



# TABLE TALK

## AUSTRALASIAN TIMETABLE NEWS

No. 277, September 2015

ISSN 1038-3697 RRP \$4.95

Published by the Australian Timetable Association

[www.austta.org.au](http://www.austta.org.au)

## TOP TABLE TALK – GREYHOUND COACH SERVICES

by Steven Haby

This article provides a 'snapshot' of Greyhound services across Australia as at 30 June 2015. What is interesting to note is the reduction of services particularly in Victoria and the West. It is now no longer possible to travel to Adelaide from Melbourne (in fact the only service into Victoria from Adelaide is a day return service to Mildura). Sydney-bound passengers from Melbourne now have to travel via Canberra and change to connecting services.

For some years Greyhound has stopped publishing a book of their services, and timetables are available now either as PDF files from their website or through a 'journey finder' page. Timetables can be sourced direct from their website at [www.greyhound.com.au](http://www.greyhound.com.au).

### Adelaide – Alice Springs

Daily, with the departure ex Adelaide at 1800 (GX580) arriving Alice Springs at 1430 next day. Departure from Alice Springs is at 1030 (GX850) arriving in Adelaide at 0625 next morning. There is a connection to Darwin with GX800 which departs at 1915. Timetable is effective 5 April 2015.

### Adelaide – Mildura

The only service from South Australia to Victoria now, this run operates daily, with the departure ex Adelaide at 0900 (GX522) arriving Mildura at 1430. The Adelaide bound service departs at 1515 (GX252) arriving Adelaide at 2000. Timetable is effective 5 April 2015.

### Alice Springs – Darwin

Daily, with departure ex Alice Springs at 1915 (GX880) arriving 1720 the next day. Southbound departure from Darwin is at 1200 (GX882) arriving at 0915 the next day. A connection to Adelaide is provided with GX850 which departs at 1030. Timetable is effective 1 June 2015.

### Alice Springs – Townsville ("The Red Centre Express")

A throwback to the days when certain coach services were given 'names', *The Red Centre Express* to Townsville service operates Tuesdays and Fridays only (GX 849) with departure ex Alice Springs at 0900 arriving Townsville 1115 the next day. The Alice Springs service operates Wednesdays and Sundays only (GX489) departing at 1900 arriving Alice Springs at 2030 the next day. Timetable is effective 15 May 2015 (Townsville service) and 5 April 2015 (Alice Springs service)

### Brisbane – Byron Bay

There are five daily services to Byron Bay with departures ex Brisbane at 0700 (GX421); 0930 (GX428); 1315 (GX429), 1600 (GX422) and 1930 (GX423). Services GX421, 422 and 423 all continue to Sydney with GX423 not operating between 22 June and 14 September 2015. Brisbane bound services depart Byron Bay at 0650 (GX243 ex Sydney); 1025 (GX244 ex Sydney); 1330 (GX248); 1700 (GX249) and 2100 (GX241 ex Sydney). Timetable is effective 5 April 2015 (Byron Bay services) and 2 June 2015 (Brisbane services).

### Brisbane – Cairns

This busy corridor has a mix of through and short workings along its length. Northbound there are five departures from Brisbane at 0745 (GX401); 0800 (GX440); 1015 (GX441); 1200 (GX402) and 1515 (GX443). Services GX401, 402 and 443 all head to Cairns; GX440 to Agnes Waters and GX441 to Hervey Bay. There are two other northbound services with GX512 departing Australia Zoo at 0935 for Rainbow Beach and GX409 departing Mackay at 1830 for an overnight run to Cairns arriving 0545. All services are daily.

Southbound services comprise departures from Cairns at 0025 (GX410); 0745 (GX411); 1300 (GX412) and 1900 (GX419 to Townsville only). Other southbound workings are at 1130 (GX416) ex Townsville for Mackay; 0630 (GX446) ex Agnes Waters for Brisbane; 0900 (GX445) ex Hervey Bay for Brisbane and 1435 (GX519) ex Rainbow Beach for Noosa Junction. Timetable is effective 12 May 2015.

### Brisbane – Gold Coast Shuttle

Daily with two departures ex Brisbane at 0745 (GX450) and 1130 (GX451) arriving at Surfers Paradise at 0900 and 1250 respectively. Return trips depart Surfers Paradise at 0915 (GX460) and 1300 (GX459). All services are run by a minibus according to a note on the timetable which is effective 5 April 2015. It is interesting to note that during the late 1980s and until the extension of the railway line from Beenleigh to the Gold Coast this corridor was one of the busiest for express coach working.

### Brisbane – Roma

Daily with Roma bound trips departing Brisbane at 0605 (GX485) and 1300 (GX487) arriving 1405 and 2010 respectively in Roma. Brisbane bound trips depart Roma at 0145 (GX486) and 0730 (GX488) arriving at 0955 and 1540 respectively. Timetable is dated 5 April 2015.

### Brisbane – Sunshine Coast

Services run daily with trips ex Brisbane at 0700 (GX501) to Noosa Junction and 1705 (GX505) to Noosaville. The route is supplemented by services to Cairns (GX443), Rainbow Beach (GX512); Agnes Waters (GX440) and Hervey Bay (GX441) providing for six services overall each day. Brisbane bound services depart at 0745 (GX513) from Noosaville for Australia Zoo; 1105 (GX511) from Noosa Junction; 1240 (GX411) from Noosa Junction ex Cairns; 1505 (GX446) from Tewantin ex Agnes Waters; and 1800 (GX461) from Noosaville. Timetable is dated 13 April 2015.

### Brisbane – Toowoomba – Sydney via New England Highway

A service runs daily with departure ex Brisbane at 1700 (GX424) arriving at 0930 next day at Sydney Airport. The Brisbane bound service departs at 1730 (GX242). Timetable is dated 5 April 2015.

### **Brisbane – Sydney via Pacific Highway**

Daily with three services ex Brisbane at 0700 (GX421); 1600 (GX422) and 1730 (GX423) the latter not operating from 15 June to 14 September 2015. There are two additional short workings to Byron Bay from Brisbane being GX428 and GX429 departing at 0930 and 1315 respectively. Brisbane bound services depart Sydney at 0700 (GX241); 1800 (GX243) and 2200 (GX244) with short workings from Byron Bay at 1330 (GX248) and 1700 (GX249). Timetable is effective 15 June 2015.

### **Brisbane – Toowoomba**

This is Greyhound's busiest trunk route with 11 services daily, with an additional service on Fridays. Some trips start and finish at Brisbane Airport with three services continuing to Roma (GX485 and GX487) and Sydney (GX424) from Toowoomba. Not all services are run with standard coaches, with two trips operating using minibuses which are indicated in the timetable. Departures from Brisbane (Roma Street) are at 0605 (GX485); 0730 (GX951 minibus); 0830 (GX952 express); 1000 (GX950); 1100 (GX 958); 1200 (GX957 minibus); 1300 (GX487 to Roma). 1400 (GX955 Fridays only); 1500 (GX953); 1600 (GX954); 1700 (GX424) and 1800 (GX956).

Brisbane services from Toowoomba commence at 0530 (GX150); then 0600 (GX157); 0720 (GX486 ex Roma); 0800 (GX242 ex Sydney); 1000 (GX151); 1100 (GX152); 1200 (GX158); 1305 (GX488 ex Roma); 1400 (GX153); 1600 (GX154) and 1800 (GX155). Timetable is effective 12 June 2015.

### **Darwin – Broome**

Darwin bound services operate Mondays-Saturdays departing Broome at 1800 (GX680) arriving Darwin 2130 the next day. The Broome service operates Sundays to Fridays departing at 0725 (GX860) arriving in Broome at 0640 the next day. The Broome service is the only Greyhound service into Western Australia now. Timetable is effective 5 April 2015.

### **Darwin – Jabiru**

This service operates Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 0830 (GX816) ex Darwin arriving Jabiru at 1230. The return service departs at 1330 (GX817) arriving in Darwin at 1655. Timetable is effective 5 April 2015.

### **Melbourne – Canberra**

Canberra is as far north as Greyhound now runs from Melbourne and those wishing to travel onwards to Sydney need to change at Canberra. In fact the Canberra service is the only Greyhound service operating out of Melbourne now. Canberra bound services depart Melbourne at 0800

(GX320), 1200 (GX321) and 2200 (GX322) with an extra service from Wagga Wagga at 2100 (GX224). Connections to Sydney are GX903 from GX322 and GX909 from GX320 and GX321.

Melbourne bound services depart Canberra at 0900 (GX231), 1400 (GX230), 1730 (GX223 to Wagga Wagga only) and 2300 (GX233). Timetable is effective 5 April 2015 (Canberra-Melbourne) and 11 May 2015 (Melbourne-Canberra).

### **Rockhampton – Emerald / Longreach**

These routes are subsidised by the Queensland government as part of that government's support to regional and remote transport services and the timetables have the Queensland government's state seal printed on them. Rockhampton-bound services depart Emerald at 0900 (GX477/478) daily except Wednesday and Saturday and Longreach at 0800 (GX470/2) on Wednesdays and Sundays. Services from Rockhampton to Emerald depart at 1810 (GX475) each day except Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays and 1750 (GX476) on Fridays. The Longreach service runs on Tuesdays and Saturdays departing at 0800 (GX471). Timetable is effective 5 October 2014 (Longreach – Rockhampton) and 5 April 2015 (Rockhampton – Longreach).

### **Sydney – Canberra**

This is another busy trunk route for Greyhound with nine southbound services with an additional short working from Goulburn with all running daily. Services from Sydney depart at 0700 (GX200); 0800 (GX273); 0930 (GX902); 1030 (GX912); 1230 (GX904); 1330 (GX906); 1530 (GX914); 1800 (GX908) and 1830 (GX910). GX200 extends to Thredbo from 25 June to 7 October 2015. Services to Sydney depart Canberra at 0350 (GX901); 0630 (GX913); 0730 (GX903); 0930 (GX905); 1230 (GX284); 1430 (GX907); 1700 (GX911); 1800 (GX909) and 2005 (GX203). A Goulburn short working departs from the Big Merino at 0700 and returns departing Canberra at 1730 (GX991) arriving Goulburn at 1845. Timetable is effective 15 June 2015.

### **Sydney – Thredbo**

This daily return service runs during the snow season with the departure from Sydney at 0700 arriving at Thredbo at 1445. The return service departs at 1630 (GX203) arriving back in Sydney at 2335. This service is essentially an extension of existing services GX200 and GX203. Timetable is effective 15 June 2015.

A future article in the *Times* will look at the changes to express coach operations across Australia since the 1970s.

## **RAILAND TRAM NEWS**

### **Great Southern Rail: Drastic Cutbacks**

GSR's **Indian Pacific** and **Ghan** transcontinental trains will both be reduced to run only once a week. GSR is blaming this on the Federal government's withdrawal of its subsidy of \$9 million per annum to Great Southern Rail to reimburse it for providing concessions to pensioners This is the latest result of the current Federal government's lack of interest in passenger rail. Seniors and pensioners make up more than half of the patrons on GSR. They will now receive a much smaller (20%) reduction in fares, and so GSR expects demand to fall.

GSR also planned to completely discontinue operation of the **Overland**. The last run was expected to be from Melbourne to Adelaide on 29 December 2015. However on 27 August the SA government announced that it will provide \$1 million over the next three years to keep it operating. SA Transport Minister Stephen Mullighan says under the funding deal GSR will continue to run two return services each week. "We are a strong supporter of the Overland service and we want

to see it continue," he said. The Overland has operated since Victorian-SA line opened in May 1886.

From 2016 the Indian Pacific and Ghan will be reduced to once a week, that is, the second weekly run of the Ghan (which runs in June, July and August) will not operate and the second weekly run of the Indian Pacific (which runs in September and October) will not operate. GSR states that at peak periods longer trains will operate to provide capacity. Thus they expect the overall Gold/Platinum Service capacity to fall by 8% on the Indian Pacific and by 3% on the Ghan. The surviving GSR transcontinental services will be:

- **Indian Pacific** from Sydney Wednesdays at 1503, arrive Perth Saturdays at 1457 (unchanged);
- **Indian Pacific** from Perth Sundays at 1000, arrive Sydney Wednesdays at 1107 (unchanged);
- **Ghan** from Adelaide Sundays at 1215, arrive Darwin Tuesdays at 1730 (unchanged);

- **Ghan** until 27 July 2016 and from 2 November 2016 to 29 March 2017, from Darwin Wednesdays 1000, arrive Fridays 1130 (unchanged);
- **Ghan** from 3 August until 26 October 2016 the once a week Ghan will change to the extended four night schedule with very lengthy off-train excursions as presently provided for by the supplementary second weekly service. The sketchy schedule which GSR is advertising for this period is: Darwin depart Wednesdays at 1000, Katherine arrive Wednesdays at 1340, depart 1820, Alice Springs arrive Thursdays at 1000, depart 2145, Coober Pedy (ie, the train halts at Manguri) arrive Fridays at 0900, depart 1850, Adelaide arrive Saturdays at 1045.

In additional GSR cutbacks:

- From 1 July 2016, the economy ("Red Service") will be removed from both the Indian Pacific and the Ghan;
- The Ghan - which in recent years has operated only fortnightly during the northern tropical wet season - will not operate at all between 18 December 2016 and 18 January 2017; and
- The Motorail car carrying service will be withdrawn between Adelaide and Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney, and Adelaide and Alice Springs (but will still be available from Adelaide to Perth and Adelaide to Darwin).

Great Southern Rail was formed by the sale of Australian National Railway's interstate passenger trains by the Howard government in November 1997. In March 2015 it was acquired from Serco by Allegro Funds, an investment company.

## Brookfield to acquire Asciano

Canadian engineering company Brookfield is to acquire Asciano, owner of Pacific National freight train operator and of ports, in an \$8.9 billion deal that is the largest takeover of an Australian company since 2011. On 19 August Asciano concluded that Brookfield's offer was in the best interests of shareholders. Brookfield's latest offer was \$9.15 per Asciano share, a 39% premium on the pre takeover price. Brookfield already manages and controls the WA rural rail lines. The deal still requires Asciano shareholder approval and regulatory clearance from Australian and NZ foreign investment review boards, competition authorities and third-party consent at certain Australian ports. 72% of Asciano's earnings come from Pacific National.

This takeover has caused speculation that Brookfield might bid for the Australian Rail Track Corporation when the Federal government places it on the market. If Brookfield were to do so, its main rival, Aurizon, might then also bid for ARTC.

## ARTC: Communications

ARTC has awarded a ten year contract to Telstra to provide telecommunications through its NextG network to support the National Train Communications System (NTCS) across its 8500km network.

NTCS is a single government-funded network for communications between train control, trains, track workers and wayside equipment for ARTC-controlled and non-ARTC train controlled territories. It includes more than 70 base stations built by Telstra to offer 3G voice and data for ARTC through NextG, which are supplemented by an Iridium-powered satellite solution to provide redundancy in black territory. NTCS also includes the design and supply of 704 In-Train Communications Equipment (ICE) units for locomotives.

ARTC switched off its analogue communications network in December 2014 to operate a single nationwide platform with NTCS replacing disparate and old communication systems. NTCS now offers seamless coverage across the Interstate

and Hunter Valley rail networks, with the latest contract with Telstra covering the security of supply, maintenance and enhancement to the network.

ARTC says deployment of the system will allow its network to meet evolving data intensive communications needs and provide a platform for future innovations. These could include the deployment of safe travelling distance technology with proximity alerts, real-time locomotive tracking, sophisticated track and wayside monitoring technology, situational awareness systems, and the Advanced Train Management System.

The contract with Telstra marks ARTC's switch from using a private telecommunications infrastructure to a public network.

## ARTC: East-West line Train control

Control of the railway from Stockinbingal to Parkes to Broken Hill was transferred from Mile End (Adelaide) to Junee from 25/26 June. This occurred despite ARTC's foreshadowing that Junee Train Control office may be closed in the long-term.

## Aurizon: Coal traffic

The following breakdown of Aurizon's major traffic, coal is derived from their 2014-15 Annual Report. This is overwhelmingly in their traditional market of Central Queensland. However, their Queensland traffic is projected to slightly decline while their NSW Hunter Valley traffic will increase. The following table is in million tonnes per annum.

YEAR	2014	2015	2016
Queensland	193	189	180
NSW	39	41	45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>225</b>

## Sydney Trains: WTT 2 August 2015

In addition to the ARTC and Transport for NSW Freight Working Timetables commencing 2 August noted in last month's *Table Talk*, there is a new Sydney Trains Passenger WTT of that date.

## JHR NSW CRN WTT 4 October 2015

A new John Holland Rail NSW Country Regional Network WTT is on their website at [www.jhrcrn.com.au/Documents.asp?ID=67](http://www.jhrcrn.com.au/Documents.asp?ID=67) This WTT is to come into effect from 4 October and was placed on their website on 14 August. All alterations are to freight trains in Western NSW. All JHR NSW CRN lines are in the one document. The WTT has an interesting introduction (which has also been placed on their website as a standalone document at the same web address) summarising the NSW train numbering system.

## Port Botany freight

Transport firm Toll and stevedore DP World are discussing a joint venture to increase movement of freight by rail to and from Port Botany to a new terminal on the Southern Sydney Freight Line at Villawood, potentially carrying 180,000 container units per annum.

## Sydney Trains: City closedown

On the weekend of 29 and 30 September there will be a closedown of the City Circle, City via the Airport to Sydenham, City to Ashfield lines. Work to be undertaken will be:

- station upgrades at Redfern, Museum and Wynyard
- track reconditioning
- tunnel, overhead wiring, signal and track inspections and
- other preventative maintenance.

On this weekend the Blue Mountains line will also be replaced by buses between Lithgow and Springwood.

## Metro Trains Melbourne: 21 June 2015 timetable

We now have a summary of changes to Metro Trains introduced from 21 June as follows:

- Several empty trains changed to carry passengers, although not part of Metro's contractual obligations (non Passenger Service Requirement in the current jargon),
- Introduction of Calder Park Stabling Sidings to replace St Albans as a stabling location,
- Flemington Racecourse now assigned to the Caulfield and Northern Groups for stabling,
- Daytime trains formerly stabled at Flemington Racecourse now stabled at Ringwood,
- Overnight trains formerly stabled at Flemington Racecourse now stabled at Macleod,
- A standby train at Flemington Racecourse from 1504 until 1800,
- A standby train at Westall from 0430 until 1830,
- A standby train at Sunbury from 0425 until 1430,
- V/Line services no longer via Werribee,
- V/Line services no longer available to Pakenham and Sunbury passengers,
- Additional train from Werribee at 0705,
- Additional train to Werribee at 1705,
- Minor alterations to a few other peak Werribee trains,
- Changes to platforms at Mooroolbark on Sundays.

## Metro Trains Melbourne: System shake-up?

Metro Trains is planning to split the Melbourne railway network into five independent parts as a way of curbing chronic delays, the *Age* reported on 29 July. Each part will have its own dedicated train fleet and pool of drivers. This is modelled on the simpler, more successful Hong Kong Mass Transit Rail which is Metro's major shareholder.

However it is opposed by the Rail, Tram and Bus Union. The union has condemned the plan, because it will diminish the responsibilities of hundreds of train drivers. All but a few drivers would be restricted to driving on one of the five new railway networks. It will reduce the level of training required to qualify as a driver and that would pave the way for an influx of lower-paid drivers to operate trains.

As part of the plan, most drivers are being progressively shifted from their traditional base at Flinders St Station into one of five "mega depots" that are being established at Sunshine, Bell, Bayswater and Caulfield. Eventually, only a small band of drivers will be based at Flinders St. Only those drivers will be required to know how to drive on every train line in Melbourne and how to operate all three types of trains in use. The remaining drivers will only be required to be familiar with "routes on their home rail operating group". Metro refused to rule out that more drivers would be paid less under the plan.

Metro said the "five railways" system would transform the network from a "traditional suburban service to a more metro style service", in which timetables are simplified, train stopping patterns are made consistent and there is minimal interaction between suburban lines. Timetables are already being changed, as the network is divided into the five groups. However, one crucial timetable change, which was planned for this year, has been rejected by the Victorian government because services on three lines would have been cut from the City Loop.

## Metro Trains Melbourne: Frankston line

The Frankston line between Caulfield and Moorabbin will be closed for a week in mid 2016 for preliminary work to remove level crossings at Bentleigh, Ormond and McKinnon. Then it will be closed for 34 days over the Christmas-January period 2016-2017. Bentleigh, Ormond and McKinnon stations will

be closed a few weeks before the second closedown and for about three months after it. The stations will be demolished and rebuilt as part of the works to lower the line to remove level crossings at North Road, McKinnon Road and Centre Road.

This is part of the Victorian government's plan to remove 20 level crossings in the next three years and 50 within eight years, including nine crossings on the Dandenong line.

## Metro Trains Melbourne: Patronage

The number of commuters catching trains from the Werribee line has, unsurprisingly, dropped by almost one-third since the Regional Rail Link opened, Public Transport Victoria data reveals. In the two months after the Wyndham Vale and Tarneit stations opened on 21 June, the number of people boarding trains at Werribee station decreased by 29% on an average weekday, from 5200 to 3714. Passengers at Hoppers Crossing decreased, by 24% from 5399 to 4116. PTV spokesman Adrian Darwent said some passengers had shifted from the Werribee and Hoppers Crossing stations to Wyndham Vale and Tarneit. Tarneit is being used by about 2900 passengers each weekday, and Wyndham Vale by about 1500. But Mr Darwent said the new train stations had not created any relief at Williams Landing, where patronage had remained steady.

This change comes as the latest performance data shows the percentage of peak hour services being delivered on time on the Werribee line has jumped from 84% in May to 91% in July - a 12 month high. Williams Landing is now the busiest train station in Wyndham City with about 4400 passengers boarding trains each day.

PTV says it is developing a new metropolitan train timetable to introduce improvements and capitalise on the benefits made possible through the deliver of the RRL.

## Metro Trains Melbourne: Significant closedowns

The first line closure as part of the Level Crossing Removal Project was on 25 July when the Glen Waverly line was closed between Burnley and Darling to demolish parts of Gardiner station platforms and buildings. The line between Burnley and Darling was closed again on 29-30 August for further works at Gardiner and Burke Road was closed at the same time. The Bayside Rail Improvement Project will see the closure of the Frankston line on the weekend of 5-6 September and the opportunity will be taken to do work at the Centre, McKinnon and North Road level crossing removals. Burke Road will be closed again between 19-28 September, and the Glen Waverly line was closed from 21-25 September.

## Melbourne: Trial of weekend all-night public transport

Commencing 1 January 2016 the Victorian government will trial all-night public transport on weekends for one year. The patronage and popularity of the different modes, routes and timetables will be measured, and community feedback will be sought to help inform the outcome of the trial. If successful, 24-hour weekend public transport will be continued and expanded where necessary. Standard myki fares will apply.

- **Metro trains:** Trains will depart hourly from Flinders St on all lines (except Stony Point and Flemington Racecourse). There will be multiple trains each hour where stations are serviced by two or more lines.
- **Trams:** Trams will operate every 30 minutes on routes 19, 67, 75, 86, 96 and 109. This will provide coverage across Melbourne as well as servicing key night-time precincts and major streets in the CBD.

- **V/Line:** V/Line buses will depart Southern Cross station around 0200 for Bendigo, Ballarat, Traralgon and Geelong.
- **Night bus network:** Night buses will provide a revamped and improved bus service with around 20 overnight routes. The night bus network will have a mix of routes operating from the city, with others providing suburban connections from stations and suburban night-time hubs.

### **Metro trains Melbourne: Mernda line**

The South Morang to Mernda rail extension project has begun with geotechnical investigations taking place along the rail corridor. In late August geotechnical engineers took more than ten soil samples that will be used to form part of the project's design and construction methodology.

### **Yarra Trams strike**

Melbourne trams did not operate for four hours on Thursday 27 August due to an industrial dispute over pay negotiations. Although officially there were no trams from 1000 until 1400, operations were disrupted for longer as services wound down before and were built up afterwards. 110 buses were hired as replacements and operated at 6-12 minute intervals on portions of routes 1, 57, 48, 109, 3, 8, 64, 70 and 75 – mainly areas away from railway lines – but were poorly publicized.

Metro Trains Melbourne employees are planning a similar strike on Friday 4 September and tram employees another four hour strike on 10 September.

### **V/Line: Caroline Springs station**

Construction of the new Caroline Springs railway station – between Deer Park West Junction and Rockbank - is expected to start this month, the Victorian government announced on 19 August.

### **V/Line: Bendigo upgrade?**

The Bendigo Metro Rail project has recommended to the Victorian government upgraded passenger services:

- Stage 1: Five return train services per day to Epsom and Eaglehawk, and every Bendigo-Melbourne train to stop at Kangaroo Flat;
- Stage 2: Further services between Epsom, Eaglehawk, Bendigo and Kangaroo Flat, station upgrades and connectivity with walking and cycling paths;
- Stage 3: 20 minute peak and 40 minute off-peak services between Bendigo and Kangaroo Flat, with alternating services to Epsom and Eaglehawk at peak times.

*Details of a additional V/Line bus service is in Bus news.*

### **Victoria: Murray Basin Rail project**

On 19 August the Victorian government committed to the biggest upgrade to regional rail freight in decades – the full Murray Basin Rail Project – which will standardise and upgrade the entire NW Victorian freight rail network. Lines from Geelong to Maryborough, Mildura, Manangatang, Sea Lake and Murrayville will be standardised, and the existing unused standard gauge connection between Maryborough and Ararat will be reopened. Axle loading on Murray Basin freight lines will be increased to 21 tonnes, allowing larger trains to carry more product. Total cost will be \$416 million.

The Victorian government has already provided up to \$220 million in its 2015-16 Budget for the project, with \$5 million fast-tracked in February to get work started on critical maintenance and safety works. Major works are expected to commence in the second half of 2016 and 270 jobs will be created during construction.

The Victorian government has written to Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss asking the Federal government to

partner with Victoria in funding the project. But Premier Daniel Andrews has promised the project will be delivered even without Federal funds. The business case has been sent to Infrastructure Australia for their assessment. A spokeswoman for Mr Truss did not rule out the Federal government contributing funds to the project, but said the rail line would “normally be a state only responsibility” because it was not part of the Australian Rail Track Corporation network.

The acting head of the Mildura Development Corporation, Jenny Garonne, said the project bolsters the case for a link from Mildura to the transcontinental line passing through Menindee and Broken Hill.

### **Pacific National: Victorian freight**

Pacific National's Hopetoun to Iluka Siding mineral sands train was reduced from six to three times a week from 22 July.

### **West Coast Wilderness Railway future**

The Tasmanian Premier stated on 29 July that the government hoped to increase passenger numbers on the West Coast Wilderness Railway by 25% in the current financial year. \$13.5 million has been allocated to the railway over the next three years. A premium carriage is under construction at Queenstown to cater for increasing numbers of passengers opting for the upmarket service. The Premier also advised the media that “while consideration is being given to longer term plans for the ongoing management of the West Coast Wilderness Railway, this government clearly recognises its importance to the region”.

### **Public Transport Authority WA: Infrastructure information**

A new website resource is a detailed guide to Perth suburban infrastructure by the Public Transport Authority of Western Australia entitled “Network & Infrastructure Access & Information Book”. It is accessible at [www.pta.wa.gov.au/PublicationsandPolicies/SafetyResources/tabid/107/Default.aspx](http://www.pta.wa.gov.au/PublicationsandPolicies/SafetyResources/tabid/107/Default.aspx)

### **KiwiRail: Gisborne line**

KiwiRail has called tenders for the operation of freight or tourist trains on the line from Napier to Gisborne on the North Island east coast. The line has been closed since 2012 when it was damaged by storms.

### **Malaysian Railways: Trains disappear**

KTM Malaysian Railways have withdrawn passenger trains between Johor, southern Malaysia and Woodlands terminus in Singapore. Passengers must now find their own way across the border.

### **Current British Public timetables**

Transport for London still prints the following:

- Tube map - plentiful supply as ever.
- London tube and rail map/South East England rail map - available in some racks or from most ticket booths or information kiosks at TfL station and other railway stations.
- Ferry timetable
- Overground timetables – Most overground stations have these in racks but often only for the relevant line.
- Continuing your journey from <this station.
- Area bus maps – these are available behind the counter at selected locations, I believe the distribution is being cut back.

South West Trains publishes a timetable book that is available free from the ticket office at Waterloo but you have to line up and it seems that it is not often asked for.

Line timetables for all National Rail operators are still freely available.

## Current Portuguese Public timetables

There is very little printed material available in Lisbon. The central train termini have some printed timetables but the suburban stations did not (although they had good timetable posters on display). There is a system map for Lisbon (trams, buses and metro) but copies are difficult to find. The Metro does not print anything. Many of the bus stops in the central area have a system map but it tends to be sun faded so finding particular services can be hard. However, all stops have a line diagram of the routes that service that stop.

## German clockface timetable studied

A detailed study of the feasibility of introducing of a national clock-face timetable in Germany based a 30 minute and 60 minute cycle of long distance trains with optimised connections has been published. The study was commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Transport. It found that a clockface timetable would be technically feasible and

could be introduced by 2025. Depending on the chosen scenario, it could offer passengers travel time reductions totalling between 8 and 12 million h/year, which could generate a growth in ridership of between 9 to 12 million journeys. However, further discussion and analysis of the benefits would be needed before a decision on whether to go ahead. The large size of the German rail network and the number of fixed boundary conditions make it difficult to devise a national clockface timetable, which could not simply be implemented as a single step. It would need to be phased in over a multi-year timescale as the required infrastructure works to remove bottlenecks were undertaken. Further studies would be needed to compare the value of the benefits with the work required and the resulting changes in operating costs.

**Thanks** to Tony Bailey, Geoffrey Clifton, Ian Cooper, Scott Ferris, Victor Isaacs, Geoff Lambert, Len Regan, Michael Smith, Roger Wheaton, [www.railpage.com.au](http://www.railpage.com.au), *Age*, *Australian Railway Digest*, and *Transit Australia* for Rail news.

# REVIEWS

**The Daylight: A history of intercapital daylight rail travel between Melbourne and Sydney**, by Chris Banger, Australian Railway Historical Society, NSW Division, 352 pages, hardback, \$115.

This large book provides a history of Melbourne-Sydney daylight rail travel. The story commences with the little remembered special daylight services which occasionally ran between 1938 and 1940. The history gathers momentum with the introduction of the Intercapital Daylight Express in 1956, which provided a service until 1991, and then the daylight XPT service since 1994. This history is extremely thorough and will provide you with everything you might wish to know. It not only covers Melbourne-Sydney trains, but many associated subjects, such as terminal and intermediate railway stations, the Albury-Sydney Riverina Express, the Melbourne-Canberra through carriages, V/Line's interim bus service to Sydney 1991-1994, and even the short-lived Albury-Sydney day train of 1881. There are copious notes about carriages and locomotives.

Of most interest to ATA members will be extensive quoting of timetable details, and illustrations of timetable covers and much other associated railway paper.

The author has obviously made extensive use of railway documentation, as well as of employees' and passengers' recollections. The book is extensively illustrated.

**City Limits: Why Australia's cities are broken and how we can fix them**, by Jane-Frances Kelly and Paul Donegan, Melbourne University Press / Grattan Institute, 218 pages, paperback, \$33.

This perceptive book examines the problems of Australia's cities and how they can be remedied. The biggest theme is the disconnect between the transport-rich, job-rich city centres and the transport-poor outer suburbs where housing is affordable.

# BUS NEWS

**NOTE:** Sadly the new Table Talk Bus editor announced last month is unable to take up his position. The interim arrangement therefore remains in effect, ie, for the time being please send your contributions of Bus news to the Rail editor at [abvi@iinet.net.au](mailto:abvi@iinet.net.au)

## Interstate

**Greyhound Australia** commenced a commuter service between Goulburn and Canberra from 15 June. The service departs Goulburn at the Big Merino and runs to Canberra Jolimont Centre.

**Rixon Bus Service** runs Batemans Bay-Canberra daily departing Batemans Bay at 0730, arriving Canberra at 0945; Canberra depart 1645, Batemans Bay arrive 1845.

## New South Wales

**Australia Wide Coachlines** has since 2013 been operating a daily return service between Orange and Sydney: Orange 0600 via Sydney Central and Sydney Domestic Airport to Airport International Terminal 1100; returning at 1530 ex Airport to Orange 2115.

## Tasmania by Ian Cooper

Hobart and large parts of Southern, Central and Western Tasmania were blanketed by heavy snow on 3 and 4 August – the heaviest snow falls since July 1986. Public transport on the western shore of the River Derwent, in the Huon Valley and Channel District was severely disrupted, some routes

being suspended for two days. The snow fell overnight 2/3 August with more falls all day on 3 August and in some areas on 4 August as well, making it impossible for buses to operate due to road closures. Metro's first notice to passengers was at daybreak on 3 August and advised that all Channel Highway, Southern Outlet, Tollman's Hill, Blackmans Bay and Kingston, Strickland Avenue and South Hobart services were not operating.

During the day other roads were closed while yet others were re-opened. Buses on some services could operate only part way along the route because of road closures, such as Tarooma, Mt Nelson and Strickland Avenue. Delays occurred to many schedules due to speed restrictions. By 1606 on 3 August Fern Tree Road remained closed and Mt Nelson buses could only get as far as the sports ground which is a considerable distance from the residential areas. On the morning of 4 August Metro buses were not operating to Fern Tree or Strickland Avenue past Marilyn Road, affecting routes 46, 47 and 49.

Tassielink's notice to passengers at 0930 on 4 August advised that due to the continued closure of the Huon Highway from Grove to Summerleas Road at Kingston

several Huonville to Hobart services were cancelled. As Tassielink had several buses at Huonville, waiting for updates on road conditions, one vehicle was scheduled to start its southbound journey to Dover in Huonville rather than in Hobart. By 1045 the Huon Highway had reopened and Tassielink was endeavouring to resume normal services. As has often been the case for decades in the depths of winter, Lyell Highway services to and from Hobart to Queenstown, were suspended on Monday morning and remained suspended late on Tuesday, due to the weather and road conditions at Derwent Bridge and Lake St Clair.

Adverse weather conditions continued to affect bus services in some of the residential areas on the foothills of Mount Wellington on the third day of the heavy snowfalls –5 August. On that Wednesday morning buses were again prevented from servicing Fern Tree beyond the top of Strickland Avenue. Services to Marlyn Road and Tolmans Hill were also suspended due to road closures. Services to the Mount Nelson bends were also disrupted for short period during the day. Other roads such as the Southern Outlet to Kingston and Blackmans Bay were closed for short periods before 0700 as Council trucks spread gravel to assist in eliminating black ice. By lunch time on 5 August routes 46 and 47 resumed normal service to Strickland Avenue but Routes 48 and 49 were still unable to get to Fern Tree. By Thursday morning 6 August Fern Tree was again connected to the Metro network.

After the morning peak on 5 August and the re-opening of the Huon Highway Tassielink resumed normal operation. However, due to hazardous road and weather conditions around Cradle Mountain the Wednesday Launceston to Queenstown and return services were cancelled. Normal services resumed on Thursday. Buses ran normally from Hobart to Queenstown and return on Thursday 6 August.

No attempt has been made to document the adverse effect on rural school bus services in southern, central and western Tasmania. On some days up to 50 country schools were closed, often just as much caused by the inability of teachers, let alone students, to get to school. On the Monday of "Snow Week" almost all schools in Hobart were closed.

## **Victoria by Craig Halsall and Steven Haby**

### **'New' route 560 - Down Down to Coles**

Route number 560 was temporarily reinstated on 8 August for between Pascoe Vale station and the corner of Gaffney and Sussex Streets. The purpose is to enable access to the new Coles supermarket being built at Coburg North Village (the terminus of 560), following community concerns the existing network did not provide an east-west connection for elderly locals in walking distance of the previous store. It is the first route to climb the steep Gaffney St hill departing Pascoe Vale for many decades. The route departs from the 542 stop at Pascoe Vale station then runs via Gaffney St, Cumberland Road, O'Hea St, Sussex St to the terminus near the new Coles using the existing bus stops. Frequencies are every 40 minutes from 0920 to 1600 seven days a week and is timed to meet trains at Pascoe Vale. Trips from Pascoe Vale take eight minutes with a five minute layover and a nine minute return so presumably one bus is only required. Formerly the route number 560 was used for the 'cross suburban' Greensborough - Broadmeadows route operated by East West Bus Company which was eventually incorporated into SmartBus route 902 (Airport West - Chelsea) on 5 April 2010. The operator is not identified on the PTV website but presumably it would be Dyson's given that it is within their operating area. According to the PTV website the 560 is a temporary solution and a more long term answer is being looked at. Dyson's subsidiary East-West operate the service, with rumours the route will be extended east later in the year.

Interestingly shuttle buses have been used by Coles in previous years to provide access to nearby Coles supermarkets during periods of refurbishment usually using small minibuses. Some examples include Williamstown - North Altona during the period of refurbishment of the Williamstown Coles and Hawthorn - Tooronga Village during the refurbishment of the Hawthorn supermarket.

### **Additional V/Line service**

Since 24 August an additional V/Line bus service has operated departing Wendouree at 1545, via Loreto College and St Patrick's College, Ballarat at 1610, Ballan at 1643, terminate at Bacchus Marsh at 1705.

### **Coronet Bay cuts**

A previously unreported change on 21 June was the reduction of services on the locally known "Waterline shuttle" linking the coastal townships of Coronet Bay, Corinella, Tenby Point and Grantville. The service, introduced in 2009, allowed V/Line coaches to Cowes to bypass the towns, saving over 15 minutes on the journey. PTV states that the operator, Westernport Coaches, failed to increase loadings from an average of less than 1 per service. Prior to 2009, the towns were served by one inbound service on weekdays, two outbound services on weekday evenings and two buses each way on weekends. Initially, the changes saw the weekday trips in each direction cut from six to three, and weekend trips cut from five to two, basically removing all trips in the middle of the day. However, community protests that they would not be able to travel to the nearby centres of Grantville or Wonthaggi without spending 8 hours saw weekday trips re-introduced at 1030 into Grantville, returning at 1330. Since learning of the cuts, the local community has been encouraging people to use the bus, to ensure no further cuts take place and argue for the cancelled trips to be reinstated.

### **New Chadstone Interchange opens**

PTV, in conjunction with centre owners Gandel Group and Federation Centres, opened the new interchange at Chadstone on 10 August, five days later than originally anticipated due to late completion of works. All routes now serve a single interchange to the south of the centre, replacing previous arrangements of bus stops on either side of the centre, only served by selected routes. The new interchange consists of 15 bus spaces, however Bay 1 for instance caters for four services (Routes 612, 623, 624, 625 and 626 to the west).

Service times remained unchanged, however new timetables and maps appeared on the PTV website to reflect the relocation. Most routes continue to access the centre using their existing alignment, however Route 903 to Altona now enters via Dandenong Road, bypassing two stops on Warrigal Road south of Middle Road Routes 800, 802, 804 and 862 continue to pass these stops.

### **Victoria Parade bus lane delays**

In early August PTV released new timetables for Transdev's Eastern Freeway Routes 302, 303, 304, 305, 318, 350, 905, 906, 907 and 908 as part of the planned realignment of services effective 23 August, with services to enter Lonsdale St via Spring St rather than Gisborne St and Albert St. The number of trips is unchanged, however the opportunity has been taken to update run times. Savings from the new bus lane and realignment have been offset by updates to reflect current runtimes, with some trips taking up to five minutes longer in peak times.

On 20 August it was announced that route changes, along with stop relocations along Victoria Parade had been delayed four weeks, now due to commence on 20 September. It was cited that issues with BusTracker systems processing information for the new alignment was the cause of the delay!

### Quince's sold

It has been announced that Australian Transit Group, who currently operate town and school bus services across regional WA and NT have purchased the Oakleigh charter business owned by Rod and Graeme Quince. The current operation consists of 34 buses. Quince's originally operated the Yarraville – Kingsville service in 1944, and later services in the early 50s in the Oakleigh area, but these had been sold by 1958. In 1988, the company won several eastern suburb routes from Driver (Waverley Transit) and Ventura as part of a controversial bidding process, than resulted in a court finding the owners had 'grandfather' rights to the routes. Quince's, who had purchased around 60 buses for the new contracts, was eventually allocated Routes 615, 631, 634, 705, 708 and 731 most of which were new routes formed following the bungled bidding process. The company decided not to renew their contracts with the government in 1998, and their routes were transferred to National, Moorabbin Transit, Ventura and Invicta, who subsequently took network changes in late 1998 to absorb their acquired routes.

As part of their charter business, Quinces operate a series of shuttle routes between various campuses of Monash University, including a Saturday shopper bus to Brandon Park for students living on the Clayton campus.

### New network planned for Wollert

PTV is currently undertaking community consultation for bus network expansion in the growing communities of Epping North and Wollert, replacing the existing 575 service to Thomastown, which fails to reach many parts of the area. The new network will see three routes introduced, 356, 357 & 358, serving the east, central and western extents of the area. The 356 & 358 will through-route at Epping Station, while 357 will continue over the existing 575 to Thomastown via Edgars Road. Unfortunately, a connection to Craigieburn will not occur until further development occurs along Craigieburn Road East. Services will operate at 20 minute intervals at peak times and 40 minutes at other times, until 2100 nightly.

### Skybus acquires Airbus

OPTrust Private Markets Group and Catalyst Direct Capital Management, the foreign investment consortium which purchased Skybus in September 2014 has now acquired it's second operation, Airbus, which operates shuttle services to Auckland Airport, for \$NZ 30 million.

### Local Area Map updates

New Local Area maps uploaded to the PTV in recent months show recent network changes and the opening of the new interchange at Chadstone:

- June 2015: Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Hume, Melton and Wyndham
- August 2015: Bayside, Glen Eira, Monash and Stonnington.

### Western Australia by Hilaire Fraser

Further to the report in last month's *Table Talk*, Transperth has introduced route 14 The Mezz Shopping Centre Hawthorn to Brady St Hawthorn on 10 August 2015 to serve Egina St, Tasman St and Brady St now bypassed by amended route 15 Perth-Glendalough Station via Oxford St. This is only a trial service and its continuation will depend on consistent and well supported patronage. Services operate on Mondays to Fridays only departing The Mezz at 1038, 1138, 1338 and 1438pm, and Brady St at 0918, 1018, 1118 and 1318. Route 14 was introduced in response to community concerns about a loss of service.

On Sunday 6 September the following services underwent service changes:

- 36 Perth-Midland, 295/9 Perth-Walliston and 296 Perth-Kalamunda had time changes.
- 37 Kings Park-Domestic Airport via Belmont Forum now has services every 15 minutes to Belvidere St with a 30 minute service continuing to the Airport on Sundays. Previously 30 minute services had operated to the Airport.
- 40 Perth-Domestic Airport via Great Eastern Highway now has extra Sunday services operating prior to 0830 and after 1930
- 282 Perth-Kalamunda via Grove Road now has an additional service on weekdays departing the Esplanade Busport at 0830
- 38 Perth-Cloverdale now has an additional service on weekdays departing Cloverdale at 1517.
- 345 Morley-Bennett Springs was extended into Whiteman Park, twice per weekday, in each direction, for a period of six months. Its continuance will depend on consistent and well supported patronage.

**Thanks** to Jason Blackman, Damon Cooper, Ian Cooper, Hilaire Fraser, Steven Haby, Craig Halsall, Victor Isaacs, Peter Parker, Alex Smith, Tris Tottenham and various contributors on *Australian Transport Discussion Board* for Bus news.

## About Table Talk

**Table Talk** is published monthly by the Australian Timetable Association Inc. (Registration No. A0043673H) as a journal of record covering recent timetable news items. The ATA also publishes the **Times** covering timetable history and analysis. Contributions are invited and are very welcome. Please send these to the appropriate Editor. ABN 74248483468.

The **deadline for Table Talk** is the last weekend of the month, but contributions are welcome at all times.

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**Membership of the Australian Timetable Association** includes monthly copies of the *Times*, *Table Talk*, the Distribution List of timetables, and the monthly Auction catalogues. The membership fee is \$60 (Adult) and \$36 (Junior) pa. Membership enquiries should be directed to the Membership Officer, Michael Smith, at [volvob10m0007@hotmail.com](mailto:volvob10m0007@hotmail.com)

Back issues of **Table Talk** are available on the Australian Timetable Association's website, [austta.org.au](http://austta.org.au), after three months.

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