggage allowances are hidden amongst the legal *fine print* on the back page. (325 days? Who plucked that figure out of thin air? Why not 365 days?)

In the main, I've restricted this article to reviewing the TT booklets themselves and not to the information contained therein including the times of trains (with the exception of the changes made between the two editions). Most other changes have been covered elsewhere in *Table Talk*. That being said, I do wish to discuss one interesting thing enumerated in the TT but not given much publicity elsewhere. Under the heading "Austrail Flexipass" the Traveltrain TT says: "The Austrail Flexipass is available to International Passport holders for travel on rail services operated by QR Limited, Countrylink and Great Southern Railway ...". This is confirmed at the Rail Australia website - <http://www.railaustralia.com.au/flexipass.php>. Not only does this mean that the Pass is not available on intrastate services in Victoria and Western Australia but it can no longer be used for suburban travel anywhere in Australia, and, of course, that includes places that are really rural, such as local services to Nambour, Gympie North, Scone, Dungog, Lithgow, Goulburn and Bomaderry

(Nowra). Although the Traveltrain TT doesn't state this, the website confirms that the Pass isn't available for travel on the *Kuranda Scenic Railway*, the *Gulflander* and the *Savannahlander*. One wonders how many foreign passport holders still consider the Pass to be value for money at \$950 for 15 days or \$1,330 for 22 days, particularly as an upgrade is needed for any use of sleeping berths, etc.

Let's not overlook the fact that the proofreader of the October edition forgot to change the reference to the company under "Austral Flexipass" from QR Limited to the new name, QR Passenger Pty Ltd (see above).

In summary, it's good to see system-wide Traveltrain TTs being issued again. Although I've been critical of it on a number of points, it will still be an extremely useful document. Let's hope it gets the wide distribution that it deserves.

## **All Change: 2009 rail schedules**

**Hidden Europe: the magazine exploring Europe's special spaces**, *November 2008 issue*, *anticipated an important event*.

It is that time of year when we start to look ahead to next year's train timetables. To [non-Europeans], this will doubtless sound truly eccentric, but just look at German speaking countries where the weekend of the *Grosse Fahrplanwechsel* (the Great Timetable Change) is eagerly anticipated by both the media and the public. Sunday 14 December is the big day this year. For weeks now in our home city of Berlin there had been media tattle about what we might expect for 2009, but folk at Deutsche Bahn play their cards pretty close to their chest when it comes to releasing details about what changes we might look for in the new schedules. Not so the organised Swiss who published a 2009 rail timetable preview way back last [northern] spring.

The December Sunday, when we all have come to know and love sudden changes, is an important day in the civic calendar. And it is a Europe-wide feast of uncertainty, as new schedules are introduced for trains, buses, trams and boats from Brittany to Bavaria. Even Britain joins in, at least as far as trains are concerned. Indeed many British train companies are especially virtuous, publishing provisional timetables months in advance not just to inform would-be travellers of future plans but even inviting the public to comment on the proposals.

Such consultative zeal is exceptional, and the first inkling we Berliners get of the new schedules is only late on the Saturday evening when officials from the local bus company turn up to post the new timetable at the bus stop. We shall be there waiting of course. Similarly, at train stations all over Germany, as if by magic, new timetables suddenly appear on noticeboards late on Saturday evening or in the wee hours of Sunday.

The antics surrounding the Great Change presciently anticipate Christmas. Newspapers publish special supplements. There are radio phone-in programmes and European travellers experience the joys and disappointments that accompany gift giving.....

# **NEWS**

## **RAIL & TRAM**

### **QR Citytrain 12 Jan 09**

From 12 January 2009:

- An additional service was introduced departing Darra at 0635 and arriving Central at 0704 and Bowen Hills at 0710. It is on trial to help ease passenger demand ahead of further service enhancements early this year. This new six-carriage service will provide an extra 450 seats and room for 300 standing passengers.
- The 0829 from Beenleigh was altered to run express from Kuraby (0850) to South Bank (0919). Times from South Bank to Bowen Hill are three minutes earlier than previously and it terminates at Bowen Hills at 0935. A new all stops train was introduced from

Kuraby at 0852 arriving Bowen Hills at 0938 and taking up the running of the former train thence to Ferny Grove.

Introduction of the Caboolture-Elimbah track triplication has been delayed. It may be brought into use over Easter. If so, there may be a new Citytrain timetable also introduced then.

## **QR agricultural freight**

QR has stated that it will continue operation of cattle trains. It is the only remaining operator of cattle trains in Australia. It also announced that it will increase its grain trains from three to six. In December 2008 QR held discussions with Graincorp about the future of services on the Thallon-Dirranbandi line.

## **Regional Rail Logistics**

A new operator, Regional Rail Logistics, has commenced operation of a freight train thrice weekly from Junee to Botany and return. The first train ran on 12 December 2008 with regular operation from mid-January 2009. A 25 wagon train uses rolling stock hired from El Zorro.

## **ARTC coal tonnage record**

On the weekend of 13-14 December 2008, a record 328,000 tonnes of coal was hauled on the Hunter Valley network.

## **ARTC duplication in SA?**

ARTC may duplicate the line between Bordertown and Wolseley, SA.

## **They keep coming: NSW RailCorp WTTs 25 Jan & 1 Feb 09**

After very short intervals, more WTTs have been issued by RailCorp. The edition of **21 Dec 2008** was quickly replaced by an edition of **25 Jan 2009** which was very little different. This January WTT lasted an extremely short time and was replaced by an edition dated **1 February 2009**. Although described as "Freight Services", they continue their practice of also printing Countrylink and GSR passenger schedules for the Western line between Lidcombe and Lithgow (Sydney to Lidcombe is not included as it is a passenger only line). Passenger schedules are not included for any other line.

## **Epping – Chatswood, NSW CityRail 23 Feb 09**

From 22 February:

- The Epping-Chatswood line will open with a temporary service of stand-alone shuttle trains every 15 minutes, and
- Most weekday Northern line trains which did not already do so, will stop at Epping.

## **Countrylink: Three trains to Canberra. Hooray!**

It is believed that Countrylink will resume operation of three trains a day from Sydney to Canberra in May. Train Order working between Joppa Junction and Canberra will commence in February.

## **Northern Sydney Freight Corridor**

The NSW Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation has proposed a number of options to improve access for freight trains to and from the north of Sydney. The main components would complete quadruplication all the way from Strathfield to Hornsby, and involve construction of a tunnel from Hawkesbury River to Mt Kuring-Gai. The proposals (from south to north) are:

- Construction of a dive for grade separation under four tracks south of North Strathfield junction and the provision of a connection between the Up relief at North Strathfield to the North Strathfield Goods Line.
- Quadruplication of infrastructure (track, signaling, overhead wiring, and modifications to stations, road and pedestrian bridges) in areas which are not currently quadruplicated including the construction of an additional Up track between Concord West and West Ryde, and an additional Down track between Rhodes and West Ryde. Additional work required is the construction of bridge spans across the Parramatta River between Rhodes and Meadowbank.

- Quadruplication of infrastructure in areas which are not currently quadruplicated including the construction of additional tracks between Epping and Pennant Hills, and additional tracks between Pennant Hills and Hornsby.
- Amplification of infrastructure in areas which are not currently quadruplicated including the construction of additional tracks between Hornsby and Cowan.
- Construction of twin tunnels for passenger services from Mt Kuring-Gai to Hawkesbury River which will allow the existing alignment to be used exclusively for freight services.
- Construction of three sets of passing loops which will enable four freight paths per hour in the northbound direction and provide additional flexibility for southbound freight trains. The loops, which will be approximately 2km, will be in the vicinity of Woy Woy, Wyong and between Morisset and Awaba. The exact locations will be determined through the design process.

## **Clifton Hill – Westgarh Melbourne 27 Jan 09**

Double track between Clifton Hill and Westgarh was brought into service on Tuesday 27 January 2009. This project comprised construction of a new bridge for the up line over Merri Creek. It should improve timekeeping on the Clifton Hill group of lines.

## **Echuca V Line services**

In late November, work commenced on restoring the historic freight shed at Echuca station. Once complete, the shed will be used to stable VLocity DMUs overnight. This will remove the need for the present early morning down empty Bendigo-Echuca and late evening Echuca-Bendigo empty trains.

## **V Line cracking under passenger overload**

from *Herald Sun* 8 January 2009

Frustrated rail commuters could have claimed up to \$10 million in compensation because V Line trains failed to run on time last year. The regional rail service is cracking under the pressure of patronage growth. A record 12.9 million trips were taken across the network last year, up 17%. The latest rise follows patronage growth of 23% in 2006/07 and 29% in 2005/06, the biggest in more than 50 years. And government figures recording V Line's failure to meet punctuality targets show the pressure on the system is taking its toll. Trains ran late on the Ballarat, Geelong, Bendigo, Seymour and Traralgon lines every month to September last year - leaving commuters eligible for free tickets. But only passengers who carry a monthly or periodical ticket can claim a free return trip, valued at up to \$40 each. Figures show V Line only paid \$67,140 in compensation to July last year because the majority of affected commuters failed to make a claim. To claim compensation, commuters must write to V Line and show proof of travel with a valid V Line ticket before it will be considered. An analysis of patronage figures shows the Brumby Government could have been forced to hand out \$10 million in free tickets if V Line commuters had used monthly tickets and made claims.....The latest figures show the Geelong line is the busiest, recording 3.4 million trips last year, up 16%; this was followed by 3.2 million on the Bendigo line, up 20%, and 2.8 million on the Ballarat line, up 22%.

## **Stony Point trains disruption**

Early-morning trains on the Stony Point line in mid-January were temporarily replaced by buses, allegedly because of poor lighting. Drivers refused to move trains into position at night for the start of services next day. Relations between the train drivers' union and Connex are tense following last year's row over Christmas bonuses.

## **Melbourne & Adelaide hot weather Jan 09**

In late January there was a more severe than usual period of the Southern Inversion, the summer weather phenomena which brings very hot air from central Australia south over Adelaide and Melbourne. There was severe affects on trains in both cities, with many cancellations and disruptions. To compensate, train travel throughout Victoria was free on Friday 30 January – but there were also disruptions on that day.

## Adelaide

A **new timetable for the Gawler line** was introduced from 27 January. It was placed on the web on 14 January. The weekday timetable now highlights in red the names of "high-frequency" stations, ie, those with a 15 minute train service.

An **additional weekday service** was introduced from 8 December 2008, departing Salisbury Interchange at 0828, Mawson Interchange at 0834 and arriving Adelaide at 0851. With the 27 January timetable, referred to the preceding paragraph, this train now runs three minutes earlier.

**Public timetables** for Adelaide services are now all in the new format introduced at the beginning of 2008 except for bus route 361 Tea Tree Plaza-Port Adelaide. The Belair rail, Glenelg tram and route 100 Circle line bus are available in both old and new style.

The long awaited **extension of the Noarlunga railway to Seaford** is on the list of projects for which the State Government is seeking Federal funding. There is rapid housing development taking place in this region.

A brochure by the Department of Transport, Environment and Infrastructure details the proposal to **improve the Belair line infrastructure** later in 2009. The railway will be completely closed during the construction stage and alternative bus services provided. There will be no impact on the parallel interstate standard gauge line.

The Government has called tenders for a \$20 million upgrade of the **overhead on the Glenelg tramline**, including replacing overhead poles and four substations. The work is expected to start in late 2009. Almost all of the poles on the reservation portion of the line are stobie poles erected at the time of the conversion of the line to electric tramway operation in 1929.

The **heritage H class tram service** is now regularly operated, according to the timetable, although sometimes runs are cancelled, often because of braking problems. When cancelled, the run is operated by a Flexity tram. Single cars now operate on some runs whereas previously they were always coupled sets.

The Belair line and Noarlunga line between Adelaide and Oaklands were **replaced by buses** on 27 and 28 December for trackwork to be undertaken at Goodwood. The timetables for the replacement buses were available on the Adelaidemetro website but no printed copies were sighted.

Tram and Train **reliability and on time performance statistics** continue to be posted to the Transadelaide website ([www.transadelaide.com.au](http://www.transadelaide.com.au)) each month for the preceding month. A bar graph shows the statistics for the preceding 13 months. In the latest period there was a decline in the on time performance for trams in December to 91.3% but this still exceeds the target of 90%. The on time target is within 6 minutes. The reliability target of 95% was just achieved with 306 trips being totally or partially missed during the month. There is less detail for trains and no separation between lines. The on time performance of 93% has not been achieved over the entire period. In December it was 89% - one of the better results. The best result was 91.2% in October and the worst 73.1% in January and March 2008. The train service reliability (i.e. services run compared with those scheduled) of 99% has been achieved over the period from February.

**Special events:** City – Bay Fun Run, Sunday 21 September: The tram service was supplemented by additional buses.

Melbourne Cup Day, Tuesday 4 November: A special timetable with a 10 minute service on the Glenelg line operated. The City shuttle was not operated. This is one of the busiest normal weekdays on the line.

New Years Eve: As in recent previous years, free travel was provided on Adelaide's trams, trains and buses after midnight on the special services.

Pageant Day 8 November. The Annual Christmas Pageant is a major event in Adelaide introduced by John Martins department store as a relief from the misery of the depression in the 1930s. It is a major day for public transport. Unfortunately, the small publicity leaflet gave no details of additional services that operated. The tram service was cut back to South Terrace until about midday. During the peak of the inbound loading, trams were scheduled to operate only from Brighton Road on a 7/8 minute headway. It is estimated that approximately 1500 passengers arrived between 0800 and 0930.

## Auckland

The Auckland Regional Transport Authority has called international Expressions of Interest for the supply of Electric Multiple Units, comprising 140 carriages.

## Wellington

Two electric Eo class electric locomotives, unused since the Otira-Arthurs Pass line was de-electrified in 1997, have been rehabilitated and returned to service to help cope with increasing patronage. They haul a set of six refurbished ex-British carriages with a locomotive at each end of the set. In the Monday-Friday morning peak the set works an additional morning run from Upper Hutt at 0704, all stations to Waterloo 0736, arriving Wellington at 0754. The set then runs to Plimmerton at 0810 non-stop (replacing the 0810 stopping train) arriving at 0836, returning from Plimmerton at 0841 (replacing the 0842) all stations arriving Wellington at 0918. In the evening peak, it forms an additional service from Wellington at 1712, express to Waterloo 1728, then all stations to Upper Hutt arriving at 1753.

Also to cope with increasing patronage, 35 English Electric two-car multiple unit sets are undergoing moderate refurbishment to maintain service until the new electric multiple units, known as Matangi trains, start arriving next year. One English Electric set has been retrieved from the Ferrymead Museum in Christchurch, rehabilitated and returned to service.

## WWW: World Wide WTTs by Victor Isaacs

### Australia:

In *Table Talk* November 2007 (page 3) a list was provided of Australian Railway Working Timetables on the internet. We are particularly favoured, in that Australia and Switzerland seem to be the only countries where this is the practice. The main reason for Australian WTTs on the web is that Federal competition legislation requires railways to consider access applications by prospective operators and some railways have apparently concluded that the easiest way to provide information about available capacity is to place timetables on the web. Australian Railway WTTs currently on the web are:

- ARTC (interstate and NSW separately),
- Rail Corp NSW (freight services only),
- V Line (although usually without amendments), and
- Great Southern Railway (idea inherited from the old Commonwealth Railways, but the schedules are now out-of-date).

However Connex Melbourne's WTTs and detailed infrastructure descriptions have now disappeared from the web. Other railways never embraced the idea of placing WTTs on the web.

### Overseas:

There was a brief period after the internet became popular when western US railroads (Union Pacific and BNSF) put their Employee Timetables on the web (for more details see the *Times* no. 214, January 2002, page 15). But after the events of 11-9, alleged security concerns led to their removal. The railways of Sweden and Norway, SJ and NSB, also put WTTs on the web until recently. But these were in a different form to what we are used to, being train by train schedules or graphical timetables. But these too seem to have now disappeared. As far as the Editor knows, there are only now two non-Australian railway systems which currently place their Employee Timetables on the web, one major and one minor.

The current (Dec 2008 – Dec 2009) **Swiss Federal Railways** WTTs are all on the web in the usual European graphical format. Go to [www.fahrplanfelder.ch](http://www.fahrplanfelder.ch) and check on Archives then Graphic Timetables. This site also includes the WTTs of most **Swiss private railways**. These Swiss graphs also usefully include track and gradient diagrams.

**White Pass and Yukon Railway** [www.wpyr.com/railfancorner.timetable.html](http://www.wpyr.com/railfancorner.timetable.html) This is now a small summer only operator of passenger trains for tourists in Alaska and British Columbia from Skagway to Bennett. The ETT appears in the "railfan corner" of their website.

If you know of others, please advise the Rail and Tram Editor.



## Amtrak



*Amtrak Southbound First Class Extra POTUS (President-elect of the United States), Philadelphia – Washington 17 January 2009:  
Two Genesis Diesel – electric locomotives, nine sitting carriages, one observation car ex Southern Railway built 1930.  
Picture from New York Daily News*

Amtrak expanded capacity by adding trains and cars for service to and from Washington, DC for the inauguration of President Obama on 20 January. Extra trains and cars were added to Northeast Corridor trains, with most extra capacity southbound toward Washington in the morning and northbound in the afternoon/evening. All Amtrak trains in the Northeast required reservations. Supplementing Amtrak service was commuter rail services. MARC Penn Line service between Baltimore and Washington was also all-reserved and schedules completely changed. Virginia Railway Express trains between Fredericksburg/Manassas, Va. and Washington, operated on a normal schedule but required reservations.

Kansas Department of Transportation and Amtrak are studying a possible state-sponsored passenger rail service between Kansas City and Oklahoma City, from where it would continue on the existing route to Fort Worth, Texas. BNSF Railway will analyze the capacity of the route. Amtrak expects to complete the study this year.

**Thanks** to Tony Bailey, Scott Ferris, Geoff Lambert, Dennis McLean, Roger Wheaton, Victor Isaacs, *Sunshine Express*, *Rail News Victoria* and the *Recorder* for Rail news.

## BUS NEWS

**ACT** by Ian Cooper

A broadly spread, but very useful, set of improvements to ACTION schedules were introduced on 2 February. The changes fell into three main categories:

- Placement of additional capacity on the Intertown Route and 12 feeder routes, almost all in the peak periods;
- Introduction of one new Xpresso route, three “Community Bus” routes and an extension of service in Fyshwick.
- Restoration of some logic and commonsense to the practice of numbering routes.

A new map has been published highlighting the changes.

### **Thirty Extra Trips on Existing Routes**

A total of nine extra trips have been added to the Route 300 Intertown (four in the morning peak and five in the afternoon peak). A total of 21 additional trips have been spread across 12 existing feeder routes, almost all in the peak periods, to cater for an ever increasing passenger demand, plus some earlier starts in the morning. Routes which received extra trips were: 10, 17, 28, 30, 31, 39, 45, 51, 52, 59, 60 and 64. For example, Route 39, City to Watson, gained an extra four peak period trips. This service, under many different numbers over the past 40 years, has always been a busy route as it has always operated along Northbourne Avenue from the City to Antill Street, Dickson, servicing one of the few medium density corridors of development in Canberra. In addition there were alterations to timetables on Routes 2, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25.

Unfortunately, not all peak period services are well supported. ACTION has put considerable resources into the operation, since June 2008, of full time bus services to the Brindabella Business Park and Fairbairn Park (office precincts on opposite sides of Canberra Airport). Many of these services continue to carry negligible passenger numbers, even in the peak period.

### **New Services and Diversions**

Several new routes have been introduced filling gaps in the earlier route structure.

Route 704 is a new Xpresso service operating from Kippax in West Belconnen to City, Russell and Barton via Hawker, Weetangera, Macquarie, Cook and Aranda. This service should be very popular, especially with residents living east of Hawker shops.

New Route 71, classified as a "Community Bus" is a new off-peak service operating between Belconnen Town Centre and north and south Kaleen and Giralang, reminiscent of the former Route 49. Five trips are offered between 9.30 am and 1.30pm.

New Routes 76 (clockwise) and 77 (anti-clockwise) are the classic "shop and doctor" bus routes. Three trips are offered on the 76 and two on the 77 between the Brindabella Gardens Aged Care in Curtin, Saint Andrews Retirement Village in Hughes, Canberra Hospital, the National Capital Private Hospital and the associated health specialist precinct in Garran and the Woden Town Centre. Routes 76 and 77 replace very small segments of routes which were eliminated in the June 2008 changes.

Route 8 from Dickson to Woden via Fyshwick, has been divided into two segments. It was a very long route – 90 minutes one way and the Fyshwick segment was to get even longer following a decision to divert via the new Direct Factory Outlet (DFO) in Fyshwick – a four minute diversion.

Number 8 is retained for the Dickson to City segment while Route 80 has again been allocated to the City to Woden sector, thus again linking it logically to the existing weekend route to Fyshwick only, Route 980. The latter section carried Route 80 prior to the June 2008 changes. The weekend diversion via the DFO on Route 980 was introduced on 6 December 2008. With the splitting of Route 8 into Routes 8 and 80 there was no loss in the number of departures on each segment.

### **The Saga of Routes 4, 4E and 4W**

In June 2008 ACTION made a baffling and unintelligible decision when re-numbering three bus routes under the one all-embracing number, but including suffix letters. Route 4 operated, from 2 June 2008, as 4E from Belconnen to City via Gungahlin East (the eastern part of the Town Centre plus Harrison and Franklin) and Route 4W operated from Belconnen to City via Gungahlin West (Palmerston). At the City Routes 4E and 4W departed for inner southern Canberra suburbs as a combined Route 4 – no prefixes or suffixes.

The only problem with route designators 4E and 4W was that buses with roller destination blinds had no capacity to display letters of the alphabet and most could not display a route description which included the words, *Gungahlin East* or *Harrison* or *Franklin*, or, in the case of 4W, *Palmerston*.

It is not known why the various electronic displays could not be amended to accommodate the letters E and W and a more comprehensive route description. Most buses just displayed "*Belconnen*" or "*City*" or "*AGSO*" (for the uninitiated Australian Geological Survey Office", the old name for GeoSciences Australia). Not a very helpful solution! Not surprisingly many passengers who were critically dependant on the East and West configurations were obliged to ask the driver, upon boarding, the direction of travel, thus slowing the service. In desperation some drivers made their own hand written signs for the windscreen.

Fortunately, eight months after the commencement of the 4E/W debacle, ACTION has now realised the importance of selecting a route designator which can be displayed on the buses and the bizarre operation of 4E and 4W has been terminated. From 2 February Route 4E reverted to Number 56 and 4W reverted to Number 58, the numbers held prior to the June 2008. That segment of Route 4 south of the City remains Route 4.

Although there has been a split of the one route into three components, the grand total of advertised departures has remained the same. One other advantage of the re-introduction of Routes 56 and 58 is that there is again a direct link with the numbers of the weekend routes in these areas: 956 and 958.

### **The Route 73/74 mystery**

Previously unrecorded were changes to Community Routes 73 and 74 which were lengthened on 21 July 2008 to include a diversion via the Belconnen Food Markets in Lathlain Street and a diversion via Aranda, including Bindel Street, another thoroughfare which had lost its bus service in the 2 June 2008 changes. It can be seen that the first Route 73/74 timetable had a life of just seven weeks before its extension.

The new timetable and diversions were previously unreported because ACTION's publicity machine did not begin to publicise the changes until four months after their introduction. Signs advising the extension of service and the new timetable were first posted at Belconnen Interchange platforms in November. Four trips on each route are operated between 9.17am and 2.30pm.

Patronage on Routes 73 and 74, remains very low. The service design is excellent and deserves much better support. A household drop of timetables would seem to be a worthwhile move, together with an explanatory introductory letter highlighting the very extensive list of places served by these routes.

### **School Bus Changes**

Changes to school bus timetables, also introduced from the start of Term 1, affected 35 schools across Canberra. The most significant variation was the addition of 10 school runs, five in the morning and five in the afternoon, servicing the new Kingsford Smith School in Holt, western Belconnen.

### **Construction work starts on Belconnen's "Super Bus Stops"**

Construction of the first of the new "super bus stops" in Belconnen Town Centre, designed to collectively replace the centrally located Belconnen Interchange, commenced in the week ending 9 January 2009. The first work is taking place in Cohen Street, in the western sector of the Town Centre, outside the Belconnen Depot.

Other "Super Stops" are to be constructed:

- adjacent to Westfield Belconnen,
- adjacent to the Australian Bureau of Statistics headquarters on part of the site of the existing interchange and
- near the Lake Ginninderra College on Emu Bank.

Temporary facilities are also to be constructed in Lathlain Street and Chandler Street while the present interchange is removed and a new road constructed between Benjamin Way and Eastern Valley Way..

It is somewhat ironic that the construction of the "super stops" commenced a few weeks before the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first day of operation of the Belconnen Interchange – 27 January 1979.

Weekday use of the Belconnen Busway between Benjamin Way and Coulter Drive ceased at the end of service on 30 January 2009. Intertown Routes 312 and 315 were the only two weekday routes using the Busway and, as from 2 February, these services switched to Lathlain Street. Routes 902 and 907 continue to use the Busway at weekends. It is assumed that the latter routes will also switch to Lathlain Street in April when the demolition of the Belconnen Interchange commences.

In conjunction with the pending closure of the Belconnen Interchange construction commenced in the week commencing 19 January 2009 of a new layover on Aikman Drive between Emu Bank and Eastern Valley Way.

Buses no longer have the benefit of the very useful "B" priority signal westbound on Belconnen Way at the intersection of Caswell Drive and Gungahlin Drive, although the pre-intersection bus lane remains. It was removed in late 2008 and the reason for its removal is not known.

### **Services to new prisons**

Weekday Route 82 and Weekend Route 982 commenced operation from the City Interchange to the Bimberi Youth Detention Centre on Morrisset Drive, Mitchell on 2 June and 7 June respectively, although the Centre did not commence full operation until December. The three daily departures operate at the same times, seven days a week. The operation of Routes 88 and 988 to the Alexander Maconohie Centre (the new ACT Prison) on the Monaro Highway at Symonston has been, up to now, a little unclear. Timetables, dated 2 June, were printed and made available in late May 2008. The six daily trips, seven days a week, were added to the new shifts commencing 2 June 2008. Because of a serious delay in the completion of the new prison drivers were advised the trips remain on the shifts but operation was suspended until further notice. Timetables were withdrawn from displays in June 2008.

### **New South Wales – Sydney**

From March, bus stops at Wynyard (those in Carrington, York and Clarence Streets) will become pre-pay only between 0700 and 1900 on weekdays. Implementation of pre-pay will then be progressively rolled out across all State Transit Authority services in the CBD.

The three Sydney Buses routes (461, 480 and 483) which were extended to the Domain late last year have been truncated to terminate at the former terminus of Queen Victoria Building. This is due to safety concerns with fears raised over "anti-social behaviour" in the Domain area.

In response to the introduction of the new Manly ferry timetable, Sydney Buses has adjusted a number of services operating to and from Manly. Revised timetables commencing 28 January 2009 were implemented for routes in the 131 to 173 range. Additionally, minor adjustments were made to morning express and limited stop trips from the Northern Beaches area to the city.

Similarly, Sydney Buses has adjusted some services on Routes 505 and 538 as from 1 February 2009 to restore connections at Woolwich with ferries operating to the 20 December 2008 timetable

Sydney Buses has also adjusted the timetable of Routes 257, 272 and 273 as from 1 February 2009 to properly reflect current traffic conditions and improve reliability.

### **New South Wales – Regional**

**Wollongong:** Further to the free shuttle bus mentioned last month, the proposed service is to be introduced early this year. The buses will operate over a circular route linking the University of Wollongong, TAFE, Innovation Campus, the beach, entertainment precinct, CBD and Wollongong Station. Weekday frequencies will be 10 minutes 0700 – 0900 and 1530 – 1830, and 20 minutes 0900 – 1530 and 1830 – 2200. On weekends, a 30 minute frequency will operate between 0800 and 1800.

### **Queensland – Regional**

Community Transport: Called 'Out and About', Hinchinbrook Community Transport appears to be operated by Ingham Travel on behalf of Blueprint for the Bush (a State government programme), Hinchinbrook Community Support Centre Inc., and Hinchinbrook Shire Council. Buses operate on 5 routes serving Ingham and surrounding towns including Lucinda, Halifax, Toobanna and Taylors Beach as well as smaller communities. The tt is undated and there is no indication as to what dates of the week the service operates (assumed Mon-Fri).

Similarly the Ravenshoe Community Centre has also commenced operating the 'Take a Bus to Town' project, also funded under the Blueprint for the Bush Initiative. Bus routes run between: Ravenshoe & Mt Garnet, Malanda & Atherton, Malanda & Butchers Creek, Yungaburra & Malanda, Millaa Millaa & Malanda.

Surfside Buslines has adjusted routes and timetables from 19 January 2009. Those services affected are those which extend into New South Wales (Routes 601 – 609). Details are available on the Surfside web site.

## South Australia – Adelaide

Some bus route changes were introduced on 13 October 2008. The main change was the extension of the J2 Jetbus service from Adelaide Airport to West Beach. Other services affected were Routes 283 and 543.

The Footy Express services will be continued in the 2009 season with the fare included in the admission ticket.

The Adelaide Metro website now provides a trial travel planning option. It has been suggested that some fine tuning is required.

## Tasmania – Regional

Metro Tasmania and Phoenix Coaches introduced a timetable connecting Burnie and Devonport from 2 February 2009. It operates in two stages, Burnie to Ulverstone and Ulverstone to Devonport. Metro provides ten return trips each weekday, and three return trips on Saturday from Burnie to Ulverstone. The first weekday service leaves Burnie at 0648 and the last at 1745. Ten services operate during the day. Phoenix Coaches connects with all Metro services at Ulverstone. The first weekday departure from Devonport is 0550 with the last at 1750. Thirteen services depart Devonport throughout the day. There are four return trips from Devonport to Ulverstone on Saturdays.

## Victoria – Melbourne

In December the Melbourne City Tourist Shuttle, operated by Driver Bus Lines for the City Council, was re-routed southbound from the corner of William & La Trobe Sts via La Trobe St, Harbour Esplanade, Footscray Rd, Pearl River Rd (Waterfront City), Docklands Drive, Harbour Esplanade, Bourke St, Batmans Hill Drive & Collins St, rejoining the existing route at the corner of Collins & William Sts. It appears that no extra buses have provided for the longer route via Docklands, resulting in a reduction of frequency from 15-20 mins to 30 mins, which is unfortunate for a service which has no published timetable.

## Victoria – Regional

**Geelong:** Under the new Victorian Transport Plan, bus services in Geelong are to receive a financial boost in 2010. The aim is to introduce more morning, evening and weekend services, co-ordinate bus and rail timetables, and improve cross-town and Surf Coast routes. Transport Minister Lynne Kosky has said an interchange was the key to success as demonstrated on a smaller scale in Ballarat and Bendigo. (Readers may remember that the Geelong Busport was constructed some years ago but was a failure due to an obscure and inconvenient location. Since then, bus termini formerly located in Moorabool Street, the main shopping thoroughfare, have been dispersed to fringe CBD locations).

Myki Smartcard trials have been implemented in Geelong allowing use by the travelling public.

**Gisbus:** A new demand responsive began in Gisborne on 19 January 2009. The service runs between the Gisborne Station and the town centre then 'roaming' as required within a designated area collecting pre-booked passengers in the morning and dropping off on request in the evenings. Passengers with a valid V Line ticket travel free, for others the fare is \$2 adult and \$1 concession. There are four morning trips to the station and five evening trips returning. The operator is Sunshine Tours, a hitherto charter operator. Interestingly, the timetable does not show train connections, nor is there any indication that the bus will wait for delayed trains. The service is on trial for 18 months, with evaluation every six months.

**Thanks** to Australian Transport Discussion Board, Simon Aalbers Tony Bailey, Barry Blair, Ian Cooper, Adrian Dessanti, Neville Fenn, Hilaire Fraser, Norbert Genci, Craig Halsall, Victor Isaacs, Michael Marshall, Bradley Matthews, Ministry for Public Transport, Len Regan, Lourie Smit, Roger Wheaton and Sydney *Daily Telegraph* for Bus news.

# AIR NEWS

## International

**China Southern Airlines** is considering flights into Brisbane. It currently operates five weekly flights from Guangzhou to Sydney and two to Melbourne.

**V Australia** has applied to codeshare with Pacific Blue on flights between NZ and Australia.

**Air Austral** is set to launch direct flights from Sydney to Paris via Reunion in April using A380s.

**Singapore Airlines** is to discontinue 200 services worldwide from March, including 98 a week to Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. It will continue to monitor demand and make further cuts where necessary.

**Qantas Freight** will launch a direct weekly Boeing 747-400 freighter service between the US and NZ in February. It will initially operate every Friday from New York JFK and Chicago O'Hare to Auckland and Melbourne, and then extend direct from Melbourne into Asia.

**SkyAirWorld** will commence daily services between Darwin and Denpasar from 16 February.

**Continental Micronesia** will provide an additional eight flights from Guam to Cairns during March and two extra weekly flights from April to September.

**Garuda** will recommence flights to Adelaide from late this year with three flights a week as part of an aggressive route expansion plan.

## Domestic

Receivers were appointed on 30 January for **MacAir** which operated services to Queensland's Northern, Western and Gulf regions. The State government is retendering to restore services. There had been numerous complaints about delays, cancellations, or non-arrival of scheduled flights.

**Thanks** to Tony Bailey for Air news.

# FERRY NEWS

## Manly fast ferry

Sydney cruise company Bass and Flinders has been chosen to operate a fast ferry service to and from Manly. The NSW government sought tenders from the private sector to run the high-speed service to the northern beaches suburb after the axing of the JetCat in 2008's mini-budget. NSW Transport Minister David Campbell says the government is now in final negotiations with Bass and Flinders Cruises on wharf access. He says the company is aiming to start running up to eight services in the morning and afternoon peaks in February, although a firm start date would be announced once negotiations were complete. "Bass and Flinders will provide services on a fully commercial basis with no government subsidy," Mr Campbell said. "They will take responsibility for all risks including fare levels, patronage, reliability, customer information, timetables and ticket sales." The wharf access agreement with Bass and Flinders will run through 2010, while the overall reform of Sydney Ferries continues.

The new 0530 Quay-Manly service suffered mixed fortunes in its first week when a *Table Talk* contributor travelled on it twice. Patronage, at fewer than a dozen, was about one-half the number travelling on the former 0600 Jetcat. Even the full complement of crew failed to show up on time on one morning, delaying the service for 15 minutes. The return 0610 service to the Quay closely matches in patronage the former 0620 Jercat

*Regular Manly ferry commuter and AATTC Secretary Geoff Lambert comments on the change and on recent media articles:*

The ferry Bass and Flinders will use at first is the *Ocean Dreaming*. More like a Nightmare than a Dream I reckon. I was on board the first and only time they tried it on the Manly run. It behaved like a wild brumby- broke its halter, kicked down the stable door and bolted. We had to be hauled back to the wharf by a press gang tugging on the ropes and were herded off onto a bus. It never returned.

And not only that... the stories of persistent overcrowding on the regular Manly Ferries have proved to be....errrr....total bullshit. My survey of the busiest trip of the evening to Manly (1745) show a loading of 60 to 70% ( 600-700 people). It could hardly be otherwise. I have firm figures from a survey I did a few years ago showed an average of 432 people on the 0800 Manly-Quay and 299 on the 1745 Quay-Manly. In the succeeding year (commuting twice every day), I never noticed any massive increase. If you add a full Jetcat load of 250 to these figures they come out in the right range. Sure there are people wandering around like lost sheep looking for seats- but that's because they want to travel alone and/or because the seats are occupied by peoples' handbags. Handbags don't count as passengers. At any rate, in logic, there must always be at least 100 spare seats if Sydney Ferries follows its policy.... the boats seat 1100 and the gates lock up when the count gets to 1000. These days, I travel south by the 0700 - it is practically deserted. It has averaged about 20-25% loading this week.

As for the "shock horror" headlines about the infamous 45 minute gap (one paper screamed them in **RED BOLD LETTERING!**) - it's another massive beat up. A gap like that has been in the ferry timetable at that time of day for over 100 years and arises as the third ferry goes out of service after the peak. What Sydney Ferries did in 2008-2009 was to change the successive gaps in the 6-7pm time-slot from two of 35 and 40 minutes, to two of 30 and 45 minutes. That's all.

I am one of Sydney Ferries most vehement, most media-active, critics and have been for a decade, but they have taken an unfair hammering over the capacity and "gap problem"

## Manly slow ferry

**Sydney Ferries** summer timetable came to an end on Monday 26 Jan. On Friday 23 Jan, staff were at the wharves with loud-hailers handing out new timetables, effective Tuesday 27 January. There have been several significant changes:

- A very early weekday service from the Quay to Manly at 0530. This was previously an empty trip from Balmain (see Jan Table Talk). This replaces the two 0600 services run by Ferry and Jetcat in the old timetable.
- An adjustment of times and intervals (but not frequencies) during the peaks. For instance the Manly-Quay service has altered from 0620 (operated by Jetcat), 0640, 0700, 0730, 0800, 0815, 0845 to 0610, 0635, 0700, 0730, 0800, 0820, 0850.
- Making permanent the summer Friday and Saturday night "midnight" services.
- An early morning (0620) weekend Manly-Quay service formed by an empty placement run. This is the only real replacement in the timetable for a vanished Jetcat service.

The new timetable will be available via the AATTC's Distribution Service.

**Thanks** to Tony Bailey and Geoff Lambert for Ferry news.



# ***Members' News*** **- February 2009** **Australian Association of Timetable Collectors**

## **ASSOCIATION NEWS**

Our new Publicity Officer is proceeding with work on design of a publicity brochure for the AATTC. When complete, this will be distributed to members who are able to get it into appropriate racks of kindred organisations and shops. Suggestions are welcome. Contact is [iancooper@velocitynet.com.au](mailto:iancooper@velocitynet.com.au)

## **DIVISION NEWS**

**Adelaide:** The South Australian Division meets twice a year normally in May and November on a Friday mutually convenient to the majority of local members. The date is arranged during the preceding month. Interested persons should contact convenor Roger Wheaton at [thornewheaton@telstra.com](mailto:thornewheaton@telstra.com) or 08-8331 9043.

**Brisbane:** Regular meetings are held. Contact the Brisbane Convenor, Brian Webber, 8 Coachwood St, Keperra 4054, [bwebber@tpg.com.au](mailto:bwebber@tpg.com.au) or 07-3354 2140.

**Canberra:** The meeting place of the Canberra Division has changed to the Ainslie Club. Unfortunately, our former venue, the Canberra Club, is in severe decline.

The Canberra Division meets at 1830 on the second Thursday of **every** month at the Ainslie Club, Wakefield Avenue, Ainslie. Good conversation and a meal are always features. Enquiries to Ian Cooper, GPO Box 1533, Canberra ACT 2601, 02-6254 2431, [iancooper@velocitynet.com.au](mailto:iancooper@velocitynet.com.au).

**Melbourne:** Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of odd months from March to November 2009. The dates are:

- Wednesday 4 March 2009 Topic: General discussion of current timetable topics (Local/Interstate/Overseas)
- Wednesday 6 May 2009
- Wednesday 1 July 2009
- Wednesday 2 September 2009
- Wednesday 4 November 2009

All meetings commence at 2000 and are at the home of David Hennell, 3/29 Croydon Road, Surrey Hills which is a short walk from Chatham Railway Station on the Lilydale/Belgrave line.

Melbourne will also host the 2009 AGM around September/October. Further details will follow later in the year.

**Sydney:** Sydney meetings are held at 1400 on the first Saturday of February, May, August and November at the church hall, rear of the Roseville Uniting Church, 2 Lord St, Roseville. This is a very short walk from Roseville Railway Station on the North Shore line. All members and non-members are welcome. Large grab tables for the exchange of timetables and cake are always features. Inquiries to the Sydney convenor, Geoffrey Clifton, GPO Box 1963, Sydney NSW 2001, [G.Clifton@itls.usyd.edu.au](mailto:G.Clifton@itls.usyd.edu.au)