



TABLE TALK

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M METRO

Glen Waverley Line

metlink



Effective November 2008

New Year's Eve

Extra train services



In addition to our normal Thursday services, we will operate extra trains to and from the city on New Year's Eve.

Extra trains to Flinders Street for the celebrations:

From: Watergardens (6.41pm); Frankston (7.30pm, 8.00pm); Mordialloc (8.40pm, 9.20pm, 9.50pm, 10.20pm, 10.50pm); Sandringham (6.36pm, 6.57pm); Pakenham (7.36pm, 8.40pm); Cranbourne (8.10pm, 8.36pm); Dandenong (9.33pm, 10.00pm, 10.30pm, 11.00pm); Caulfield (9.34pm, 9.49pm, 10.05pm); Broadmeadows (6.16pm); Craigieburn (8.37pm, 9.18pm); Epping (8.42pm, 9.12pm, 9.42pm, 10.12pm; 11.48pm); Greensborough (8.07pm, 8.37pm, 9.07pm); Hurstbridge (11.19pm, 11.57pm); Eltham (11.21pm); Maelood (9.31pm, 9.43pm); Montmorency (11.50pm); Glen Waverley (8.42pm, 9.12pm, 9.42pm, 10.12pm); Ringwood (9.20pm, 9.51pm, 10.21pm, 10.51pm, 11.51pm); Belgrave (7.47pm, 8.18pm); Camberwell (8.48pm); Richmond (9.39pm).

Extra trains from Flinders Street after early fireworks display:

To: Mordialloc (9.33pm); Frankston (10.05pm, 10.35pm); Dandenong (9.50pm, 10.20pm); Craigieburn (9.57pm); Epping (9.47pm, 10.17pm); Greensborough (9.54pm, 10.24pm); Glen Waverley (9.42pm, 10.14pm); Ringwood (9.55pm, 10.20pm, 10.50pm, 11.20pm, 11.50pm); Riversdale (10.04pm).

Extra trains from Flinders Street after midnight:

To: Watergardens (12.34am, 12.49am, 1.04am, 1.24am, 1.50am, 2.25am, 3.25am, 4.25am); Frankston (12.34am, 12.46am, 12.58am, 1.10am, 1.30am, 1.55am, 2.25am, 3.20am, 4.20am); Sandringham (12.38am, 12.50am, 1.02am, 1.22am, 1.50am, 2.20am, 3.15am, 4.15am); Cranbourne (12.30am, 12.54am, 1.40am); Pakenham (12.42am, 1.06am, 1.18am, 2.00am, 3.00am, 3.50am); Dandenong (2.30am); Craigieburn (12.30am, 12.45am, 1.00am, 1.20am, 1.45am, 2.20am, 3.20am, 4.20am); Upfield (12.42am, 12.57am, 1.17am, 1.42am, 2.10am, 3.10am, 4.10am); Epping (12.40am, 12.55am, 1.10am, 1.30am, 1.50am, 2.15am, 3.15am, 4.16am); Eltham (12.35am, 1.00am, 1.35am); Hurstbridge (12.45am, 1.15am, 2.00am, 2.35am, 3.30am, 4.37am); Glen Waverley (12.30am, 12.40am, 12.50am, 1.03am, 1.23am, 1.43am, 2.15am, 3.15am, 4.15am); Lilydale (12.25am, 12.45am, 1.05am, 1.35am, 2.30am, 4.30am); Belgrave (12.35am, 12.55am, 1.20am, 1.55am, 3.30am); Werribee (12.38am, 12.53am, 1.09am, 1.32am, 2.00am, 2.30am, 3.15am, 4.15am).

Extra trains to Flinders Street after midnight:

From: Watergardens (12.35am, 1.05am, 1.17am, 1.33am, 2.04am, 3.04am); Frankston (12.01am, 12.29am, 1.00am, 1.20am, 1.59am, 2.25am, 3.15am); Sandringham (12.08am, 12.26am, 12.46am, 1.18am, 1.42am, 2.39am, 3.29am, 4.04am); Pakenham (12.20am, 1.20am, 2.20am, 3.20am); Craigieburn (12.42am, 1.04am, 1.22am, 1.49am, 2.38am, 3.33am, 4.09am); Upfield (12.42am, 1.20am, 2.00am, 2.22am, 3.22am); Epping (12.02am, 12.22am, 1.19am, 2.17am, 3.27am); Hurstbridge (3.09am); Eltham (12.35am, 1.07am, 1.36am, 2.33am); Glen Waverley (12.03am, 12.18am, 12.31am, 12.48am, 1.28am, 2.08am, 2.46am, 3.46am); Ringwood (12.04am, 12.15am, 12.21am, 12.44am, 12.50am); Belgrave (12.09am, 12.33am, 1.56am, 2.49am, 3.51am); Lilydale (1.00am, 1.54am, 2.18am, 3.04am); Werribee (12.31am, 1.31am, 1.59am, 2.25am, 2.55am, 3.32am); Williamsstown (12.45am, 1.41am, 2.40am, 3.10am, 3.48am).

For full details please contact Metlink on 131 638 or visit metlink.com.au



Melbourne's new operators – page 2

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, P O Box 1253, North Lakes Qld 4509, (07) 3260 5329.

TOP TABLE TALK

Melbourne: new train and tram operators

by Geoff Mann and Victor Isaacs

The new franchisees for Melbourne's suburban trains and trams took over on 30 November. Our front cover shows examples of Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM) publicity. The timetable retains the original date and format, but has been reprinted with the Metro Trains logo replacing Connex. The Connex name was swiftly obliterated everywhere, particularly on trains by use of vinyls.

It is understood that the Victorian government has requested MTM to provide a "two tier" timetable and MTM has flown in 20 'key' staff from MTR Hong Kong to help devise it. Should a "two tier" timetable be shown to be "not economically or operationally feasible", a new timetable is to be devised within 18 months. It is believed that a "two tier" timetable means a high frequency inner area metro type operation and express services to outer suburban areas.

Unlike the site of Connex Melbourne, the former operator, Metro Train Melbourne's website does not at present include a copy of the **Working Timetable**, but one is promised. The WTT section of their website states "Reserved for Working Time Table to be re-issued at the next timetable change planned for May 2010." The Track Access section of the website (go to "Contact Us", then to "Access Arrangement") does include the **WTT System Description [WTT Addenda]**, and basic track diagrams. The WTT System Description [WTT Addenda] contains comprehensive network infrastructure and rolling stock information. Amusingly, the first non-Metro trains rolling stock mentioned as authorised to operate is a 120 year old standard gauge steam locomotive! (12 class owned by the ARHS,ACT. Not only is the age and technology, shall we say, unusual, but it is unclear why SG vehicles are included at all). The WTT System Description [WTT Addenda] is available from the AATTC Distribution Service.

The new operator of Melbourne's trams, KDR, continues to use the designation Yarra Trams and the website continues to be www.yarratrams.com.au The website of the new Rail operator, Metro Trains Melbourne, is www.metrotrains.com.au Both tram and train websites contain comprehensive public timetable information. Requesting printable versions of timetables takes you to the Metlink site.

For the fifth consecutive year the Victorian government provided free travel on Victoria's public transport network on Christmas Day and New Year's Eve.

The myki electronic ticketing system became operational in Melbourne from 29 December 2009, but only for trains, and not as yet for trams or buses. There were many glitches in its introduction. Metcards remain valid for the next few months.

RAIL & TRAM NEWS

ARTC: Timetable 3 January 2010

by Geoff Lambert, Geoff Mann and Victor Isaacs

A new ARTC Master Train Plan (Working Timetable) came effect from Sunday 3 January 2010. It is on their website at www.artc.com.au/Content.aspx?p=161 It is available in both print and electronic formats from the January 2010 AATTC Distribution List.

There does not appear to be any significant changes compared with the October 2009 WTT, with one very curious exception. The new WTT includes schedules for V Line Standard Gauge passenger trains between Melbourne and Albury, despite the fact that these are not expected to commence until late 2010. To add to the curiosity, these are incorrectly designated as "XPT"s. The WTT does not include any indication of the rumoured extension of one(?) V Line service daily from Albury to Wagga2. The V Line SG services, for what they are worth, show three trains a day. There are inconsistencies in running times and some dreadful crossing delays. One theory is that these V Line SG schedules are, in fact, a draft timetable that has somehow escaped. Another theory is that the schedules (which are headed "ARTC SPARE") appear now in the WTT to ensure that these paths are not sold to another operator. Perhaps one lesson to be learnt from the inclusion of these trains - if it needs to be said - is that one cannot always trust schedules in Working Timetables.

New ARTC graphical working timetables also became available valid from 3 January. These do not show the curious V Line SG passenger trains. The graphical timetable has blank lines inserted for the stations at which the new V Line SG services will stop, e.g. Avenel.

Evidence of the new Southern line passing lanes still do not appear in the tabular WTT.

The graphical and tabular WTTs appear to be made by two different sections of ARTC, with the tabular WTTs apparently compiled by hand from the graphical WTT. This dichotomy may account for some long-recognised inconsistencies between the two forms of WTT. (For example, according to the graphical timetable, important crosses occur at Mount Lofty in the Adelaide Hills. But Mount Lofty doesn't even appear in the tabular timetable.)

Rail Corp also issued minor amendments to its Working Timetable for Freight trains within the Greater Sydney area from 3 January 2010.

ARTC: Melbourne - Brisbane inland railway study

On 11 December ARTC released the results and working papers of Stage 2 of the Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Rail Alignment Study. The Federal government announced the study in March 2008 to determine an optimum alignment, economic benefits and likely commercial success of a new standard gauge inland railway between Melbourne and Brisbane. During Stage 2 of the study the 1880km option identified in Stage 1 was further assessed, with a focus on the development of a potential route, including preliminary land and environmental assessments. It also included a more detailed economic and financial analysis based on further demand and operating cost studies. During the course of this further work, an alternative 1690km option emerged. The alternatives are:

- 1,880 km from Melbourne via Albury to Cootamundra, Parkes, Narromine, Dubbo, towards Binnaway and Werris Creek (both with bypasses), Moree, Inglewood, Millmerran, Gowrie, Grandchester, Rosewood, Kagaru and Brisbane;
- 1,690 km comprising the existing corridor from Melbourne to Junee, Stockinbingal, Caragabal, Narromine, and a new route from Narromine to Narrabri. From Toowoomba, this route would also pass through Rosewood and Kagaru to Brisbane.

With the optimisation of passing loops, the second option would provide a Melbourne-Brisbane transit time of approximately 22 hours. Both options are reckoned to be financially unviable on a stand-alone commercial basis. However, the shorter option potentially offers better public benefits. The capital cost of the 1690km option, subject to further analysis, is estimated at \$3.75 billion.

The study team will continue in Stage 3 to develop a more financially viable option. Work will include further analysis of likely demand, and the optimisation of capital costs. As the 1690km route shows a potentially stronger financial performance as well as a potentially better public good benefit, it has been adopted for further analysis in the study's Stage 3.

The working papers are at www.artc.com.au/Content.aspx?p=192

ARTC: Braefield, Worondi, Aerosol Valley, Loadstone & Moolarben loops

ARTC has completed new crossing loops at:

- Braefield on the NSW coal network between Willow Tree and Quirindi in the Upper Hunter, at a cost of \$11.1 million, to cater for 1350m trains.
- Worondi between Muswellbrook and Gulgong, a two km loop, which cost \$14 million.
- Aerosol Valley between Muswellbrook and Gulgong, costing \$15.3 million for a two km loop.
- Loadstone between Kyogle and Border Loop, at a cost of \$7.1 million, and capable of accommodating 1500m trains.

A new coal loading loop at Moolarben, near Ulan, was commissioned in the week of 14-18 December 2009.

ARTC: NSW South line signal upgrade

The last upper quadrant semaphore signals on the NSW South mainline, between Yass Junction and Cunnigar, 333.7 km to 373.76 km, were replaced by colour light signals on 12/13 December 2009.

ARTC:Cootamundra-Parkes resleepering completed

Resleepering with concrete sleepers, at a cost of \$91.5 million, of ARTC's 201 km Cootamundra to Parkes line was completed in early December.

ARTC: NSW branch temporary closures

From 17 December 2009 the NSW wheat line from Camurra to North Star was "booked out of service due to infrequent train services and track patrols ...suspended". The branch can be re-opened on seven days notice.

From 15 January 2010 the lines from Ungarie to Lake Cargelligo and Ungarie to Naradhan were similarly booked out of service due to infrequent train services, and subject to re-opening, if required, on 14 days notice.

ARTC & Rail Corp: You didn't want to travel, did you?

In the week from 26 December to 1 January, the **ARTC north-south mainline** was closed for works between Melbourne and Albury (as mentioned in Dec. *Table Talk*, p.2). It is believed that this was mainly for work at Somerton and on the Wodonga deviation. However, an AATTC member in the area at the time saw no activity.

From 26 to 28 December, the **ARTC east-week mainline** was closed at various locations between Keith and Stirling North.

On three successive January weekends, 2/3, 9/10 and 16/17, the entire **NSW South line** was closed from Lidcombe/Granville to Goulburn. All short and long distance passenger trains did not run and were replaced by buses. Melbourne XPTs started/terminated at Goulburn. On the intervening weekdays, suburban trains did not operate between Glenfield/Liverpool/Fairfield and Villawood and were replaced by buses. As is common, Cumberland line trains (Campbelltown-Blacktown) also did not run. On 74kms of track timber sleepers were replaced with concrete sleepers and new rail and ballast installed. The electricity supply was upgraded. Two new sub stations at Warwick Farm and Campbelltown were built to increase power supply for the new Waratah trains when they are introduced. The next closedown is scheduled in January 2011, with further stages planned over the next two years. This will take place mostly on weekends to finish replacing the remaining track between Macarthur and Glenfield and continue electrical upgrading works. The South Line suburban upgrade program is expected to be completed by 2012.

The future of Queensland Rail

The Premier of Queensland, Anna Bligh, has modified proposals for privatisation of government assets. In particular, **QR's** coal network and operations will no longer be offered for sale as a trade sale, but be converted to a company floated on the Stock Exchange, with the State government initially retaining a 40% stake. Pacific National is reported as preparing

to bid for the Queensland coal network. So too is a consortium of coal mining companies, including BHP Billiton. They were to seek ARTC to manage the infrastructure. However, the Queensland government has ruled this out, because they wish to sell both above and below rail coal network assets as one package.

The remnant QR, ie suburban and long-distance passenger operations, are now being marketed as QRPassenger. Its headquarters will be transferred from Brisbane to Ipswich.

Pacific National has signed a 10 year contract to haul 1.1 million tones of coal from the new Isaac Plains mine to Abbott Point terminal near Mackay.

QR Citytrain: Gold Coast line 14 Dec 09

The extension of the Gold Coast line from Robina to Varsity Lakes, 4.1km, opened on 14 December 2009. The former timetable had already made provision, with a running time on the extension of five minutes each way for all trains. There is, however, now an additional train in each peak period:

- 0602 Varsity Lakes arrive Brisbane Central 0723, and
- 1739 Brisbane Central, arrive Varsity Lakes 1903.

A new timetable dated 14 December was issued for the opening.

QR: Xstrata coal contract

Queensland Rail has secured a major contract worth \$2 billion to haul Xstrata coal from its Newlands, Collinsville, Oaky Creek and Rolleston mines and will invest about \$100 million in new locomotives to support it.

QR & GSR: Rains on the plains, no trains

Due to flooding, the line from Emerald to Longreach was closed from 31 December until 4 January, including suspension of *Spirit of the Outback* passenger trains. For the following fortnight, the *Spirit of the Outback* operated only as far as Emerald with buses beyond.

The Mt Isa line was broken by flooding near Julia Creek, and the Charleville-Quilpie line closed.

In a first, on 7 January the south bound *Ghan* was stopped by floods at Iloquara between Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

CityRail Working Timetables 17 April 2010 & October 2010

The next CityRail Working Timetable is expected to come into effect from Saturday **17 April 2010**. The major feature will be introduction of double line on the Sutherland-Cronulla line. The initial improvements in service will only be minor. (It is usual for major Sydney area infrastructure improvements to be introduced in stages, with the first improvement being minor.) In the morning, the 0750 from Sutherland will instead commence from Cronulla, but this is only five minutes after the preceding train. In the evening, there will be some additional Up services, as stabling arrangements have changed at Cronulla. The 17 April WTT will also include all changes since 9 October 2009.

It is interesting that this WTT will commence on a Saturday rather than the traditional Sunday. Since CityRail services are almost identical on Saturdays and Sundays, it makes sense to commence on a Saturday, as this gives operators an additional day to get used to changes before the intense weekday services commence.

A new **ARTC WTT** is also expected from 17 April 2010.

A full revision of the Illawarra (Sector 1) and South Coast Lines is expected from **October 2010**.

CityRail documentation 2009

New CityRail suburban "Starts and Stables" and Intercity Rosters were issued from 7 December 2009.

An Eastern Suburbs/Illawarra line public timetable dated 12 October 2009, but "Reprinted November 2009" has been sighted.

CityRail South Coast upgrade timetable 14-18 Dec 2009

The usual type of timetable booklet has been issued for this track upgrade. It shows amended timetables with many trips running to amended times. It makes specific mention of the 0448 from Central to Wollongong operating 20 minutes earlier at 0428. This is confusing when looking up the timetable which shows a trip at 0448, but this is the 0452 trip running four minutes earlier. What is unusual about this timetable that it only has amended train times and there are no replacement buses involved.

X-Rail hauls the coal

The joint venture between British Freightliner and Xstrata for coal haulage in the Hunter Valley will be known as X-Rail.

Drink your way to public transport sustainability?

The December issue of *Time Out* magazine came with a copy of the 'Time Out Sydney Monorail Bar Map'. It is an A3 sized street map of the CBD and inner west showing the routes of the light rail and monorail and the location of 12 bars. The reverse of the map contains fares and frequencies plus a short review of each of the bars. The map folds up to be roughly the size of a standard Sydney Private bus timetable.

Maldon-Dombarton line study

The Federal Government has invited proposals to conduct a feasibility study into the completion of the Maldon-Dombarton railway in NSW. Federal Transport Minister Anthony Albanese said that "The allocation of additional funding followed the findings of the pre-feasibility study published earlier this year, namely that completing the rail line has long-term economic merit – but more work needed to be done before sensible investment decisions could be made."

A new Canberra railway station?

High value housing and commercial developments are approaching the Canberra railway yards area, presenting a dilemma for future development. An ACT government advisory group has now recommended retaining Canberra railway station at or near its present location, but rebuilding it as part of a commercial development. The adjoining freight yard, which is now largely disused, would be removed. The Australian Railway Historical Society ACT Division Museum would be moved to the neighboring industrial suburb of Fyshwick.

Train Orders Dubbo-Coonamble

Train Order working replaced Train Staff and Ticket between Dubbo and Coonamble from 8 November 2009. However, soon after, part of the line was washed away by the heavy rains of late December.

Cowra may be connected to the world again

On 2 December 2009, the Lachlan Valley Railway signed a Licence Agreement for the Cowra to Demondrille line. It will now apply to the Independent Transport Safety Reliability Regulator for a variation to the LVR's accreditation to become a Rail Infrastructure Manager. This will restore access to LVR's operating base at Cowra. During September the line was closed by the ARTC (see *Table Talk*, September 2009, page 10). At present LVR's rolling stock is stored at various locations around NSW to enable the Society to still have access to the main line and operate its heritage train trips.

This lease from Cowra to Demondrille is 102 km. Previously the LVR leased and maintained Cowra-Blayney and Cowra-Trajere Creek, a total of 148 km. Revenue from operating wheat trains covered maintenance costs. At that time the LVR were pioneers in private rail freight in NSW, operating the first ever private wheat train. In the long term it is planned to open the line to third party operators to offset maintenance costs and eventually to also re-open the Cowra-Blayney section.

NSW fuel transport

A horrific road crash involving a fuel tanker occurred on 28 December, just a few weeks before Shell was to transfer the last transport of fuel from rail to road, on the Sydney to Canberra route. Subsequently, a coalition of rail unions, motoring organisations and

consumer groups, supported by the media and the State opposition called for the transport of dangerous goods to be transferred to rail and for the NSW government to reinstate its subsidy for fuel to be transported by rail.

Melbourne: South Morang extension

The existing Epping station will be rebuilt to the east of Davisson Street and the rail line lowered underneath Cooper Street. The new South Morang station entrance will be aligned to provide for future pedestrian connections between the Whittlesea Civic Centre to the north west of the rail line and the Plenty Valley Town Centre to the southeast. Works to extend the Epping line to South Morang will start in 2010.

V Line: Geelong-Lorne extra summer buses

Similarly to last summer, additional bus services will operate between Geelong and Lorne/Apollo Bay from Saturday 19 December 2009 to Sunday 31 January 2010.

V Line: Public timetables 9 Nov 09

V Line has issued new timetable booklets for Northern and North East Victoria, dated 9 November 2009.

V Line: Station upgrades

Platforms have been extended at North Melbourne, Geelong, South Geelong and Marshall to accommodate seven carriage trains. Works are underway to extend platforms at Clarkefield, Gisborne, Macedon, Woodend, Malmsbury and Kangaroo Flat.

Metro Trains Melbourne: Blackburn-Ringwood shutdown

The busy eastern suburbs line was closed from Blackburn to Ringwood from midday Friday 1 January until Sunday 10 January for work to eliminate the level crossing at Springvale Road, next to Nunawading station. A series of bus replacement services operated, with an estimated increase in journey time of 25 minutes.

Victorian *Transport Integration Bill*

The *Transport Integration Bill* currently before the Victorian Parliament will unify the transport portfolio under one central statute for the first time. Under the Bill all transport agencies – including the Director of Public Transport, VicRoads, VicTrack, V/Line and the Linking Melbourne Authority – will be required to work together towards the common goal of an integrated and sustainable transport system; and land use agencies – including the Department of Planning and Community Development, municipal Councils, the Growth Areas Authority and Parks Victoria – will be obliged to have regard to the legislation when making decisions that impact on the transport system.

Victorian wheat trains

GrainCorp will have two standard gauge (50 wagons) and two broad gauge grain (40 wagons) trains available for this summer's wheat harvest. AWB will have two, with the possibility of a third, train available. These are estimated to be able to cater for 80% of what is expected to be a large harvest. However, farmers' organisations and rural shires have expressed apprehension that a much larger share will need to be carried by road.

QR National: Horsham service

A QR freight service to Horsham commenced on 6 December 2009, running twice a week at present. It departs North Dynon on Mondays and Wednesdays and from Horsham on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

TasRail

Tasmania Railway, owned by the State government, took control of the Tasmanian network, at 2359 on 30 November. It will generally use the name TasRail.

TransAdelaide upgrading

Belair line: Track work has mostly been completed, but is still outstanding at Torrens Park and Blackwood stations. Passengers for these stations are required to travel in the front two carriages of a train. A petition to reopen the Millswood Station was presented to State Parliament. The station was one of three closed in 1995 by the then Liberal government on

the grounds of poor patronage and an excess of stations on the line, the others being Hawthorn and Clapham. The platforms remain following the recent refurbishment program. The campaign to reopen these stations has been on-going since their closure.

Noarlunga line was closed between Adelaide and Brighton and replaced by buses due to track work on the weekends of 27-29 November and 4-6 December. The last trains departed Adelaide at 1900 and Brighton at 1902. It was planned to close the line on Saturday 12 Dec after 1800, however, this was not required as the work had been completed ahead of time.

Electrification of suburban railways: Expressions of interest were called on 10 November 2009 for more than \$400m in electrification works. Major site works are expected to commence in 2010 with the new services starting in 2011. The project will cost \$1.4billion.

Glenelg line: New span poles have been erected along most of the reservation section, being a mixture of centre and side poles. The side poles tend to be near the level crossings presumably to assist in visibility. The majority of work for the transfer of the overhead to the new span poles is still outstanding.

Buses replaced trams on Sunday to Thursday evenings between 23 November and 17 December. The last tram departed Glenelg at 2140 and City West at 2220. The bus route is the same as that used on recent occasions.

The Glenelg line was also closed completely and a replacement bus service operated on the first weekend of December. Track at the South Terrace was replaced. This had been required for a long time. The main reason for the closure was to enable the tram tracks to be diverted onto the bridge over South Road. Work was also carried out on the overhead. The work was planned to be completed to enable regular services to commence over the bridge on Monday morning. Unfortunately, delays occurred. Replacement buses operated on the Monday.

Entertainment Centre tram extension: Major weekend works for tram track installation took place on the weekend of 11-14 December at the North and West Tces intersection with Port Road, and the Port Road and Phillips St intersection. The terminal at the Entertainment Centre is taking shape. The passenger shelter at the new City West terminal at the North and West Terrace intersection has been partially erected.

TransAdelaide information

TransAdelaide no longer has a separate website. The information previously on this site is now on the Adelaidemetro website, www.adelaidemetro.com.au, including the monthly on time running and service reliability reports for tram and train services.

Fee Adelaide Metro buses, trains and trams operated after midnight on New Year's Eve. A guide was produced detailing running times, special after midnight routes and city pickup points.

Adelaide Christmas Pageant 2009

The traditional Christmas Pageant was held on a hot 14 November. The estimated crowd was 224,000 compared with 325,000 in 2008. The reduced number was reflected in the number of passengers on the Glenelg tram which appeared to be less than half of previous years. Operations were similar to previous years. The proposed timetable was posted on the website with trams commencing at Brighton Road during periods of anticipated heavy loading inbound. Bus substitute services were shown for the Moseley Square – Brighton Road section. After the pageant, tram substitute buses were observed in Victoria Square to cater for passengers prior to the restoration of the service beyond South Terrace.

Glenelg Tourist Tram service

A heritage H car service commenced on 12 December between Moseley Square, Glenelg and Morphettville with car 367. There is no charge for the ride which is a return trip. No intermediate or one way passengers are carried. The service is on trial until April 2010 and is financed by the City of Holdfast Bay and Jetty Road Traders Association for \$25,000 each. The TransAdelaide crew is supplemented by volunteers arranged by the City of Holdfast Bay who give a tourist commentary. The service operates every 30 minutes between 1000 and 1600 on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays (except Christmas Day, New Years Day and Good Friday).

TransPerth: Joondalup line extension

The WA government has committed \$240 million to extend the Joondalup railway to Butler, 7.5 km north of the existing Clarkson terminus. Preliminary earthworks are in place and construction of the station will begin in 2011, with passenger services expected by late 2014.

Transwa: Prospector slowed

From 3 January 2010 some Prospector train services have departed East Perth five minutes earlier than formerly. From Midland to Kalgoorlie the timetable is unchanged, as are services originating from Kalgoorlie. The change is to allow more time for passengers boarding at Midland.

WA grain network

The WA Government has submitted a second round of proposals to Infrastructure Australia including funding for the state's grain freight network and South West railway. At an estimated cost of more than \$3 billion, WA anticipates the proposals to be funded through a combination of Federal, State and private funding. WA is seeking funding for key components of the state's grain freight network including resleepering of the Avon to Albany line at a cost of \$43 million. WestNet Rail general manager Paul Larsen says Avon to Albany rail is the first project in the grain line strengthening program. "It's an important project to ensure the rail network continues to be available as part of the supply chain for grain, which is a \$6 billion export commodity industry for WA,"

With the single track South West rail line and Bunbury port approaching capacity, the State Government had also asked for \$63 million to expand the capacity of rail to facilitate the export of increased volumes through Bunbury port by removing a bottleneck between Brunswick Junction and Bunbury.

TranzScenic future

London-listed international services company Serco is looking at how it can turn NZ's long-distance passenger trains into a profitable tourist-orientated business. Minister of Transport Steven Joyce said the company is preparing a paper on the train services and he expects their ideas would be put into the mix of options for KiwiRail next year when a strategic review of its business is completed.

Roturua railway

The Rotorua - Ngongotaha Rail Trust has been granted a 30 year lease of the Rotorua and Putaruru railway by OnTrack and KiwiRail. Once the track is repaired it will be possible for freight and passenger services to resume, with steam enthusiasts from around NZ able to bring trains to Rotorua.

Indian long distance train timetables

Newman's Indian Bradshaw, Volume 1, which shows long distance trains, will continue production. eRail has stepped in to redesign the timetable, and as sole marketing agent. eRail will give a new look to the publication from January 2010.

The other Indian long distance train timetable, Indian Railway's **Trains at a Glance** (TAG) timetable was re-issued from 1 November. A new feature is colour coding for different classes of trains. Pink shows Rajdhani Express, Shatabdi Express, Jan Shatabdi Express, Garib Rath Express and Duronto Express. Yellow indicates other super fast trains and blue/white other mail and express trains. In addition to TAG, as usual, all the 16 zonal railways published their own time tables. These are in English and Hindi, and often in local languages as well.

China: High-Speed trains

In one of the biggest ever developments of High Speed Railways, China has inaugurated a route of 1049 km from Guangzhou to Wuhan. Trains will travel at an average speed of 350 kph, one of the fastest regular speeds in the world, but are capable of speeds up to 394 kph. The former 7 hr 30 minute travel time is reduced to 3 hours. An extension of 1318 km from Wuhan to Beijing will open by the end of the year. This is only one of a large network of high speed railways under construction in China. Forty-two high-speed lines of about 13,000 km are under construction. The total length of China's railways will increase from 80,000 to 110,000km over the next three years.

Russia: High Speed trains

On 18 December 2009, a high-speed train service, known as "Sapsan", was launched between Moscow and St Petersburg, 650 km. The journey time of 3 hours 45 minutes, compares with the previous best of 4 hours 30 minutes. The trains are scheduled to depart from both Moscow and St Petersburg daily at 0645, 1300 and 1900. The average time for a journey from Moscow to St Petersburg by plane (taking into account trips to and from the airport, flight registration, and flying time) is not less than 5 hours. The trains will operate up to 250 kmh.

Polish timetable information

Staff on Polish inter-city trains can now provide passengers with journey information using HaCon's Hafas Mobile Professional software installed on Casio IT-3100 devices by TK Telekom. Enquiries are entered using a keyboard or with a stylus on the touch-screen, enabling Polish characters to be entered into a fault-tolerant station search. Functions include departure times, connections, searches for individual trains and a print function. A button switches between information and ticket sales, enabling tickets to be printed while the timetable application keeps running in the background. Polish Railways PKP is currently using an offline version of Hafas Mobile Professional, with the data stored in the mobile device. It is possible to upgrade so that real-time information can be obtained online, an option which has recently been taken up by Danish national operator DSB.

Franco-Swiss rail link approved

Voters in Geneva on 29 November approved a key cross-border rail link with neighbouring France. The CEVA line between Geneva's Cornavin station, Eaux Vives and the French town of Annemasse will make the French border accessible from Geneva's centre in around 20 minutes, serving around 900,000 people. It will be in operation from 2016.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Geoffrey Clifton, Albert Isaacs, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Geoff Mann, Bradley Matthews, Len Regan, Lourie Smit, Roger Wheaton, www.vicsig.net, the *Australian*, *Weekend Australian* and *Canberra Times* for Rail news.

BUS NEWS

New South Wales - Sydney

Hillsbus has announced increased frequencies on routes 600, 601 and 700 from 30 November 2009. From Saturday 12 December 2009, 36 additional 610X services operate every weekend along the popular Rouse Hill – Railway Square route, running express via the M2 and Lane Cove tunnel. The extra daytime buses provide a service every 15 minutes on Saturdays and every 30 minutes on Sundays and Public Holidays.

Veolia: From Monday 30 November 2009 temporary timetables commenced for extra services on Routes **900, 905, 907, 909** and **910** using the nine new Growth buses. There is one timetable available on the website which shows the extra trips only for all five routes. From 14 December full new timetables commenced for Veolia Transport Routes **900, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 913, 914, 916, 925, S2, S4** and **912** (renumbered **925**) ie routes 912 and 925 are amalgamated to operate Lidcombe – East Hills.

Busabout/Interline (Region 2): Updated route 850 Oran Park to Minto timetable commenced Monday 30 November 2009. Route 850 will no longer service West Minto Station. This is a considerably improvement on the previous service which consisted of only three weekday trips but is now hourly all day weekdays and Saturday mornings.

New South Wales - Regional

Blue Mountains and Wollongong Proposed Bus Service Changes by *Hilaire Fraser*

In mid October the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure issued three brochures detailing outer metropolitan proposed bus services changes as follows:

Region 8 Blue Mountains Bus Company

843 Springwood-Yellow Rock, new: The use of route number 843 is of interest. Perhaps when the 830 & 840 series are no longer required for the Liverpool area with the implementation of the Region 3 Network Review then the Blue Mountains routes will all be re-numbered in the 830 & 840 series. This would then free up route numbers 685-698 for the growing Rouse Hill and Hawkesbury areas.

690 Penrith-Faulconbridge Sunday services increased from 2 to 5 trips in each direction.
692 Springwood-Winmalee, some Saturday services will be extended to Hawkesbury Heights.

Region 9 Northern Illawarra (Green's Northern Coaches and Dion's Bus Service)

1 University-Austinmer (to be renumbered 1U)

4 University-Bulli (to be renumbered 4U).

Region 10 Premier Illawarra

7 Wollongong-Bellambi via Tarrawanna shortened to terminate at Corrimal

10 Wollongong/Keiraville/Figtree/Coniston/Wollongong to become Wollongong-Keiraville

11 Wollongong/Coniston/Figtree/Keiraville/Wollongong to become Wollongong-University via Coniston & Figtree

23 Wollongong/Coniston/Figtree/Mangerton/Wollongong discontinued

24 Wollongong/Mangerton/Figtree/Coniston/Wollongong to become Wollongong-Figtree via Mangerton

25 Wollongong-Figtree via West Wollongong & Mangerton discontinued

36 Wollongong-Kembla Heights now Figtree-Kembla Heights

38 Wollongong/Figtree/Figtree Hts/Mt Keira/Wollongong discontinued

39 Wollongong/Mt Keira/Figtree Hts/Figtree/Wollongong loop replaced by linear Wollongong-Figtree service

51 Wollongong-Albion Pk via Mt Warrigal shortened to terminate at Shellharbour Sq

52 Wollongong-Oak Flats via Nth Warrawong & Shell Cove discontinued, replaced by more services on 53

53 University-Oak Flats via Shell Cove shortened to terminate at Shellharbour Sq

54 Wollongong-Albion Park Rails via Nth Warrawong & Mt Warrigal discontinued, replaced by more services on 51

70 Shellharbour Beach-Albion Pk via Barrack Pt & Mt Warrigal discontinued

72 Shellharbour Sq-Lake South via Barrack Hts to become Shellharbour Sq-Barrack Pt via Barrack Hts

73 Shellharbour Sq-Albion Pk via Flinders, Barrack Pt & Mt Warrigal discontinued

74 Shellharbour Sq-Shellharbour Beach via Barrack Hts discontinued

76 Albion Pk-Shellharbour Sq extended to Shellharbour Beach

77 Shellharbour Sq-Albion Pk via Oak Flats, new, replaces 51, 54, 70, 73

Members of the public were invited to respond to these proposals by 16 November 2009.

Hunter and Central Coast Proposed Bus Service Changes *by Hilaire Fraser*

In mid November the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure issued six brochures detailing outer metropolitan proposed bus services changes as follows:

Region 1 Cessnock (Rover Coaches)

165 West Cessnock Local & 169 Cessnock Local to become 165 Cessnock Local via West Cessnock

166 Bellbird & 168 Millfield to become 166 serving Bellbird & Millfield

167 Nulkaba-Cessnock to be extended to South Cessnock to make 162 services to Kearsley & Abernethy more direct

171 Kurri Kurri Local service to be split into 171 Weston & 172 Heddon Greta.

Region 2 Maitland & Raymond Terrace (Hunter Valley Buses)

125 Newcastle-Stockton to become Stockton-Fern Bay

134 Newcastle-Lemon Tree Passage discontinued, 137 Raymond Terrace-Lemon Tree Passage will connect with 130 Newcastle-Fingal Bay operated by Port Stephens Coaches to provide a connection to Newcastle

135 Stockton-Raymond Terrace via Medowie to become Newcastle Airport-Raymond Terrace via Medowie with an extension to Stockton in peak periods.

145 Raymond Terrace-Greenhills (new)

182 Rutherford-Singleton Heights to be renumbered 180 and commence at Greenhills Shops New 182 will operate from Rutherford to Thornton incorporating North Rutherford from the existing 181, and replacing 188 Greenhills-Ashtonfield and 186 Greenhills-Thornton

184 Maitland-Greenhills via Morpeth will now become Greenhills-Morpeth

185 Maitland-Gresford will now serve new residential areas in Bolwarra Heights

187 Greenhills-Wilton Dr will now become Metford-Wilton Dr via Greenhills.

Region 3 Port Stephens Coaches

30 Anna Bay-Solders Pt to be renumbered 132

31 Nelsons Bay-Solders Pt to be renumbered 131.

Region 4 Maryland, Edgeworth & Toronto (Hunter Valley Buses)

Present 260 Minmi-Wallsend to become 260 Minmi-Glendale via Maryland Dr and 261 Fletcher-Glendale via Warkworth St

Present 265 West Wallsend-University via Lake Rd, 266 Cameron Park-Charlestown and 267 West Wallend-University via Elernmore Vale to become 265 West Wallend-Glendale

266 Cameron Park (Blackwood Cct)-Glendale

267 Cameron Park (Northlakes Dr)-University via Elernmore Vale

268 Edgeworth-Glendale

Toronto District: Present 270 Toronto-University, 271 Toronto-Glendale and 272 Toronto-John Hunter Hospital to become

270 Toronto-Glendale via Fassifern & Woodrising (extends to University in peak periods)

271 Toronto-Glendale via Marmong Point

272 Toronto-Glendale via Woodrising

(At present 270, 271 & 272 can travel via Marmong Point or Woodrising).

Region 6 Busways Central Coast

51 Gosford-Ettalong via Ocean Beach Rd to be renumbered 55

52 Woy Woy-Umina via Springwood St & 53 Woy Woy-Umina via Booker Bay to become 53

Woy Woy-Booker Bay via Springwood St

54 Woy-Woy-Umina via Trafalgar Av to be extended to Patonga replacing 50, 52 & 53 or

Castle Circuit replacing 55 & 56

55 Umina-Castle Circuit & 56 Woy Woy-Castle Circuit replaced by extension of 54 or 57 Woy Woy-Umina West

60 Gosford-Woy Woy via Empire Bay to be renumbered 64

61 Gosford-Wagstaffe to be renumbered 65

63 Gosford-Davistown & Saratoga (clockwise) to operate anti-clockwise

64 Gosford-Saratoga & Davistown (anti-clockwise) discontinued

65 Gosford-Avooca to be renumbered 66A

66 Gosford-Copacabana to be renumbered 66C

69 Gosford-Avooca via Charles Kay Dr discontinued

70 Gosford-Green Point discontinued, now included in 63

96 Budgewoi-Wyee (new).

Region 7 Red Bus Services

25 The Entrance-Wyong via Glenning Valley to be extended to Wyong Hospital

47 Bay Village to Wyong via Kangy Angy to no longer operate on Saturdays

The present route structure remains intact have some routes have been altered to be straightened or to service new areas.

Members of the public are invited to respond to these proposals by 14 December 2009.

South Australia – Adelaide

Improvements to the O-Bahn: The major problem with bus services on the O-Bahn is the time taken between the CBD and the commencement of the track at Gilberton. A dedicated project team is currently considering options to overcome this problem. Bus travel times are planned to be reduced by up to 10 minutes on its completion. This project has Federal government funding of \$61m.

Victoria - Melbourne

Route 501 Moonee Ponds – Niddrie via Airport West has a new timetable, with extended operating hours until 2100, seven days a week from 28 December 2009. Sunday services have been introduced for the first time. However, the new timetable is introduced as a holiday timetable with a 45 minute frequency and is completely different to the permanent timetable which will not commence until 25 January 2010. Also, the Saturday and Sunday late services do not run over the Australia Day weekend. The normal timetable will commence on 25 January 2010 with a weekday off peak frequency of 40 minutes and a peak and evening (!) frequency of 30 minutes. A potential regular traveller would need three timetables over the first month of operation!

Changes to bus routes in the Frankston area were implemented from Monday 30 November:

Route 771 - Frankston - Karingal Hub via McMahons Road: Route 771 is extended beyond Karingal Hub Shopping Centre to North Road in Langwarrin and has extended operating hours to 2100, seven days a week.

768 - Karingal Hub Shopping Centre – Langwarrin: Route 768 will have a new route number and is now known as Route 771. Route 771 continues to travel along its existing route, but is extended to Langwarrin and operates to 2100, seven days a week.

Route 770 - Frankston - Karingal Hub via Ashleigh Avenue: Route 770 has extended operating hours to 2100, seven days a week.

Route 778 - Kananook - Carrum Downs: A new bus route is introduced to service the Lathams Road industrial area.

Routes 215/223/460: Melbourne Bus Link has issued a new combined timetable booklet for these routes dated 1 November 2009 v.1 (Oct 09), which replaces the separate timetables currently listed for routes 215/223 & 215/460.

Victoria - Regional

A trial bus service has been introduced between Ararat and Maryborough via Elmhurst, Amphitheatre and Avoca. Running on Mondays and Fridays only (except Public Holidays), the service commenced on 21 December 2009 and operates until 29 January 2010. Departures from Ararat are at 0730 and 1315 with arrivals at Maryborough at 0850 and 1440. The return trips depart Maryborough at 0900 and 1450 with Ararat arrivals at 1026 and 1610.

This is a Grampians Pyrenees Regional Development Board Flexible Transport Project.

Gippsland Region: Viclink has produced a South Gippsland and Bass Coast bus and V/Line coach services timetable effective 9 November 2009. This also includes the Wonthaggi Town Service. There are also various other services not included in the booklet.

Ventnor - Cowes, run by D & D Cleeland - Printed on Flyer, effective late 2008

San Remo - Cowes(demand responsive service), run by D & D Cleeland - Printed on Flyer, effective late 2008

Seaspray Holiday Bus, run by unknown operator - Printed on Flyer, printed in 2008, effective late 2008

Boisdale - Briagolong - Stratford, run by unknown operator - Printed on Flyer, printed in 2008, effective late 2008

Coastal Bus (Loch Sport, Paradise and Golden Beach), run by Little's Gippsland Coaches. - Printed in small pocket sized timetable, effective late 2008

Mallacoota to Genoa Bus, run by unknown operator - Printed in small pocket sized timetable, effective late 2008

Metung/Lakes Entrance Coastal Bus, run by various operators - Printed in small pocket sized timetable, effective late 2008.

Western Australia - Regional

Effective December 21, Greyhound has operated a direct service from Perth to Coral Bay and provided more frequent services to Monkey Mia, Exmouth and Kalbarri. Services between Perth and Broome operate five days a week instead of once weekly. Connections to Monkey Mia and Kalbarri have been increased from one to three days per week and buses now travel to Exmouth five days a week.

Thanks to ATDB, Tony Bailey, Jason Blackman, Hilaire Fraser, Mike Kavanagh, Michael Marshall, Metlink, Lourie Smit and Roger Wheaton for Bus news.

AIR NEWS

International

Jetstar will operate four times weekly between Cairns and Osaka from 1 April subject to regulatory approval.

Qantas's subsidiary **Jetstar** and Malaysian low cost carrier **AirAsia** announced an alliance on 6 January. This will better position them to compete with Singapore Airlines and its low-cost

subsidiary Tiger Airways. The non-equity partnership, which is expected to net hundreds of millions in savings, will see Jetstar and AirAsia work together on aircraft purchasing, ground handling, fleet specification and the pooling of aircraft components.

Pacific Blue Australia plans to fly daily between Australia and Thailand.

Royal Brunei Airlines is reportedly set to expand. Possible new routes in 2010 include Ujung Padang (Indonesia) and Penang (Malaysia) and a return of services to Sydney and Shanghai. Routes to Melbourne, Bahrain, Los Angeles, Frankfurt, Narita, Chennai, and Beijing are anticipated to be added from 2011. It may add non-stop flights to London in the second half of 2012 and to Los Angeles in 2013.

PacificFlier, a new Palau-based carrier, will commence services on 7 January 2010, flying from Palau to Manila, Guam, Tokyo (Narita) and Brisbane.

From now until 20 February **China Southern Airlines** will increase from five flights per week to daily from Sydney to Guangzhou.

Philippine Airlines will launch bi-weekly flights between Manila, Brisbane and Melbourne from 16 March. The return to Brisbane comes ten years after it suspended flights there.

The ACCC has approved operational co-operation between **Delta Air Lines** and **V Australia** on the trans-Pacific route.

Strategic Airlines has been officially granted Ozjet's rights to access Bali by the Australian government, and may commence services in March.

Cook Islands has approved a financial guarantee for **Air New Zealand** to operate flights during a trial period of July to October 2010. The once weekly Boeing 767 will depart Rarotonga on Sunday mornings, returning the same evening.

Qantas has changed times of some Hong Kong services from 29 March. QF67 will change from a 2215 to 0920 departure on MWF from Perth arriving Hong Kong at 0605 the following day. Qantas claims this will provide a wider range of connections. The return flight QF68 will operate on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, departing Hong Kong at 2330 and arriving Perth at 0720 the following day. The Brisbane services will also change from an 1115 departure to 2305, arriving early in following day.

The Virgin Blue Group's NZ based offshoot, **Pacific Blue**, will launch a twice weekly service between Cairns and Auckland from 23 March. It will operate on Tuesdays and Saturdays. This is Virgin's first international route from Cairns.

From 1 February, **Emirates** will change one of its daily Melbourne - Dubai services to operate via Kuala Lumpur. It operates thrice daily on the route, with one service via Singapore and the others presently nonstop, but from February, EK408 and EK409 will travel via KL.

A runway upgrade at Perth Airport has forced **South African Airways** to cancel its 1120 Saturday flights to Johannesburg during February and March.

Continental Airlines will increase flights between Guam and Cairns from four-times weekly to a daily from 17 March to 6 April.

Domestic

On 9 December, **Jetstar** announced its largest domestic expansion since its launch.

Flights on the following routes will be increased progressively from March.

ROUTE	FORMER FREQUENCY	NEW FREQUENCY
Melbourne–Newcastle	Twice daily	Thrice daily
Melbourne–Gold Coast	Six times daily	Eight times daily
Newcastle–Gold Coast	Daily	Twice daily
Sydney–Gold Coast	Nine times daily	11 times daily
Brisbane–Launceston	Four times weekly	Daily
Perth–Cairns	Thrice weekly	Five times weekly
Adelaide–Cairns	Four times weekly	Six times weekly
Sydney–Cairns	Daily	Twice daily
Sydney–Sunshine Coast	Thrice daily	Four times daily
Melb–Sunshine Coast	Twice daily	17 times weekly

Melbourne–Townsville Thrice weekly

Daily

The effect of this is that Virgin Blue, Jetstar and Tiger Airways are battling it out to become the Gold Coast's major domestic airline. Each carrier currently dominates a specific route out of the Gold Coast -- Virgin claims the Sydney route, Tiger Airways has the numbers in Adelaide and Jetstar is ahead for Melbourne travellers.

A week later Jetstar announced increased frequency Melbourne Tullamarine-Brisbane to twice daily from 1 July 2010. This will complement Jetstar's current double daily Melbourne Avalon-Brisbane flights. They will depart Melbourne at 0650 and 1610 daily, and return from Brisbane at 0930 and 1850.

Qantas announced on 21 December that, as a result of improving demand, it would begin increasing capacity across a range of domestic routes from 29 March 2010. The changes will see the addition of a total 19 return services across selected routes, while capacity will be restored on others by upgrading from Boeing 737 to larger Boeing 767 aircraft. Additional services will be introduced on:

- Adelaide-Melbourne additional three per week (currently 64 per week), 1,200 extra seats
- Brisbane-Sydney additional six per week (currently 140), 2,016 extra seats
- Brisbane-Townsville additional three per week (currently 33), 912 extra seats
- Melbourne-Perth additional one per week (currently 45 per week), 288 extra seats
- Sydney-Ayers Rock (seasonal July-October) additional one per week (currently 7), 336 extra seats

Upgraded Services:

- Brisbane-Cairns six per week, 912 extra seats
- Brisbane-Melbourne six per week, 912 extra seats

Qantas will also increase existing daily Cityflyer services between Adelaide and Brisbane with four extra services per week (currently 20), increasing capacity by 20%. These moves come as it expects a half year pre-tax profit of up to \$150m.

QantasLink will expand operations to regional ports with 13 return services Melbourne-Mildura, one additional flight from Devonport and three additional flights from Launceston to Melbourne each week from 1 February. It will launch 23 return services each week between Adelaide and Port Lincoln from 15 February, subject to regulatory approval - four return flights Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays, three return flights on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and double daily flights on both days of the weekend are planned.

Tiger Airways have announced daily flights between the Gold Coast and Sydney, effective from 15 December. Virgin Blue and Jetstar both revealed that they were also looking at opportunities to increase market share from the Gold Coast because it was a 'key port'. Tourism Queensland projections show Tiger Airways just ahead of Jetstar on the Adelaide route with 39% of the market by offering 1260 seats in its daily service. Jetstar offers 1239 seats a week on this route, while Virgin Blue lags with just 742 seats a week on its daily service. The route to Sydney is dominated by Virgin Blue with 52% in its 13,140 seat capacity on 80 flights a week. This trumps Jetstar's 43% (10,668 seats on 56 flights). Tiger's new daily service will offer 1260 seats. Jetstar wins the Gold Coast to Melbourne route with a 47% share (8658 seats) ahead of Virgin Blue (5904 from 35 weekly flights) and Tiger (3780 from 21 flights).

Regional Express (Rex) ceased operating flights between Mackay and Townsville on 1 January, just three months after launching the services in competition with QantasLink. This follows the lodgment of a formal complaint with the ACCC in which Rex accused QantasLink of predatory pricing practices on the route.

Virgin Blue has been awarded a Federal government contract to operate regular flights between Perth and the Indian Ocean territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands. These services will commence from 1 April 2010, with twice weekly flights to Cocos and Christmas Islands, and an additional third weekly flight to Christmas Island only which will be reassessed after six months, subject to demand.

Strategic Airlines will launch its first Airbus A320 aircraft on the Perth-Derby (Curtin) route.

Thanks to Tony Bailey and Mike Kavanagh for Air news.

FERRY NEWS

The New South Welsh Premier, Kristina Keneally, announced on 22 December that **Sydney Ferries** will not be privatised. The Government says it took into account improved performance standards by Sydney Ferries in the 12 months since it was de-corporatised. A significant restructure will be carried out at Sydney Ferries so that further improvements can be delivered.

The tender for permanent operation of the Sydney to Manly Ferry has been awarded to **Seaflight Ferry Service**. The company says that it will operate 30 services using catamarans with a capacity of 300 passengers and taking 15 minutes, a reduction of three minutes on present schedules. The contract is for five years, with an option to extend for a further three years. There was surprise that **Manly Fast Ferry**, operator of the service since it was removed from Sydney Ferries in February 2009 was not awarded the contract. There was also scepticism as Seaflight has no experience in this area, and does not have a telephone or website listing.

Sydney Summer Ferry timetables provide extra services on routes like Manly and Darling Harbour, as well as detailed event information, by route, for days such as Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Eve, New Years Day and Australia Day. They are effective from Saturday, 19 December 2009 and are on www.sydneyferries.info/timetables.htm and available at Circular Quay and Manly wharves from 19 December 2009.

From Monday 21 December 2009 the 0750 Darling Harbour weekday service was altered to depart Circular Quay five minutes earlier at 0745, to provide better connections with buses at McMahons Point.

Thanks to Tony Bailey, Geoff Lambert and Lourie Smit for Ferry news.